Consumers: general framework for Community activities 1999-2003

1998/0028(COD) - 25/01/1999 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a legal base for a general framework for Community activities in favour of consumers for the period 01.01.1999 to 31.12.2003. COMMUNITY MEASURE: European Parliament and Council Decision 283/1999/EC establishing a general framework for Community activities in favour of consumers. CONTENT: This Decision establishes, at Community level, a general framework for activities promoting the interests of consumers and providing them with a high level of protection. The financial framework for the implementation of this general framework for the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2003 is EUR 112.5 million (excluding the sum of EUR 7.5 million earmarked for funding EHLASS). The framework comprises actions designed to help protect the health, safety and economic interests of consumers and to promote their right to information and education and their right to join forces in order to protect their interests. More specifically, within these 4 categories, the following activities are eligible: 1) Consumer health and safety as regards products and services, e.g. technical expertise to assess, adopting a preventive approach, risks relating to products, in particular for foodstuffs; actions relating to consumer products and services causing danger to consumers; dissemination of information about dangerous products and services, as well as about potential risks. 2) Protecting the economic and legal interests of consumers, including access to dispute resolution, as regards products and services, taking into account horizontal aspects, e.g. actions to ensure the respect of consumer rights in the supply of goods and services; actions to improve cooperation between the bodies participating in market surveillance; improving common extra-judicial procedures; development of, and support for, actions aiming at facilitating access to justice; actions to monitor environmental claims on product labels, on packaging and, in general, in advertising and through other types of marketing. 3)Educating and informing consumers, e.g. raising awareness among consumers for the need for sustainable production and consumption patterns; developing education and training of consumers, particularly in schools; development of and support for European centres providing information and advice to cross-border consumers in the Community. 4) Promotion and representation of the interests of consumers, e.g. strengthening the representation of the interests of consumers at the Community and international level; supporting consumer organisations in the Member States, in particular when their means are limited; pilot projects promoting sustainable consumption models, in particular those that are environmentally friendly. The activities to support and supplement the policy conducted by the Member States shall consist of: - actions taken by the Commission; - actions providing financial support for activities of the European consumer organisations, as defined in this Decision; - actions providing financial support for specific projects to promote the interests of consumers in the Member States, as defined in this Decision, in particular by consumer organisationsand appropriate independent public bodies. The Decision also lays down criteria regarding the eligibility of organisations and the conditions for granting financial support. Strict selection conditions are laid down in the Decision. These include: - a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness, - an added value ensuring a high and uniform level of the representation of the interests of consumers, - a lasting multiplier effect at national or European level, - the widest possible dissemnation of the results of the activities and projects supported. The Commission is responsible for the management, monitoring, evaluation and supervision of the activities it funds. It will be assisted in this by an Advisory Committee composed of Member State representatives. The actions funded are to be evaluated regularly, both by the Commission and independent experts. Each year, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of this general framework. By 30.06.2002 at the latest, the Commission must submit an evaluation report to the European Parliament and the Council on the first three years of the implementation of activities under this general framework. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 09.02.1999.