Basic information

1995/0336(SYN) SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic) Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme) **Subject** 3.70 Environmental policy 6.40.14 Relations with non-governmental organisations, NGOs	Procedure completed

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	FLEMMING Marialiese (PPE)	05/02/1997

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	RÜBIG Paul (PPE)	21/02/1996

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	GHILARDOTTI Fiorella (PSE)	24/01/1996

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Environment	2062	1997-12-16
Environment	1978	1996-12-09
Environment	1990	1997-03-03
Industry	2001	1997-04-24

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
08/12/1995	Legislative proposal published	COM(1995)0573	Summary
12/02/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		

23/07/1996	Vote in committee		Summary
23/07/1996	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0258/1996	
12/11/1996	Debate in Parliament		Summary
05/02/1997	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1997)0028	Summary
24/04/1997	Council position published	06927/3/1997	Summary
29/05/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
04/09/1997	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
04/09/1997	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A4-0264/1997	
17/09/1997	Debate in Parliament		Summary
31/10/1997	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1997)0543	
16/12/1997	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
16/12/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/12/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1995/0336(SYN)
Procedure type	SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legal basis	EC Treaty (before Amsterdam) E 130S-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/08827

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A4-0258/1996 OJ C 277 23.09.1996, p. 0005	23/07/1996	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T4-0588/1996 OJ C 362 02.12.1996, p. 0093-0125	13/11/1996	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A4-0264/1997 OJ C 304 06.10.1997, p. 0007	04/09/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T4-0442/1997 OJ C 304 06.10.1997, p. 0097-0107	18/09/1997	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Council position	06927/3/1997 OJ C 188 19.06.1997, p. 0001	24/04/1997	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(1995)0573 OJ C 104 03.04.1997, p. 0011	08/12/1995	Summary
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1997)0028 OJ C 104 03.04.1997, p. 0015	05/02/1997	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position	SEC(1997)0848	07/05/1997	Summary
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1997)0543	31/10/1997	
Legislative proposal	COM(2001)0337 OJ C 270 25.09.2001, p. 0125 E	22/06/2001	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0525/1996 OJ C 204 15.07.1996, p. 0001	24/04/1996	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Decision 1997/0872
OJ L 354 30.12.1997, p. 0025 Summary

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 08/12/1995 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to promote European organizations active in the field of environmental protection, mainly by cofinancing their administrative activities. CONTENT: the fields of action eligible for Community aid are: - information on the environment (40% of funds): . dialogue and exchanges of information between NGOs, . development of their environmental protection information and documentation infrastructures; - analysis of environmental measures (40%): . promotion of ecological projects with a multiplier effect, . drafting of reports on the extent of ecological problems which the Community could address, . analysis of the penetration of the "environment" dimension in EC policies; - cooperation between "environmental players"

and NGOs active in the field of the environment at European level (20%): . promotion of cooperation between partners in the fifth Community action programme, . promotion of a multisectoral approach to the environment, . coordination between Community programmes and national, regional and local environmental projects. Financial aid consists of cofinancing for projects or subsidies for the NGOs themselves (up to a total not exceeding, in principle, 40% of the operating expenses of NGOs over a maximum of 3 years). - Implementation: the Commission will determine and select the projects to be financed and will ensure that they are consistent with and complementary to Community action in the same field. An opinion will be published on 30 September each year setting out the priority activities and the selection criteria for allocating appropriations for the following year. There will be supervision and penalties in the event of any irregularity. A list of initiatives funded will be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities every year. - Report: the Commission will submit a report on the first three years of this programme to the European Parliament and the Council by 30 June 1999. A new programme, to be implemented from 1 January 2000, will be decided on the Commission's proposal. - Duration and financial reference amount: the programme is planned for a period of four years (1996-2000) with a total budget of ECU 10.6 million.

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 24/04/1997 - Council position

In its common position on the Community action programme promoting non-governmental organizations primarily active in the field of environmental protection, the Council largely followed the amended Commission proposal: 10 of Parliament's 21 amendments were thus included in their entirety or in part. Those accepted included: - a definition of NGOs taking part: 'independent and non-profit-making organizations primarily active in the field of environmental protection'; - Community assistance, which can cover activities of environmental NGOs initiated by the organizations themselves; - eligible costs: unpaid work and donations in kind may be taken into account (up to a level of 10%); - the timetable for calls for proposals for activities and decisions on financing: decisions on financing will be taken before 31 May, as asked by Parliament, and calls for proposals will be announced before 31 January; - the possibility of continuing the programme beyond the phase covered by the proposal. The Council modified the following amendments proposed by Parliament: - the maximum rate of funding should not exceed 50% of NGO budgets and their administrative costs (and not 60% as Parliament wanted); - there is no reference to duration of funding (in practice this means that an NGO could receive funding under this programme for its entire four year duration). The Council also made some changes to the text of the proposal. It has simplified the terminology used ('subsidy' and 'Commission-financing' have been replaced by 'financial assistance' and 'financial contribution', 'costs' has been substituted for 'expenditure', etc.). The Council has also changed the programme's procedure and dates from 1996-2000 to 1998-2002 (the date for presentation of the report has also been changed from 30 June 1999 to 31 December 2000). The Council has also: - introduced the financial reference amount in the text: ECU 10.6 m; - deleted references to the 'polluter pays' principle and the subsidiarity principle in the recitals (because they are covered elsewhere); - introduced a reference to Community environmental legislation (as well as policy) under areas of activity eligible for financing; - detailed the general criteria for the selection of activities for financing; - made a better distinction between NGO activities eligible for financing and their administrative costs (a financial contribution for administrative costs will be considered only for NGOs working at European level in the context of their general working programme); - stated that the list to be published each year in the Official Journal should include details of the beneficiaries and the amounts allocated; - provided for an annual report to the Council and Parliament on the state of implementation of the programme.

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 24/04/1996 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The financial aid programme is the sole aspect of overall relations between NGOs and European bodies covered by the proposal. European-wide environmental organizations have for a long time now been calling for the institutionalization of cooperation - particularly in respect of participation, information and financial support - by bringing it within the context of a formal framework (e.g. Council Decision) after consultations with the organizations in question. This is in keeping with the principle of involvement of "environmental policy actors" in the "sustainable and environmentally-compatible development" advocated in the European Communities' Fifth Action Programme on the Environment. The Economic and Social Committee would draw attention to this link. The Committee calls upon the Commission to review the funding of the aid programme insofar as its scope is to be extended. Funds for the "consultative forum" and "other meetings at national and regional levels" should be removed from the Financial Statement since the objectives connected therewith go beyond the activities of NGOs proper. In the view of the ESC, the Draft Decision should provide a clearer definition of aid beneficiaries - something which is especially important given the limited funds available. Aid should thus be concentrated on non-governmental organizations which are primarily active in the field of environmental protection at European level and have their headquarters in a Member State of the European Union. Actions or programmes carried out jointly with organizations active at national level should also be eligible for financial support. In the view of the Committee, financial support should not be limited to the provision of information and the mobilization of the population but should also include the preparation of studies and documentation. Consultations in connection with the preparation of Community regulations and European provisions in the field of environmental policy, including environmental problems occurring in other policy areas, should also receive financial support. The detailed provisions for the financial support of activities of environmental NGOs need to be reviewed. Procedures regarding the co-financing of operations carried out with European non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) are much more generous and the differential cannot be accounted for by the different aid objectives.

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 07/05/1997 - Commission communication on Council's position

In its opinion on the Council's common position on this proposal, the Commission stated that it did not even want a proposal for a financial reference amount to be included in the text, since it was incompatible with the joint declaration by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission of 6 March 1995. It included a statement to this effect in the Council's minutes. The Commission accepted the remainder of the text put forward by the Council.

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 18/09/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

In adopting the recommendation for second reading by Mrs Marialiese FLEMMING (PPE, A), the European Parliament approved the Council's common position with the following amendments: - doing away with the financial reference amount in the text of the proposal (ECU 10.6 million), - amending the rate of Community assistance available for NGOs: Parliament proposed a new threshold of 60% rather than the 50% proposed by the Council in the common position, - adding certain selection criteria on which financial support would depend: cooperating with organisations in Central and Eastern Europe, promoting sustainable development and education on the environment, innovation, enhancing the participation and influence of the social forces and the public. Parliament also pointed out that NGOs seeking grants over ECU 100 000 would have to provide their accounts for the preceding two years, the current year and the year during which the grant-aided projects had been completed.

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 13/11/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Paul RÜBIG (PPE, A), Parliament approved the Community action programme promoting NGOs primarily active in the field of environmental protection. However, it called for the inclusion of European environmental umbrella organizations. The programme should also finance measures designed to strengthen cooperation between NGOs from different countries. Parliament also spelled out the criteria on the basis of which activities should be selected, inter alia: a sound cost-benefit ratio, a lasting multiplier effect, cross-border cooperation in Europe, particularly with Central and Eastern European organizations, and the participation of the public. It also stated the Community funding should not be granted to general education and information campaigns, measures which have already been completed or are underway, activities which can be supported under Community programmes, organizations against which an EC tribunal has delivered a judgment in the course of the preceding two years, or simple transfers of national measures. The EP proposed that Community assistance should be able to cover up to 60% of operational and administrative expenditures, whereas the Commission recommended a rate of assistance not exceeding 40%. Assistance would be limited to 30% of costs in the case of European umbrella organizations. Finally, the EP proposed changes to the allocation of funds. This would mean that analysis of environmental activities would receive 50% of the budget (instead of 40%) and cooperation between NGOs active at European level would qualify for 10% of the budget (instead of 20%).

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 22/06/2001

PURPOSE : to establish a report on the experience gained in the application of Decision 97/872/EC on the Community support to NGO's primarily active in the field of the environment. CONTENT : this report was established in the light of the experience gained by the Commission in the implementation of the Action Programme during the first three years, 1998-2000, and the experience gained by the during this period. In order to collect information on the Action Programme in a systematic way, a survey was produced, which was disseminated to all the services of the Environment DG (the Programme co-ordinator) and to external stakeholders (present and previous beneficiaries). The aim of the survey was twofold: 1) to compile information on how the provisions of the Programme and their implementation had been perceived in the past by the Commission and the NGOs in order to produce this present report; 2) to compile information on how the provisions of the Programme could be amended to better fit the needs of the Commission and the stakeholders in case of a renewal of the Programme. This would then require a Draft Proposal for a new Council Decision (see COD/2001/0139). The general objective of the Programme is to promote the activities of NGOs, which are primarily active in the field of environmental protection at a European level by contributing to the development and implementation of Community environmental policy and legislation. The financial contributions granted under this financial instrument (covering both 'running costs' and activities) are meant to enable environmental NGOs to carry out a number of activities for the benefit of Europe·s environment and society as a whole. These NGO activities include, among others, bringing the citizens closer to the European Union by making EU policies comprehensible and relevant to everybody as well as the provision of channels for feedback to the Commission of citizens' views and concerns. The collective experience gained by both the Commission and consulted NGOs (including all present and previous beneficiaries), as outlined in the survey replies, indicates that the Programme should be renewed, preferably for a period of 5 years · but with certain modifications, such as an expansion of the geographical scope in order to include Candidate Countries' NGOs and NGOs of the Balkans. The evaluation of budget line B4-3060 (under the SEM 2000 initiative), which comprises an in-depth analysis of the efficiency and justification of this financial instrument, has been duly taken into account and the results of this study support the conclusions of this Report for a renewal: A renewal of the Action Programme is also supported by the [Proposal for a Sixth Environment Action Programme], which provides for a continuation of NGO funding to environmental NGOs in order to facilitate participation in the dialogue process. The

strategic approach of the [Proposal for a Sixth Environment Action Programme] recognises the need for empowering citizens, and the measures proposed include extensive and wide-rangingdialogue with stakeholders in environmental policy-making. The Programme also foresees co-operation with environmental NGOs in the Candidate Countries in order to raise awareness.

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 16/12/1997 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to promote the activities of NGOs primarily active in the field of environmental protection at European level by helping to develop and apply Community environmental policy and legislation. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Decision 97/872/EC on a Community action programme promoting non-governmental organizations primarily active in the field of environmental protection. SUBSTANCE: The programme to promote NGOs in the field of environmental protection covers the period 01.01.1998 to 31.12.2001. It is intended to provide financial support for activities of benefit to the Community which contribute to the implementation and development of Community environmental policy and legislation, respecting the basic principles of the 5th action programme in relation to the environment. The financial reference amount for 1998-2001 is ECU 10.6 m. The Decision particularly applies to independent and non-profit-making organizations primarily active in the field of environmental protection, with an environmental objective aimed at the public good. The aid particularly covers campaigns and activities to promote public awareness, information and documentation infrastructure, demonstration projects and measures to coordinate environmental protection NGOs originating with the organizations themselves. An annex to the Decision specifies the areas of activity eligible and the share of resources to be allocated to each. The activities are selected in the light of criteria stated in the Decision (a sound cost-benefit ratio, a multiplier effect, effective cooperation between partners and a multinational approach). The Community aid consists of a financial contribution towards activities of NGOs. A financial contribution to compensate for administrative costs will be considered only for organizations working at a European level in the context of their general working programme. In principle, contributions to the budgets of NGOs must not exceed 50% of the NGOs' budgeted activities and administrative costs. Unpaid work or donations in kind may be taken into account up to a level of 10% of total eligible costs. The Community assistance is for activities which are to take place in the current or subsequent year. The Commission will determine and select the projects to be financed, and will ensure that the projects undertaken are consistent with and complementary to Community action in the same field. A notice will be published in the Official Journal each year, outlining the priority activities to be financed and the selection criteria for the allocation of funds. There will be supervision and, in the event of any irregularities, penalties. Beneficiaries will be required to keep for 5 years all supporting documents concerning expenditure for which assistance has been provided. A list of the beneficiaries and activities financed is to be published in the Ofifcial Journal each year, together with the amounts allocated. By 31.12.2000 at the latest, the Commission will submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the first 3 years of the programme and any proposals for continuing or discontinuing it. A decision on the continuation of the programme may be taken only after 01.01.2002. ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Decision enters into force on 01.01.1998 for a period of 4 years.

Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 05/02/1997 - Modified legislative proposal

In its amended proposal the Commission has taken over wholly or in part 12 of the 21 amendments approved by Parliament at first reading. These amendments deal with the following points: - demonstration of the specific nature of the NGO participating in the programme (active environmental NGOs) and clearer definition of the NGOs eligible (private, non-profit making), - increase in the level of Community aid for operational expenditure (up to 60% instead of 40%) and increase in the term of the aid (four years instead of three), - account to be taken of volunteer workers and gifts in kind in the total eligible expenditure (10%), - greater transparency in the use of EC support and in particular amendment of the dates for the publication of calls for tender under this programme (31 January) and the date on which the Commission decides on the eligible NGOs (31 May each year), The Commission did not however accept the amendments dealing with the following points: - extension of the measures to NGOs with a coordinating role or a European dimension and provision of different funds for coordinating NGOs (30% instead of 40%), - references to the Fifth Environmental Action Programme, - provision of funding for measures intended to strengthen cooperation between NGOs from different countries, - changes to the selection and exclusion criteria for NGOs in the programme: e.g. cost-benefit of the activities proposed, existence of crossborder cooperation, or exclusion from financing of measures relating to awareness, etc. (the Commission prefers not to set too rigid criteria in its proposal), - provision of an assessment of the selection criteria to be forwarded to the budgetary authority each year and verification of the accounts relating to the operations funded, - modification of the proportion of funding allocated for different types of environmental measures (these changes involve a reduction in the grants for the actions themselves, which the Commission considers unacceptable), - change in the date on which the final assessment report must be forwarded to the institutions and provision of the legal basis for the future proposal for changes to the programme.