

European research area: activities within the scope of the EC framework programme 2002-2006

2001/0053(COD) - 22/11/2001 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission presents an amended proposal, which take up a large proportion of the Parliament's amendments. On the structure of the thematic priority areas, the Commission accepts the changes, namely:

- the organisation of priority one into two sections, one centred on genomics and its applications for health, the other on major diseases.
- the organisation of priority six into three sections covering sustainable energy systems, sustainable surface transport, and global changes and ecosystems.

On the scope and content of the priority areas, the Commission accepts many of the clarifications requested and some additions. On the instruments, the Commission accepts the principle of a smooth transition from "traditional" to "new" instruments and the idea of a fourth instrument in the spirit of a "stairway to excellence", which would be in two forms: "specific targeted projects" and "networking of research activities", which would be applicable to all types of participants. While the framework programme will be implemented mainly through "integrated projects" and "networks of excellence", part of the research actions within the thematic priorities will be carried out through this fourth instrument. A degressive approach will be followed, ensuring a progressive increase in the utilisation of the new instrument. As regards the section of the programme entitled "anticipating the EU's scientific and technological needs", Parliament has proposed changes to the budget and scope of these activities which, in the Commission's view, would make it impossible to achieve important Community goals. Two parts are particularly affected:

- Research in support of Community policies and responding to emerging needs where the considerable budget cut envisaged would make it impossible to carry out necessary research in support of Community policies in areas such as agriculture and forestry, fisheries, public health and protection of cultural heritage.
- specific international co-operation activities where the proposed transfer to the human resources and mobility part of the programme would make it impossible to fulfil the Community's political commitments in this area.

On the budget the Commission maintains the overall amount, but there are some changes in the breakdown in the directions suggested by Parliament.