Recognition of qualifications for academic and professional purposes

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The Council welcomed the outcome of the debate organised by the Commission in cooperation with the Member States and the opinion expressed by Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and other European and national organisations on the subject of recognition. It considered that the process that had been started was on-going and required the setting-up of a permanent dialogue with all the parties involved. To this effect it called on the Commission to ensure that the report on the results of the debate was given a wide circulation and to promote a greater discussion of this subject; stressed that the dialogue between the relevant authorities in the two areas of recognition concerned should be incorporated into the current activities of the existing national structures; called on the Member States and the Commission to promote better coordination between the national structures responsible for disseminating information on the two areas of recognition, namely NARIC, the Euro-Info-Centres, etc., and to build up the relevant databases, such as ORTELIUS, so as to promote greater transparency within the higher education systems; called on institutes of higher education, professional organisations and other relevant authorities to continue the dialogue in order to ensure that the study programmes made sufficient allowance for the needs of the professions at European level; called on the Commission: - to encourage the involvement of representatives from the business and professional world, the social partners and students in any appropriate subject network provided for by SOCRATES; - to carry out an assessment, in collaboration with the Member States, of the various suggestions that had been put forward in the course of the debate: = the feasibility of putting in place, on a voluntary basis, a European supplement as an administrative annex to the university degree. This annex would comprise a description of the studies completed by the degree holder and would be aimed at promoting transparency and providing greater recognition for the study course in Member States other than the country of learning; it would also take account of the experience acquired in this area by other organisations, such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO; = the appropriateness of identifying and promoting an awareness of the procedures at national or Community level, which could help in finding an amicable solution to the disagreement that existed in respect of the recognition of qualifications, in response to individual requests addressed directly or, preferably, through the NARIC network or the network of coordinators for the various directives; - to provide it and Parliament, before the end of 1998, with a report on the headway that had been made in this area and on the progress achieved on the different initiatives taken at Community and national level.