# Cooperation, third countries: democracy, rule of law, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms

1997/0191B(CNS) - 01/07/1998 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to lay down provisions implementing measures to promote human rights in third countries, other than measures implemented as part of the Community's development cooperation. SUBSTANCE: the proposal for a Regulation complements the proposal for a Regulation on the implementation of measures to promote democracy and respect for human rights in developing countries (SYN97191). Apart from technical details of the implementation of measures, the proposal lays down a financial reference amount of EUR 150 m for the period of application of the Regulation (1999-2004). On the technical side, the measures to be carried out must be implemented within the framework of existing programmes of cooperation with third countries (Tacis, Phare, Meda and the Regulations on Bosnia) and any future measure relating to third countries in these fields implemented on the basis of Article 235 of the Treaty on European Union. As in the case of the proposal on democratisation in developing countries, this proposal lays down the general Community support framework. The measures to be implemented essentially have the same objectives: 1) promotion and defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms (promotion and protection of civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, etc); 2) support for democratisation (consolidation of the rule of law, support for the judiciary, promotion of pluralism and proper administration of public affairs, support for electoral processes, etc.); 3) consolidation of respect for human rights in support of conflict prevention (assistance with the establishment of early warning systems, the peaceful settlement of civil disputes, promotion of humanitarian law, etc.). The Community measures will comprise technical and financial assistance. The measures will be implemented by the Commission at the request of partners or on its own initiative, consistently with, and as a complement to, the measures of the Member States. Provision is made for determining the criteria for assessing the eligibility of the Community's partners (NGOs and other bodies based in the Community or, exceptionally, elsewhere). The Commission will be responsible for managing, implementing and monitoring the measures. It will be assisted by a committee consisting of representatives of the Member States (enabling the Commission to respond to immediate, unforeseeable needs arising from the brutal suspension of the democratic process or from a crisis). In this case, the Commission will be empowered to take its decision with the aid of Member States, which will be permitted to lodge objections only within 5 days. A regular evaluation of the measures is provided for, as is the submission of an annual report on all the measures financed. This will be forwarded to the Council and Parliament. Within 3 years of the entry into force of the Regulation, the Commission is to submit a general assessment of the measures taken, together with proposals for extending the Regulation if appropriate. The Regulation should expire on 31.12.2004.