Community action programme 1997-1998 in the fields of books and reading, ARIANE

1994/0189(COD) - 21/10/1996

While regretting the problems that had been encountered in making the programme a reality, the rapporteur, Mrs Mouskouri (EPP, GR), referred to the four substantial changes that the Council had made to the initial proposal. The programme's duration had been reduced from five to two years; the budget had also been cut from ECU 34 million over five years to ECU 7 million over two years (and in any case, with such a limited budget the Culture Committee had called for an increase of ECU 3.5 million); the setting up of a joint committee (consultative and management), which was something Parliament had been against, preferring instead the initial arrangement of the Consultative Committee; finally, the provision of six priority actions instead of three main actions. While accepting this amendment, which would provide a clearer view of the scope of the programme, Mrs Mouskouri wanted to see actions to promote reading essentially based around the translation of works that had been produced in the EU's less widely used languages. Commissioner Oreja declared that the Commission could accept those amendments relating to the consultative committee and those that concerned the different actions and the lesser used languages. However, the Commissioner stated that it could not accept the increased budget allocation, which would continue to depend on whether or not the programme was to be extended. Similarly, the Commission thought that it was not possible to justify Amendment No 1, which provided for a change of title.