



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 30.01.2002  
SEC(2002) 105 final

2001/0053 (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 Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the 6th Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002-2006) and to innovation**

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**1. BACKGROUND**

Date of the transmission of the proposal to the EP and Council (document COM(2001) 94 final - 2001/0053(COD)) :	26 February 2001
Date of the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee:	11 July 2001
Date of the opinion of the Committee of Regions:	14 November 2001
Date of the opinion of the European Parliament in the first reading:	14 November 2001
Date of transmission of the modified proposal:	22 November 2001
Date of adoption of the Common Position:	28 January 2002

**2. COMMISSION'S POSITION ON THE COMMON POSITION**

In accordance with Article 251 of the EC Treaty, the present communication sets out the Commission's position on the Council's Common Position of 28 January 2002 concerning the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. Political agreement on the Euratom Framework Programme was also reached on 10 December in parallel with the agreement on the Common Position on the EC Framework Programme.

Broadly, the Common Position preserves the essential features of the Framework Programme proposed by the Commission and is, in overall terms, highly consistent with the opinion of the European Parliament.

The Council has incorporated a large majority of the amendments adopted in the opinion of the European Parliament, on first reading (14 November 2001) and accepted by the Commission in its modified proposal<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2001)709, 22.11.2001

The Commission therefore regards the Common Position as a good basis on which to carry forward negotiations on the framework programme and rapidly proceed to a co-decision.

### 3. COMMENTS ON THE COMMON POSITION

As regards the budget, the Council has endorsed the overall amount of EUR 16,270 m which the Commission proposed, this having been agreed by Parliament on first reading.

As regards the structure of the programme, the Common Position maintains the various components of the programme proposed by the Commission, including the focus on seven thematic priorities areas and the flexible element of the programme, on “Anticipating the EU’s scientific and technological needs”. Moreover, it closely follows the Parliament’s opinion, which was taken up in the Commission’s modified proposal, as regards the internal reorganisation of the first and sixth thematic priorities. Thematic priority 1 on “Genomics and biotechnology for health” has been subdivided into two sections, on *advanced genomics and its applications for health*, and on *combating major diseases*, the latter focusing research efforts on certain diseases, in particular cancer. Thematic priority 6, on “Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems” has been structured around three sections: *sustainable energy systems*; *sustainable surface transport*, and *global change and ecosystems*.

In terms of the research content, a large proportion of the amendments proposed by Parliament and accepted by the Commission in its modified proposal, are carried through into the common position. However, these amendments have been accompanied in some areas, notably in thematic priority 6, by some dilution of the original focus. Some revisions have also been made to the content of the section of the programme on “anticipating the EU’s scientific and technological needs”.

The Common Position recognises the importance of the new instruments (Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence) as an overall priority means to attain the objectives of critical mass, management simplification and European added value, and the integration of research capacities. They will be used from the start of the framework programme, in each thematic priority and, where deemed appropriate, as a priority means, while maintaining the use of specific targeted projects and co-ordination actions. This is consistent with the spirit of the “Stairway of Excellence” concept put forward by Parliament, in order to effect a smooth transition to the new instruments. An independent evaluation will be carried out in 2004 on the efficiency of the new instruments in the execution of the sixth framework programme. Given the importance attached to the question of the instruments during the discussions, the Council considered it appropriate to include in the Framework Programme text a list of all instruments and the modalities of their application.

On the budget breakdown, the Common Position is broadly consistent with the Commission modified proposal and Parliament opinion, with the following adjustments:

- Under the *first heading*, “Focusing and integrating Community Research”, as compared with the Commission’s modified proposal:
  - Increased amounts for four *thematic priorities*: “Genomics and biotechnology for health”, “Aeronautics and space”, “Food quality and safety”, “Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems”; in particular for the renewable energies and the environment.
  - A significant reduction in the section on “Anticipating the EU’s scientific and technological needs” dealing with Research in support of community policies and responding to emerging needs.
- Reductions are made under the *2nd heading*, on “Structuring the European Research Area”, in particular in the area of *Research infrastructures*. Funds for high speed electronic networks (building on the Géant and GRID activities) are foreseen both here and in priority 2.
- Under the *3<sup>rd</sup> heading* on “Strengthening the foundations of the European Research Area”, a cut is made to the budget for the *co-ordination of activities*.

On ethics, which is a major concern for the European Parliament, the Common Position asserts, in line with the Parliament and Commission, that fundamental ethical principles are to be respected in the conduct of research under the 6<sup>th</sup> framework programme. However, it does not go as far as defining activities that will be excluded from funding. At the time of the 10<sup>th</sup> December Research Council when Ministers arrived at political agreement, this led the Commission to make a specific declaration to the Minutes. This declaration, in accordance with Parliament’s amendment, clearly sets out a number of areas of research that should not be financed under the Framework programme: research activities aimed at human cloning for reproductive purposes, research activities intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes inheritable, research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer. Animal experiments should also be replaced by alternatives wherever possible, and suffering by animals avoided or kept to a minimum.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The Common Position indicates a strong convergence of the position of Council with respect to both the European Parliament and the Commission. It takes into account a large proportion of the amendments made by the European Parliament and adopted by the Commission in its modified proposal. The Commission therefore endorses the Common Position, within the limits indicated above on the ethical issue, and considers that it represents a good basis on which to commence the second reading, and that any remaining issues can be quickly resolved. The Commission thus hopes that it will be possible to make rapid progress in the decision-making process, both of the Framework programme and for the specific programmes, with the aim of ensuring an adoption of the Framework programmes by mid-2002, as agreed at the European Council in Stockholm. This would allow for effective implementation of the programmes on time.