Procedure file

Basic information

COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation 1998/0336(COD)	Procedure completed
LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92) Amended by 2003/0260(COD) Amended by 2003/0305(COD) Repealed by 2004/0218(COD) Subject 3.70 Environmental policy	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
DELE EP Delegation to Conciliation Committee	PSE LIENEMANN Marie-Noëlle	27/03/2000
Former committee responsible		
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	PSE LIENEMANN Marie-Noëlle	21/01/1999
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection		
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	PSE LIENEMANN Marie-Noëlle	21/01/1999
Former committee for opinion		
BUDG Budgets	PSE DÜHRKOP DÜHRKOP Bárbara	19/01/1999
RELA External Economic Relations	I-EDN VAN DAM Rijk	26/01/1999
CONT Budgetary Control	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meeting	Date
Health	2281	29/06/2000
Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)	2251	27/03/2000
Social Affairs	2208	22/10/1999
Environment	2194	24/06/1999

Key events

09/12/1998	Legislative proposal published	COM(1998)0720	Summary
24/02/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
30/03/1999	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
30/03/1999	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A4-0180/1999	
13/04/1999	Debate in Parliament		
14/04/1999	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T4-0309/1999	Summary
05/05/1999	Vote in committee, 1st reading		
06/05/1999	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T4-0423/1999	Summary
14/06/1999	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1999)0305	Summary
22/10/1999	Council position published	10233/1/1999	Summary
19/11/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
25/01/2000	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
25/01/2000	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A5-0014/2000	
15/02/2000	Debate in Parliament		
16/02/2000	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T5-0049/2000	Summary
27/03/2000	Parliament's amendments rejected by Council		
23/05/2000	Formal meeting of Conciliation Committee		Summary
23/05/2000	Final decision by Conciliation Committee		
15/06/2000	Joint text approved by Conciliation Committee co-chairs	3625/2000	
21/06/2000	Report tabled for plenary, 3rd reading	A5-0172/2000	
29/06/2000	Decision by Council, 3rd reading		
04/07/2000	Debate in Parliament		
05/07/2000	Decision by Parliament, 3rd reading	T5-0294/2000	Summary
17/07/2000	Final act signed		
17/07/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
28/07/2000	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1998/0336(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)

Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
	Amended by 2003/0260(COD) Amended by 2003/0305(COD) Repealed by 2004/0218(COD)
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 175-p1; Rules of Procedure EP 52-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CODE/5/12661

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		COM(1998)0720 OJ C 015 20.01.1999, p. 0004	09/12/1998	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A4-0180/1999 OJ C 219 30.07.1999, p. 0008	30/03/1999	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T4-0309/1999 OJ C 219 30.07.1999, p. 0176-0273	14/04/1999	EP	Summary
Reconsultation		SEC(1999)0581	28/04/1999	EC	
Text adopted by Parliament confirming position adopted at 1st reading		T4-0423/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0253-0275	06/05/1999	EP	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0554/1999 OJ C 209 22.07.1999, p. 0014	26/05/1999	ESC	
Modified legislative proposal		COM(1999)0305 OJ C 274 26.09.2000, p. 0116 E	14/06/1999	EC	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0178/1999 OJ C 374 23.12.1999, p. 0045	15/09/1999	CofR	
Council position		10233/1/1999 OJ C 346 02.12.1999, p. 0001	22/10/1999	CSL	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position		SEC(1999)1762	10/11/1999	EC	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A5-0014/2000 OJ C 309 27.10.2000, p. 0004	25/01/2000	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T5-0049/2000 OJ C 339 29.11.2000, p. 0059-0124	16/02/2000	EP	Summary
Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading		COM(2000)0170	20/03/2000	EC	Summary
Joint text approved by Conciliation Committee co-chairs		3625/2000	15/06/2000	CSL/EP	
Report tabled for plenary by Parliament delegation to Conciliation Committee, 3rd reading		A5-0172/2000 OJ C 121 24.04.2001, p. 0011	21/06/2000	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 3rd reading		T5-0294/2000 OJ C 121 24.04.2001, p. 0034-0105	05/07/2000	EP	Summary
Follow-up document		COM(2003)0668	05/11/2003	EC	Summary

Court of Auditors: opinion, report		RCC0011/2004 OJ C 061 10.03.2004, p. 0001-0001	02/03/2004	CofA	
Follow-up document		COM(2005)0394	30/08/2005	EC	Summary

Additional information

European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act

Regulation 2000/1655
OJ L 192 28.07.2000, p. 0001 Summary

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

PURPOSE: to present an adjusted proposal for the financial instrument for the environment (Life) with a view to its third phase, from 01/01/2000 to 31/12/2004. CONTENT: Life will consist of three thematic components, with no more than 5% of resources for each one being devoted to accompanying measures: 1) Life-Nature (47% of resources): nature conservation projects and accompanying measures regarding the conservation of wild birds, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, as specified in earlier Council directives and, in particular, the implementation of the Natura 2000 European network. 2) Life-Environment (47% of resources): demonstration projects and accompanying measures which further the integration of environmental considerations into land-use development and planning, the minimisation of the environmental impacts of industrial production activities, the recycling of waste and sound management of waste streams and the reduction of the environmental impact of products through an integrated approach to production, distribution and consumption, as well as preparatory projects to develop new environmental actions. 3) Life-Third Countries (6% of resources): technical assistance projects and accompanying measures contributing to the establishment of capacities and administrative structures in the environmental sector and the development of environmental policy and action programmes in third countries bordering on the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea other than the accession candidate countries. This proposal makes provision for Life to also be open to the accession candidate countries and for consistency between Life and other Community financial instruments. Monitoring of projects is to be carried out through beneficiary's reports and sample checks by the Commission, on the basis of which allocation and timetabling of payments may be adjusted or, in the event of irregularities, cancelled. For the second and third components of Life, the Commission will be assisted by a Committee of representatives of the Member States which will give its opinion on the Commission's draft measure. The Commission will submit an evaluative report to the European Parliament and the Council by 31/12/2003 and provision is also made for a possible fourth phase of Life from 1/1/2005.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

The Committee adopted with amendments a proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) concerning the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE). The rapporteur is Mrs Marie-Noëlle LIENEMANN (PES, F). The general objective of LIFE is twofold: to contribute (1) to the development of Community environment policy (particularly as regards the integration of the environment and - according to an amendment adopted today in committee - sustainable development into other policies) and (2) to the implementation and updating of environmental legislation. LIFE has three themes: nature conservation, the environment, and help for third countries. The aim of the current proposal is to define the third phase of LIFE (2000-2004). The first two phases were 1992 -1996 and 1996 -1999. A budget of 613 million euros is suggested for the third phase in the Financial Statement drawn up by the Commission. However, in a key amendment the committee introduced into the text of the proposal a budget of 850 million euros. Another amendment says that priority may be given to projects liable to foster cross-border, transnational or regional cooperation. Innovative projects and those liable to create jobs are also singled out.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

In adopting the report drafted by Ms. Marie-Noelle LIENEMANN (PES, F), the Parliament called for a financial reference amount of EUR 850 million to be set aside for the third stage of the LIFE Programme which is to run from 2000 to 2004 in so far as this is possible from a budgetary point of view. The Parliament also stresses the importance of integrating environmental and sustainable development considerations in land-use development and planning, and as a matter of priority in urban areas. It is also keen to promote projects liable to foster cross-border, transnational or regional co-operation and projects likely to contribute to job creation. The Parliament would like to see greater synergy with the projects funded under the URBAN initiative. The Parliament called on the Commission to draw up a report by 31/12/2002 evaluating the projects funded under LIFE, as well as to compile a database of projects funded under LIFE.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC)

No 1973/92)

Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam on 01/05/99, the European Parliament confirmed as its first reading under codecision procedure its vote of 14/04/99 on the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive concerning the financial instrument for the environment (LIFE).?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

The Commission's amended proposal takes up, either in their totality or partically, 32 of the 44 amendments adopted by the European Parliament in its first reading. The main modifications introduced by the Commission concern the following points: - LIFE's contribution to sustainable development in the Community, as well as to the development of Community policy in the environment field, in particular in regard to the integration of the environment within other policies, implementation and the updating of environmental legislation; - the strengthening of the dimension of LIFE as a financial instrument that is specific and complementary to other Community instruments, without limiting LIFE interventions to fields not covered by other Community financial instruments; - improvement of the efficiency, transparency and methodology of procedures for the implementation of LIFE, information and public dissemination procedures and procedures for cooperation between the beneficiaries; - the objective of LIFE: it has to mainly focus on sustainable urban development in close association with pilot projects undertaken within the URBAN initiative; - the taking into consideration of results achieved by individual actions implemented under LIFE as well as the experience acquired through these actions; - the development of innovative actions in the environment field, through preparatory projects; - the contribution of supported projects to the sustainability of socio-economic activities, and, as a consequence, job creation; - the need to evaluate and exploit the results of projects in Community policies; - the examination, by the European Parliament and the Council, of the opportunity to follow up the LIFE action after the third phase.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

The Council's common position accepts, in total or partially, most of the European Parliament's amendments integrated by the Commission in its amended proposal. The main amendments approved by the Council are the following: - General Objective: the common position integrates sustainable development into the general objectives of LIFE. It also specifies that priority may be given to projects based on a multinational approach when this is likely to have more effective results in terms of achievement of objectives taking into account feasibility and costs; - LIFE-Nature: the bird species covered by projects eligible for 75% financial support have been specified (those which are considered as priority by the committee set up under the "Wild Birds" Directive). A transitional measure has been introduced for the submission and the selection of projects concerning the year 2000. Attention is focused on the migratory routes and buffer zones for projects contributing to the implementation of Natura 2000. The references to the annexes of the "Wild Birds" Directive and to the Berne Convention resolutions have been clarified. It is also specified that the accompanying measures relating to cooperation or the exchange of experience are subject to consultation of the relevant Committee and that the Member States may submit proposals for such measures; - LIFE-Environment: the common position takes account of amendments relating to the integration of sustainable development into land use planning, the prevention and reuse of waste, the reduction of the environmental impact of products at the end of their life and the development of environmentally-friendly products, accompanying measures seeking to strengthen the transfer of results and the introduction of a reference to the broadest possible dissemination and application of practices and technologies. The common position also accepts the amendment that seeks to take account of the employment implications of the project when demonstration projects are being selected, without actually making them into a selection criterion. Lastly, bearing in mind the importance of the guidelines both in the preparation of the projects and their selection, a simple Article 11 committee opinion is not sufficient and the Council foresees the implementation of the committee procedure in its integral form; - LIFE-Third Countries: the text has been modified in such a way as to ensure that Cyprus is unequivocally covered. Furthermore, as special powers are necessary to assess projects concerning nature protection, consultation of the committee set up under the Habitats Directive has been provided for. The common position takes up the amendment regarding the breakdown of credits given to the co-financing of the instrument by the accession candidate countries; - duration and budget resources: the Council has mentioned, like the European Parliament, a financial reference amount of EUR 613 million for the period 2000-2004. It should be noted that the Council has kept the regulatory committee proposed by the Commission, already in place in the the context of LIFE II. Without affecting the possible launch of the fourth phase of LIFE, the deadline for submitting theCommission report to the Parliament and to the Council, and that for the decision have been brought forward.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

The common position maintains the main features of the proposed Regulation and introduces several clarifications in the text which the Commission welcomes. However, the Commission cannot agree with the type of committee chosen to assist it in the management of Life-Environment and Life-Third Countries. The Commission invites the European Parliament to amend Article 11 in accordance with the Council Decision (1999/468/EC) of 28 June.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

The committee adopted the recommendation for second reading (codecision procedure) by Marie-Noëlle LIENEMANN (PES, F) amending the

Council's common position. The main change proposed by the committee involved increasing the financial framework from EUR 613 million, as proposed by the Commission and agreed by the Council, to EUR 850 million for the third phase of the LIFE programme (2000-2004). The committee noted that the budget allocated to the LIFE programme had not been adapted since its inception, not even after the number of Member States had increased to 15 following the last enlargement of the EC, and that applications for LIFE funding far outstripped the current budgetary provision. It therefore felt that funding levels should be raised from the start of LIFE III. If the report was adopted in plenary, then conciliation would have to follow under the codecision procedure in order to settle the issue of funding for the programme. Other amendments included changes to the commitology procedure and the introduction of a provision ensuring that the LIFE programme would be continued (into a fourth phase) and that Parliament would be involved in the preparations for the next regulation.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

The European Parliament approves the report (co-decision, second reading) by Mrs. Marie-Noëlle Lienemann (PES, Fr) on the Council's common position concerning the financial instrument for the environment (LIFE). One of the main amendments relates to the financial framework for the implementation of the third phase for the period 2000-2004: an increase in the funding from EURO 613 million to EUR 850 million. Another of the Parliament's key amendments related to comitology. The Parliament proposes that a 'LIFE Committee' consisting of representatives of the Member States and chaired by the Commission representative, rather than the regulatory committee, in the Council's common position. Further amendments seek to: - reduce the environmental impact of products through an integrated approach to production, distribution, consumption and handling at the end of their lifetime, including the development of clean technologies and environmentally friendly products; - include plans and demonstration projects for the sustainable management of groundwater and surface water; - include plans and demonstration projects for reducing air pollutants which affect climate. Lastly, the Commission is called upon to put forward proposals concerning a fourth phase of LIFE no later than 30/09/2003.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

Fourteen amendments were accepted by the Parliament. The Commission is prepared to accept eight amendments in their entirety and one amendment in principle. Five were not accepted, and in particular : - an increase in funding to 850 million euro cannot be accepted, since it is not compatible with the financial perspective for Heading 3 of Part B of the Community budget, to which the Life instrument belongs; - the requirement to submit proposals for a fourth phase of Life cannot be accepted as this would conflict with the Commission's right of initiative; - the amendments relating to sustainable exploitation of surface and underground water and the reduction of greenhouse-effect atmospheric pollutants cannot be accepted, partly because these topics are already covered within the field of application of Life-Environment; - the amendment concerning the transmission to other funding sources of projects for the conservation of sites that are not funded by Life-Nature or Life-Environment cannot be accepted. Each instrument has its own field of application and procedure.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

The Conciliation Committee reached agreement on a joint text for the regulation on the LIFE III programme. A budget of 640 million euro was agreed for the five-year programme, representing an increase of 27 million euro over the Council's common position. A compromise was also reached on the commitology issue. On the other questions, the Council accepted the amendments relating to the programme's objectives and the submission of a proposal for a follow-up programme (LIFE IV) in the wording proposed by the Commission. It was also agreed that the relevant deadlines for submitting and selecting projects should be fixed annually by the Commission in accordance with the relevant commitology procedure. Parliament's delegation felt that the agreement reached, particularly for the LIFE III budget, could be considered satisfactory and therefore proposed that Parliament adopt the regulation at third reading.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

By approving the report drafted by Mrs Marie-Noëlle LIENEMANN (PES, Fr), the European Parliament adopted the legislative resolution on the joint text approved by the Conciliation Committee for a European Parliament and Council regulation concerning the financial instrument for the environment (LIFE). (Codecision procedure: third reading).?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

PURPOSE : to adjust the financial instrument for the Environment (LIFE) with a view to its third phase (2000 to 2004). COMMUNITY MEASURE : Regulation 1655/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE). CONTENT : the general objective of LIFE shall be to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of Community environment policy and of environmental legislation into other policies, and to sustainable development in the Community. LIFE shall consist of three thematic components: 1) LIFE-Nature (47% of resources): in this field LIFE shall contribute to, in particular, the implementation of the NATURA 2000 European Network. 2) LIFE-Environment (47% of resources): LIFE shall contribute to the development of innovative and integrated techniques and methods and to the further development Community environment policy. 3) LIFE-Third Countries

(6% of resources): the specific objective of LIFE-third countries shall be to contribute to the establishment of capacities and administrative structures needed in the environmental sector and in the development of environmental policy and action programmes in third countries bordering on the Mediterranean and the Baltic sea other than countries of central and eastern Europe which have concluded Association Agreements with the European Community. With regard to the financial framework for the implementation of the third phase for the period 2000 to 2004 is set at EUR 640 million. ENTRY INTO FORCE : this Regulation shall enter into force on 31.07.2000.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

This report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council deals with the mid-term review of Regulation 1655/2000/EC (LIFE). 2001 and 2002 were dedicated to improving the management of LIFE by establishing mechanisms and adopting working methods which reduced a significant burden from the past (reduced the number of projects which were finished but not closed and the amount of outstanding commitments) and helped improve the implementation of ongoing projects. The financial implementation of the instrument was improved at the same time. At the end of 2002, after the reorganisation, management capacities were freed up to strengthen the policy on communicating and using the results as it was first necessary to ensure the best possible management procedure for selecting and implementing projects. The LIFE III programme is now well underway. According to the results of the external evaluation, it is a useful programme for implementing Community environment policy. It would be desirable to continue with a specific instrument for the environment, but several adjustments should be made in order to: simplify its management; improve its focus on the priorities of the sixth environment action programme and improve the use and dissemination of the results. This evaluation relates to the administrative operation of the instrument and its contribution to Community environment policy. It is based on the Commission's presentation of the statistical information available and on the concrete results of ongoing projects. This evaluation is backed up by an evaluation carried out by an external consultant in July 2003. More specifically, these conclusions were drawn from the internal evaluation and analysis as well as from the recommendations of the external study. - The management of LIFE should be simplified, in particular the selection procedure which is still very laborious. The monitoring of projects also creates a very heavy administrative burden. The human resources employed by the Commission for these operations would be better used if they spent more time disseminating and using the results to improve the environment in the European Union. - It therefore seems appropriate to review the existing selection and management procedures and examine ways of simplifying them without reducing their reliability or efficiency. - The number of innovative projects should be limited (favouring programmes which bring together several national or transnational projects thus ensuring the creation of networks from the design stage). This option would combine the advantages of more decentralised management with better dissemination and use of results. - For LIFE-Environment, launching preparatory actions (see above) could also contribute to strengthening the programme approach and simplifying central administrative management. - LIFE-Nature has still only covered a small part of the network to introduce the Natura 2000 management approach. The positive evaluation of the programme suggests that it should be continued on the same lines. During a short transition period, it is not necessary to amend the Regulation. However: - the criteria for selecting projects should be adapted, without requiring a revision of Article 2 of the LIFE Regulation, in order to promote projects which have: - the greatest knock-on effect and a wide geographical coverage (launch of regional or international management plans), - an increased training capacity in order to ensure subsequent monitoring, and - a network effect (strengthening of Coop projects). Finally the dissemination and use of results should be improved. _ The potential of LIFE-Environment has not yet been fully utilised. The current Regulation could be better used by promoting programmes which are preparatory to the development of new Community actions and instruments in accordance with the priorities defined in the sixth environment action programme. The current demonstration projects concern too many issues, which complicates the task of selection and does not make it easy to evaluate or make rational use of the results. - It is important to limit the field of eligible projects to issues where the need is greatest by launching calls for proposals which are more targeted in terms of current political priorities. This possibility is already offered under the guidelines but has not been used until now. - The innovation criterion should be better defined and concern only innovative technologies and not the transfer of existing technologies which should be covered by other financial instruments which are more suitable than LIFE. - LIFE-Third Countries can also be continued in its current form whilst strengthening action to support the preparation of projects. - For the three thematic areas of LIFE, more use should be made of the results, particularly by increasing communication and networking. Increased financial resources and possibly the help of external experts should be foreseen. The Commission's conclusion, supported by the external evaluation, is that: - LIFE is a useful instrument and continuing it is justified; - Efforts relating to the organisation and management of the programme undertaken since the start of LIFE III should be continued; - The potential of LIFE-Environment should be fully exploited in the context of the sixth environment action programme; - More use should be made of the results to further sustainable development. It is therefore proposed to renew the Regulation for a period of three years, taking account of the improvements identified during the evaluation. The renewal should take account of the need for continuity and also establish the transition to the new Financial Perspective after 2006.?

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

The Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE) III programme has been extended by two years to last until 31 December 2006. This extension was made in order to avoid a gap between the close of LIFE III at the end of 2004 and the new Community financial perspective beginning 2007. This updating Report has been prepared by the Commission in accordance with requirements for it to do so under EU legislation. The current update covers the period from mid-2003 until Spring 2005. To recall, between 1992 and 2004, the LIFE programme has co-funded almost 2500 projects covering 40 countries and made commitments worth EUR 1.3 billion towards the total estimated cost of the projects of EUR 3.6 billion. The projects supported are those which are in line with key EU environmental policies and thinking.