



Procedure file

Basic information		
CNS - Consultation procedure Decision	2007/0135(CNS)	Procedure completed
Research Fund for Coal and Steel: research programme, multiannual technical guidelines		
Repealing Decision 2003/78/EC 2000/0364(CNS) Amended by 2016/0047(NLE)		
Subject 3.50.02.03 Framework programme and research programme for Coal and Steel		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		02/10/2007
		PSE GIEREK Adam	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	General Affairs	2864	29/04/2008
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Research and Innovation	POTOČNIK Janez	

Key events			
08/07/2007	Legislative proposal published	COM(2007)0393	Summary
03/09/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
29/01/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
15/02/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A6-0039/2008	
09/04/2008	Debate in Parliament		
10/04/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
10/04/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0117/2008	Summary
29/04/2008	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
29/04/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		
20/05/2008	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2007/0135(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
	Repealing Decision 2003/78/EC 2000/0364(CNS) Amended by 2016/0047(NLE)
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 000
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/6/51558

Documentation gateway					
Legislative proposal		COM(2007)0393	09/07/2007	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE398.429	28/11/2007	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE400.286	08/01/2008	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A6-0039/2008	15/02/2008	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T6-0117/2008	10/04/2008	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2008)3169	28/05/2008	EC	
Follow-up document		COM(2013)0845	29/11/2013	EC	Summary

Additional information	
National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act
Decision 2008/376 OJ L 130 20.05.2008, p. 0007 Summary

Research Fund for Coal and Steel: research programme, multiannual technical guidelines

PURPOSE: to adopt a research programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: when the European Coal and Steel Community was wound-up in 2002 its assets were transferred to the Commission for management under the 'Research Fund for Coal and Steel'. This Research Fund is intended exclusively for research projects in sectors relating to the coal and steel industry. The multiannual technical guidelines for the programme are set out in Council Decision 2003/78/EC. The programme covers production processes, the utilisation and conservation of resources, environmental improvements and safety at work in sectors related to the coal and steel community.

The 2003 Decision, however, is in need of review in order to take account of a number of recent developments, including enlargement of the EU; the entry into force of the 7th Framework Programme; and changes to the EU's energy and sustainable development policies.

CONTENT: the purpose of this proposal, therefore, is to adopt a revised 'Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel', taking account of recent developments, to be referred to as the 'Research Programme'. The proposed Council Decision lays down the multiannual technical guidelines for its implementation.

In summary, the Commission is making the following proposals:

- to adjust some of the rules in order to take account of EU enlargement. To maintain the efficient and smooth running of the programme, the Commission proposes that having at least one representative per Member State be abandoned to be replaced by the concept of ensuring the widest possible geographical representation. In addition, following the accession of Estonia, a new term 'oil shales' needs to be included under the definition of 'coal'.
- not to revise the definition of 'steel'. In light of the research topics most likely to receive funding under the 7th framework programme, the current definition is sufficient;
- to delete accompanying measures relating to organising conferences and research fellowships since they are already covered by the Specific Programme 'People' in the 7th R&D programme;
- to align the role of the Member States in the Coal and Steel Programme Committee with that of the 7th R&D programme;
- to monitor the RFCS programme for seven, as opposed to five, years;
- to follow mutatis mutandis the procedures for the appointment of experts as set out in Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006;
- to maintain the research objectives for coal and steel. The following priorities have been identified: improving the competitive position of Community coal; protecting the environment by improving the use of coal as a clean energy sources, reducing CO₂ emissions from coal utilisation (such as the capture and storage of greenhouse gas); the management of external dependence as regards energy supply; the reduction of energy consumption and the environmental impact of steelmaking; the conservation of resources and the preservation of the ecosystem in relation to steelmaking; and environmental protection around steelworks;
- to allow the Commission to launch specific calls for research proposals in the context of these research objectives (that take account of the 7th R&D framework programme);
- to maintain the basic principles governing the financial aspects of the research grants;
- to define, more precisely, the definition of 'operating cost categories'; and
- to increase the maximum financial contribution from 40 to 50% of the admissible costs. For the other actions, the maximum financial contributions remain unchanged.

All other provisions remain unchanged.

Research Fund for Coal and Steel: research programme, multiannual technical guidelines

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted a report drafted by Adam GIĘREK (PES, PL) on the proposal on the multiannual technical guidelines for the research programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel. It made some amendments to the Commission's proposal. The main ones are as follows:

- the Committee stated that the definition of the term 'coal' has been inappropriately broadened to include 'oil shales' when it already covers hard coal, which includes 'A'-ranking coals and thus bitumen shales. The broader term 'bitumen shales' should therefore be used instead of 'oil shales', since the latter come into the category of bitumen shales;
- a new clause states that research projects shall make coal more competitive on local energy markets, subject to efficient use being made of local coal reserves;
- projects should promote more efficient conversion of the primary energy latent in coal into other energy forms, for example through the use of conventional coal gasification and liquefaction technologies. The Committee stated that conventional coal gasification and liquefaction are 'clean coal' technologies. When used as motor fuels, the products of gasification and liquefaction, including hydrogen, help to reduce CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere, owing to more efficient energy conversion. Projects should also promote more economic and more reliable technologies;
- preference shall be given to projects integrating complementary techniques such as the adsorption of methane or carbon dioxide, coal bed methane extraction and use as an energy source, efficient coal burning in heat and electricity generation processes and unconventional underground coal gasification methods.
- the Committee also made some amendments to the Articles dealing with the research objectives for steel. Inter alia, a new clause refers to the steel castings and forgings and sintered products obtained by powder metallurgy from iron powders and ferro-alloys as semi-finished products for further processing ;
- the Coal and Steel Advisory Groups will be independent technical advisory groups comprising appropriately qualified specialists. The Commission must ensure, within each Advisory Group, a balanced range of expertise and the broadest possible geographical and geo-economic representation, with special reference to the Member States which joined the EU in 2004.

Research Fund for Coal and Steel: research programme, multiannual technical guidelines

The European Parliament adopted, by 558 votes to 61 with 22 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending the proposal on the multiannual technical guidelines for the research programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel, and stressed that research in "clean coal technologies" must be improved. The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Adam GIĘREK (PES, PL) on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

Parliament did not accept the view of the Committee that the definition of the term 'coal' had been inappropriately broadened to include 'oil shales'. The definitions in the proposal were, accordingly, not amended.

The main amendments - adopted under the consultation procedure - were as follows:

- a new clause states that research projects shall make coal more competitive on local energy markets, subject to efficient use being made of local coal reserves;

-projects should promote more efficient conversion of the primary energy latent in coal into other energy forms, for example through the use of conventional coal gasification and liquefaction technologies. Projects should also promote more economic and more reliable technologies;

-preference shall be given to projects integrating complementary techniques such as the adsorption of methane or carbon dioxide, coal bed methane extraction and use as an energy source, efficient coal burning in heat and electricity generation processes and unconventional underground coal gasification methods;

-Parliament also made some amendments to the Articles dealing with the research objectives for steel. Inter alia, a new clause refers to the steel castings and forgings and sintered products obtained by powder metallurgy from iron powders and ferro-alloys as semi-finished products for further processing;

-research projects must also address the design of steel structures that are easy to disassemble at the end of their service life, with a view to the recovery of steel scrap and its re-conversion into usable steels;

-the Coal and Steel Advisory Groups will be independent technical advisory groups comprising appropriately qualified specialists. The Commission must ensure, within each Advisory Group, a balanced range of expertise and the broadest possible geographical and geo-economic representation, with special reference to the Member States that joined the EU in 2004 and after.

Research Fund for Coal and Steel: research programme, multiannual technical guidelines

PURPOSE: to establish a Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel and the multiannual technical guidelines for this programme.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2008/376/EC on the adoption of the Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel and on the multiannual technical guidelines for this programme.

CONTENT: the Research Programme shall support the competitiveness of the Community sectors related to the coal and steel industry by complementing the Seventh Research Framework Programme of the EU in these sectors.

Coal: the research projects shall aim to:

- improve the competitive position of Community coal by reducing the total costs of mining production, improving the quality of the products and reducing the costs of using coal;
- achieve scientific and technological progress with a view to gaining a better understanding of the behaviour and control of deposits in relation to rock pressure, gas emissions, the risk of explosion, ventilation and all other factors affecting mining operations;
- improve health and safety in mines;
- minimise the impact of mining operations and the use of coal on the atmosphere;
- improve the use of coal as a clean energy source;
- enable better management of external dependence on energy supply.

Steel: the research projects shall aim to:

- improve steelmaking and finishing techniques with a view to enhancing product quality and increasing productivity through new techniques;
- undertake measures in respect of the utilisation of steel to meet the future requirements of steel users and to create new market opportunities;
- encourage the conservation of resources, the preservation of the ecosystem and the improvement of working conditions and safety issues.

The maximum total financial contribution of the Research Fund shall be:

- for research projects up to 60%;
- for pilot and demonstration projects up to 50%;
- for accompanying measures, support and preparatory actions up to 100%.

The multiannual technical guidelines for this programme are amended so as to ensure complementarity with the Seventh Research Framework Programme and to take account of the incorporation into the EU of new Member States. The guidelines shall be reviewed every seven years, first period ending on 31 December 2014.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 21/05/2008.

APPLICATION: from 16/09/2007.

Research Fund for Coal and Steel: research programme, multiannual technical guidelines

In accordance with Council Decision 2008/376/EC, the Commission presented a summary report on the monitoring and assessment exercise of the research programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS).

The RFCS was established in 2002 to support the competitiveness of the European Coal and Steel sectors. In its 11 years of activity, the RFCS has co-funded research, pilot and demonstration projects with total funding in the order of EUR 600 million (typically EUR 55 million per year) granted to industries, universities and research centres.

The Commission has recently completed a Monitoring exercise of the research programme and an Assessment of the expected benefits. The Assessment exercise was carried out on completion of projects co-financed by the RFCS between 2003 and 2010.

Results of the monitoring exercise: the main recommendation of the Monitoring exercise was to maintain the general approach adopted since the creation of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel in 2002 and revised in 2008. More specifically, the programme should:

- keep the research programme as an industry-oriented sectorial programme and keep the research objectives unchanged;
- maintain the current main processes for implementation, such as the rules for allocation of budget to the sectors, the share of allowable actions (research projects, pilot and demonstration projects, accompanying measures) and the participation rules. The practice that non-EU partners can take part in projects but cannot receive funding should be maintained;

Amongst the recommendations were: (i) a possible better harmonisation of the technical sub-fields of the programme (Technical Groups), (ii) the improvement of the criteria used for the evaluation of submitted proposals, a more extensive use of electronic tools (e.g., for submission and remote evaluation of proposals), (iii) the strengthening of dissemination actions both during the lifetime of projects and after the production of the final report, the encouraging of pilot and demonstration projects.

In response to these recommendations, specific actions were undertaken including:

- the full introduction in 2013 of an electronic submission system of proposals;
- a review of the evaluation criteria carried out with the assistance of the Coal and Steel Advisory Groups (CAG and SAG);
- a review of the scope and of the evaluation criteria for the Accompanying Measures action of the programme;
- a draft proposal to harmonise scope and size of some critical technical groups.

Main conclusions: the Commission considered that from this analysis, the Research Fund for Coal and Steel appears fully in line with its mandate defined by Council Decision 2008/376/ EC according to which it shall be an instrument to support the competitiveness of the Community sectors related to the coal and steel industry and delivering innovation.

Main outcomes can be summarised as follows.

- The programme does not require fundamental changes; its industry-oriented nature and main operating rules should be maintained.
- Qualitative benefits: for the coal and steel sectors and for the society and mainly consist in new knowledge, new processes and products, financial returns and improved working conditions.
- Quantitative benefits: these have been estimated in detail for 23 selected projects, showing that every euro used as RFCS co-funding has resulted in EUR 3.3/year of financial benefits for the beneficiaries.
- Exploitation of the technical and scientific achievements: projections across the coal and steel sectors indicated that, if widely applied at European scale, these achievements could lead to financial benefits of EUR 684 million/year. Considering a typical annual RFCS budget of approximately EUR 55 million/year, this corresponds to a potential multiplying factor of 12.4.