

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

1998/0091(CNS) - 19/11/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

Following confirmation by the Commissioner, Mr Hans van den BROEK, that the Commission could not accept all the amendments adopted in plenary, the rapporteur, Mr Ralf WALTER (PSE, D) requested and received authorisation for referral of his report back to committee, hoping that the Commission would show a more flexible approach to the requests. In its amendments Parliament was concerned in particular to achieve better targeting of interventions under the ISPA pre-accession instrument. Stressing the importance of close involvement of the applicant countries in the choice of projects to be financed, Parliament considered that the ISPA should finance projects of a sufficient size. The total cost of a measure should not, except in exceptional circumstances and for justified reasons be less than EUR 5 million. Parliament also considered that all eligible measures where the cost was less than EUR 5 million should not exceed 5% of the total ISPA funding. In order to avoid overlap, Parliament stressed the need for coordination between the three pre-accession instruments (Phare, ISPA, agricultural instrument) and with the activities of the financial institutions (EIB, EBRD). The applicant countries should also participate in other Community financial instruments (LIFE, European Environment Agency). Parliament hoped that the local and regional authorities would play an active part in the granting of Community funding under ISPA. Parliament added Cyprus to those countries eligible to benefit from the Fund and stressed that the aim of ISPA was the economic and social cohesion of the beneficiaries and the promotion of their environmentally stable development. It considered that a balance had to be established between funding for transport infrastructure measures and for environmental improvement measures. By 2006 the latter area should account for at least 50% of all appropriations. In this context the Community should also seek to: - promote intermodality and interoperability, - keep a strict watch to ensure that there was no disproportionate concentration of funding for road projects to the detriment of other forms of transport, - strengthen environmental measures by focusing on the needs of each country in specific areas (water pollution, waste management, etc.). Parliament called on the Commission to submit a mid-term report in 2003 on the implementation of ISPA. In order to ensure transparency it called for this instrument, together with other pre-accession aid, to be placed in a separate budget chapter. Parliament also stressed the need for constant monitoring of the degree of utilisation of resources. It proposed that if necessary the aid could be reprogrammed in relation to the needs of countries. It also suggested a series of penalties in the event of irregularities. Lastly, Parliament stated that the other applicant countries (those in the second group) should benefit from equivalent measures.