TACIS: assistance to the New Independent States of the former USSR and Mongolia (amend. regul. 2053/93/EEC)

1995/0056(CNS) - 19/04/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament after reconsultation

In adopting the report by Mr Peter PEX (PPE,NL), Parliament approved the new draft for a regulation concerning the TACIS II programme, notably by tabling a series of amendments aimed at simplifying the procedures proposed by the Council. The draft regulation, as modified by the Council, gives evidence of a deep mistrust for the Commission. The Council defines binding procedures for each type of assistance in the greatest detail and case by case, something which is unique in the Union's history. Parliament has therefore sought in its amendments to guarantee a wider autonomy for the Commission vis a vis the Council in the programme's management, in particular by providing for an advisory committee. In addition, it calls for the Commission to ensure the monitoring and assessment of projects throughout the course of their implementation, as well as their general coordination. The other amendments concern the following points: - a two-year extension of the programme (1996-2001 instead of 1996-1999) and the establishment of indicative programmes covering three-year periods (and not four-year periods), - establishment of cultural programmes (and in particular inter-cultural cooperation), education, health and social protection programmes (including support for democracy) and programmes for environmental protection and public health, - cross-border cooperation is encouraged and cross-border projects could be approved under TACIS II and INTERRREG), - in all cases, particular attention must be paid to the potential multiplier and spin-off effects of the projects (e.g. environmental impact assessment procedures and eco-audits), - the recipients must be involved in the financial management of the projects (the Commission having to establish an appropriate level of local representation with the Member States) and particular attention will be paid to projects which are co-financed directly by local authorities, - service contracts to be awarded by restricted invitations to tender and by private treaty are for operations up to ECU 300 000 (and not ECU 200 000), and participation in all invitations to tender is open to the countries benefiting from PHARE, - an annual report evaluating the progress of projects in each of the partner States. Parliament also insisted on a more effective protection of human rights, and in particular minority rights and the rights of indigenous peoples. In cases of violation of such rights, measures could be taken with a qualified majority and after consulting the EP.