



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 09.04.1997
COM(97) 155 final

96/ 0034 (COD)

OPINION OF THE COMMISSION

pursuant to Article 189 b (2) (d) of the EC Treaty,
on the European Parliament's amendments
to the Council's common position regarding the

proposal for a
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION

adapting for the second time

**Decision No 1110/94/EC concerning the Fourth Framework Programme of the
European Community of activities in the field of research,
technological development and demonstration (1994-1998)**

1. Introduction

On 2 February 1996 the Commission submitted to the Council and Parliament a proposal for a Decision adapting for the second time Decision No 1110/94/EC concerning the Fourth RTD Framework Programme, as amended by Decision 616/96/EC. This proposal for additional funding [COM(96)12] was subject to revision of the financial perspective.

The European Parliament gave its opinion on this proposal on 18 June 1996.

In the absence of revision of the financial perspective, the Commission revised its proposal by letter dated 13 November 1996 from Mrs Cresson to the Council and the European Parliament and confirmed at the Council meeting on research on 5 December 1996. Without prejudice to the conclusions of the budget procedure for 1997, the revised proposal cut the amount of additional funding to ECU 100 million for selective refinancing of specific themes under the first activity in the Fourth Framework Programme.

On this basis, the Council adopted its common position on 27 January 1997.

The Commission gave its opinion on the Council's common position in its communication dated 27 January 1997 to the European Parliament [SEC(97)107 final]. On 13 March 1997 the European Parliament concluded its second reading and proposed five amendments to the common position.

2. Commission opinion

First, the Commission is pleased to note the special effort made by Parliament to complete its second reading within one month of receiving the common position. The Commission shares Parliament's opinion on the urgent need for a definitive decision on the additional funding to bring it into operation and avoid any interference with the discussions on the Fifth Framework Programme.

The Commission is also interested to note that Parliament opted to make a limited number of amendments on second reading. This was possible because the positions had already been brought closer together in the course of the codecision procedure. In this way, following an amendment proposed by Parliament on first reading, the Council's common position included the theme "detection and destruction of landmines", a change endorsed by Parliament. Parliament also accepted the urgent need and importance of stepping up the research on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, as advocated in the common position. Despite the divergence between the Council and Parliament on the overall amount and breakdown of the additional funding, the Commission therefore considers that the bases for a definitive agreement exist. In order to allow a compromise to emerge between Parliament and the Council in the next few weeks, the Commission wishes to take none of Parliament's amendments into account at this stage, greatly though it sympathizes with their objectives. The Commission feels that the amendments should be considered and discussed constructively within the Council. Against this

background, the Commission also plans to leave a sufficient margin in its preliminary draft budget for 1998 to enable the budgetary authority to go beyond the ECU 100 million already entered in the 1997 budget.

In conclusion, the Commission reconfirms its will to contribute to formulation of a satisfactory, comprehensive agreement between the Council and Parliament.

ISSN 0254-1475

COM(97) 155 final

DOCUMENTS

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15 01 16

Catalogue number : CB-CO-97-143-EN-C

ISBN 92-78-18110-2

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

L-2985 Luxembourg