

Aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FR Yugoslavia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia FYROM

1998/0023(CNS) - 20/04/1998 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to make technical changes to Regulation 1628/96/EC on reconstruction and rehabilitation in the former Yugoslavia to improve the measures applicable to the granting of Community aid.

COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Regulation 851/98/EC amending Regulation 1628/96/EC relating to aid for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

SUBSTANCE: In view of the exceptional circumstances prevailing in the countries covered by Regulation 1628/96/EC relating to aid to the former Yugoslavia, an amending Regulation has been adopted to render the application procedures more flexible and speed up the implementation of projects. Measures are provided for, in particular, to improve the consistency of the measures envisaged. Close coordination is to be established between the Council and Commission and, where appropriate, with the High Representative for Bosnia to improve the effectiveness of aid. In this particular region, a special delegate is also to be appointed who will assume responsibility for all the Commission's activities. This person will enjoy largely autonomous powers of decision and will be assisted by a solid team to carry out management, technical assistance and monitoring functions. Besides the sending of extra staff to Bosnia, the Regulation provides for a series of specific measures designed to raise the profile of EU aid (the EU being the principal donor) and render aid more effective and rapid. These measures concern: - service contracts: technical assistance contracts with a maximum value of ECU 400 000 may be awarded by private treaty, whereas previously the ceiling was ECU 200 000 (technical assistance and project supervision and evaluation contracts); - certain works and supply contracts: contracts not exceeding ECU 3 m may be awarded, under exceptional circumstances and subject to certain conditions, by geographically limited call for tender. If such procedures prove inadequate or do not result in a contract being awarded, the contracts may possibly be awarded by private treaty with international contractors; - flexibility of aid: in certain cases, the Commission is authorized - after consulting central government - to provide municipalities or regional organizations with direct financial aid in the form of cooperation programmes and measures. In Bosnia, the granting of such aid will be subject to the decision of the High Representative for the region to the extent that he assumes the functions of central government; - projects which facilitate the return of refugees: works and supply contracts to facilitate the return of refugees, with a value exceeding ECU 3 m (but less than ECU 10 m) may be awarded under restricted invitations to tender; - the amount above which the management committee (Article 12 of Regulation 1628/96/EC is to be consulted: this is increased from ECU 2 m to 5 m. However, the committee is to be duly kept informed of actions corresponding to financing of less than ECU 5 m; - transparency: monthly information meetings are to be organized locally between the Commission and representatives of the Member States concerning all the projects awarded. In addition, the Commission is required to issue in the Official Journal or over the Internet, once a year, an invitation for expressions of interest to allow all interested parties to make themselves known. The Commission must take account of these expressions of interest before awarding contracts. **ENTRY INTO FORCE:** 25.04.1998. It is applicable from 31.12.1999.