

Agenda 2000: Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-accession ISPA 2000-2006, aid for applicant countries

1998/0091(CNS) - 06/05/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

Under consultation procedure, the European Parliament adopted the second report by Ralf Walter (PSE, DE), which approves the Commission proposal for a Council regulation establishing an Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession, subject to amendments, notably in the following areas: - setting out priorities to be followed in implementing environmental measures under the programme (combatting and preventing further water and air pollution, waste management, conformity with the *acquis communautaire*, conservation, restoration of biodiversity, nature conservation...); - allowing for exceptional cases where the total cost of each measure under the programme may be less than EURO 5 million; - in an effort to ensure environmentally sustainable mobility, ensuring that disproportionate concentration of aid to road transport to the detriment of the other modes of transport is avoided; - providing that measures financed by the Community shall comply with Community legislation on public procurement; - providing that preliminary studies and technical support financed under the programme should pertain to projects deserving promotion and general technical assistance to national, regional and local authorities, including environmental authorities in the applicant countries; - providing that the Commission may grant assistance on its own initiative, only where there is an overriding Community interest; - ensuring that measures are implemented in compliance with the principles of sound financial management; - laying down provisions with regard to advances, responsibility for prosecuting regularities and making necessary financial adjustments in the case of any substantial change in the implementation or monitoring of a measure (accorded first and foremost to the beneficiary countries), and detailing the procedure to be followed by the Commission if it considers that a beneficiary country has failed to comply with its obligations; - in terms of management and control, adding to the obligations of the beneficiary countries a requirement that they check regularly that the measures financed by the Community are contributing to the development of the region and are not perpetuating inefficient and environmentally damaging structures and that they also submit an annual evaluation report; - specifying that provisions in the financial memorandum for the reduction, suspension and cancellation of assistance may be made, in particular where insufficient account was actually taken of the strategic priorities by the applicant countries and where strict coherence of the projects was not observed; - undertaking to deliver an opinion on the Commission's annual report on Community assistance under ISPA within three months (rather than "as soon as possible", as proposed by the Commission and requiring that in its annual report of the following year, the Commission report on how it has taken account of this opinion; - requiring the Commission to draw up a mid-term review of the implementation of ISPA in 2003, together with proposed amendments to the legal provisions then in force, to be submitted to the Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions for their opinions; - providing that the beneficiary countries be kept regularly informed of the work of the programme's advisory committee; - with regard to information to be contained in applications, providing that analysis of the project's direct and indirect effects on employment be quantified, where possible, and that information should also be given on the participation of women in all stages of the decision-making process, as well as the degree of consistency of proposed measures with the guidelines for the trans-European networks and the pan-European transport policy and details on compliance with basic employee rights and on consideration of socially disadvantaged groups; - providing that ex-post evaluation of the measures should assess their short- and long-term consequences for social and employment policies; - adding to the information to be contained in the annual report the contribution of assistance under ISPA to beneficiary countries' efforts to implement the Community's common transport policy and policy on trans-European networks as well as the impact on employment of the measures financed, compatibility with Community policies concerning employment and social affairs and a breakdown of the measures in the infrastructure sector by mode of transport.

