



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 26.01.1998
SEC(1998) 37 final

97/0106 (SYN)

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

pursuant to the first subparagraph of Article 189 c (b) of the EC-Treaty

Council Common Position on the Commission Proposal for a Council Decision concerning a multi-annual programme for the promotion of renewable Energy Sources in the Community - (ALTENER II)

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ref: COM(97) 87 fin, 97 0106 (SYN)

1. Background:

- proposal lodged with Council:	23 May 1997
- European Parliament Opinion (1st reading):	6 November 1997
- Amended proposal tabled:	4 December 1997
- Date of adoption of Common Position:	8 December 1997

(The Opinions of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions were lodged on 29 October 1997 and 18 September 1997 respectively).

2. Purpose of Commission Proposal

This proposal aims to continue and extend the scope of the ALTENER programme, which expired on 31 December 1997, until 2002. The aim of the multiannual ALTENER programme is to make an essential contribution to increasing use and market share of Renewable Energy Sources, which are environmentally sustainable and constitute a major component of the Community strategy to abate Greenhouse Gas emissions.¹

3. REMARKS ON THE COMMON POSITION

3.1 Preliminary

The Commission can in general terms express its satisfaction with the Common Position as adopted by the Council on 8 December. It is of great importance that, with its entry into force, practical implementation may begin without undue delay, on account of the central rôle to be played by the programme in the proposed renewables strategy and action plan 1998-2010 currently under consideration by the Parliament and Council.

3.2 Parliament amendments on first reading

Of the 24 amendments voted by Parliament, seventeen were accepted by the Commission with or without purely textual adjustment.

¹ The ALTENER II programme will be in the forefront of the effort, especially as regards coordination, dissemination, and transparency, to be made towards the Community strategy for Renewables as put forward in the Commission Communication on a strategy and action plan for Renewables ('White Paper'), COM(97)599 fin, 26.11.97.

3.3 New provisions introduced by the Council, and Commission's position thereon

The Common Position takes into account 15 of the 17 amendments made by the European Parliament and accepted by the Commission, adding 7 new recitals - two of them from the former article 2.2, minimal changes in art. 2.1a) and 4.1 and major changes in art. 1.3, 5 and 8 as follows

Art. 1(3): Financial reference amount for implementation of programme over the two years provided (see below) : the Common Position stipulates 22 MECU. The Commission noted the agreement to this effect reached by the Council but can only reiterate its point of view that, in the light of the priority to be attached to the scope of the programme, as summarised at point (2) above, its proposal for a higher amount has not been followed. The Commission made a Statement to the Council Minutes to that effect.

Art. 8: Limitation of duration of the effects of the Decision to 31 December 1999, or the entry into force of the Multiannual Energy Framework Programme:

The Commission concurs with the logic of this formulation under the relevant conditions set out in its proposal for the Framework Programme.

3.4 Comitology

Art. 5: The Commission accepted the choice of a 'type II a)' committee as agreed by the Council, as opposed to its original proposal for an advisory committee.

4. Conclusions

There is general agreement as regards the operational details of the programme, which therefore remained in the form already strongly and consistently advocated by the Parliament. The Commission remains disappointed at the modest scale of the financial reference amount included in the Common Position, but this has to be brought into perspective by the indicative nature of this reference amount, and in considering that the duration of the decision is conditioned by the entry into force of the Energy Framework Programme currently before Council and Parliament.