European year of intercultural dialogue 2008: respect and promote cultural diversity in Europe and develop an active European citizenship

2005/0203(COD) - 14/11/2006 - Council position

The Council has sought in its common position to take account of the European Parliament's concerns and priorities and was able to accept most of Parliament's amendments. Out of the 46 amendments voted by Parliament, the Council accepted in full, in part or in principle, 31 amendments, as did the Commission in its amended proposal.

The Council took up a number of drafting amendments as well as amendments that incorporated references to relevant policies or processes. In particular, it made the following amendments, which introduced substantial changes regarding the implementation of the Year:

- the text underlines the cultural and educational dimensions of the renewed Lisbon Strategy and stressed the need to contribute to ensuring equal opportunities and non-discrimination within the EU;

- two amendments now refer to gender equality;

- the text underlines links between the Year of intercultural dialogue and the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007);

- it mentions explicitly cooperation with the Council of Europe and UNESCO with in the context of the Year;

- three amendments aim to ensure continuity and long-term follow-up to the Year;

- there are now references to religious diversity;

- the importance of education in promoting intercultural dialogue is emphasised;

- there are references to the recognition of good practices

- the regional and local levels are emphasised;

- there is a need to consult trans-national networks and civil society;

- cooperation with other institutions, notably the European Parliament, is included in the text.

Regarding the allocation of **financial resources**, the Council has sought a balanced

Compromise, and allocated:

a) EUR 4 million (40%) to information and promotions campaigns and

b) EUR 3 million (30%) both for actions at Community and at national level;

c) preparatory actions are limited to 30% of the budget.

A number of informal contacts took place between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission during tripartite meetings with a view to reaching an early agreement with Parliament.

In conclusion, the Council considers that, as a whole, its common position is fully in line with the objectives of the Commission's amended proposal. The Council also considers that it has taken due account of the objectives pursued by the European Parliament in its amendments to the Commission's proposal and looks forward to an agreement with the Parliament in the near future with a view to the early adoption of the Decision.