



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 251 of the EC Treaty

concerning the

**common position of the Council with a view to adopting a Regulation of the European
Parliament and of the Council on promoting gender equality in development
cooperation**

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1- BACKGROUND

Date of transmission of the proposal to the EP and the Council (document COM(2003)465 final – 2003/0176COD):	30 July 2003.
Date of the opinion of the European Parliament, first reading:	18 December 2003.
Date of political agreement in Council (unanimous):	26 January 2004.
Date of adoption of the common position:	19 February 2004.

2- OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The objective is to replace the Council regulation (EC No 2836/98) on integrating gender issues in development cooperation which expired on 31 December 2003. The Commission proposal dovetails with the political goals of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the UN Millennium Development Goal, and reinforces the gender mainstreaming strategy by supporting specific actions for the empowerment of women.

3- COMMENTS ON THE COMMON POSITION

3.1. Consideration of the amendments proposed by the Parliament at its first reading

In its plenary meeting on 17 December 2003, the Commission indicated clearly that it accepted all the amendments except one (Amendment 21 to Article 11(1)), as they strengthened and clarified the text of the regulation without altering the main objectives. At the beginning of January the Commission informed the Council orally about its position on the EP amendments and indicated that its proposal has to be considered as amended consequently.

3.1.1. Amendments accepted in full by the Commission and incorporated into the common position

Amendment 1 to Recital 2 (new): emphasises the current situation for girls in relation to education.

Amendment 2 to Recital 13: underlines the role of Gender as a cross-cutting issue also in financial terms.

Amendment 3 to Article 3: broadens the international references to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing.

Amendment 4 to Article 3 (a): underlines the concept of “all ages” in the context of gender mainstreaming.

Amendment 5 to Article 4 (1 (a)): broadens the list of projects to be supported. These areas for promotion are health, training (in addition to education), access to economic and social activities, employment and infrastructures and the participation of women in political, decision-making.

Amendment 6 to Article 4 (1 (b)): strengthens the analytical framework of the Regulation.

Amendment 7 to Article 4 (1 (c)): adds the stakeholders network dimension.

Amendment 8 to Article 4 (1 (d)): underlines the role of stakeholders in partner countries.

Amendment 9 to Article 4 (2 (b)): introduces education and the information society within technical assistance.

Amendment 10 to Article 4 (3 (b)): clarifies the role of operating expenditure.

Amendment 11 to Article 5 (b): strengthens the role of strategic partnerships.

Amendment 12 to Article 5 (e): introduces a series of policies where synergies should be promoted, in particular: HIV/AIDS programmes, measures to combat violence, training of women of all ages, human rights, conflict prevention, democratisation and the participation of women in the political, economic and social decision-making process.

Amendment 13 to Article 5, (f (new)): focuses on the relation between the gender mainstreaming process and the six development priority areas.

Amendment 14 to Article 5, (g (new)): strengthens links with education.

Amendment 15 to Article 6 (3 (new)): underlines the importance of operational expenditures with respect to administrative expenditure.

Amendment 16 to Article 7 (1 (b old)): deletes a redundant point.

Amendment 17 to Article 7 (1 (b new)): highlights the role of grassroots organisations and women’s organisations.

Amendment 18 to Article 7 (1 (c new)): creates a link between private sector development and gender equality.

Amendment 20 to Article 10 (3 (new)): suggests that the Commission takes into account the experience gained in the area of gender equality by the various parties involved.

Amendment 23 to Article 10 (2): suggests that the Commission organises regular discussions on gender equality during meetings with Member States and Partner countries.

3.1.2. Amendments not incorporated in the common position

The Parliament amendment not incorporated in the common position is Amendment 21 to Article 11(1). This called for an increase to the financial envelope from € 9 million over three years (EC proposal) to € 11 million. The proposed regulation has to play the role of catalyst in trying to mobilise other resources in the context of gender mainstreaming in development cooperation policy. As such, a budget increase of € 2 million is not justified. Moreover, no additional financial resources are available. The Commission cannot, therefore, accept this amendment.

3.2 Common position of the Council

The text of the common position fully reiterates the Commission's position. It is acceptable to the Commission as it largely respects the substance of the Commission's original proposal and takes account of the amendments proposed by the Parliament and accepted in full by the Commission.

4- CONCLUSION

The Commission considers that the text of the common position is a good basis for a European Parliament and Council regulation.

The proposed common position is therefore acceptable to the Commission.