Trans-European energy networks: guidelines

2001/0311(COD) - 07/02/2003 - Commission communication on Council's position

The Commission considers that the common position is in line with the spirit of the Commission proposal. In general, where the common position departs from the Commission proposal it clarifies and supplements the concepts and approaches set out in the original text; this is particularly true as regards the definition of the priority routes and the projects (definitions contained in Annexes I and III respectively). With regard to the criteria which the projects of common interest must meet (criteria contained in Annex II), in its common position the Council has adopted an intermediate solution between the Commission proposal which provided only for the definition of very general thematic criteria and the European Parliament's request for very precise identification of projects, with no flexibility with regard to updating the detailed definition of the projects of common interest. The Commission is of the opinion that the Council's common position thus resolves the delicate problem of identifying the projects of common interest more precisely but allowing flexibility in the updating of the detailed project descriptions through a committee procedure. The Commission considers this flexibility to be necessary on account of the emergence of new variants of projects already identified or new projects which are in line with the priorities and criteria of the guidelines but which, for practical reasons connected with the length of the co-decision procedure, cannot be added in good time to the list in the guidelines, and cannot therefore benefit from TEN financial support. In addition, the Commission considers this flexibility to be proportionate, since it is a question of essentially technical adjustment to the detailed list of projects. Consequently, the Commission invites the European Parliament to approve this common position.