

9 February 1999 A4-0056/99

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REPORT

on the proposal for a Council Decision concerning the Community position within the Association Council on the participation of Bulgaria in Community programmes in the fields of vocational training and education (COM(98)0750 - C4-0061/99 - 98/0352(CNS))

Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media

Rapporteur: Peter Pex

(Simplified procedure - Rule 143(2))

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Commented [COMMENT1]:

(Amendment ##)

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 5 February 1999 the Council consulted Parliament, pursuant to Article 126 in conjunction with Article 228(3), first subparagraph, of the Treaty, on the proposal for a Council Decision concerning the Community position within the Association Council on the participation of Bulgaria in Community programmes in the fields of vocational training and education.

At the sitting of 9 February 1999 the President of Parliament announced that he had referred this proposal to the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media as the committee responsible and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Budgetary Control for their opinions.

At its meeting of 25 January 1999 the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media decided to apply the simplified procedure pursuant to Rule 143(2) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, and its chairman was accordingly appointed rapporteur.

Since objections were not received from at least four members of the committee within the time limit laid down in Rule 143 of the Rules of Procedure, the chairman of the committee noted that the report had been adopted.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets is attached; the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment decided on 26 January 1999 not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 9 February 1999.

The deadline for tabling amendments is 12 noon on Wednesday, 10 February 1999.

A
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

Proposal for a Council Decision concerning the Community position within the Association Council on the participation of Bulgaria in Community programmes in the fields of vocational training and education (COM(98)0750 - C4-0061/99 - 98/0352(CNS))

The proposal is approved with the following amendments:

Text proposed by the Commission()

Amendments by Parliament

(Amendment 1)
Draft Decision of the Association Council
Annex I (7)

7. Without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Commission and the Court of Auditors of the European Community in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of the programmes pursuant to the Decision concerning Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates (Articles 10, 9 and 8 respectively), the participation of Bulgaria in the programmes will be continuously monitored on a partnership basis involving Bulgaria and the Commission of the European Communities. Bulgaria will submit the necessary reports to the Commission and take part in other specific activities undertaken by the Community in that context.

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(¹) OJ C 10, 14.10.1999, p.10

(Amendment 2)
Draft Decision of the Association Council
Annex I (8)

8. Without prejudice to the procedures referred to in Article 6 of the Decision on the Leonardo da Vinci programme and Article 4 of the Decision on the Socrates programme, Bulgaria will be invited to coordination meetings on any question concerning the implementation of this

8. Without prejudice to the procedures referred to in Article 6 of the Decision on the Leonardo da Vinci programme and Article 4 of the Decision on the Socrates programme, Bulgaria will be invited to coordination meetings on any question concerning the implementation of this Decision prior to the

Decision prior to the regular meetings of the Committees. The Commission will inform Bulgaria about the results of such regular meetings.

regular meetings of the Committees. Bulgaria may also send a representative to such regular meetings in order to gain from first-hand experience of the Community without, however, being able to influence the Committee's decisions.

(Amendment 3)
Draft Decision of the Association Council
Annex I (9)

9. The language to be used as regards the application process, contracts, reports to be submitted and other administrative arrangements for the programmes, will be one of the official languages of the Community.

9. The language(s) to be used as regards the application process, contracts, reports to be submitted and other administrative arrangements for the programmes, will be official languages of the Community. This should not, however, rule out occasional use of the national languages of the countries concerned, in particular during informal negotiations.

DRAFT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

Legislative resolution embodying Parliament's opinion on the proposal for a Council Decision concerning the Community position within the Association Council on the participation of Bulgaria in Community programmes in the fields of vocational training and education (COM(98)0750 - C4-0061/99 - 98/0352(CNS))

(Consultation procedure)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council, COM(98)0750 - 98/0352(CNS)(),
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 126 in conjunction with Article 228(3), first subparagraph, of the Treaty (C4-0061/99),
 - having regard to Rule 58 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (A4-0056/99),
1. Approves the Commission proposal, subject to Parliament's amendments;
 2. Calls on the Commission to alter its proposal accordingly, pursuant to Article 189a(2) of the EC Treaty;
 3. Asks to be consulted again should the Council intend to make substantial modifications to the Commission proposal;
 4. Instructs its President to forward this opinion to the Council and Commission.

^(b) OJ C 10, 14.1.1999, p.10

B
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Commission, in its Agenda 2000 communication of 14 July 1997, and the European Council, at its meeting in Luxembourg on 12 and 13 December 1997, reaffirmed the importance of the applicant countries' participation in Community programmes, in particular in the education and training sectors, as part of the enhanced pre-accession strategy.

The conclusion on 4 December 1995 of an additional protocol to the Europe Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Bulgaria, of the other part, had paved the way, in legal terms, for Bulgaria's participation.

Bulgarian participation in the Youth for Europe programme became possible in October 1998.

Bulgaria will be able to participate in the Leonardo and Socrates programmes, as originally planned, once the problems concerning financial contributions have been resolved: it is to cover the bulk of its contribution to both programmes from its Phare budget allocation, the rest amounting only to 3% (plus 6% administrative costs).

Without waiting for this decision, however, Bulgaria has already made a number of preparations, such as the creation of decentralised management structures in Sofia.

Parliament can only welcome the fact that Bulgaria is to join the other eight countries of eastern Europe already taking part in these programmes.

However, it wishes to restate a number of demands, for instance that Bulgaria be as closely involved as possible in the discussions that take place in the regular meetings on the management of Leonardo and Socrates so that, through contact with other countries that have more experience, it can find out how those programmes are conducted and can also benefit from the same specific monitoring measures.

Parliament would also like to stress that it wishes to receive specific reports from the Commission so that it is kept regularly informed of how participation in these programmes is proceeding.

OPINION
(Rule 147 of the Rules of Procedure)

for the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media

on the proposal for a Council Decision concerning the Community position within the Association Council on the participation of Bulgaria in Community programmes in the fields of vocational training and education (COM(98)0750 - C4-0061/99 - 98/0352(CNS)) (report by Mr Pex)

Committee on Budgets

Letter from the committee chairman to Mr Pex, chairman of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media

Strasbourg, 9 February 1999

Dear Mr Pex,

The Committee on Budgets considered the above matter at its meeting of 9 February 1999.

It noted that the proposal seeks to spell out the conditions for the participation of Bulgaria in the Community programmes *Leonardo da Vinci* and *Socrates*, in accordance with the Council decisions establishing those programmes, as set out below:

**Funding of the action:
contribution of Bulgaria to the
Leonardo da Vinci and *Socrates* programmes (1999)**
(in millions of euros)

Programme	Bulgaria	%	EU	%	Total cost of the action
<i>Leonardo da Vinci</i>	0.031	3	1.011	97	1,042
<i>Socrates</i>	0.116	3	3.754	97	3,870
Total operational expenditure	0.147	3	4.765	97	4,912
Administrative costs	0.342				0,342
Amounts of co-funding	0.489		4.765		5,254

This proposal forms part of the pre-accession strategy which has been strengthened in respect of the 'acquis communautaire'; it provides for a financial contribution based on EU-Bulgaria co-funding in accordance with the following procedures:

- (a) The national contribution shall be paid into Item 6091 of the Union's budgetary revenue, while the Community's participation shall be made through the Phare programme (B7-503: *Opening of Community Programmes to the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe*).
- (b) The contribution under the Phare programme shall not exceed 10% of the National Indicative Programme.
- (c) The supplementary administrative expenses generated by this extension shall be borne exclusively by Bulgaria.

In conclusion, it has delivered a favourable opinion, and calls on the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its draft report.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Detlev Samland

The following were present for the vote: Samland, chairman; Tillich, Willocks and Giansily, vice-chairmen; Bourlanges, Dankert, Dührkop Dührkop, Elles, Fabre-Aubrespy, Garriga Polledo, Haug, Jöns (for Bösch), Kaklamanis, Miranda, Mulder (for Brinkhorst), Müller, Pasty, Pimenta, Pronk (for Bardong), Seppänen, Tappin, Viola (for Böge) and Virrankoski.

Commission text

Amendments

(Amendment 1)
Recital 4 (new)

Whereas revenue from third countries shall be pre-allocated to the aforesaid programmes and entered as such on the corresponding expenditure heading;

(Amendment 2)

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The position to be taken by the Community within the Association Council established by the Europe Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Bulgaria, of the other part, concerning the participation of Bulgaria in Community programmes in the fields of vocational training and education, is the attached draft decision of the Association Council.

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- the annual breakdown of the appropriations intended for co-funding these actions, in accordance with Article 2 of the Additional Protocol referred to in the second recital, shall appear in Annex IV, Part B, Section III of the budget of the European Union;

Justification for the amendments: pre-allocation of resources and visibility of co-funding:

The purpose is to ensure that the decision specifies the procedures by which third countries contribute to the 'acquis communautaire'. The share of co-funding borne by the European Union is set out in a special heading of the Official Journal.