Technical assistance and information exchange Programme TAIEX: extension to the countries eligible for the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument ENPI

2005/0133(CNS) - 19/07/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to enable countries eligible for the future European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) to benefit from assistance through the Office for Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX).

PROPOSED ACT : Council Decision.

CONTENT : TAIEX was set up in 1995 to provide short-term, targeted technical assistance to the Central and Eastern European candidate countries. The initiative was conceived as a 'one stop shop' to assist the countries in understanding and drafting EU-related legislation and to help them with implementation and enforcement. TAIEX provides five main services: documentation, information and advice on legislation; workshops and seminars; study visits to the European Commission and Member States; expertise to advise the beneficiary countries and, finally, databases on the deployment and results of technical assistance provided.

The European Neighbourhood Policy’s (ENP) objective is to share the benefits of the EU’s 2004 enlargement with neighbouring countries and to use some of the instruments and experience gained during the enlargement process to bring partner countries closer to the EU, aiming at gradual economic integration and a deepening of political integration. Both the ENP Strategy Paper and the ENP Action Plans offer to extend TAIEX to ENP partner countries.

While Russia is not officially part of the ENP, the recently adopted road maps for the creation of the four Common Spaces between the EU and Russia set out objectives similar to those of the ENP, namely to intensify cooperation and to pursue regulatory convergence and legislative approximation between the EU and Russia. In addition, Russia will also be eligible for funding under the future European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

The purpose of the proposal is to enable ENP partner countries, in particular those with ENP Action Plans under implementation as well as Russia, to have access to TAIEX in the same way as the countries covered by the PHARE, CARDS and Turkey regulations. TAIEX is implemented in line with article 54 (2) of the Financial Regulation, which allows for the implementation of the Community budget through centralised indirect management subject to specific requirements. For implementation by national public-sector bodies, the Commission may entrust tasks of public authority, and in particular budget implementation tasks to national public-sector bodies or bodies governed by private law with a public-service mission providing adequate financial guarantees and complying with the conditions provided for in the implementing arrangements. However, such bodies may be entrusted with implementation tasks only if the basic act of the programme or action concerned provides for the possibility of delegation and lays down the criteria for the selection of the bodies concerned. Neither Council Regulation 1488/1996 /EC concerning financial and technical measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (MEDA)nor Council Regulation 99 /2000/EC concerning the provision of assistance to the partner States in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Tacis)has such a provision. However, centralised indirect management has already been established for

the PHARE and CARDS Programmes. A proposal has also been made for the pre-accession financial assistance for Turkey. The proposed new Instrument for Pre Accession Assistance (IPA) and the proposed new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) will also authorise centralised indirect management.

Therefore, the proposal provides a temporary solution and an appropriate legal basis until TAIEX actions can be funded under the ENPI from 2007 onwards. An amount of EUR 4 million, to be taken equally from the respective regional budget lines, will be sufficient.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS :

- Budget lines: 19.06.01 Assistance to partner countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the associated budget line for administrative costs 19.01.04.07; 9.08.02.01 MEDA (measures to accompany the reforms to the economic and social structures in the Mediterranean non-member countries) and the associated budget line for administrative costs 19.01.04.06.

- Duration of the action and of the financial impact: 2005/2006 for commitments, 2005-2007 for implementation.

- Summary of commitment appropriations and payment appropriations for budget line 19.06.01:

- Operational expenditure: total commitment and payment appropriations: EUR 1.6 million.

- Administrative expenditure within reference amount: EUR 0.4 million.

- Total reference amount: EUR 2 million.

- Summary of commitment appropriations and payment appropriations for budget line 19.08.02:

- Operational expenditure: total commitment and payment appropriations: EUR 1.6 million

- Administrative expenditure within reference amount: EUR 0.4 million.

- Total reference amount: EUR 2 million.

- Total number of human resources: 1.5 in 2005, 8 in 2006 and 3 in 2007.