Development cooperation, NIS and Mongolia: assistance to economic reform and recovery, Tacis programme, 2000-2006

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By adopting the report by Mr Jaime VALDIVIELSO DE CUE (EPP-ED, E), the European Parliament approved the new programme aiming to provide assistance to economic reform and recovery in the New Independent States and Mongolia, replacing the TACIS Programme for the period 2000-2006. Moreover, the Parliament requests that, in line with its resolution of the 18.11.1999, the conclusion of new contracts regarding actions in favour of Russia to be funded in the context of the budget for the 2000 financial year, should be suspended until a satisfactory solution has been found in Chechnya (with the exception of the TACIS budget line for democracy and social development). The European Parliament also reaffirms that in the case of a serious crisis in the partner countries, the Council may decide by qualified majority, following consultation with the Parliament, to implement a special aid programme. Furthermore, the Parliament requests that emphasis be placed on sustainable economic development in these countries, as well as social and environmental development. The programme should also reinforce economic and social cohesion of the partner countries. More specifically in the Black Sea region, it should be possible for appropriations approved on the basis of this Regulation to be used to fund the recipient countries' share of projects under the Interreg initiative. Although the programme mainly aims at the reform and the redressing of partner countries' economies, the Parliament also stresses the necessity of promoting the development of the rule of law and civil society. In addition, it insists on the need to respect minority rights and the rights of indigenous peoples as an essential criterion for the continuation of the assistance provided. In addition, it call for an improvement in the interventions carried out in the cooperation policy framework (first pillar) and those carried out in the CFSP framework (second pillar). Particular priority should also be given to the sustainable improvement of children's and young peoples' living conditions. Moreover, a percentage of assistance should also be provided via non-governmental organisations and a good part of it should be made available to projects involving a significant participation of local agents. The European Parliament also requests that a strategy to increase the visibility of programmes be prepared and that costs of preparatory studies for projects be limited. In parallel, amendments have been made to the proposal in order to stress the following points : - strengthening energy networks; - reinforcing the sensitivity of the environment; - support for the management of nuclear power stations, as well as recycling of waste; - aid for twinning in order to strengthen the development of civil society in the partner countries. Lastly, it introduces amendments of a comitology nature as well as in budgetary terms by deleting the Article relating to 25% of the budget of the programme initially provided for by the Commission for investment incentives or activities. The Parliament also wishes to be kept well-informed regarding theimplementation of the projects. With this in mind, it calls for reports three times a year on the financial execution of the programme and regular information on the projects approved.