LIFE II: financial instrument for the environment (amend. regul. 1973/92/EEC)

1995/0093(SYN) - 17/11/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

Adopting the report by Mrs Elena MARINUCCI (PSE, I), the European Parliament approved the proposal for a regulation with the following amendments: - it redefined the objective of the LIFE programme, i.e. to implement Community environmental policy by financing nature protection actions, preparatory actions, demonstration actions and technical assistance. Eligible actions were defined as joint actions to promote cooperation and the transfer of environmental know-how between public authorities (including regional or local authorities) and NGOs working in priority intervention sectors: . preparatory measures: guiding measures to integrate the environment into structural interventions relating to regional management and socio-economic projects; . demonstration measures: the introduction of innovative procedures and the implementation of guiding experiences so as to promote sustainable development; . technical assistance: the promotion by local authorities or NGOs of actions to promote rational management of the environment through increased cooperation (especially cross-border cooperation); - the programme was opened to associated CEECs, using the PHARE fund to finance actions in these countries. Actions in CEECs must meet specific criteria (they must have a certain interest for the Community, seek to achieve sustainable development, increase cross-border cooperation, be feasible and deal with problems of major importance); - technical modifications were made to eligible actions: mainly by including certain actions such as the protection of rivers, the prevention and harmless recycling of toxic waste, the protection of water resources, the protection of the air (in urban zones), the fight against atmospheric pollution and conservation of natural habitats and threatened species; - appropriations for LIFE were increased to ECU 800 million, subject to annual revision on the basis of changes in expenditure. The European Parliament proposed a new distribution ratio: . 45% for nature protection (instead of 46%), . 45% for other actions (instead of 46%), . 7% for regions bordering the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas (instead of 5%), . 3% for management and evaluation. It also made provision for actions not financed in 1995 to be taken into account in 1996; - actions proposed by NGOs, for which up to 75% of the cost may be financed by the Community, should be publicized; - the European Parliament called for the Commission to establish a reference framework of requirements for certain actions by June 1996. This could be used to guide parties interested in LIFE support to areas of particular interest to the Union; - the European Parliament divided eligibility criteria into general and particular criteria and called for regular reports (every 6 months) from the beneficiary on the state of progress of each project, as well as a final report. The European Parliament also asked to be informed of the projects implemented every year; - as far as committees were concerned, the European Parliament included representatives of NGOs working in the environmental sector in the LIFE committees. The comitology procedure was also revised; - finally, it asked to be fully associated with the third stage of LIFE under the codecision procedure.