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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

COMETT PROGRAMME

REPORT OF 1991 ACTIVITIES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMETT I, the Community Action Programme for Education and Training for Technology, was adopted by the Council Decision 86/365/EEC of 24 July 1986. Following a preparatory year in 1986, the operational phase of the COMETT I programme was for three years (1987-1989).

The second stage of the programme - COMETT II - for the period 1990-1994, was adopted by the Council in December 1988 (Decision 89/27/EEC) and came into operation on 1 January 1990. COMETT II aims at reinforcing training in technology (particularly advanced technology), the development of highly skilled human resources and the competitiveness of European industry. COMETT II is not simply an extension of COMETT I but a development, a deepening and broadening of the scheme. The Decision re-emphasises COMETT's role as a Community Programme for advanced training for technology and its applications but places increased stress on changing skill requirements and regional needs.

With the beginning of this second phase and in accordance with the Council Decision of 22 May 1989, universities and enterprises of the Member States of EFTA (European Free Trade Association) can take part in the COMETT Programme.

The estimated budget for COMETT II for the period 1990-1994 is 200 million ecus, (the contribution of the EFTA countries counting for 30 million ecus).

In 1991, the second operational year of COMETT II, the Call for Applications was a restricted Call limited to the 158 COMETT II UETPs (university-enterprise training partnerships) accepted in the previous year, that is, only the 1990 UETPs could submit new projects in 1991. Moreover, applications were possible only for transnational student and personnel exchanges, for crash training courses, and for complementary promotion measures. All Member States and almost all EFTA countries were represented.

Of the 414 projects submitted by UETPs in 1991, 393 were selected for COMETT funding. These projects provided grants for 5,073 transnational student exchanges and some 125 transnational secondments of university and industry personnel; more than 725 training courses, involving 1,299 training sessions, were organised. In addition, there were the joint training courses and the Pilot Projects accepted in 1990, most of which are running for at least three years. Consequently, in the year under report, all in all more than 1,000 courses were supported by COMETT, with more than 20,000 persons receiving training in advanced technology. More than 500 training materials were under development in this year.

In the year under review, a series 'Positive Actions', were launched. While the purpose of the Positive Actions is to meet the challenge of some of the economic differences of the countries and regions within the Community, some Actions are especially devoted to sectoral studies and improvements. The Positive Actions that were launched concerned national and promotion measures, university-enterprise training partnerships, student placements, actions for the promotion of industrial participation, and sectoral activities. In order to define and implement the necessary actions, feasibility studies, working groups and workshops were arranged. Two conferences concerning student placements were organised, one in Lappeenranta, Finland, 2/3 September 1991, the other in Segovia, Spain, 7/8 November 1991.

In addition, a major COMETT conference was held in Amsterdam, 13/15 November 1991, with over 400 delegates attending. Entitled 'Towards new models of university-industry cooperation: the example of COMETT', the conference focused on two main themes - COMETT's experience in establishing university-industry cooperation, and the findings of the recent IRDAC report on Skills Shortages in Europe. The conference confirmed that there is a growing interest in a programme like COMETT.

The second external evaluation of the COMETT Programme took place in 1991. This evaluation of the last two years of COMETT I (1988-1989) and the early stage of COMETT II (1990-1991) was carried out by ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd. The report examined the performance of COMETT, focusing particularly on such issues as COMETT's support for university-industry cooperation within the context of regional development in the Community both through the creation of university-enterprise networks and within the sectoral context of industrial development with Community R & D. The Report stressed that COMETT has contributed strongly to university-enterprise cooperation and the development of transnational networks, and that its effect extends beyond the Programme as such.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is COMETT?

The European nations understood long ago that Europe's economic competitiveness will not depend on one but on a whole range of key factors. Clearly, the development of the Community's human resources and the commitment to scientific research must go hand in hand with the development programmes in industry. While each Member State has its own distinctive system of higher education and training, the Community is in a position to improve the effectiveness of these individual systems through actions carried out on a concerted basis with the active involvement of industry. Since 1986, the year of the ratification of the Single European Act, the Community has launched several initiatives that have clearly demonstrated its commitment to these interdependent issues. The COMETT Programme is one of these initiatives.

'COMETT' stands for the European Community Programme on cooperation between universities and industry regarding training in the field of technology. The first phase of the Programme was established by the Council Decision 86/365/EEC of 24 July 1986. Following a preparatory year, COMETT I ran for three operational years, from 1987-89. The second stage of COMETT, for the period 1990-94, was adopted by the Council in December 1988 (Decision 89/27/EEC). COMETT II came into operation on 1 January 1990.

With the beginning of this second phase and in accordance with the Council Decision of 22 May 1989, universities and enterprises of the Member States of EFTA (European Free Trade Association of Austria, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Liechtenstein) were entitled to take part in the Programme.

COMETT in 1991

- The 158 University-Enterprise Training Partnerships supported by COMETT received support to organise more than 5000 student exchanges, 700 courses, and 120 personnel exchanges.
- 78% of the projects accepted in 1991 involved at least one SME.*
- An external evaluation of the Programme, conducted by an independent organisation, provided a very positive assessment of COMETT.
- A series of special actions, Positive Actions, have been implemented to strengthen the impact of COMETT in selected geographical areas and technology sectors.
- The major COMETT conference organised in Amsterdam in November 1991 confirmed the success of the network and the growing interest of the industry in the Programme.

* In this document an SME is defined as an enterprise with less than 500 employees.

1.2 The Objectives of COMETT

COMETT aims at reinforcing training in technology (particularly advanced technology), the development of highly skilled human resources and the competitiveness of European industry. As such, COMETT represents an important part of the Commission's overall programme in the education and training field. By supporting the development of university-enterprise links on a transnational basis, COMETT assists in the development of systems and mechanisms for identifying and providing solutions for the high skill needs of industry in the field of technology. In doing so, COMETT also contributes to the development of social and economic cohesion across the Community. This aim, the overall balanced development of the Community, is reinforced by COMETT's assistance in the transfer of technology to the less advanced regions.

The specific objectives of COMETT II laid down by Article 3 of the Council Decision of 16 December 1988 are:

- **The contribution of technology training to economic and social development**
'to improve the contribution of, in particular, advanced technology training at the various levels concerned and thus the contribution of training to the economic and social development of the Community';
- **Joint university-industry efforts**
'to foster the joint development of training programmes and the exchange of experience, and also the optimum use of training resources at Community level, notably through the creation of transnational sectoral and regional networks of, in particular, advanced technology training projects';
- **Training needs of small and medium-sized firms**
'to respond to the specific skill requirements of small and medium sized businesses having regard to specific priority measures';
- **Equal training opportunities for men and women**
'to promote equal opportunities for men and women in initial and continuing training in, in particular, advanced technology';
- **Promoting the European dimension**
'to give a European dimension to cooperation between universities and industry in initial and continuing training relating to technologies and their applications and transfer'.

II. THE COMETT PROGRAMME - CHARACTERISTICS, DEVELOPMENT AND RESULTS IN 1991

2.1 The Operational Components

In order to meet its general objectives, COMETT focuses on four main areas of activity, each of which constitutes a *Strand* within the Programme as a whole. What these actions have in common is that they set out to promote, on a transeuropean basis, training for technology at an advanced level. The other unifying feature is that they will always involve at least *one* university and *one* enterprise.

Although the fundamental objectives adopted at the outset have remained unchanged, a direct comparison between COMETT I and COMETT II is difficult since the second phase represents not simply an extension of COMETT I but a development, a deepening and broadening of the scheme. Not only has the programme structure changed, but, as mentioned above, with the beginning of the second phase the universities and enterprises of the EFTA countries can take part in the COMETT Programme. The second year of COMETT II saw also the development and implementation of some new measures which further strengthen all aspects of the Programme. In addition, 1991 was special in that in this year there was a restricted Call for Applications limited to UETPs accepted in 1990.

The following paragraphs describe the different COMETT activities and the results achieved for each of them in 1991.

2.2 European network of University-Enterprise Training Partnerships (Strand A)

- 2.2.1 The backbone of the COMETT Programme is the development and reinforcement of university-enterprise training partnerships (UETPs) operating both on a regional and/or on a sectoral basis, to further transnational cooperation. Of the 158 UETPs accepted in the first year of COMETT II, 99 are regional in that they are confined to a particular geographical

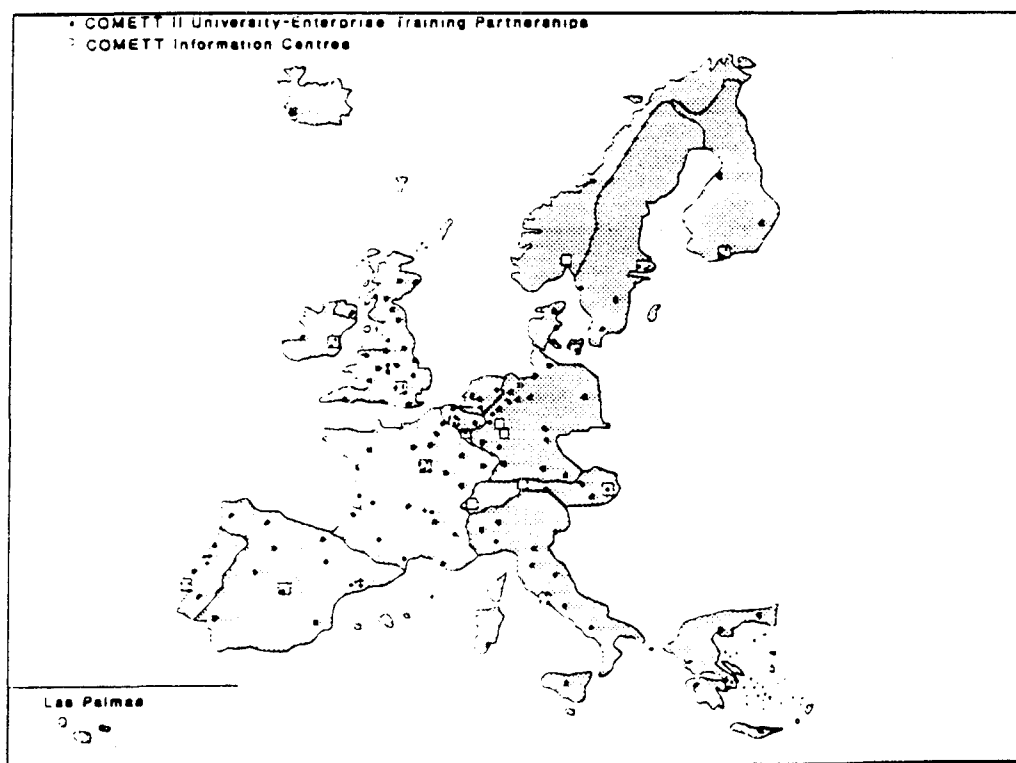


Figure 1 - The geographical coverage of COMETT UETPs in 1991.

area, 49 are sectoral in that they are concerned, on a transnational basis, with a specific technological or industrial sector, and 10 are mixed (regional/sectoral) partnerships. These UETPs will have Community support of maximum three years. By 1991 most of the 158 UETPs were firmly established (see Fig.1 above).

Development and Results 1991

2.2.2 In the year under review, the Call for Applications was a restricted Call limited to the 158 COMETT II UETPs accepted in the previous year, that is, only the 1990 UETPs could submit new projects in 1991. Moreover, applications were possible only in Strand Ba, Bc, Ca and D. All Member States were represented. As far as the EFTA countries are concerned, all countries were participating except Switzerland (who at the time did not have a UETP) and Norway (whose only sectoral UETP did not submit a new project).

Of the 414 projects submitted by UETPs in 1991, 393 were selected for COMETT funding. These projects provided grants for 5,073 transnational student exchanges and some 121 transnational secondments of university and industry personnel; 724 courses, involving 1,299 training sessions, were organised. Interesting to note is that out of the 158 accepted UETPs, 153 submitted at least one project in 1991, with 90% of the UETPs submitting a project for a series of transnational student exchanges and 84% a project for a range of training courses in technology. If these figures show that UETPs are very dynamic, they also confirm their interest in the various activities supported by COMETT.

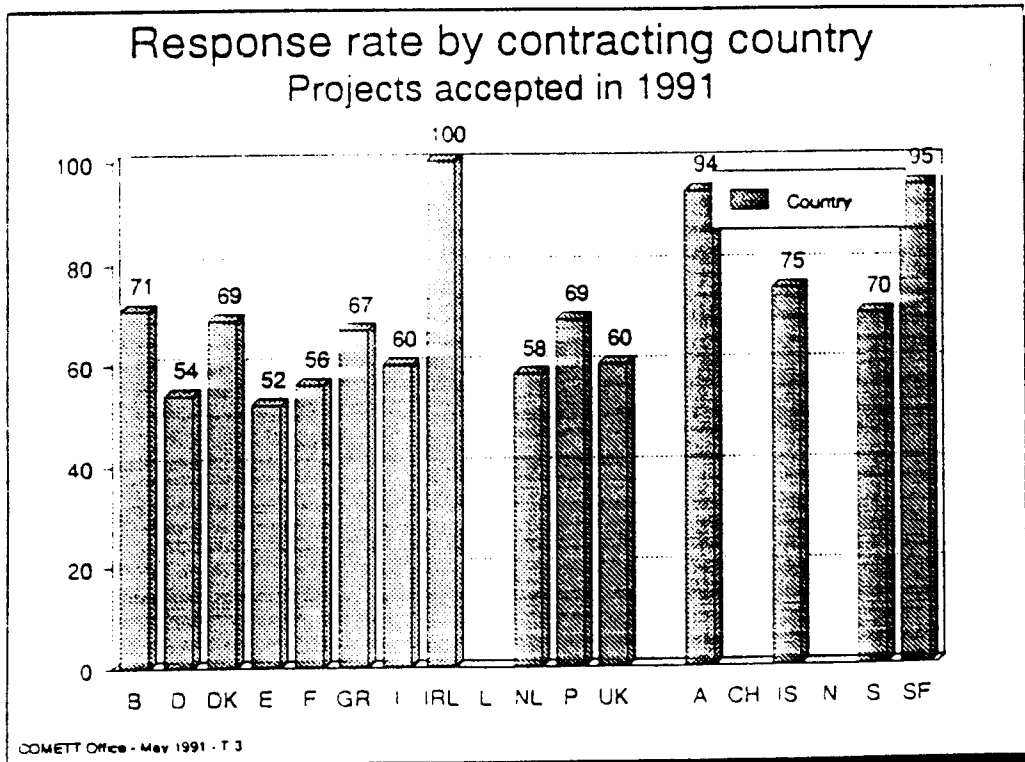


Figure 2 - Response rate in 1991 when there was a restricted Call for Applications. The table shows, for example, that the UETPs in Italy responded with 60% in all the Strands.

2.3 Transnational exchanges (Strand B)

2.3.1 The grants for transnational exchanges fall into three categories:

- ▶ Strand Ba: Grants for students undergoing periods of training (3-12 months) in industry in another Member State or EFTA country as an integrated part of their training at university.
- ▶ Strand Bb: Grants for advanced training placements (6-24 months). This Strand is similar to the one above concerning integrated student placements and only differs in that the participants are graduates and must be engaged in the most advanced training level but not in research.
- ▶ Strand Bc: These grants provide fellowships (2-12 months) for personnel seconded from universities to industry or vice versa in another Member State to bring their skills to the host organisation.

Transnational exchanges of students and personnel are a major commitment for the UETPs. COMETT I supported approximately 4,115 student placements and some 200 transnational secondments of university and industry personnel. To give a brief breakdown for 1990: with the 246 integrated student exchanges accepted by COMETT, at least 3,731 students could be placed in an enterprise abroad.

Developments and Results 1991

- 2.3.2 In 1991 the number of **Transnational Student Exchanges** was substantially higher than in 1990 (5,013 compared with 3,700 in the previous year). Since COMETT I, the scale of this activity has increased considerably, with the two first years of COMETT II exactly doubling the level of activity of the whole of COMETT I.
- 2.3.3 As far as **Advanced Training Placements** are concerned (Strand Bb), due to the low success rate in the previous year (13 projects were accepted out of 99 applications) there was no Call for Applications in this Strand in 1991. In the year under report, the concentration was on the two other Strands, that is, Strand Ba and Bc.
- 2.3.4 Of the 138 applications for **personnel exchanges** under Strand Bc, COMETT supported 66, that is, 121 members of staff could benefit from these projects and carry out a secondment in another country. While the flow could be either from university to enterprise, or vice versa, in this year the majority of exchanges were from universities to enterprises.
- 2.3.5 1989 witnessed the beginning of the very successful **Pool Schemes** with the COMETT consortia. Under this scheme, the COMETT university-enterprise training partnerships receive from the Commission a 'pool' of student placement grants which can be allocated flexibly over the ensuing academic year to students undertaking a placement in industry in another Member State. Initially designed for student exchanges only, the Pool Scheme was extended in 1991 to include the organisation of courses.

The great success of the 'Pool Schemes' is reflected in the fact that the majority of COMETT UETPs are participating actively in this scheme. 1991 is exceptional in that it was the first time that all the submitted projects, both for student placements and for courses, were 'pool' projects, as explained in the following section.

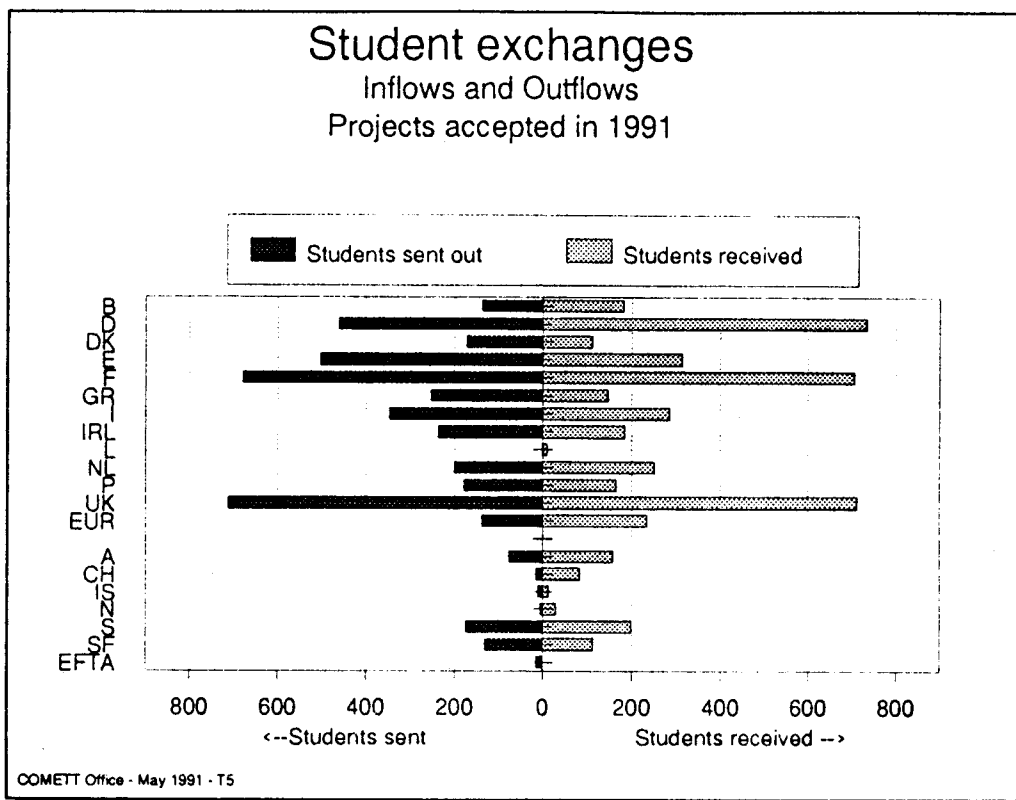


Figure 3 - Table showing the response rate

2.4 Joint projects for continuing training in technology (particularly advanced technology) and for multimedia and/or distance training (Strand C).

2.4.1 These COMETT projects are of three types:

- ▶ **Strand Ca:** Crash training courses with a European dimension in technology (particularly advanced technology) designed for the rapid dissemination - by and in universities and by and in industry - of research and development results in the field of new technologies and their applications, as well as for the promotion, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, of the transfer of technological innovation to sectors in which it was not previously applied.
- ▶ **Strand Cb:** Devising, developing, and testing at European level joint training projects in technology (particularly advanced technology), initiated jointly by different industries in association with the universities concerned in at least two different Member States in fields relating to the new technologies and their applications. Many of these projects are involved in the development of training materials using new technology such as computer based training, simulators, CD-ROM, interactive videos, etc.
- ▶ **Strand Cc:** Pilot projects which are of a similar nature of joint training projects (Strand Cb) but which are set up in a more substantial form.

One may recall here that during the lifetime of COMETT I over 1.200 courses were organised and approximately 720 training materials were developed during this period. In all, more than 100,000 persons have received training in advanced technology as a direct result of COMETT I projects.

Developments and Results 1991

- 2.4.2 The COMETT Crash Training Courses focus on technology transfer involving SMEs. They are particularly designed for the rapid dissemination of research and development in the field of new technologies. In the year under review, 130 training projects were accepted and these provided financial support for 725 courses (involving 1,299 training sessions). As explained above, section 2.3.5, these courses were managed for the first time via the 'pool' system.

There was no Call for Applications under Strand Cb and Cc in 1991. However, it is worth noting that the Cb and Cc projects accepted in 1990 (182 and 30, respectively), were now in their second operational year and actively developing training materials and courses. While the precise figures will only be available when the final reports will have been written at the completion of these projects, it may be estimated that in 1991 more than 1,000 courses were supported by C, with more than 20,000 persons receiving training in advanced technology. More than 500 training materials were under development in this year.

2.5 Complementary promotion and back-up measures (Strand D).

In addition there is a fourth Strand which comprises a range of complementary promotion, evaluation, and back-up measures. These include the funding of transnational visits and the support for preparatory activities in less developed regions. Of the 88 projects submitted in 1991, 69 were accepted and these provided Community support for 135 visits, that is, 92 visitors travelled from an EC to another EC country, 17 from an EC to an EFTA country, and 26 from an EFTA to an EC country.

2.6 Budget

For COMETT II the overall budget for the period 1990-1994 is 200 million ecus, excluding the contribution of the EFTA countries (30 million ecus). This sum is intended to cover all the actions supported under the four Strands of the Programme. 21 million ecus were allocated to projects accepted in 1991. To this budget must be added the sum of 25 million ecus used to finance projects accepted in 1990 on a multiannual basis, so that COMETT devoted the total of 46 million ecus to training in the field of technology in 1991.

III. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

3.1 Selection 1991

As already mentioned, in 1991 the Call for Applications was restricted to proposals from the 158 UETPs accepted in the previous year. However, the actual selection process corresponded closely to the one adopted in previous years:

- First came the initial assessment of the applications by the Commission with the support of the COMETT Technical Assistance Office. All ineligible applications were removed at this early stage (ineligibility, for example, due to the non-transnational nature of the project or the lack of a university-industry partnership), and the ground was prepared for the later stages of the selection process.
- The criteria used for the selection of projects were those given in the Vademecum and Application Package. In accordance with the fundamental objectives of COMETT, eligible

projects have to involve cooperation between universities and enterprises relating to post-secondary level training concerned with technology and its application or areas affected by technological change.

- The next concern was that of the internal coherence with the other Community programmes, both those relating to the Framework Programme of Research and Development as well as those directed towards specific sectors, such as the strategic programme in favour of SMEs. The Community programmes with which COMETT has established close links are DELTA¹, ERASMUS², FORCE³, EUROTECNET⁴, LINGUA⁵, and TEMPUS⁶.
- The projects were then assessed by the COMETT Experts Group, a group of independent experts from universities and industry. The Experts Group met for this purpose on 14 March 1991.
- The proposed draft list of accepted projects was submitted to the COMETT Committee and the COMETT EFTA Joint Committees on 3/4 April 1991. In this process, as provided for in the COMETT Decision, specific arrangements were made to permit discussion by the Committee of projects for which a Community contribution of more than 100,000 ECU was proposed.
- Taking into account the views expressed by the COMETT Committee and the COMETT EFTA Joint Committees, the Commission decided upon a final list of projects for Community support.

3.2 COMETT Committee and EC-EFTA Joint Committees

3.2.1 The development of the COMETT Programme has been conducted throughout in close collaboration with the COMETT Committee. The role of the Committee is to assist the Commission in the implementation of the COMETT Programme. The Committee consists of two representatives from each Member State on the basis of nominations made by the Member States as well as two representatives of the social partners as observers. The Commission chairs the Committee and provides its secretariat.

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- ¹ DELTA - Developing European Learning through Technological Advance. Council Decision 90/221/Euratom, EEC, OJ No. L117, vol.33, 8.5.1990.
- ² ERASMUS - European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, Council Decision 87/327/EEC, OJ No. L 166, 25.6.1987, p.20-24.
- ³ FORCE - Community Action Programme for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training in the European Community, 90/267/EEC, OJ No. L 156/1, 21.6.1990.
- ⁴ EUROTECNET - Community wide network of demonstration projects in the field of New Information Technologies and Vocational Training, COM (85) 167 Final.
- ⁵ LINGUA - Community Action Programme to promote Foreign Language Competence in the European Community. Council Decision 89/489/EEC, OJ No. L239/24, 28 July 1989.
- ⁶ TEMPUS - Trans-European mobility scheme for university studies. Council Decision 90/233/EEC, OJ No. L 131/21,7, May 1990.

- 3.2.2 The Commission may consult the Committee on any matter concerning the implementation of the COMETT Programme. The Committee delivers opinions, in particular on the general guidelines governing the COMETT Programme, the general guidelines for the financial assistance to be provided by the Community, the procedure for selecting the various types of projects and any measures which require a Community contribution of more than 100,000 ECU.
- 3.2.3 Since the launch of COMETT II, the EFTA countries have participated in the COMETT Programme, and Joint Committees were established between the European Community and each EFTA country.
- 3.2.4 The COMETT Committee met formally on two occasions (3/4 April 1991 and 16/17 July 1991); there was also an informal meeting on 28 February 1991. The EC-EFTA Joint Committees met on 4 April 1991 and 17 July 1991. A list of the members of the COMETT Committee and the EFTA Joint Committees is given in Annex 3.

3.3 COMETT Information Centres

- 3.3.1 To facilitate and promote the dissemination of information about COMETT, national Information Centres have been established within each Member State and, from the beginning of COMETT II, also in the EFTA countries. The precise organisational location of each Information Centre varies between the participating countries according to individual needs and circumstances. The Information Centres' main tasks are to respond to information queries concerning the COMETT Programme, especially on projects led by organisations within their country and to produce informational material (brochures, bulletins, projects files etc). They also organise information days, workshops and press conferences, to assist with the preparation of new applications and to disseminate COMETT project outputs. Finally, in cooperation with the UETPs, the Information Centres provide assistance for COMETT Project promoters within their country, including finding new project partners and disseminating relevant project outputs from other countries.
- 3.3.2 The Commission provides financial support towards the costs of activities undertaken by the Information Centres. In addition, the Commission supplies various forms of documentation, services and promotional material for use by Information Centres. A list of COMETT Information Centres is given in Annex 4.

3.4 COMETT Experts and Advisers

- 3.4.1 Following the Council Decision, the Commission established the COMETT Experts Group as an additional source of specialist technical advice and expertise. Members of the Group are appointed by the Commission on the basis of their personal knowledge of a particular technical area or sector related to the work of COMETT. The breadth of membership is such that there is at least one Expert from each participating country, ensuring awareness of the level of technology exploitation in all of these countries. The Experts met on the 14 March 1991 and 19 November 1991 with the main objective of examining the project proposals received by the Commission under the 1991 Call for Applications. Their developing role in project monitoring as well as their technical advice helped to ensure that the Commission was able to select the most appropriate range of projects to achieve COMETT objectives.

3.4.2 Project Advisers

Because of the exemplary nature and large scale of the Pilot Projects (which had been accepted in 1990) a new approach was adopted whereby a Project Adviser was assigned to work with every Pilot Project during the project's life time. A tripartite relationship is developed between the project coordinator, the COMETT project officer and the project adviser. This process has proved very beneficial in assuring the good development of the Pilot Projects.

3.5 Technical Support

3.5.1 The Commission is assisted in the operational implementation of the COMETT Programme by the COMETT Technical Assistance Office, a non-profit organization with which appropriate contractual arrangements have been made.

3.6 Collaboration with other Community Programmes

3.6.1 An important aspect of COMETT is the potential it has for synergy with other Community programmes. COMETT complements the strategic Community approach in the R & D and innovation fields by contributing towards the development of highly qualified manpower necessary for the development, transfer and exploitation of new technologies. Close consultation has been established both in the selection of projects and also the on-going monitoring and development of the COMETT Programme. COMETT Projects have also established links between organisations active in a number of Commission R & D Programmes. There is in particular a close link between COMETT and DELTA in view of the complementary objectives of the two programmes in the field of technology support for education and training.

In 1991, at a practical level, the links involved the following:

- Joint COMETT/DELTA presentations at key conferences and DELTA launch meetings.
- Participation in the selection process for the current phase of DELTA which started in the latter half of 1991.
- Cooperation between the two programmes with regard to COMETT Pilot Projects with close links to current DELTA projects, for example, COSTEL (COMETT) and COSYS (DELTA).

3.6.2 In the education and training field COMETT complements the activities of the ERASMUS Programme for the mobility of university students, FORCE, the programme for the development of continuing vocational training, and the EUROTECNET Programme for basic vocational training for the new information technologies. Links exist also with the LINGUA and the TEMPUS Programmes.

3.6.3 The ERASMUS Programme was adopted by the Council in June 1987 to promote inter-university cooperation and in particular to increase substantially the number of university students carrying out a period of integrated study in another Member State. Although there are a number of important differences between the specific aims, objectives and

actions of the two Programmes, both COMETT and ERASMUS include the common policy aim of encouraging students to spend periods of recognised training in other Member States. The TEMPUS Scheme, which is designed specifically to promote the development of the higher education systems and transeuropean mobility in the countries of Central/Eastern Europe, was adopted on 7 May 1990 by the Council of Ministers. Close links have been established to ensure coordination of the overall implementation and monitoring of the three Programmes.

IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 External evaluation

The ECOTEC Report

In June 1990 the Commission launched a Call for Tender for a second external evaluation of the COMETT Programme.⁷ This external evaluation of the last two years of COMETT I (1988-1989) and the early stages of COMETT II (1990-1991) was carried out by ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd and finalised in August 1991. The report examined the performance of COMETT, focusing particularly on such issues as COMETT's support for university-industry cooperation within the context of regional development in the Community, both through the creation of university-enterprise networks and within the sectoral context of industrial development and interaction with Community R & D.

- 4.1.1 The ECOTEC Report concluded that the various objectives of the COMETT programme have been successfully achieved. Commenting on the COMETT sectoral network, the Report stated that the

'The COMETT programme has helped establish a diverse range of sectoral UETPs. They have promoted a high measure and variety of university enterprise cooperation, particularly transnational cooperation.'

- 4.1.2 Another key finding concerned the skills needs, training and training products and the Report concluded that

'A wide range of objectives have been met by the COMETT funded projects. The training needs analysis work has often been pioneering and has helped improve communication between employers and university trainers. The work has helped the customers of training increase their influence over the type and form of advanced technology training provision.'

- 4.1.3 Commenting on the COMETT transnational student exchange programmes, the Report drew attention to the considerable expansion of this activity during COMETT II. It was in particular noted that the benefits of this activity

'...extend beyond COMETT. In particular there are considerable long term benefits to the trainees involved. The activity has contributed strongly to university-enterprise cooperation and the development of transnational networks.'

⁷ The first external evaluation of COMETT I was carried out by Coopers & Lybrand and the Science Policy Research Unit of the University of Sussex. This report was published by the Commission of the European Communities, CEC, *Evaluation of the COMETT Programme*, Luxembourg (1989).

4.1.4 *The Commission's response*

Welcoming the ECOTEC external evaluation, the Commission recognised that the Report raises a number of basic policy questions which acknowledge COMETT's achievement while correctly putting these issues on a broader agenda which goes far beyond COMETT as such.

4.1.5 One of ECOTEC's key recommendations in connection with the regional UETP network is that the Commission should retain *commitment to the maintenance* of this network and that the European-level objectives for this network should be more clearly defined. The Commission fully accepts this recommendation and is engaged in a series of actions to develop the effective operation of the regional UETP network during the remainder of COMETT II.

4.1.6 ECOTEC's analysis of the *financial sustainability of UETPs* is an invitation to the Commission and the Member States to continue funding provided its objectives and nature are properly defined. For the time being, the Commission will maintain the policy intention on UETP funding set out in the COMETT II Decision, continue its efforts to assist UETPs in meeting that objective as well as continue its discussions with the relevant bodies, drawing on the analysis made in the external and internal monitoring work.

4.1.7 The ECOTEC Report argues that *progress in transnational university-enterprise cooperation has been slow, especially with SMEs*. This is a point that is reiterated in the Conclusions. Certainly, this is an area that remains one of the greatest challenges for the Commission as well as the UETPs, since much hope has been placed in the merits of local approaches.

4.1.8 The *UETP contribution to knowledge of and activity in other EC programmes* is an important observation. It demonstrates that COMETT must not be evaluated in too narrow a context, but in one which takes account of the rapidly developing education and training scene in the European Community, to which the various other Community education and training programmes have contributed (especially ERASMUS, LINGUA, FORCE, TEMPUS, and EUROTECNET).

4.1.9 The finding regarding the *lack of standard methodologies for training needs analysis* is one which strongly echoes analyses which the Commission has itself made. Nevertheless, the finding that the TNA work undertaken has reduced the 'supplier-led' character of many of the projects, is very welcome. Furthermore, the recommendation for more work in this area is totally in line with current work within the Task Force Human Resources, and the call for more resources to be devoted to this is fully noted.

4.1.10 Concerning the transnational student placements, the Commission takes clear note of the finding that it is 'unlikely that much of the activity would happen in the absence of the programme'. Within the same context, the *imbalance in student flows* is an important issue on which vigilance is required. Great hope is placed in the 'pool' schemes which give a reasonable and promising basis to enable the UETPs to contribute towards balanced movements across the Community as a whole.

4.2 Internal Evaluation

4.2.1 Internal monitoring and evaluation are important aspects of the implementation of the COMETT Programme. A variety of formal and informal methods are used to collect and analyse information at the following levels: project level, Strand level, sectoral level, and programme level.

- 4.2.2 At project level, the process begins with an analysis of project applications according to specified criteria to ensure selected projects are adequately designed. For approved projects, the formal process consists of interim and annual progress reports. In this way every project is continuously monitored to ensure its progress is satisfactory and to identify specific issues which may have wider implications. In addition, more informal contact with project promoters occurs through their visits to Brussels, attendance at conferences and other similar activities. At Strand level, a number of Strand-specific analyses and activities have been undertaken. The analyses that were launched serve as a basis for the development of sectoral networks.
- 4.2.3 At programme level, the development of the Programme has been carefully monitored with respect to both its internal design and implementation and its wider contribution to Community objectives. The contributions of the COMETT Committee, the COMETT Experts Group and the COMETT Information Centres are of particular importance, especially in providing information about the development of COMETT within each Member State and EFTA country.

4.3 Positive Actions

In 1991 the Commission launched a series of actions, **Positive Actions**, whose main aim is to meet the challenge of some of the economic differences of the countries and regions within the European Community. The first task was to analyse the gaps and weaknesses in the development of the COMETT network and on the basis of this analysis to identify actions that would strengthen and enhance the overall development of the COMETT programme, and in particular the regional and sectoral UETP network.

In order to assist the identification, development and implementation of these actions a working group, or Experts Group, was set up. This working group discussed, on a practical level, the strengthening of the university-enterprise cooperation, the training of UETP managers, the transnationality of partners, and the improvement of the student exchange programmes.

The Positive Actions that were launched can be listed under the following headings:

- National studies and promotion measures
- UETPs (networking and training of UETP managers)
- Student placements
- Actions for the promotion of industrial participation
- Sectoral activities

4.3.1 National studies and promotion measures

- ▶ Certain actions focused on individual countries (Spain, Greece, southern Italy, Portugal, Switzerland and Norway) taking into account their different national and/or regional situations. The main objective of these Positive Actions is to identify structural and functional problems in the implementation of the COMETT Programme in these specific countries. The activities included a series of operations (organised in collaboration with the relevant national authorities) whose overall aim was to improve the COMETT Programme.
- ▶ Related to the Positive Actions were the measures taken to assist the integration of the new German *Länder*. 1 million ecu was allocated to the following three actions assisting the integration of enterprises, universities and other organisations from the *Länder* in the COMETT network:
 - Financial support to prepare university-enterprise training partnerships for the

next Call for Applications in 1992.

- Grants for transnational student placements.
- Various initiatives to introduce persons and organisations from the new federal states to the EC environment. These activities included project training, study visits, conference or seminar participation, as well as studies concerning the university/industry environment.

4.3.2 UETPs (networking and training of UETP managers)

- ▶ Since the UETPs are a fundamental component of the COMETT programme, a feasibility study for the development of a qualification programme for UETP managers was designed and a series of courses as part of a training programme were organised. The purpose of the feasibility study is to identify the working structure of UETPs, their needs, areas of activities, and to gather, in a general way, information concerning their future development and perspectives.

4.3.3 Student Placements

- ▶ Two conferences concerning student placements were organised (in Lappeenranta, Finland, 2/3 September 1991, and in Segovia, Spain, 7/8 November 1991). Both conferences provided complementary opportunities to promote and strengthen transnational student exchanges. Particularly successful was the Segovia conference, organised by the 'Fundacion Universidad-Empresa' in collaboration with the Commission of the European Communities. The conference was dedicated to generic aspects of the COMETT student placements schemes and to analysing its relationship with other educational programmes of the Commission, in particular with ERASMUS. The conference also provided essential information for a forthcoming guide on European student placements.
- ▶ Four projects received support to explore and develop electronic-mail and database facilities for the daily work of the Ba managers of the UETPs. The results of these projects were presented at the Segovia conference. These results will also provide the basis for a document on the exchange and coordination of information for the finalisation of coherent interactive projects in this area.

4.3.4 Actions for the promotion of industrial participation

- ▶ In the general context of targeting industry and SMEs, three projects were supported to examine and improve industrial participation in the Programme. The first of these projects focuses on the improvement of industry participation in the COMETT Programme in Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, while the second is concerned with the improvement of SME participation in the COMETT Programme in Iceland. The third of these projects concentrates on Northern Sweden and its increased participation of enterprises in the COMETT network.

4.3.5 Sectoral Studies

- ▶ Within the framework of Positive Actions a COMETT Sectoral Strategy scheme was launched in 1991. The first task of the scheme was to improve the understanding of the scope and range of COMETT projects in the most important COMETT sectors. The preparatory studies are the basis for the main part of the scheme which is the establishment of sectoral networks as foreseen in the Council Decision on COMETT II.

- ▶ Ten carefully selected COMETT sectoral UETPs were contracted (with allocations varying between 5,000 and 10,000 ECU) to examine the progress in the following ten sectors: Advanced Manufacturing Technology, Agro-food, Biomedical Engineering and Medical Technology, Biotechnology, Environment, Materials, Mechanical Engineering, Microelectronic Technology, Software Technology and Engineering, Technology and Innovation Management. The choice of these sectors was based on their importance in the 1990 and 1991 selection rounds. Since the 10 sectors represent together more than 40% of the COMETT projects, the results of the COMETT Sectoral Survey will provide the basis for some general conclusion.
- ▶ Part of the contract for the Sectoral Survey is the organisation of workshops. During 1991 Positive Action contracts were awarded to organise workshops in the following four areas: Microelectronics, Software Engineering, Biotechnology and Agrofood. On the occasion of the SITEF Fair (25 October 1991) two sectoral workshops on Environment and Agrofood were held, while during the COMETT Amsterdam conference a whole series of sectoral workshops took place.
- ▶ Within the broader framework of sectoral actions, a COMETT workshop was organised on the occasion of the SITEF Fair. This workshop addressed training needs in the Environment, Biotechnology and Technology Transfer areas with a view to develop in these areas a strong transeuropean network.

The COMETT Sectoral Survey will be the beginning of a transeuropean advanced technology training network that may have an impact on the supply and structure of training provision throughout the Community over the next decade.

4.4 Conferences

A general COMETT conference was held in Amsterdam (13-15 November 1991) with over 400 delegates attending. Entitled 'Towards new models of university-industry cooperation: the example of COMETT', the conference focused on two main themes - COMETT's experience in establishing university-industry cooperation, and the findings of the recent IRDAC report on Skills Shortages in Europe. The conference consisted of 2 plenary sessions and 17 parallel sessions. The first of the plenary sessions was devoted to the two main themes of university-industry cooperation and the role of industry in continuing technological education, while the other session focused on transcontinental differences in continuing technological education.

The conference demonstrated that COMETT is a crossing point for a large number of topics, varying from methodologies for training needs analysis to regional development policies or to problems in technology transfer. Another general conclusion from the conference was that there is a clear demand to continue improving university-industry cooperation and that there is a need for a programme like COMETT. The conference drew attention to the fact that 'true competitiveness does not come from having the technology but from having a workforce which is capable of exploiting that technology in the optimum way'. In the words of the Commission, the conference made the delegates realise afresh that it is 'such factors as human attitude and human capital that will largely determine the success or failure of their activities' and that 'it is this message which COMETT has succeeded in propagating'. - The proceedings of the conference will be published in 1992.

Conclusion: The Multi-faceted Character of COMETT

It must be emphasised that there is a strong interrelationship between all the activities described above, with the UETPs representing the agencies through which a great number of the transnational

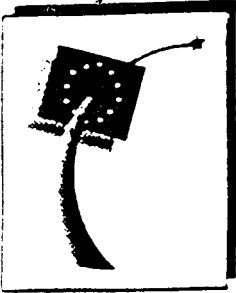
exchanges of students and personnel are being organised. The UETPs are furthermore particularly well placed to coordinate the development of training courses which respond to economic regional and sectoral needs. They are in a unique position to receive and/or give information and as such fulfil a 'broker' role suited to the multi-faceted character of COMETT.

Patently, COMETT covers a wide-ranging number of issues and problems. This is most evident when we refer not to individual activities, or separate Strands, but to *themes* that make use of more than one component of the Programme. These horizontal themes include, for example, the measures taken under Positive Actions, or the COMETT interaction with national CET (Continuing Education and Training) programmes, the role of open and distance learning in CET, skill needs analysis, women and technology, and technology transfer. Bringing a wide range of different and yet interrelated issues together, COMETT can in a very special way improve university-enterprise cooperation on a transnational basis. When in 1991 the ECOTEC Report commented on the transnational student exchange programmes, it stated what is applicable to the COMETT Programme as a whole, namely, that in its multi-faceted character its role goes far beyond COMETT, influencing and contributing to educational, economic, and social developments throughout the Community.

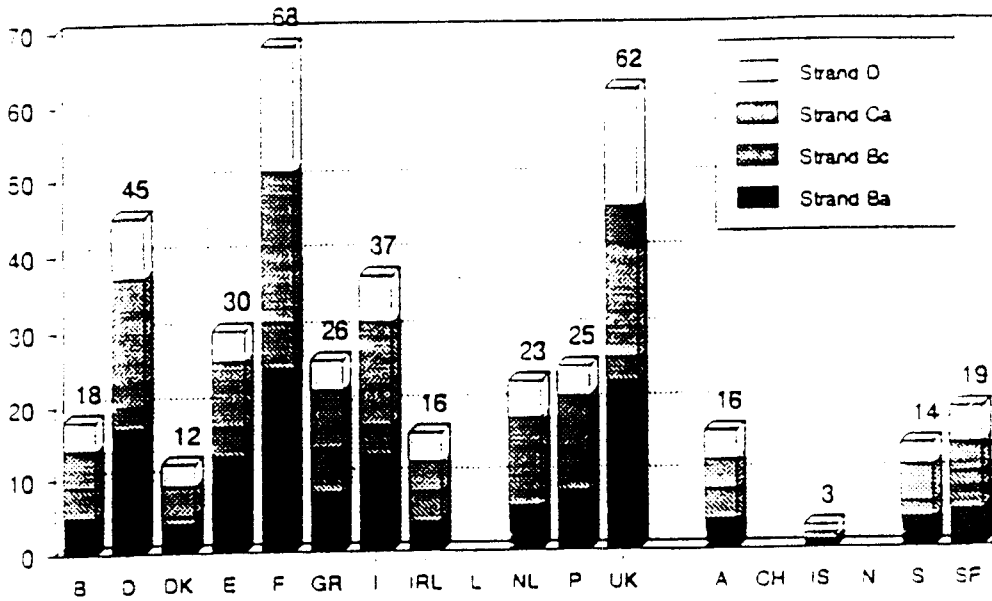
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ANNEX 1

Statistical Overview

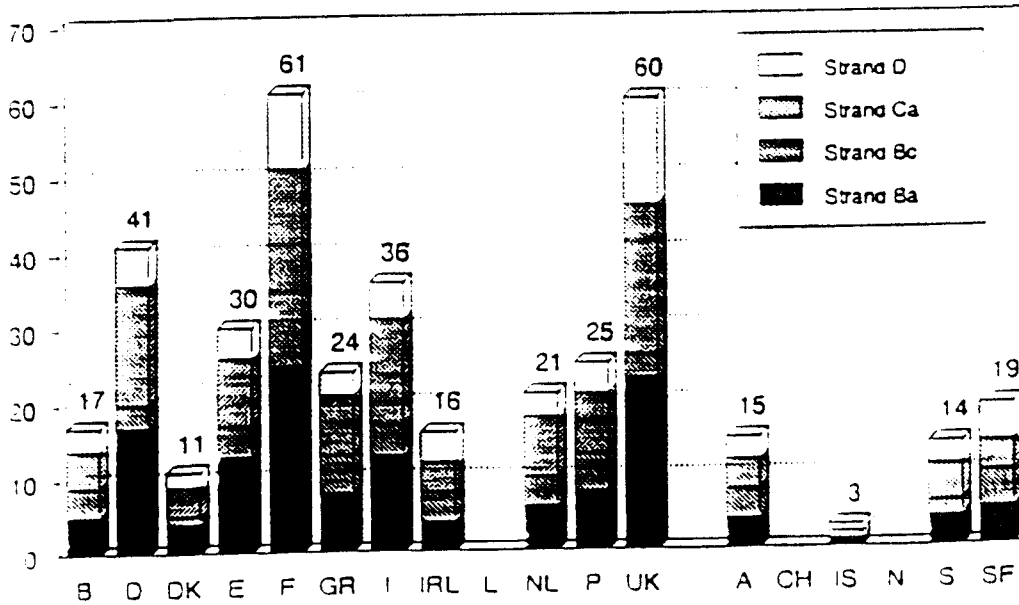


Number of projects submitted in 1991 Distribution by Strand and contracting country

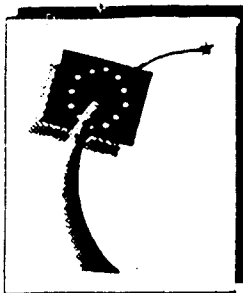


COMETT Office - February 1991 - T 1

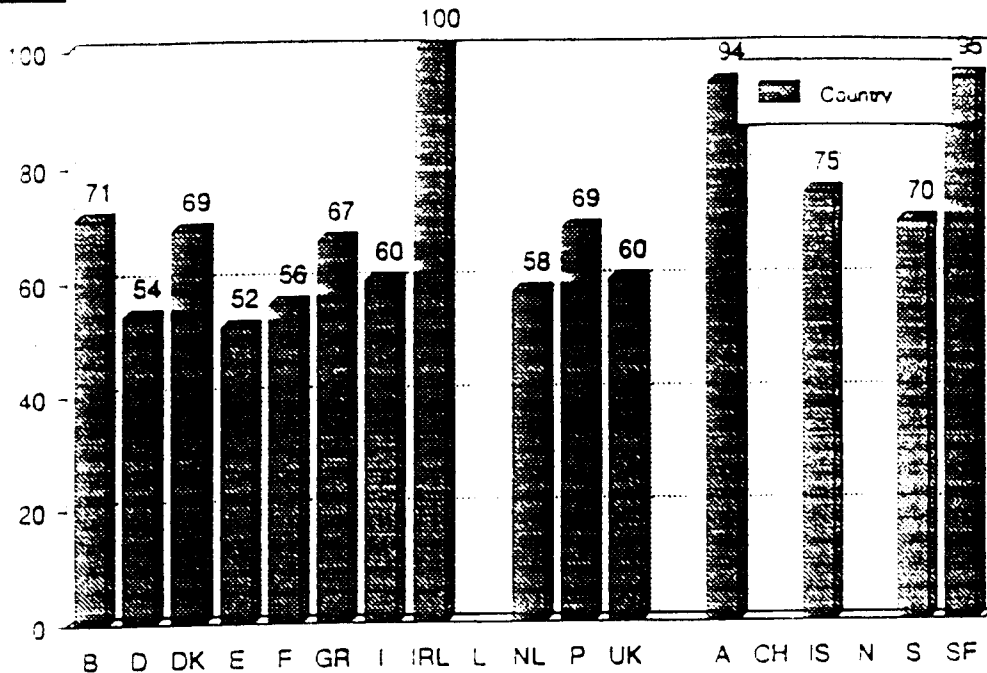
Projects accepted in 1991 Distribution by Strand and contracting country



COMETT Office - May 1991 - F 2

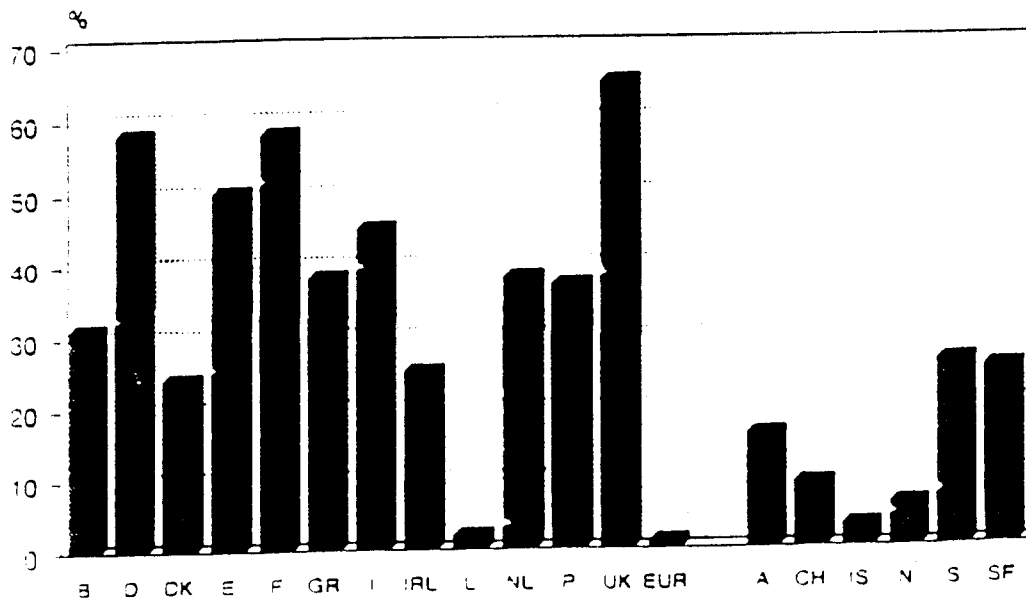


Response rate by contracting country Projects accepted in 1991

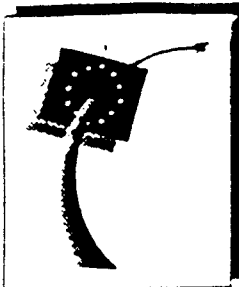


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Participation by country in projects accepted 1991 Call for Applications

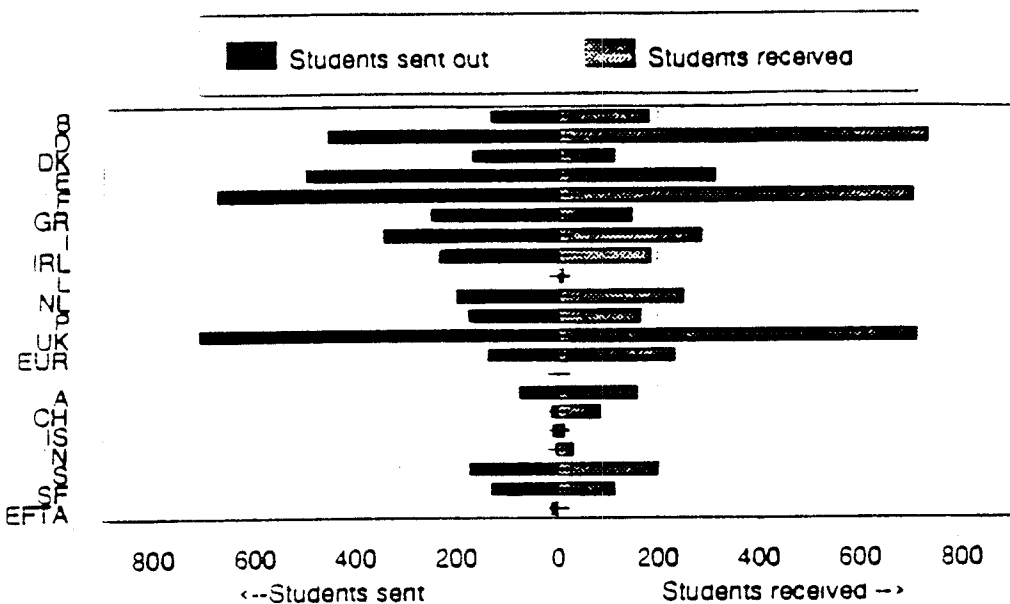


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Student exchanges - Strand Ba

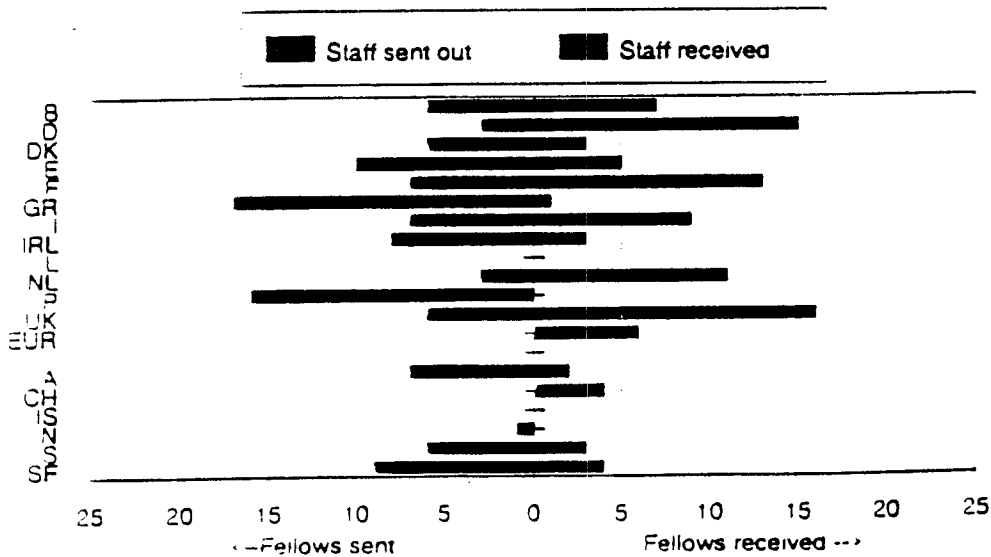
Inflows and Outflows
Projects accepted in 1991



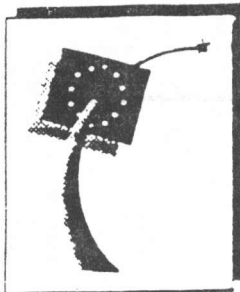
COMETT Office - May 1991 - T5.

Personnel exchanges - Strand Bc

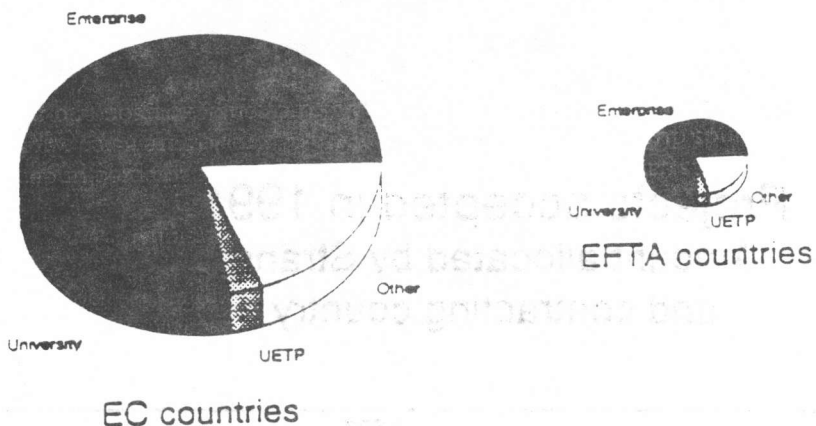
Inflows and Outflows
Projects accepted in 1991



COMETT Office - May 1991 - T 6

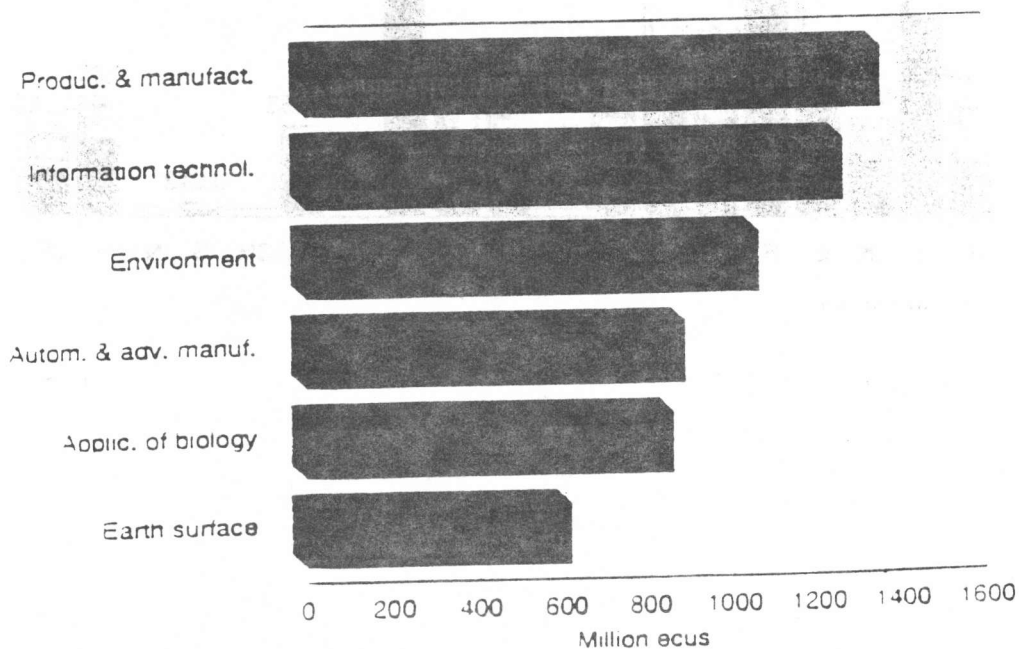


Number of organisations by type of organisation in projects accepted

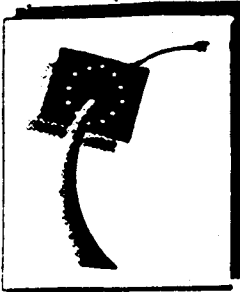


COMETT Office - May 1991 - T 7

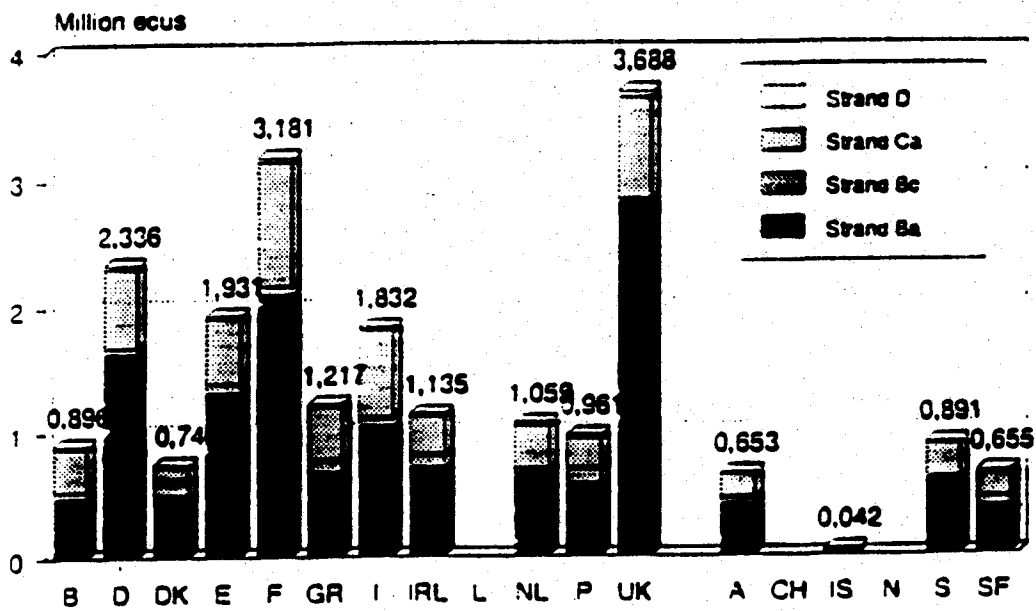
Distribution of allocations by Sector Projects accepted in 1991



COMETT Office - May 1991 - T 3



Projects accepted in 1991 Amount allocated by Strand and contracting country



COMETT Office - May 1991 - T 9

ANNEX 2

COMETT Publications 1991

COMETT Publications 1991

▶ **COMETT I Final Report of the Commission (1986 - 1990)**

This official report concerns the first phase of the COMETT Programme. It documents the background to the Programme, its rationale, structure and implementation, with particular regard to its impact in the different operational Strands. It is a synthesis of a great deal of documents, reports, surveys, studies, and analyses undertaken during the first operational phase.

▶ **COMETT Report of Activities 1990 - September 1991**

This document represents the Annual Report referred to by the terms of Article 5 of the Decision of the Council establishing the COMETT programme. The purpose is to formally record an account on the progress made in the implementation of the COMETT programme in 1990.

▶ **Development of COMETT I - Executive Summary**

This document is an internal monitoring report on COMETT I and covers the period 1987-89 during which COMETT projects were launched each year. Some of these projects were in fact operational until 1990. The conclusions offered in this report take account of the content and outputs of each project supported under the COMETT Programme.

▶ **COMETT II Project Compendium 1990 (English and French versions)**

The **Compendium** gives basic information on all COMETT projects accepted under all Strands and application rounds during the first year of COMETT II. Projects are listed with the project title, a short indication of the nature of the project and the contact person and address.

▶ **COMETT Bulletin**

No 10 February 1991
No 11 June 1991
No 12 November 1991

The COMETT Bulletin appears three times a year and contains a range of articles relevant to COMETT. It gives important information on COMETT projects and is directed towards all organisations interested in the programme.

▶ **Application Package 1992 (November 1991)**

The Application Package is addressed to those intending to make an application for support under the COMETT programme. It concentrates on detailed guidelines for submitting applications and includes the application forms to be used for submitting projects under the current Call for Applications.

▶ **COMETT Courses Register (November 1991- Pilot issue)**

Arranged under technology sectors, this document gives details on current courses supported by COMETT in the Member States and EFTA countries.

ANNEX 3

COMETT Committee Members

COMETT EFTA Joint Committees Members

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ANNEX 4

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