

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

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The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted a report drafted by Adam **GIEREK** (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.