

Education, training: Community action programme Socrates, 2nd phase 2000-2004

1998/0195(COD) - 21/12/1998 - Council position

The Council's common position takes into account, to a large degree, the amendments proposed by the European Parliament and supported by the Commission in its amended proposal (25 amendments taken up out of the 34 put forward by the Commission). The amendments were as follows : - the explicit mention, in terms of the objectives of the programme, of the principle of integration of equal opportunities between men and women in all the actions; - greater emphasis on references to the European course credit transfer system (ECTS); - clarification of the arrangements on complementarity between the programme and other Community policies; - consolidation of the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of the programme; - the name 'Minerva' to be given to Action 5 of the programme, which relates to open and distance learning and new technologies. On the other hand, the Council did not take on board the Parliament's amendments concerning: - a stronger appeal to the Member States to remove obstacles to access to the programme; - the allocation of ERASMUS grants, giving a priority to students whose financial circumstances warrant special assistance; - the inclusion of an explicit reference to the possibility of using the Structural Funds to disseminate and transfer the programme's results on a wider scale. Nor did the Council take up the Parliament's suggestions for the development of a multilingual European school T. V., the concept of 'participation in democratic culture' or the setting up of 'European knowledge centres'. On this latter point, the Council preferred a more general reference to the promotion of 'regional and local contact and interaction between the players involved in this programme and in Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes. The main innovations in the Council's common position are as follow: - duration of the programme : seven years (in line with the proposed timespan of the next phase of the financial perspective) instead of 5 years in the initial proposal; - the SOCRATES budget : MEUR 1550 over 7 years instead of MEUR 1400 over 5 years (as opposed to MEUR 2000 proposed by the Parliament); - breakdown of funds between actions; - selection procedures - two procedural variants within the category of centralised actions and the possibility of a 2-phase procedure in those cases where the scale and nature of the activities in question justify it; - comitology : the Council opted for a type IIb procedure and strengthened the number of measures to be decided using this procedure.