

EUROMED REPORT

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Implementation of MEDA programme in 2001

Since the last Euromed Foreign Ministers meeting in Marseille the Commission started implementing some major reforms in order to improve the quality and speed-up the delivery of EC external aid. Among the main components of the reform are:

- aid implementation entrusted to a single structure: EuropeAid
- deconcentration or devolution of responsibilities from the Commission to the Delegations and to the beneficiary countries
- dismantling of Technical Assistance Offices
- measures to eliminate old commitments.

For **2001 commitments of about € 740 million are expected**. As far as payments are concerned, they are expected to represent **over 56%** of the commitments this year to reach nearly half a billion euro, **the best ever result achieved in the region**.

In parallel, efforts are made to **eliminate old commitments**. The backlog of outstanding commitments, the so-called RAL ("Reste à liquider") has been reduced by 38 % between the beginning of the year 2000 and the beginning of November 2001 for all MEDA countries. This is the result of a large operation, closing old, non-active projects (pre-1995).

As far as **deconcentration** is concerned, cooperation in three MED countries will be 'deconcentrated' from 1 January 2002: Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt; staff is being reinforced in each of the three Delegations according to future needs. For the other MED countries deconcentration will be operational around 1 July 2002.

Dismantling the Technical Assistance Offices: the functions implemented at present by 11 Technical Assistance Offices in Brussels are in the process of being integrated into the Commission services. New personnel entering the Delegations will replace functions implemented by present Technical Assistance Offices in the MEDA Countries. The process is expected to be completed by the end of November 2001.

2001 is also the first year of the **implementation of the revised MEDA Regulation** which puts in place mechanisms for more coherent *programming* of the aid, better *coordination* both with partners and with the other major donors and more *streamlined* approval procedures inside the EU. Consultations have already taken place with the partners and with the other donors on the Country and Regional Strategy Papers covering the period 2002-2006; and on the more detailed National and Regional Indicative Programmes for 2002-2004. All these documents should be approved by the end of the year.