(Acts adopted pursuant to Title V of the Treaty on European Union)

COMMON POSITION

of 9 November 1998

defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union, concerning the process on stability and good-neighbourliness in south-east Europe

(98/633/CFSP)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article J.2 thereof,

Whereas the European Council on 15 and 16 December 1995 welcomed the adoption on 13 December 1995 in Royaumont, on the initiative of the European Union, of the Declaration on the Process on Stability and Good-Neighbourliness in South-east Europe by the Ministers of twenty-seven countries in the margins of the Paris Conference on Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas it is intended that the Process will be incorporated into the OSCE in due time;

Whereas, in the meantime, the Council approved on 26 February 1996 a 'platform' for the development of the Process; whereas it approved on 27 October 1997 the description of the tasks of the Royaumont Process Co-ordinator and, on 28 November 1997, the appointment of a Coordinator; whereas it also approved on 26 January 1998 the Action Plan for the Process Coordinator;

Whereas the approach of the Royaumont Process aims at accompanying the implementation of the Paris/Dayton Peace Agreement by placing it in a broader perspective with a view to promoting stability and good-neighbourliness, notably by encouraging dialogue, contacts and cooperation at all levels of civil society in the broad region of South-east Europe,

HAS DEFINED THIS COMMON POSITION:

Article 1

This common position aims at consolidating support for the Royaumont Process on Stability and Good-Neighbourliness in South-east Europe, which seeks in particular to:

— encourage the normalisation of relations and the restoration and development of dialogue and confidence between the countries concerned,

— encourage people-to-people links between the countries of the region and promote regional cooperation in the field of civil society (e.g. in the cultural, media, scientific, professional, trade union, NGO or religious spheres, as well as contacts between parliamentarians),

— to this end, promote the definition and implementation of projects which relate to stability, good-neighbourliness and civil society.

Article 2

The Process Coordinator will perform his tasks under the responsibility of the EU Presidency in accordance with the terms of reference set out in Annex I and will implement the initiatives described in the action plan set out in Annex II.

Article 3

The European Union may support projects in the field of stability, good-neighbourliness and civil society in South-east Europe as accompanying measures to the Process. Without prejudice to Article 4, the Council shall decide on the principle, detailed arrangements and financing of such projects on the basis of concrete proposals.

Article 4

The Council notes that:

— the Commission will continue to direct its action towards the achievement of the objectives and priorities of this common position where appropriate through relevant Community measures,

— Member States may support projects according to their national programmes, resources and priorities.

Article 5

This common position shall take effect on the day of its adoption.

Article 6

This common position shall be published in the Official Journal.

Done at Brussels, 9 November 1998.

For the Council
The President
W. SCHÜSSEL

ANNEX I

Description of the tasks of the Royaumont Process coordinator

1. These tasks result from the objective of the Royaumont Process which initially seeks to guide the implementation of the Paris/Dayton Peace Plan, at the same time incorporating it in a wider perspective covering the whole region.

   The Royaumont Process seeks to contribute towards launching a major joint and continuing effort — by all governmental and non-governmental operators and groups in civil society — of dialogue and cooperation. This framework of dialogue and cooperation will make it possible to overcome divisions and differences and thus create at all levels of civil society the trust needed to build a network of good neighbourly relations between States, a factor for stability in the region as a whole. The full participation of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) is of particular importance in this connection. It is envisaged that the Process will be incorporated in due course into the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

2. The main areas of action of the Process are:

   — normalisation of relations between the countries involved (including the possible conclusion of treaties of good-neighbourliness),

   — restoration of full freedom of movement and expression and the organisation of events and projects which encourage this in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding,

   — promotion of regional cooperation in the cultural, religious, scientific and technical fields, as well as in the re-establishment of a civil society, as a means of demonstrating the benefits of such cooperation in tackling the problems in the region.

   The objective of the Royaumont Process will be best attained by the definition, planning and organisation — in collaboration where appropriate with other national, regional and supranational organisations and initiatives which are active in the area — of any project or programme aimed at the successful completion of this Process.

3. Projects/programmes will be selected on the basis of their suitability to meet the criteria of good-neighbourliness and regional stability. Priority will therefore be given to regional and cross-border projects/programmes conducted by and aimed at a number of different groups in the region which aim at developing and bringing groups in civil society closer together.

   Royaumont will give priority to civil projects/programmes which meet the objective set out in point 1.

4. The Royaumont Process coordinator will be responsible for:

   — the profile and continuity of and the follow-up to the process, including the drafting of the agenda, the follow-up to and implementation of the guidelines and decisions of the Process meetings,

   — the representation of the Process *vis-à-vis* international initiatives, organisations and conferences in the region,

   — the link with the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

   — the role of contact point within the Royaumont Process for all States and international organisations which are members of the Process and for all non-governmental operators eligible to take part in national and regional projects/programmes and local initiatives which meet the objectives of the Process, including the provision of information on the possibilities of regional and cross-border cooperation which meet the objective of stability and good-neighbourliness. In this connection, it might prove useful to establish a database on the operators (institutes; NGOs; undertakings etc.) likely to become parties to the accompanying measures of the Process,

   — coordination with other regional and subregional initiatives such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Conference of South-east European Ministers, Central European Initiative (CEI) and the South-east Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI),

   — the identification and planning of projects/programmes for regional and cross-border meetings in the areas of culture, religion, sports, information, education (also for younger children), science and technology,

— the organisation of regional and cross-border meetings between different groups of civil society, in particular young people from various ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds (e.g. academics, journalists, members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade-unionists, members of political parties) seeking to achieve as balanced a representation as possible between men and women. The establishment of a network of direct contacts between academic, cultural and scientific institutes and between NGOs will be promoted,

— bringing together men and women of good will from all strata of civil society who are willing to join forces to promote mutual understanding and comprehension and thus to favour the creation of an environment of good-neghbourliness,

— the identification and mobilisation of funds and the establishment of contact between the promotors of projects/programmes and local initiatives and donors and potential financial backers,

— such contacts as may be needed between the special OSCE representative responsible for the implementation of Article V of Annex I B to the Peace Agreement.

In identifying projects/programmes, special attention will be given to the objective and potential of enhancing the free movement of ideas and of objective and constructive information which promotes understanding instead of creating stereotypes and propaganda leading to aggression and confrontation between nationalities, religions and ethnic groups.

5. The completion of the tasks listed in point 4 presupposes a thorough knowledge of the geopolitical, social, religious, ethnic and cultural realities of the region. The profile of the Process will be higher if it is firmly rooted in the regular action and presence of the coordinator in the region.

ANNEX II

Process of stability and good-neighbourly relations in South-east Europe (the Royaumont Process)
Action plan for the Process coordinator

By its Decision of 28 November 1997 the Council of the European Union (EU) appointed Dr P. Roumeliotis the coordinator of the process of stability and good-neighbourly relations in South-east Europe (the Royaumont Process).

This plan of action, defined in collaboration with the coordinator, is based on the following reference considerations:

— the Declaration on the Process of stability and good-neighbourly relations in South-east Europe of 13 December 1995,

— the Commission report to the Council dated 26-27 February 1996 on the prospects for the development of regional cooperation for the countries of the former Yugoslavia,

— the platform for the development of the Royaumont Process approved by the Council meeting on 26 and 27 February 1996,

— the Council Decision of 27 October 1997 on the adoption of the terms of reference of the Royaumont Process coordinator.

In addition, during the Process meeting in Istanbul on 27 October 1997, the EU informed the participants in the Royaumont Process of its intention of appointing a coordinator who would be put at the Process's disposal. The participants stated their support for the EU placing a coordinator at the Process's disposal and took note favourably of the description of the coordinator's tasks.

THE COORDINATOR'S PROGRAMME

In order to be able to complete his tasks the coordinator should take the following initiatives:

1. the preparation of Process follow-up meetings in collaboration with the Presidency of the Council;

2. the organisation, to that end, in collaboration with the diplomatic representations to the EU of the participants in the Process and the European Commission, of contacts in those countries with a view to the discussion of various possibilities arising out of the Process with the representatives of governments, civil society and NGOs.

   More specifically, the purpose of those contacts will be:

   — to ensure visibility, continuity and follow-up and the representation of the Process,

   — to ascertain governments' priorities regarding the Process and examine the possibility of setting up cells specifically orientated towards the Royaumont Process in the participant countries,

   — to organise meetings with representatives of civil society and NGOs in order (a) to give them permanent motivation to achieve the objectives of the Process; (b) to create relations between them and the representatives of NGOs from other participant countries and draw up an initial list and timetable of regional meetings in different professional, civil and religious spheres; (c) to prepare for Process meetings with the non-governmental parties,

   — to circulate information and identify regional and cross-border projects and programmes,

   — to preselect projects and programmes that are likely to meet the Process's criteria;

3. the involvement in Process meetings of a non-governmental element, for example by organising regular thematic meetings and annual forums with representatives of civil society.

To that end the coordinator should examine the possibility of associating with the next Process meeting (in Athens) a parallel round table meeting between representatives of the participant countries and representatives of the media in order to promote stability and good-neighbourly relations. The following particular points could be examined on that occasion: the elimination of obstacles to the free movement of the press and information, the media's promotion of good-neighbourly relations and mutual images, the free operation of and cooperation between media (exchanges of programmes and information, the training of journalists, co-productions, legal assistance for the liberalisation of legislation on the media, preparation of a code of ethics, etc);

4. the following could also be considered:

   — a round table meeting between representatives of the participant countries and of the world of business aimed at identifying administrative, legislative and other obstacles to the promotion of private-sector activities with a view to overcoming them,

   — the promotion of parliamentary government and of democracy and cooperation between national parliaments,

   — promotion of the social dialogue and cooperation between trade unions,

   — cooperation between public administrations in the field of combating corruption,

   — the development of practices, based on the relevant international undertakings, relating to the rule of law, human rights and equal opportunity for men and women.

   To that end representatives of journalism, political parties, trade unions, national administrations and international organisations should be mobilised.

   Support for projects identified by the coordinator under Community programmes could be considered, in accordance with current rules and procedures, and in the context of financing by participant States and private foundations;

5. the listing, for example in the form of a register of bilateral and regional agreements that contribute to good-neighbourly relations, and the evaluation, in coordination with other initiatives and institutions, of their application;

6. consultation with other initiatives and institutions, when follow-up meetings are being prepared, in particular on the promotion and financing of common projects;

7. examination of the possibility of holding a high-level (ministerial) meeting of the Royaumont Process in due course.

THE COORDINATOR'S TIMETABLE

During the first half of 1998 the coordinator should:

— prepare for the next Process meeting in Athens (at the beginning of 1998) and take stock of the projects and programmes already submitted to the Process,

— at that meeting and at subsequent meetings examine the projects proposed at previous meetings and any new projects that participants want to propose. Assess their feasibility and the arrangements for their implementation (draft timetable). At the forthcoming meeting in Athens a selection of two or three projects might be decided on,

— organise a 'contact point' around the coordinator for the EU, governments, international organisations and non-governmental organisations from EU Member States and those taking part in the Process,

— initiate discussions with the EU Presidency, the European Commission and the promoters of other initiatives in South-east Europe, in order to coordinate the Royaumont Process with the latter,

— visit the South-east European countries taking part in the Process and initiate dialogue with representatives of the governmental organisations, civil society and NGOs, while respecting the latter's diversity and specificity,

— identify priority projects and programmes and examine the possibilities for their financing by the European Commission, the participating States, financial institutions and private foundations,

— set up a database on the projects and programmes, NGOs, initiatives, etc., relating to South-east Europe with the help of the European Commission.

During the second half of 1998 the coordinator will prepare for the annual Process meetings, ensure that its decisions and guidelines are followed up, draw up an initial list and a timetable of regional meetings in various sectors of professional, civil and religious activity and supervise the implementation of the priority projects and programmes that the Process has selected. He will also have to respond to a procedure for the evaluation of the results achieved compared with the plan of action.

In the medium term the coordinator will have to ensure the visibility and sustained momentum of the Process's privileged activities (plenary meetings and interim thematic meetings between governmental and non-governmental organisations, etc.), explore possibilities for the conclusion of good-neighbour agreements and prepare for the review of the Process's standing and its organisational link with the OSCE.