


Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1997/2063(COS)	Procedure completed
Benchmarking, instrument to economic actors and public authorities		
Subject 3.40.14 Industrial competitiveness		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy		18/06/1997
		PSE MURPHY Simon Francis	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
Council of the European Union	ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Industry	2001	24/04/1997

Key events			
16/04/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0153	Summary
24/04/1997	Debate in Council	2001	
18/07/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/11/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
26/11/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0387/1997	
18/12/1997	Debate in Parliament		
19/12/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0646/1997	Summary
19/12/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
19/01/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2063(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ECON/4/08813

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1997)0153	16/04/1997	EC	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0245/1997 OJ C 064 27.02.1998, p. 0001	19/11/1997	CofR	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0387/1997 OJ C 014 19.01.1998, p. 0004	26/11/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0646/1997 OJ C 014 19.01.1998, p. 0396-0406	19/12/1997	EP	Summary

Benchmarking, instrument to economic actors and public authorities

OBJECTIVE: this communication from the European Commission seeks to propose measures to put the method of comparative evaluation of competitive performances ("benchmarking") into practice. CONTENT: in its communication of 9 October 1996 (COS0491), the European Commission advocated widespread use of benchmarking in the economy and in society in order to compare performances in key areas and factors which determine economic success, together with the development and use of benchmarking within the framework of the European strategy on employment. Benchmarking may be implemented at corporate level, sectoral level (e.g. the chemical or automobile industry) or at the level of the general economic or social environment (in particular the cost of factors, infrastructures, qualifications, innovation, the environment). Although benchmarking initiatives may be taken by anyone in the economic sector, the added value of the Community dimension is that it provides the expertise to develop and apply more complicated methodologies, makes optimum use of experience, pools the know-how of the various national systems and motivates the Member States. This is what the Commission intends to do in the field of benchmarking at the level of the general economic and social environment by developing pilot projects in the following areas: a) new technological and organizational context; b) financing for innovation, especially intellectual property; c) logistics and transport; d) development of human resources. Implementing these pilot projects will result in a working method which guarantees transparency, dialogue and expertise. The main elements of this working method are as follows: - the Commission will set up a high-level panel on benchmarking to help it lay down priorities, organize the participation of industry at a practical level, assist the Commission in interpreting results with Community implications and transmit to industry the results which concern it; - the group of directors-general of industry will monitor all the work and ensure that the approach is politically coherent; - finally, on the basis of the inventory of experiments conducted by the Member States, the Commission will call on public- and private-sector economic research centres with expertise in this field to set up a network of expertise in order to facilitate the implementation of benchmarking. The results will be made available to all the Member States, Community institutions and interested parties and will provide food for regular debate on industrial competitiveness.?

Benchmarking, instrument to economic actors and public authorities

In its report by Mr Simon MURPHY (PES, UK) on the Commission Communication on Benchmarking the performance on the European Industry, the Committee full shares the Commission's view that benchmarking is a crucial tool to monitor and improve European competitiveness. Benchmarking is a technique for identifying inefficiencies by making comparisons between economic operators who pursue the same objectives but achieve different results. In the present case, the aim is to try to identify why the European Industry is less competitive than its Japanese or American rivals. The Committee welcomes in particular the Commission's decision to set up a high level group on benchmarking composed of industrialists, trade unions and consumers but calls also for SMEs to be involved. Similarly, the Committee calls for the EP to be directly involved in the Group through observer status for a small number of MEPs. The Committee wants benchmarking activities to be focused on the general business environment, as this forms the basis for the creation of a favourable economic, social and legislative climate. Thus the definition of industrial competitiveness benchmarking should be as broad as possible, and not focus solely on wage-price competition. Although benchmarking mostly is used to identify problems, the Committee suggests that benchmarking techniques could be used to study why the EU in sectors such as food, drink, tobacco and furniture outperform their Japanese and US counterparts in terms of industrial added value. ?

Benchmarking, instrument to economic actors and public authorities

In adopting the report by Mr Simon Francis MURPHY (PSE, UK) Parliament considered that benchmarking was a basic instrument for guiding and improving European competitiveness. Parliament welcomed the Commission's proposal concerning the establishment of a high-level group on benchmarking, composed of industrialists, trade unions and consumers but also called for SMEs to be included through participants specifically representing them. It also asked that the European Parliament be directly involved with the work of this group through the granting of observer status to a small number of its Members. Parliament also asked the Commission to: - introduce an extra pilot project to investigate why certain European sectors such as food, drink, tobacco and furniture all outperformed their Japanese and American counterparts for

industrial added value; -explore the benefits of benchmarking through the implementation of best practice on the employment market (cost of labour, adaptability of the workforce, investment in human resources); - investigate the possibility of an additional benchmarking project on infrastructure investment in the Union. ?