Eurostars Joint Programme: participation by the Community in a research and development programme aimed at supporting research and development performing SMEs undertaken by several Member States

2007/0188(COD) - 10/04/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 626 to 14 with 6 abstentions, a legislative resolution, amending the proposal for a decision on the participation by the Community in a research and development programme aimed at supporting research and development performing SMEs undertaken by several Member States (Eurostars Joint Programme). The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Paul **RÜBIG** (EPP-ED, AT) on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

The amendments - adopted under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure – were the result of a compromise between Parliament and Council:

-new recitals state that financial support to participants in the Eurostars Joint Programme projects, selected at central level following calls for proposals, should be transparent and efficient. These payments should be effected within the period established on the basis of an agreement to be concluded between the national funding bodies and the dedicated implementation structure. The latter should invite the Member States to facilitate the payments to participants in selected projects, including, where appropriate, lump sum financing. On the matter of financing, Parliament added that further financing options may be available, inter alia, from the European Investment Bank (EIB), in particular through the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility developed jointly with the EIB and the Commission pursuant to Annex III to Decision 2006/974/EC;

-monitoring the execution of the Eurostars Joint Programme should be efficient and not impose unnecessary burdens on participants, including notably SMEs, in the programme;

-the dedicated implementation structure should encourage the participants in the selected projects to communicate and disseminate their results and to make this information publicly available;

-the evaluation of proposals should be performed at central level by independent experts. A ranking list should be approved at central level and binding for the allocation of funding from the Community contribution and from the national earmarked budgets to Eurostars projects;

-detailed thresholds of R&D activity in the SMEs shall be clarified in accordance with Annex II;

- research organisations, universities, other SMEs or large companies may also participate in the Programme;

-for each project, the R&D performing SME(s) should collectively execute a large part of the overall R&D activities within the project;

-the dedicated implementation structure shall take appropriate measures to encourage recognition of the Community contribution to the Eurostars Joint Programme, both to the overall programme and to

individual projects as well. It should promote appropriate visibility for such contribution through the use of the Community logo in all published material, including printed and electronic publication, relating to the Eurostars Joint Programme;

-a maximum of 4.5% of the Community financial contribution shall be used by the dedicated implementation structure to contribute to the overall operational costs of the Eurostars Joint Programme;

-the national funding bodies shall finance the national participants whose proposals are selected at central level and shall also channel the Community financial contribution from the dedicated implementation structure;

-the "Eurostars High Level Group" is composed of the EUREKA High Level Representatives of the States participating in the Eurostars joint programme. The Commission as well as EU Member States not participating in the Programme retain the option to send representatives to its meetings as observers;

-the interim evaluation of the Eurostars Joint Programme to be carried out two years after the start of the Programme and must also include recommendations on the most appropriate ways to further enhance scientific management and financial integration, assess the ability of R&D performing SMEs in particular to access the Eurostars Joint Programme, and the quality and efficiency of its implementation.