Measures necessary for the implementation of the Protocol, annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the financial consequences of the expiry of the ECSC Treaty and on the Research Fund for Coal and Steel

2017/0213(APP) - 23/02/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Budgets adopted the report by Jean ARTHUIS (ADLE, FR) on the draft Council decision amending Council Decision 2003/76/EC establishing the measures necessary for the implementation of the Protocol, annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the financial consequences of the expiry of the ECSC Treaty and on the Research Fund for Coal and Steel.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament **give its approval** to the conclusion of the Agreement.

As indicated in the explanatory memorandum accompanying the report, the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS), established upon the expiry of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), serves to finance research in the sectors concerned, 72.8% being earmarked for steel and 27.2% for coal.

The aim of the Commission’s proposal is to allow all the de-commitments made in the RFCS research programme since 2003 to be used. The Commission estimates the potential gains from this recycling at EUR 40.3 million. The adoption of the proposal would thus enable the Commission to increase the RFCS budget for 2018 to EUR 40 million and to use the remainder of the appropriations for the 2019 budget.

The EU is committed to **reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% (taking 1990 as the base year)** by 2030 and complying with the Paris Agreement adopted at COP 21.

The explanatory memorandum mentions in this respect some projects illustrating the positive contribution to the environment of co-financing from the RFCS.

Furthermore, Parliament fully supports the aim of promoting **clean and competitive European steel.** A qualitative leap is necessary in order to establish a practical project to manufacture steel without any CO2 emissions by 2025. In this context, Parliament will ensure that a substantial amount is earmarked for this initiative under the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP9).

In conclusion, the rapporteur believes that the revision of Council Decision 2003/76/EC, which has no budgetary impact, would make it possible **not only to bring the RFCS into line with the Financial Regulation but also to find the money necessary for the financing of innovative projects.** On average the fund allocates EUR 55 million per annum to research projects. Without this money, potentially only half as many projects would be funded.