


# Procedure file

Basic information		
SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)	<a href="#">1998/0196(SYN)</a>	Procedure completed
Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase		
Subject 4.40.15 Vocational education and training		

Key players			
European Parliament	Former committee for opinion		
	<b>BUDG</b> Budgets		24/09/1998
		PPE <a href="#">CHRISTODOULOU Eftymios</a>	
	<b>JURI</b> Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights		24/06/1998
		V <a href="#">ULLMANN Wolfgang</a>	
	<b>FEMM</b> Women's Rights	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	<a href="#">General Affairs</a>	<a href="#">2173</a>	26/04/1999
	<a href="#">Environment</a>	<a href="#">2153</a>	20/12/1998
	<a href="#">Education, Youth, Culture and Sport</a>	<a href="#">2147</a>	04/12/1998
	Social Affairs	<a href="#">2145</a>	01/12/1998
	Social Affairs	<a href="#">2127</a>	27/10/1998

Key events			
01/09/1998	Legislative proposal published	COM(1998)0330	Summary
18/09/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/10/1998	Debate in Council	<a href="#">2127</a>	
27/10/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
27/10/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	<a href="#">A4-0373/1998</a>	
05/11/1998	Debate in Parliament		
05/11/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0639/1998	Summary
01/12/1998	Debate in Council	<a href="#">2145</a>	

02/12/1998	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1998)0697	Summary
21/12/1998	Council position published	<a href="#">13380/2/1998</a>	Summary
14/01/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
09/03/1999	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		
09/03/1999	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	<a href="#">A4-0108/1999</a>	
23/03/1999	Debate in Parliament		
23/03/1999	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T4-0213/1999	Summary
23/04/1999	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1999)0194	Summary
26/04/1999	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
26/04/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
11/06/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

### Technical information

Procedure reference	1998/0196(SYN)
Procedure type	SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 163; Rules of Procedure EP 050; EC before Amsterdam E 127
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/4/10665

### Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal	<a href="#">COM(1998)0330</a> <a href="#">OJ C 309 09.10.1998, p. 0009</a>	01/09/1998	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	<a href="#">CES1308/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 410 30.12.1998, p. 0006</a>	15/10/1998	ESC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	<a href="#">A4-0373/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 359 23.11.1998, p. 0004</a>	27/10/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T4-0639/1998 <a href="#">OJ C 359 23.11.1998, p. 0013-0044</a>	05/11/1998	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion	<a href="#">CDR0226/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 051 22.02.1999, p. 0077</a>	18/11/1998	CofR	
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1998)0697	02/12/1998	EC	Summary
Council position	<a href="#">13380/2/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 049 22.02.1999, p. 0065</a>	21/12/1998	CSL	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position	SEC(1998)2235	06/01/1999	EC	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	<a href="#">A4-0108/1999</a> <a href="#">OJ C 177 22.06.1999, p. 0003</a>	09/03/1999	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading	T4-0213/1999	23/03/1999	EP	Summary

Modified legislative proposal	<a href="#">COM(1999)0194</a>	23/04/1999	EC	Summary
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2002)0315</a>	14/06/2002	EC	Summary
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2004)0152</a>	08/03/2004	EC	Summary
Follow-up document	<a href="#">COM(2009)0159</a>	06/04/2009	EC	Summary

#### Additional information

European Commission

[EUR-Lex](#)

#### Final act

[Decision 1999/382](#)  
[OJ L 146 11.06.1999, p. 0033](#) Summary

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

**OBJECTIVE:** to propose the 2nd stage of the Community vocational training action programme "Leonardo da Vinci" for the period 2000-2004.

**CONTENT:** the present proposal seeks to introduce the 2nd stage of the LEONARDO programme for the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2004. The financial statement attached to the proposal contains an indicative amount of EUR 1 billion for the implementation of the programme during the period in question. By supporting and supplementing action taken by Member States in this field, LEONARDO II will contribute to the Community's knowledge policy by intervening in the field of vocational training. The aim is to create a "Europe of knowledge" which fosters lifelong education and allows full exercise of citizenship. One of the major innovations of LEONARDO II is the special attention given to fostering innovation (LEONARDO II is to act as a "European innovation laboratory") and the launch of "European knowledge centres" allowing players and beneficiaries of other Community youth education programmes to group at local or regional level. The proposal also seeks to improve the definition of the players and beneficiaries of the programme. Internally, the programme has been rationalised by limiting the number of actions (3 instead of 19 as in LEONARDO I) and by maximising decentralised management of the actions. Structure of the programme: LEONARDO II has 3 objectives: - to improve and strengthen the social and occupational integration of young people, particularly through work-linked training and apprenticeship; - to expand and develop access to quality continuing training and access to lifelong skills, particularly in order to consolidate technological and organisational innovation and investment in training; - to support the vocational training systems to assist those in difficult circumstances owing to outdated skills to find employment and to better insert themselves in the labour market. These aims will be implemented through 6 types of transnational measures (instead of 23) with experimental demonstration actions: 1) physical mobility of young people undergoing training: the Commission envisages important quantitative development of this action by strengthening work-linked training and apprenticeship (with provisions to strengthen work-linked training in the SME and craft sectors); 2) "virtual" mobility in order to promote the use of new information and communication technologies in the context of vocational training; 3) innovatory transnational pilot projects designed to develop new training products and processes (skills accreditation etc.) based on the demonstration actions; 4) Community networks for pooling Community expertise and disseminating the results obtained from pilot projects which have resulted in a theme of common interest; 5) promotion of occupational language skills through new products and new training methods and a better understanding of different cultures; 6) Community terms of reference for a more systematic and programmed approach to various studies, surveys and analyses in order to make reference works available to decision-makers and both sides of industry. Specific provision is also made for accompanying measures and joint actions with a view to creating synergy with other Community programmes relating to training policies via "European knowledge centres". The programme must be consistent with other Community initiatives or programmes (SOCRATES II, YOUTH, research programmes, cultural programmes, employment, SMEs etc.) and with action by the European Social Fund. Particular attention will be granted to equal opportunities for men and women. The Commission will manage the programme in close cooperation with the Member States. Selection procedures have been limited (2 calls for proposals) and decentralised management has been strengthened (Member States are required to implement integrated management structures which will guarantee the operational implementation of the actions). Only experimental or demonstration actions will be selected under a centralised procedure (e.g. "second chance schools" or "skills accreditation"). As far as comitology is concerned, the Commission will be assisted by a committee of representatives from the Member States with knowledge of the subject in question. Both sides of industry will be consulted in certain cases. The programme will be open to associated central and east European countries, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and EEA countries under a financial procedure yet to be defined. Cooperation will also be strengthened with non-Community countries and the relevant international organisations. As far as evaluation and monitoring of LEONARDO II are concerned, the Commission plans to publish an initial interim report by 30 June 2003 and a final report by 31 December 2005. LEONARDO II will be continually monitored during implementation in conjunction with the Member States.?

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

By adopting a report by Susan WADDINGTON (PES, UK) the Committee gave the green light to the second phase of the Community vocational training programme "Leonardo da Vinci". It adopted a number of amendments with a view of making the text clearer and stronger in substance. The Committee argued that the duration of the programme should be extended to match the next financial perspective 2000-2006 in order to provide a stable financial and political framework for vocational training policy. Consequently, the extension should lead to an

increase in financing. The Commission has proposed that the programme would last five years (2000-2004). The Committee stressed that the Leonardo programme should develop quality, foster innovation and promote the European dimension in national vocational training systems. The Commission should facilitate the transfer and dissemination of innovative practices with the help of the European Social Fund. Priority should be given to measures which give access to training for people vulnerable to exclusion. Leonardo should be open to all public and private organisations, including non-profit organisations. The Committee would also like to see relevant NGOs participating in the dialogue concerning the implementation of the programme. In addition to the Commissions proposals for the concrete measures to be implemented within the programme, the Committee suggested, inter alia, that Leonardo should offer support for the mobility of people undergoing their first or second course of training as well as trainers and human resource managers. It should promote accompanying research for innovation projects and the use of new information technologies. Furthermore, the Committee stressed the importance of the collection, analysis and dissemination of Community statistical data in the field of vocational training.?

---

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

In adopting the report by Mrs Susan Waddington (PSE, UK) on the second phase of the Leonardo programme Parliament called for this programme to run from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2006, which would correspond to the duration of the next financial perspectives and would provide a stable financial and political framework for Community vocational training policy. Parliament considered that Leonardo should contribute to the promotion of a Europe of knowledge by fostering the implementation of a European area for lifelong education and training and encouraging the development of the knowledge and skills likely to foster employability, thus allowing the full exercise of active citizenship. It should seek to develop quality, foster innovation and promote the European dimension in national vocational training systems by means of transnational measures: 1) by enabling people in initial training to acquire the skills and competencies necessary to increase their employability; 2) by promoting the lifelong acquisition of qualifications and facilitating the adaptability of workers; 3) by promoting entrepreneurship through cooperation activities between training institutions and enterprises (SMEs). Parliament also stressed that priority should be given to those vulnerable to exclusion. Leonardo should also seek to remove all forms of discrimination and inequality and facilitate the vocational and social integration of disabled people. In the specific aims of the programme Parliament stressed: - support for mobility of people undergoing their first or second course of training, trainers and training managers, with a view to developing and innovating new work-linked training opportunities; - promotion of the use of and access to new information and communication technologies; - support for and development of scientific research relating to innovation projects; - collection, analysis, evaluation and dissemination of comparable Community statistical data. Parliament also called for this programme to be aimed particularly at both sides of industry and their organisations at all levels, non-profit-making and voluntary bodies, undertakings and businesses, companies and consortia, particularly SMEs and the craft sector, and public and private sector establishments. It stressed that priority should be given to persons who had any kind of difficulties in participating in the programme. As far as comitology was concerned, Parliament was in favour of an advisory committee. It called for greater coordination with the European Training Foundation and the relevant NGOs in the vocational training sector. Lastly it called on the Commission to submit by 30 June 2005 at the latest an interim report on the implementation of Leonardo and by 2007 a final report, dealing with the measures taken by the programme to combat all forms of discrimination. Many amendments were also adopted in the annex to the programme to strengthen the Community aspects of the measures and to respect the principle of equality of access to the programme. ?

---

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

The Commission have accepted in full or in part 44 of the European Parliament's amendments which : - strengthen the programme's contribution to promoting a Europe of knowledge and to the overall objective of developing the quality, innovation and the European dimension of training and, in order to make these objectives more explicit, of clarifying the relevant measures and procedures while ensuring that the actions supported under the programme retain a transnational character; - supplement the initial text and include certain details; - clarify the elements of complementarity between actions taken under Leonardo da Vinci and action taken under the European Social Fund and strengthen the links with the European employment strategy; - make it clearer that the programme is open to the participation of all age groups; - strengthen complementarity with policies to remove all forms of discrimination and promote equal opportunities; - make explicit reference to the NGOs in order to facilitate their access to the programme; The Commission rejects those amendments which : - modify the duration of the programme, preferring to maintain its proposal that the programme should run for 5 years ; - relate to the rules of committee procedure, the arrangements for consultation of Community institutions or budgetary rules.?

---

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

The Council common position takes account of a number of significant amendments proposed by the European Parliament and retained by the Commission in its amended proposal (25 amendments accepted entirely or in part by the Council out of 42 retained by the Commission + 2 amendments initially rejected by the Commission). These amendments concern the following areas: - clarification of the objectives and measures of the programme; - opening the programme's measures to members of the public of any age; - more explicit reference to new technologies; - allowing NGOs to take part in LEONARDO; - involving SMEs in the implementation of the programme; - reinforcing the account to be taken of the principles of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. However, the Council did not accept amendments relating to access to the programme for disabled people, the priority to be given to disadvantaged people and clarification of the means by which compatibility will be ensured between actions undertaken by LEONARDO and Structural Fund actions. The Council is much less insistent with regard to certain social aspects underlined by the European Parliament, such as access for persons who may be affected by exclusion, rejecting all forms of discrimination and inequality or "secondary training". Nor is it in favour of an overly strong involvement of the social partners in the implementation of the programme. The major innovations incorporated by the Council into its common position relate to the following elements: 1) the length of the programme: the Council has opted, like the Parliament, for a programme of 7 years instead of 5 years (to correspond to the next financial perspective); 2) the LEONARDO budget: the budget retained by the Council is EUR 1,550 million over 7 years instead of EUR 1,000 million over 5 years; 3) the insertion of minimum annual thresholds by measure for the annual allocation of the programme's budget; 4) the procedures for selecting projects, notably procedure B containing 2 stages for the selection of projects.?

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

---

The Commission expresses a number of reservations with regard to the Council's common position in the following areas: - length of the programme: the Commission considers that a period of 7 years for the LEONARDO programme may make the objectives and means of access to the programme too inflexible, whereas it is operating in an area subject to important developments, which require an approach based on anticipation, adaptability and constant innovation; - budget: according to the Commission, the budget proposed by the Council does not sufficiently reflect the priority given to education and training in Agenda 2000 (applying the same priority criteria over a 7 year period, all other things being equal, would have led the Commission to propose a budget of EUR 1,566 million rather than EUR 1,150 million as proposed by the Council). The Commission recalls that the budget it proposed is in line with the constraints on future financial perspectives currently being negotiated; - minimum thresholds by action: although only indicative and subject to revision, such thresholds may make implementation of LEONARDO inflexible and reduce its ability to adapt to new requirements; - procedure for selecting projects: the Commission fears that the multiplicity of assessments of projects proposed within the framework of procedure B will lead to a confusion of responsibilities between the various levels of decision-making with regard to projects (the Commission itself, the Member States, national agencies and the programme committee). Finally, the Commission regrets that the common position makes such weak reference to the Structural Funds when complementarity between actions under LEONARDO and actions under the Funds is very important in the context of this proposal. Nevertheless, the Commission has decided to accept the Council's text in order to ensure a speedy decision on LEONARDO (the programme must be adopted by 1 January 2000).?

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

---

The Parliament adopted the Council's common position on the second phase of the Leonardo Programme subject to a number of amendments. The rapporteur was Ms. Susan Waddington (UK, PES). The amendments seek to ensure quality training and to tighten up controls over the programme in view of the fact that it had been singled out for detailed scrutiny by the Independent Enquiry Committee into fraud which had discovered 'mismanagement, fraud, secrecy and nepotism'.?

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

---

After examining the amendments put forward by the European Parliament on second reading, the Commission was able to take on board 30 of the 31 proposed amendments entirely, partly or in substance. These amendments strengthen its initial proposal, are in line with its amended proposal and flesh out and complete the Council's Common Position. The amendments accepted by the by the Commission aim at : - strengthening the "life-long education and training" dimension, thereby lessening the importance of the young and opening up the programme to all ages; - reintroducing references to the Structural Funds, more especially the European Social Fund, and the possible means of getting complementarity between them and the Leonardo da Vinci II programme; - combating exclusion and improving access to the programme's measures for disadvantaged groups, in particular the disabled, by taking account of the specific needs, so as to benefit from mobility measures; - guaranteeing a process of monitoring and regular evaluation of the programme and of the instruments needed to monitor the various measures, in particular mobility; - speeding up the process of selecting proposals and narrowing the gap between launching the calls and informing promoters about the result of selecting pre-proposals and full proposals; - submitting to procedure C the proposals under the measure "transnational networks"; - laying down the role and tasks of the national management structures; - reintroducing the text modified proposal or fleshing out and completing the text of the common position. The amendment rejected by the Commission is the amendment 34 concerning the resources to be made available for the implementation of the programme and the exclusion of having recourse to the services of a Technical Assistance Office (TOA).?

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

---

**PURPOSE:** to establish the second phase of the Community vocational training action programme "Leonardo da Vinci" (LEONARDO II) for the period 01/01/2000 to 31/12/2006. **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** Council decision 1999/382/EC **CONTENT:** The main objectives of the programme are to: 1) improve the skills and competences of people, especially young people, in initial vocational training at all levels; 2) improve the quality of, and access to, continuing vocational training and the life-long acquisition of skills and competences; 3) promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation, with a view to improving competitiveness and entrepreneurship. These objectives are to be achieved by means of support for transnational mobility of people undergoing vocational training, pilot projects based on transnational partnerships to develop innovation and quality in vocational training, promotion of language competences, transnational networks facilitating the exchange of experience and good practice and the development and updating of reference material. The decision lays down a financial reference amount for the implementation of the programme from 2000 to 2006 of EURO 1,150 million. Access to the programme will be open to all public and/or private bodies and institutions involved in vocational training (notably, SMEs and the craft industry, research centres and bodies, trade organisations...). The programme will also be open to: - the EFTA/EEA countries in accordance with the EEA agreement; - the associated central and eastern European countries (CEECs) in accordance with the Europe agreements, their additional protocols and the decisions of the respective Association Councils; - Cyprus, under the same conditions as the EFTA/EEA countries and funded by additional appropriations in accordance with procedures to be agreed; - Malta and Turkey, funded by additional appropriations in accordance with the Treaty. The Commission is responsible for ensuring implementation of the programme, and will be assisted by a committee of Member States' representatives. The social partners will be allowed to participate in the work of the committee as observers. The Commission is also required to secure the assistance of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (regulation 337/75/EEC) and, where appropriate, the European Training Foundation (regulation 1360/90/EEC). It must also keep the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training regularly informed of the programme's progress and, in accordance with the decision's committee procedure, strengthen its cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations. In cooperation with the Member States, the Commission must ensure a smooth transition from LEONARDO I to LEONARDO II and that LEONARDO II builds on the achievements of LEONARDO I. For their part, Member States are responsible for: - ensuring the coordination, an integrated management and the follow-up for the attainment of the programme's objectives, involving all the parties concerned and in accordance with national practice; - ensuring relevant publicity and information in respect of the programme's actions; - ensuring the efficient running of the programme; - adopting such measures as

deemed necessary to remove obstacles to access to the programme. The Commission is required to ensure complementarity with other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions, particularly aspects of the European Social Fund relating to education, vocational training, youth, RTD and innovation as well as the priorities set out in the Council's employment guidelines as part of a coordinated employment strategy. Provision is equally made for possible joint actions with related Community programmes, particularly in the field of education and youth. The Commission will be expected to regularly monitor and evaluate the programme in cooperation with the Member States. By 31/12/2003, Member States are expected to submit a report to the Commission on the implementation and effectiveness of the programme. By 30/06/2007, they must submit a second report on the programme's impact on training systems and arrangements in the Member States. The Commission, for its part, must submit to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee: - a first interim report on the programme's operational implementation by 30/06/2002; - a second interim report on its implementation by 30/06/2004; - a communication on the programme's continuation by 31/12/2004; - a final report on the programme's implementation by 31/12/2007. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 11/06/1999.?

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

---

The Council Decision of 1999 establishing the second phase provides a solid basis for remedying many of the structural deficiencies of the past: -the programme provided a coherent and clear framework for the project promoters. The Commission will further rationalise the programme objectives, and strengthen complementarity between Leonardo da Vinci and other related Community policies in the perspective of lifelong learning. -the roles of the programme management structures have been clarified with the centralisation of political functions and the decentralisation of management functions. -the overall management costs remain modest, the payments to projects have considerably accelerated, formal eligibility criteria have been simplified and the duration of the selection procedures, especially in the mobility action, reduced. Programme activities throughout 2000 and 2001 were particularly successful: -the demand for mobility exceeded (in some cases three times) the available funds. Nevertheless the programme was able to fund 32000 grantees per year, an increase of 40% against the first programme phase. -the procedure B pilot project measures were popular, demand exceeded supply. Fewer but bigger projects were selected compared to 1995-99. All 496 procedure B and C projects selected promise to generate valuable results. Available data on project participation and targeting suggest that: -the involvement of enterprises currently stands at 20% of all partners and promoters with the SMEs being the third largest single type of organisation. -the gender equal opportunities aspect is particularly relevant in the mobility measure with 55% of all grantees being women. -the legal conditions for the candidate country promoters is progressively equalising with those of other countries. Their participation in the different measures reflect their particular interests. -the dissemination of results from the first phase (1995-1999) is currently underway. Several initiatives, among them a comprehensive database, have been launched. -the collective thematic monitoring of the current projects has just started with the establishment of five thematic groups. -the concept of valorisation of the output of all projects has been clarified in co-operation with the Member States and is understood to mean the enhancing of project outcomes through experimentation and exploitation. In summary, the first two years of implementing the second phase of Leonardo da Vinci has generally been efficient and effective.?

## Vocational training: Community action programme 2000-2004, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd phase

---

In accordance with provisions laid down in Council Decision 1999/382/EC establishing the Leonardo da Vinci programme on vocational training, the Commission is obliged to submit an interim report. The purpose of this Communication is: - to provide a better understanding of what has been achieved in the period 2000-2003, how it has been done and to what extent the initial objectives are being met; - to identify ways to improve the implementation of the programme in the period 2004-2006; and - to contribute to the development of the Commission's proposal for a new generation of education and training programmes. The Lisbon Declaration helped cement the objectives of the Leonardo da Vinci programme by recognising the importance of on-going education and training. Overall, the external evaluators of the programme note that the second phase of the programme has had very positive results. The programme has a high relevance rating. Further, the stated objectives of the Leonardo da Vinci programme are in line with recent political developments and initiatives in the domain of vocational education and training. Concerning the efficiency of the programme, external evaluators conclude that it has improved since the inception of the programme in 1995. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement. For example, the absence of tools for collecting information on an on-going basis, the number of time consuming administrative procedures and cumbersome reporting mechanisms, add to the programme's inefficiency. In order to address this short coming, the Commission is developing a new "symmetry" tool, which should make it possible to resolve, by 2005, a good number of the identified shortcoming and help stream-line the reporting and feedback mechanisms. In terms of the programme's effectiveness, again the programme scores highly. On an operational level, the effectiveness of the programme varies, depending on the measure concerned. Budgetary benchmarks indicate that in cases where priority funding is given - notably mobility and pilot projects, the effectiveness of the programme is assured. On the other hand, actions with a low budget priority status appear to be less effective. As such, external evaluators have given the "effectiveness" of the programme a "satisfactory" rating. At the same time they acknowledge that the overall effectiveness of the programme has improved in relation to the previous decade.?