

Agenda 2000: pre-accession, coordinating aid to the applicant countries

1998/0094(CNS) - 21/06/1999 - Final act

PURPOSE: to ensure the coordination and coherence in the forms of aid to applicant countries in the framework of the pre-accession strategy under the Phare programme, the agricultural instrument (SAPARD) and the structural instrument (ISPA). **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** Council Regulation 1266/1999/EC on coordinating aid to the applicant countries in the framework of the pre-accession strategy and amending Regulation 3906/89/EEC. **CONTENT:** Council Regulation 622/98/EC on assistance to the applicant countries in the context of the pre-accession strategy establishes for each of the candidate countries Accession Partnerships that comprise a single framework for the priority areas and all available resources for pre-accession assistance. The Luxembourg European Council called for a substantial increase in pre-accession aid so as to include, in addition to the Phare programme, an instrument for aid to agriculture and a structural instrument for financing schemes similar to the Cohesion Fund. The purpose of this proposed Regulation is to ensure that there is no duplication of these financial instruments and that there is maximum complementarity and economic impact of the 3 financial instruments. The three financial instruments are as follows : 1) the Phare programme focusing on the main priorities for the adoption of the Community acquis, i.e. building up of the administrative and institutional capacities of the applicant States and financing investment, excluding the types of investment financed under ISPA and SAPARD. The new Phare programme can be used to finance environmental, transport, agricultural and rural development measures which form a vital part of industrial reconstruction or regional development programmes. 2) The agricultural pre-accession instrument (SAPARD) will fund measures to support agriculture and rural development with a view to improving farm structures, the processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products, plant-health and veterinary controls and food quality controls. Integrated rural development measures, including rural infrastructures and agri-environmental measures are also funded under the instrument. 3) The structural pre-accession instrument (ISPA) will fund: - environmental measures enabling the beneficiary countries to comply with the requirements of Community environmental law and with the objectives of the Accession Partnerships; - transport infrastructure measures, in particular those that constitute projects of common interest and those which enable the beneficiary countries to comply with the objectives of the Accession Partnerships. These include measures to ensure the interconnection and interoperability of national networks both with each other and with the trans-European networks, and to provide access to such networks. Only one of the three financial instruments may be used to fund a given measure. The beneficiary States are to contribute to the financing of investments. The Commission is responsible for coordinating operations under the three instruments. It will establish the pre-accession aid guidelines for each country. It will be assisted by the Phare Management Committee in this task. The Commission is required to inform the Management Committee of any decisions concerning the indicative financial allocations for each country and for each pre-accession instrument, as well as of any measures taken to ensure coordination and coherence between operations undertaken under the three instruments and between the latter and operations funded by the European Investment Bank, other Community financial instruments or international financial institutions. There are provisions regarding the selection of projects and the evaluation of planned actions. The Commission may allow implementing agencies in applicant countries to manage the aid on a decentralised basis (the criteria are laid down in the Annex). The rules regarding inspection and evaluation are adopted by the Commission. The Commission is required to prepare an annual report for presentation to the European Parliament and the Council on all the pre-accession aid granted to each country. **ENTRY INTO FORCE:** 29.06.1999.