
Published at: 13-06-2008



The Cabinet adopted amendments to Government Decree No.131/2005 which specifies the role and functions of the National Authorizing Officer (NAO) and its coactivity with the senior programme officer/sectoral authorizing officer in respect of aid coordination granted to Bulgaria under pre-accession financial instruments PHARE and ISPA. The amendments provide that NAO who is in charge of EU funds financial management shall appoint programme/sectoral officers, the government press center announced.

These amendments are in conformity with the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the National Fund and its utilization for ISPA purposes. The changes address also one of the recommendations of the European Commission Enlargement Directorate provided in Michael Lee's letter dated 8 May.

NAO is responsible for the financial management of funds under EU programmes and pre-accession funds - PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD. Under the conditions of increased decentralization NAO shall bear the full financial responsibility to the Commission over EU funds management and shall also be responsible for the strict observance of the terms and conditions provided for in Article 164 of Council Regulation 1605/2002 which specifies the responsibilities related to the overall effective functioning of control systems.

The amendments in the subdelegated normative act increase NAO's competence. He shall appoint the programme/sectoral officers which shall be assigned with the lawful administrative, financial and technical project management performed by relevant executive agencies. Programme/sectoral officers shall be accountable to NAO for tender and contracting procedures, as well as for project implementation monitoring.

"So far the decree provided for relevant ministers to make nomination proposals for programme officers, whereupon they were appointed by NAO. Now we are abiding by EU principle according to which NAO and senior programme officers shall be free of political influence, pressure or appointment. The change refers precisely to this issue so that NAO assumes the sole right to appoint them without relevant minister's proposal in order to guarantee NAO's political and party independence. This represents a part of our commitment to the Commission which has been also referred to in Michael Lee's letter", the Deputy Prime minister stressed.