



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 13.6.2006
COM(2006) 301 final

2004/0165 (COD)

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

pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 251 (2) of the EC Treaty

concerning the

**common position of the Council on the adoption of a Regulation of the European
Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund**

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1. BACKGROUND

Date of transmission of the proposal to the EP and the Council (document COM(2004) 493 final – 2004/0165(COD)):	15.7.2004
Date of the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee:	9.3.2005
Date of the opinion of the European Committee of the Regions:	23.2.2005
Date of the opinion of the European Parliament, first reading:	6.7.2005
Amended Commission proposal (document COM(2005) 523 final – 2004/165 (COD)):	17.10.2005
Date of adoption of the common position:	12.6.2006

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The purpose of the Commission's proposal was to define the tasks of the European Social Fund and the scope of the assistance under the Fund with regard to the "Convergence" and "Regional Competitiveness and employment" objectives.

Together with the proposals for Regulations on the Cohesion Fund, on the European Regional Development Fund, on the European Grouping for territorial cooperation and on the general rules applicable to all the Funds, it represents the Community legal framework for the implementation of Cohesion policy in the period 2007-2013.

3. COMMENTS ON THE COMMON POSITION

The Common position was adopted on 12 June 2006 by qualified majority. The Commission can endorse it because it considers it an appropriate compromise that meets the objectives of the amended Commission proposal, which accepted a large number of the European Parliament's amendments.

In relation to the amended Commission proposal one change of substance was requested by Council. Member States indicated unanimously their objection to the provisions of article 5 (3) providing an allocation of at least 2% of ESF resources under the "Convergence" Objective to *"capacity building and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners"*. After consultation with the European Parliament, the Presidency has proposed that the text be adapted to state that *"an appropriate amount of ESF resources shall be allocated to capacity building, which shall include training, networking measures, strengthening the social dialogue and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners."* The other modifications, requested by the Council, do not change the substance of the Commission proposal.

4. CONCLUSION

The Commission considers that the common position adopted on 12 June 2006 by qualified majority is balanced and can therefore support it.