



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 27.6.2003
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2002/0303 (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 adopting a multiannual programme (2004-2006) for the
effective integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in
education and training systems in Europe (eLearning Programme)**

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common position of the Council on the adoption of a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council adopting a multiannual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning Programme)

1. BACKGROUND

Date of transmission of the proposal to the EP and the Council (document COM(2002) 751 final – 2002/0303 (COD)): 19 December 2002

Date of the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee: 26 March 2003

Date of the opinion of the Committee of Regions: 10 April 2003

Date of the opinion of the European Parliament, first reading: 8 April 2003

Date of transmission of the amended proposal: 29 April 2003

Date of Council political agreement (by qualified majority): 5 May 2003

Date of adoption of the common position: 16 June 2003

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Based on articles 149 and 150, the proposal seeks to establish a Community programme to support and develop the effective use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in European education and training systems, as a contribution to enhancing their quality and accessibility, and as an essential element of their adaptation to the needs of the Knowledge Society.

3. COMMENTS ON THE COMMON POSITION

3.1. General remarks

The text of the common position is broadly acceptable to the Commission as it largely respects the substance of the Commission's original proposal.

Concerning the budget, the Commission's proposal was carefully costed, within a spirit of budgetary restraint. The amount proposed was judged as a minimum threshold for impact on the three main action areas. However, the Commission accepts the common position adopted by qualified majority, reducing the budget to 33 million Euro, in order to allow the continuation of the procedure.

The inclusion of selection results in Article 5(a) may generate delays in the implementation of the Programme. Nevertheless, the Commission can accept this amendment.

3.2. Consideration of the amendments proposed by the Parliament in the first reading

- Amendments incorporated in full or in substance in the Commission's amended proposal and in the common position: 1, 2, 3, 5(only in the English version), 6, 9, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25
- Amendments incorporated in the Commission's amended proposal and not incorporated in the common position: 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 21, 26, 27

There is a large degree of convergence between the amended proposal and the common position as far as the major amendments of the Parliament, for a stronger consideration of teacher training, are concerned.

As regards the amendments that have not been integrated in the common position:

- Amendment 7 refers to the link between the programme and the administrative actions. The Commission can accept the Council proposal, as the essence of the amendment, namely keeping the financial level already allocated to preparatory actions, has been set as a general principle by a new recital (amendment 1).
- Amendments 8, 10, 13, 15, and 21 strengthen references to gender equality, special needs and geographical location. These are already addressed in recitals, or in other articles, and eliminating further references for the sake of clarity and simplicity is acceptable.
- Amendment 12, for promotion of multimedia software, would have brought into the text a major concern for the future of e-learning in Europe. However, as the programme will not address it directly, but via the transversal action for co-ordination of other Commission instruments, its rejection by the Council proposal can be accepted without problems.

3.3. Main changes introduced by the common position

The main changes introduced by the Council, further to those mentioned in point 3.1, are:

- The addition of a new recital, stressing the significance of the programme both in complementing existing programmes and in helping to prepare the new generation of education and training programmes.
- The merging of former articles 4, 7 and 8 in two, and the elimination of the mid-term evaluation report, with a view to greater simplicity.
- The change of the distribution of the budget amongst the different action areas, giving a higher priority to the eTwinning action, in large coincidence with the Parliament

All of them are acceptable to the Commission.

4. CONCLUSION

The Commission considers that the text of the common position is a good basis for a European Parliament and Council decision.