

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008

Forest Focus

2002/0164(COD) - 01/12/2003 - Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading

The Commission can accept all 12 amendments adopted as part as a global compromise package. The amendments accepted by the Commission aim to : - incorporate into Forest Focus forest fire prevention measures and thus to broaden the scope of the scheme and to allow financial support to these measures, which are not covered by the Regulation on Rural Development or not covered by the rural development programmes; - allow exceptionally retrospective co-financing in order to ensure the continuity of monitoring activities. There is a need to allow expenditure incurred by a Member State to be eligible for co-financing if it relates to actions that were launched after 1 January 2003 and before the entry into force of this Regulation provided that these actions have not been completed when the Commission approves the related national programme; - propose a shorter execution period 2003-2006 (instead of 2003-2008). - seek for the necessary adaptations concerning the review ("mid-term review" is replaced by "review"), a shorter period for the national programmes (2 years instead of 4 years), reporting by Member States; - propose that the Commission may finance activities of the Scientific Advisory Group. This group has a central role in the scheme and the amendment aims at further strengthening this expert group; - propose in particular an increased budget of EUR 61m (instead of EUR 52m + EUR 2m in the Common position) out of which EUR 9m are earmarked for fire prevention measures; - seek to get full compliance with the new financial regulation; - propose a report by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, reviewing the effectiveness of the scheme in order to provide a basis for any decision on the continuation of these activities after 2006.