


Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1998/2128(COS)	Procedure completed
Research, development RTD, innovation: reinforcing economic cohesion and industrial competitiveness		
Subject 3.40.14 Industrial competitiveness 3.50.01 European research area and policy		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	REGI Regional Policy		25/11/1997
		ARE DE LASSUS SAINT GENIÈS Henri	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
Council of the European Union	ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy		23/09/1998
		PSE IZQUIERDO COLLADO Juan de Dios	
	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Industry	2043	13/11/1997

Key events			
13/11/1997	Debate in Council	2043	
27/05/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0275	Summary
14/09/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/01/1999	Vote in committee		Summary
21/01/1999	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0027/1999	
24/02/1999	Debate in Parliament		
25/02/1999	Decision by Parliament	T4-0140/1999	Summary
25/02/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/06/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	

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Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
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Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/4/10208

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1998)0275	27/05/1998	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES1440/1998 OJ C 040 15.02.1999, p. 0012	02/12/1998	ESC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0027/1999 OJ C 150 28.05.1999, p. 0004	21/01/1999	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0140/1999 OJ C 153 01.06.1999, p. 0015-0048	25/02/1999	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0278/1998 OJ C 198 14.07.1999, p. 0041	10/03/1999	CofR	

Research, development RTD, innovation: reinforcing economic cohesion and industrial competitiveness

PURPOSE : Commission Communication to the Council, European Parliament, Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled 'Reinforcing Cohesion and Competitiveness through Research, Technological Development and Innovation'. **CONTENT :** Economic and social cohesion is enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty together with EMU and the completion of the Single Market. It is further underlined by the Amsterdam summit Resolution on Growth and Employment and by the November 1997 Jobs Summit, held in Luxembourg, which adds the requirement that priority should be given to the fight against unemployment. The Commission's Agenda 2000 document confirms that Structural Funds should continue to encourage competitive development and sustainable job-creating growth in the less-favoured regions. In order to foster diversification, restore economic dynamism and promote an active business culture, specific support measures should be put in place. These should include support for infrastructure, technological, financial and organisational innovation, SMEs and human resources, include equality of opportunity. Agenda 2000 also requires that account be taken of the prospects of the candidate countries. It recognises that knowledge policies - research, innovation, education and training - should play an important part in bridging the gap between scientific and technological excellence, on the one hand, and industrial and commercial successes on the other. Stimulating innovation in SMEs is regarded as particularly important. The common objective is to reinforce the competitive capacity of less favoured regions by ensuring that RTD and innovation policies are integrated within the productive fabric of the region. In order to do so, it is necessary to increase the awareness of national and regional authorities and economic players to : - strengthen the capacity of regions to integrate RTD and innovation into their economic development - improve the learning processes by which firms can become more innovative - assist firms and institutions to respond to the difficulties they face in adapting to new forms of work organisation - better co-ordinate sectoral policies at national level in supporting regional development efforts. The Communication also seeks to demonstrate that the complementary use of Community instruments - the Structural Funds and the Framework Programme for RTD - can contribute to cohesion and competitiveness. Moreover, candidate countries (Cyprus and Central and Eastern European countries) too can benefit from experience of EU support for RTD and Innovation in less favoured regions.?

Research, development RTD, innovation: reinforcing economic cohesion and industrial competitiveness

The committee adopted the report by Henri de LASSUS SAINT GENI-S (ERA, F) on the Commission's paper on reinforcing cohesion and competitiveness through research, technological development and innovation. The rapporteur says that the continued existence of major regional disparities in terms of RTD between the Member States becomes glaringly obvious when one compares differences in per capita public expenditure (ranging from 13 to 1) with differences in per capita income (5 to 1). For example, the technology gap between Ireland, Greece and Portugal on the one hand and Germany and France on the other is more than double the difference in their income. The gap in RTD investment is even greater: 1 to 100 in the case of Macedonia and Berlin. The report calls for a distribution of research funding which will help stimulate a culture of innovation throughout Europe, in particular in the least-favoured regions (LFRs) of the EU, including the outermost and island regions, as laid down in the Amsterdam Treaty. In addition, the simultaneous implementation of the fifth RTD framework programme and reform of the Structural Funds offers an opportunity to create a high degree of synergy between research policy and regional policy, for which purpose an integrated approach between the two could be devised, harnessing them for the benefit of policies on industry, human resources and support for SMEs which are co-financed under the Structural Funds. This is all the more necessary given that two of the areas of the fifth framework programme relate directly to factors crucial to economic growth in the LFRs, i.e. the promotion of innovation and

the development of a user-friendly information society. Overall the rapporteur takes a positive view of the Commission's paper, praising its new approach to the problems of cohesion, but says much remains to be done in order to clarify these issues over the coming years and to develop a genuine spirit of innovation in the LFRs. ?

Research, development RTD, innovation: reinforcing economic cohesion and industrial competitiveness

The Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Mr. de Lassus Saint Geniès (ERA, F) supporting increasing competitiveness through more investments in R&D. The resolution emphasises the importance of EU R&D policy helping the regions. It calls on the Commission, when allocating certain types of funding to innovation under the RTD framework programme, to observe award criteria weighted towards the less favoured regions. It also calls for the following : - the training and mobility of scientists and technologists between less and more prosperous regions to be improved; - the Commission and the Member States to establish procedures for stimulating the supply of risk capital to SMEs in the less favoured regions referred to in the Treaty of Amsterdam in support of technological development; - the Commission to propose relevant procedures to evaluate the feasibility thresholds above which the spirit of innovation and competitiveness can be developed and to use evaluation criteria defined in agreement with the scientific and economic community and submitted to Parliament and the Council for a decision; - the Commission to assess periodically and systematically - at the very least at the end of each framework programme and prior to the proposal for a new framework programme - progress achieved regarding the actual participation of groups from less favoured regions in the framework programme and regarding the benefits derived by socio-economic agents in these regions from the actions and the results of the framework programme; - the Commission to draw up precise indicators of the state of RTD and innovation applicable to the regions in order to improve the monitoring and assessment of the impact of structural interventions in this area.?