Action in the field of culture: Culture 2007 programme (2007-2013)

2004/0150(COD) - 01/09/2006 - Commission communication on Council's position

The Commission notes that the Council has accepted most Parliamentary amendments tabled at first reading, albeit subject to some rewording. There are two fundamental aspects of the Common Position, however, which the Commission can not accept. The first concerns budgetary matters; the second concerns a proposed broadening the comitology procedures.

On budgetary changes

The Council has decided to modify the Commission's indicative budgetary breakdown in the following manner:

- devoting 32%, rather than the originally proposed 36%, of the programme to multiannual projects (strand 1.1);

- devoting 29%, rather than the originally proposed 24% of the programme to co-operation measures (strand 1.2); and

- devoting 16%, rather than the originally proposed 17% of the programme to special actions (strand 1.3).

The Commission stands by its original commitment to multi-annual programming pointing out that multi-annual projects should not be viewed as a big operator versus small operator phenomenon. The aim of the project is to encourage all operators, regardless of size, to engage in ambitious co-operation projects. Further, the Commission wishes to stick to its original 17% allocation of the "special action" strand of the programme given that it seeks to strike a chord with European citizens and to increase their sense of belonging to a community.

On comitology

The Council has decided to extend the comitology procedure to projects selected for grants greater than EUR 200 000. This the Commission can not accept. Its reasons for rejecting the Council's views on this are set out in a Commission Statement, attached in Annex to this document.

In the statement the Commission explains that the Council's desire to see the comitology procedure extended to not only the selection process, (which formed part of the initial Commission proposal), but also to "individual" selection, is regrettable. Applicants would have to wait three, rather than two, months prior to a decision being made, which the Commission points out, runs counter to the principle of simplification espoused by the Commission, Council and European Parliament. The Commission also notes that the Parliament was not in favour of subjecting individual selection decisions to the comitology procedure.

Lastly, the Commission points out that the financial envelope of EUR 345 million, referred to in the Common Position, is EUR 400 million in current prices.