Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 20/06/1996 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to give existing budget headings on European humanitarian aid a legal basis and to set clear goals for such aid and specify the types of situation in which such aid is to be provided, the links existing between humanitarian aid, action to ensure preparedness in the event of disasters, and rehabilitation and reconstruction operations, as well as laying down the procedures for conducting humanitarian operations in third countries. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid. SUBSTANCE: - objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid: . scope of humanitarian aid: assistance, relief and protection operations on a non-discriminatory basis to help the most vulnerable sections of the population in third countries and as a priority those in developing countries, victims of natural disasters, man-made crises (wars and outbreaks of fighting) or exceptional situations comparable to natural or man-made disasters; . objectives of humanitarian aid: to save and preserve life during emergencies and their immediate aftermath; to provide assistance to people affected by wars, especially where their own governments prove unable to help them; the transport of aid; rehabilitation and reconstruction work (particularly in the short term, to facilitate the arrival of relief and, where possible, on a more long-term basis); to cope with the consequences of population movements (refugees, displaced people, etc.); to ensure preparedness for risks of natural disasters (use of an early-warning system); and to support mine-clearance work and measures to combat anti-personnel mines; . types of assistance eligible for financing: purchase and delivery of any product needed for the implementation of operations, including the construction of housing or shelter for the victims; the costs associated with outside staff, whether expatriate or local; the storage, transport and distribution of relief; etc.; . back-up measures eligible for financing: preparatory studies; technical assistance; public awareness campaigns; measures to strengthen coordination; and humanitarian mine-clearance operations. The operations covered by the Regulation shall be exempt from taxes, charges, duties and customs duties. Community funding shall take the form of grants. - procedures for implementing humanitarian aid: aid operations may be implemented either at the request of international or non-governmental aid organizations from a Member State or a recipient country or on the initiative of the Commission. Selection of the organizations eligible for Community funding shall be based on the principles of sound management, impartiality and experience in the field. - procedures for implementing humanitarian operations: The Commission shall decide on emergency action for an amount not in excess of ECU 10 million, namely operations to meet immediate and unforeseeable humanitarian requirements, which are limited in duration. In respect of such operations involving amounts in excess of ECU 2 million, the Commission must inform the Member States within 48 hours of the initiatives it intends to finance. The Commission is responsible for appraising, deciding on, monitoring and assessing operations. When taking certain decisions, it will be assisted by a type IIIa committee (decisions on measures to protect humanitarian aid, goods and staff). A type IIb committee will assist it with decisions on global humanitarian aid plans and amounts in excess of ECU 2 million. Provision has also been made for regular assessment of humanitarian aid and the provision of information to the other institutions: the Commission must submit to the Council and the EP an annual report on all the humanitarian operations funded during the previous financial year. The Regulation is to be reviewed three years after its entry into force. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 05.07.1996.