Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	2003/2148(INI)	Procedure completed
Research and technological innovation in Europe RTD: support and investment, action plan Subject 3.50.04 Innovation		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		11/06/2003
		PSE LINKOHR Rolf	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market		07/07/2003
		PPE-DE NIEBLER Angelika	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2525	22/09/2003
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Research and Innovation		

Key events

30/04/2003	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2003)0226	Summary
04/09/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/09/2003	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
04/11/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
04/11/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0389/2003	
17/11/2003	Debate in Parliament		
18/11/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0495/2003	Summary
18/11/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2003/2148(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/5/19838

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2003)0226	30/04/2003	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2003)0489	30/04/2003	EC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0389/2003	04/11/2003	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0495/2003 OJ C 087 07.04.2004, p. 0023-0060 E	18/11/2003	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0239/2003 OJ C 073 23.03.2004, p. 0069-0072	19/11/2003	CofR	

Research and technological innovation in Europe RTD: support and investment, action plan

PURPOSE : to present an Action Plan concerning research investment in Europe. CONTENT : this Action plan sets out initiatives to give Europe a stronger public research base and to make it much more attractive to private investment in research and innovation. The European Union must bridge the growing gap in the levels of research investment between Europe and its main trading partners, which is putting at risk our long term innovation, growth and employment potential. The objective is to reach the objective set by the March 2002 Barcelona European Council, to increase the average research investment level from 1.9% of GDP today to 3% of GDP by 2010, of which two-thirds should be funded by the private sector. To reach the Barcelona objective, research investment in Europe should grow at an average rate of 8% every year, shared between a 6% growth rate for public expenditure and a 9% yearly growth rate for private investment. The Commission's consultation process showed a very broad support for the 3% objective. Most countries are already taking measures to boost investment in research, and many have set national targets in line with the European 3% objective. The paper discusses the weaknesses of the current system. These include: - the shortcomings and rigidities of research careers, leading excellent human resources to move out of research or out of Europe; - the dispersion and lack of visibility of Europe's often excellent research; - the difficulties encountered by technology-intensive SMEs in finding financing for their research and innovation projects; - the lack of awareness of researchers and research managers regarding the protection and management of intellectual property. The action plan comprises four main sets of actions: - a first set of actions aims at supporting the steps taken by European countries and stakeholders, ensuring that they are mutually consistent and that they form an effective mix of policy measures. This includes a process of co-ordination with and between Member States and acceding countries. It also entails creating a number of "European technology platforms", which will bring together the main stakeholders - research organisations, industry, regulators, user groups, etc. - around key technologies, in order to devise and implement a common strategy for the development, the deployment and the use of these technologies in Europe; - the second set of actions aims at improving public support for research and technological innovation. The focus is on actions to improve the career of researchers, to bring public research and industry closer together, and to develop and exploit fully the potential of European and national public financial instruments. For example, the action plan asks public authorities to eliminate by 2005 the current rules and practices, attached to many public funding schemes, which prevent trans-European cooperation and technology transfer and thus reduce considerably the research and innovation opportunities available to the beneficiaries; - the third set of actions addresses the necessary increase in the levels of public funding for research. Actions focus onencouraging and monitoring the redirection of public budgets, and on making full use of the potential for public support to industry offered by State aid rules and public procurement rules. For example, the action plan will clarify and improve awareness of the types of public support that public authorities can use with no distortion to competition; - a fourth set of actions aims at improving knowledge of intellectual property protection, regulation of product markets and related standards, competition rules, financial markets, the fiscal environment, and the treatment of research in companies' management and reporting practices. For example, the action plan sets the objective that every student in science, engineering and business should receive at least a basic training on intellectual property and technology transfer. An attached working paper of the Commission services complements and supports the Communication. It comprises 7 sections addressing the following topics: - the importance of research and development investment for growth; - developments in national politics towards the Barcelona objective (3% of GDP); - the positive response of the business sector to the first Commission Communication on the Barcelona objective; - the contributions of the 6th Framework Programme to the Barcelona objective; - the approach proposed for the application of the open method of coordination to the Barcelona objective; - European technology platforms; and - the supply chain of human resources for R & D.?

Research and technological innovation in Europe RTD: support and investment, action plan

The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Rolf LINKOHR (PES, D) in response to the Commission communication on an action plan for investing in research in Europe. The committee generally endorsed the Commission's recommendations and underlined that science and technology had been "an intrinsic element of Europe's identity since at least the Renaissance". MEPs called on the Member States to increase their expenditure on research to 3% of GDP by 2010. They were critical of the Council for not following up its words with deeds and of the Member States for making little or no effort to increase their R&D expenditure or, in some cases, actually reducing such expenditure. They therefore called on Member States and private investors to increase their R&D expenditure, the required increase being 6% for public investment and 9% for private investment, to reach the average of 8% needed to achieve the target figure of 3% of GDP overall by 2010. To this end, the committee said that more funding was needed for the European research framework programme, and called for an increase in the 7th research framework programme budget to EUR 30 billion for the whole period of the programme, to include allowing for enlargement to 25 and more Member States. The committee also supported the creation of regional networks of SMEs and called on the Member States and the Commission to support such initiatives as a priority. Lastly, MEPs called for the establishment of a European Research Council with the aim of strengthening the worldwide position of basic research carried out in Europe at the highest scientific level by offering long-term funding for that purpose. The body should: primarily be a funding rather than an advisory body; follow a bottom-up approach in stimulating proposals for funding; cover all fields of science, including the natural sciences and engineering, the humanities and the social sciences, using a flexible approach; base its decisions on scientific criteria and have a rigorous and transparent peer review process; be accountable to its funders, but autonomous in its operations and run by highly respected scientists and focus on financing bottom-up academic research.?

Research and technological innovation in Europe RTD: support and investment, action plan

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Rolf LINKOHR (PES, Germany) on investment in research, calling on Member States to increase expenditure. (Please see the summary of 04/11/03.) In the context of the 6th Research Framework Programme, Parliament also called for the ideas of 'networks of excellence' and 'integrated projects' to be geared more closely to the guiding notion of the European Research Area, and therefore for adjustments to be made, particularly in relation to the size of projects, in terms both of the number of project partners and of the financial volumes involved. The following points were also made: - considerable efforts are still needed to ensure an adequate supply of scientists, engineers and skilled technicians in future; Member States must pay greater attention to scientific and technical education and on the EU to make a further contribution to mobility for scientists, engineers and skilled technicians, so that the end result is indeed a European Research Area; - in addition to the fact that fully-trained researchers are continuing to emigrate, demographic trends and lower numbers of students starting courses in the natural sciences will mean that a continuing supply of researchers will be increasingly difficult to find. Conditions should be made easier for researchers to take up residence and exercise their profession in the EU; - application-oriented research provides a major stimulus for Europe's economies and targeted cooperation between research and enterprises must be supported; - the importance of intellectual property rights in State institutes and public-private partnerships; - the key role of SMEs as a motor for growth, but the difficulty they have in terms of access to funding; - Member States should envisage tax incentives for private research activities as well as direct support for research, targeted principally at SMEs; - Member States and the Commission should make greater use of the Structural Funds for R&D.?