

# EC/developing countries: aid for population policies and programmes in developing countries

1995/0166(SYN) - 24/05/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

Adopting the report by Mr Jean-Thomas NORDMANN (ELDR, F), the European Parliament approved the proposal for a regulation with the following amendments: - it pointed out that individual freedom of choice in reproductive matters for men and women is an important factor in progress and development and noted a trend in some developing countries towards a reduction in birth rates; - it emphasized that the Community encourages the right of an individual to choose the number and spacing of their children, and condemned any country or organization which abuses human rights by the promotion of coerced abortion, forced sterilization, infanticide or the rejection, neglect and abuse of unwanted children as a means to control the growth of population; - it called for cooperation to take account of all the aspects of demography (birth rates, mortality rates, migration etc.) and for the population dimension to be incorporated over time into the various aspects of development policy; - it hoped, in particular, that ECU 300 million would be allocated to this policy by the year 2000, as the Community had undertaken at the Cairo Conference; - it also called for this policy to: . enable women and men to make a free and informed choice about the number and spacing of their children by preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; . contribute to the creation of a socio-cultural, economic and educational environment, especially for women and girls, by condemning all forms of sexual violence; . encourage gender equality in family life; . comply strictly with the decision taken at the Cairo Conference that abortion should under no circumstances be encouraged as a family planning method. There was therefore no funding for interruptions of pregnancy from this budget line; . support the establishment and development of reproductive health and family-planning services; . improve reproductive health care infrastructure, equipment, supplies or training (including safe motherhood, antenatal and postnatal care, family planning and the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS); . support the introduction of a family policy, including education and literacy programmes, incorporating information on reliable, legal methods of contraception; - it also called for the programme to be conducted on the basis of dialogue with the national, regional and local authorities concerned, in such a way as to avoid imposing policies without consultation and to take account of the cultural, social and economic situation of the population groups involved. Women should play a prominent role in the implementation and planning of the programme; - participation in invitations to tender and the award of contracts should be open on equal terms to natural and legal persons of the Member States, the recipient country and other developing countries. It could, in duly justified special cases, be extended to other third countries; - a financial contribution from local partners was requested (primarily for operating costs); - Community assistance should not be granted to countries or organizations which authorized or encouraged coerced abortion, forced sterilization or infanticide as methods for controlling population growth; - transparency should be strengthened: the Commission's general policy meetings must take place in public and the minutes must be forwarded to the European Parliament and the Council; - the Regulation should be subject to review after the first five years.