

Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+) 2007-2013

2004/0218(COD) - 14/09/2006

The committee adopted the report by Marie-Anne ISLER-BEGUIN (Greens/ALE, FR) amending - under the 2nd reading of the codecision procedure - the Council's common position on the regulation on the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+). The key amendments focused on the allocation of budgetary resources:

- the committee deleted the Council's proposal that "at least 80% of the budget shall be subject to delegated management" and wanted the current management approach to continue. It argued that allocating so much of the funding to the Member States would mean that all the European added value would be lost, and above all it would give a blank cheque to Member States to pursue national objectives. MEPs adopted a number of other amendments deleting the principle of delegated management;
- following on from this, one amendment deleted the clause allowing staff costs to be eligible for Community co-financing. MEPs felt that, although staff currently seconded from the Member States to manage the programme should continue with that task, it did not follow that any more staff should be employed or paid from the Community budget for that purpose;
- the committee wanted the budget for the LIFE+ programme to be EUR 1 911 000 000 (in 2004 prices) for the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013 rather than EUR 1 854 372 000 as proposed by the Council;
- at least 55% of the budget should be allocated to measures to support the conservation of nature and biodiversity, rather than 40% as proposed by the Council;
- the committee retabled, in slightly modified form, an amendment adopted by Parliament at 1st reading pointing out that sufficient funds should be made available for the Natura 2000 network through other instruments, given that this regulation will only finance best-practice or demonstration measures and that the annual cost of managing the network was estimated to be around EUR 6 100 million for the EU as a whole;
- lastly, the Commission should ensure that cross-border projects will continue to be financed.