

Development cooperation: promoting gender equality

2003/0176(COD) - 19/02/2004 - Council position

At first reading the three institutions met in order to find common ground on the Commission's proposals to promote gender equality in development co-operation. All agreed that a rapid agreement on this Regulation would ensure the smooth continuation of existing projects given that Regulation 2836/98 on the integration of gender issues in development co-operation had expired on 31/12/03. With the agreement of the Parliament and the Council, the Commission re-drafted its initial proposal by tabling twenty compromise amendments. The European Parliament had proposed increasing the budget from EUR 9 million to EUR 11 million. The Council, however, unanimously rejected this amendment sticking instead to the EUR 9 million budget proposed by the Commission. The reasons for maintaining the lower budget were: - The original figure was proposed by the Commission on the basis of a realistic forecast of what can reasonably be spent in the period 2004-2006. - The proposed increase of EUR 2 million is not justified because it would not allow gender mainstreaming - something for which a much larger figure would be required. - It is not possible to draw the extra EUR 2 million from budget line B7-6220 given that the Commission is already facing serious difficulties in meeting its actual financial commitments. The Council states that the common position agreed by the three institutions improves, enhances and clarifies the Commission's proposal by: - Enhancing the poverty-reduction focus and the gender mainstreaming dimension - Streamlining gender equality as a cross-cutting issue - Emphasising the importance of co-ordination between the different stakeholders and the role of non-state actors - Underlining the importance of women empowerment - Introducing clearer criteria for financial eligibility with special attention to women education and training.