

Equality women and men: promoting organisations active at European level, 2004-2005 action programme

2003/0109(COD) - 06/02/2004 - Council position

The Council adopted its common position with the aim of safeguarding continuing support for these organisations in the years 2004 and 2005. The Council has accepted the main objectives of the Commission's proposal and several of the European Parliament's amendments. More specifically, the Council accepted 9 of the 20 amendments adopted by Parliament and which were also accepted by the Commission in their entirety in its amended proposal. Concerning the duration of the programme and the overall amount of money to be spent on it, the Common Position respects the agreement reached between the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council at the Trilogue on 24 November 2003 which sets the financial framework for the implementation of the programme for the period 2004-2005 at EUR 2.2 million. This amount is deemed acceptable for the Commission. It should also be noted that the Council decided not to accept the Parliament's amendment providing for an extension of the programme to 2008 and an increase in the budget to EUR 5.5 million. The Council rejected 3 of the amendments accepted by the Commission for the following reasons: - one amendment was rejected because the Council considered the word "reconciliation" of working and family life to be stronger and more appropriate than the word "interlinking". Concerning the second part of the amendment, the Council did not add specific sectors for gender mainstreaming as this would have raised the question as to why other specific sectors were not referred to; - another was rejected for purely technical reasons as the structure of the Annex was modified and the European Women's Lobby was referred to; - the Council rejected this amendment because the definition of "non-profit-making" organisations was difficult and could lead to an unwanted exclusion of certain organisations. In addition, the reference at the end of the sentence to an objective which is part of the European Union's policy in this area was maintained as funding is important in order to boost the European Union's policy aims. The Council made additional changes to the Commission's proposal. The principle amendment made by the Council to the Commission's proposal concerns the specific references to the European Women's Lobby, which were deleted in certain Articles. The reason for this was that it was preferable that the Decision should define the selection criteria for organisations eligible for funding in an abstract way. In addition, the Council also moves the explicit references to the European Women's Lobby in the body of the proposal for a decision to the annex and specifies that the operating grant is awarded directly to it after approval of its programme of work and budget.