



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 30.5.2002
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COMMISSION OPINION

**pursuant to point (c) of the third subparagraph of Article 251(2) of the EC Treaty
concerning the European Parliament's amendments
to the Council's common position on the proposal for a**

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION

**concerning the 6th multiannual Framework Programme of the European Community
for research, technological development and demonstration activities, aimed at
contributing towards the creation of the European Research Area**

**AMENDING THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL
pursuant to Article 250(2) of the EC Treaty**

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contributing towards the creation of the European Research Area**

1. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to point (c) of the third subparagraph of Article 251(2) of the EC Treaty, the Commission delivers opinions on amendments proposed by the European Parliament on second reading. The Commission sets out below its opinion on the 34 amendments in question proposed by Parliament.

2. BACKGROUND

The Commission submitted its initial proposal (EC and EURATOM) on 21 February 2001 [COM(2001) 94 final 2001/0053 (COD)].

On 14 November 2001 the European Parliament adopted an opinion on first reading comprising 319 amendments to the Commission's proposal (EC).

On 22 November 2001 the Commission adopted its amended proposal. The Commission accepted most of the amendments proposed by Parliament in whole or in part.

On 10 December 2001 the Council reached political agreement on a common position and formally adopted that position on 28 January 2002. The Commission endorsed the Council's common position as indicated in its communication of 30 January 2002.

Parliament received the Council's common position on 7 February 2002 and began its second reading.

The competent parliamentary committee (Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy) adopted 34 compromise amendments on 13 May 2002 reflecting the agreement reached at the informal triologue of 7 May 2002 between Parliament and the Council which was endorsed by the Commission.

On 15 May 2002 Parliament adopted, en bloc, 34 amendments to the Council's common position.

3. PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposal establishes all the Community research activities for the period 2002-2006 (Article 166 of the EC Treaty). The 6th Framework Programme is structured around three objectives: integrating European research, structuring the European Research Area and strengthening its foundations.

To contribute towards the creation of this area, the proposal sets out three major changes: the introduction of new instruments as a matter of priority, greater concentration on certain areas where EU action can bring about more added value, and coordination of national policies, in particular through networking.

4. THE COMMISSION'S OPINION ON THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S AMENDMENTS

4.1 General assessment

The Commission can accept in their entirety the 34 amendments to the Council's common position adopted by Parliament.

The Commission notes the convergence of views between the three institutions on the general approach, structure and scientific and technological content of the 6th Framework Programme. The broad strategic outlines of the programme are confirmed by the European Parliament's second reading, in particular the use of new instruments and concentration on actions in priority areas.

The Commission also notes that Parliament, like the Council, wishes to assign to the 6th Framework Programme resources commensurate with the stated objectives and that it supports the Commission's proposal for an overall amount of EUR 17.5 billion.

4.2 Analysis of the second reading

The amendments adopted by Parliament relate mainly to questions concerning health, SMEs and instruments, the budget breakdown and clarifications to be made to the scientific and technological content.

- Health (amendments 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17 and 28):

Parliament wants health research aspects to be reinforced and better identified, in particular as regards the European dimension of the research and wants research on various diseases and non-genomic research to be covered. More particularly, it wants cancer research to be given greater importance and a higher profile. The Commission considers that the proposed amendments usefully reinforce the text and ensure a higher profile for these points.

- Implementation instruments and SME participation (amendments 2, 5, 6, 31 and 32):

The amendments proposed by Parliament express the concern that the new implementation instruments proposed by the Commission should not result in the marginalisation of small research entities and SMEs and the desire to ensure a harmonious transition between the current framework programme and the new one. In addition, it is proposed that special measures should be taken to stimulate and facilitate the participation of SMEs and of candidate countries' research entities in the actions carried out in the thematic areas.

The Commission considers that the proposed amendments constitute a step in the right direction and represent a good compromise which will make it possible to meet the expectations expressed by the research players.

- Budget breakdown (amendment 30):

Parliament wants to make significant changes in the budget breakdown, increasing the funds devoted to health research, specific international cooperation actions and the theme "Science and Society". The Commission is of the opinion that the amendments made represent a compromise which correctly reflects the importance assigned to these aspects by Parliament.

- Other amendments clarifying or reinforcing the text (amendments 1, 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 33 and 34). These amendments concerning the S/T content of the Framework Programme or specific aspects make useful additions and clarifications. The Commission would also stress that many of these amendments had already been incorporated in part or in principle in its revised proposal following the first reading.

5. CONCLUSION

Pursuant to Article 250(2) of the EC Treaty the Commission hereby amends its proposal as set out above.