Resaerch RTD, 5th framework-programme EC 1998-2002: research, technological development and demonstration activities

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The Committee calls on the Commission, European Parliament and Council: - to ensure close interaction between the Framework Programme and European, non-EU cooperation frameworks, particularly Eureka and Cost, and to develop, on the basis of analyses for each geographic area, coherent action for the CEEC, the Mediterranean Basin, the Newly Independent States (NIS), the dynamic economies of Asia and Latin America, developing countries and industrialized third countries; - to reframe and strengthen the SME innovation and participation action, with regard to streamlining intervention already planned under the Fourth Framework Programme, but supplementing it with new, specific features to promote a spirit of enterprise amongst researchers and scientists, and to create a new "ad hoc" support mechanism for the setting-up of technological joint ventures, so that the results of Community research can be harnessed by industry and business; - to make any allocation of financial resources conditional on a percentage realignment in favour of exchange programmes between academia and industry, universities and SMEs, large research centres, and industrial laboratories and SMEs; - to safeguard consistency between the need for an integrated approach to the Fifth Framework Programme and concentration and interoperability of the generic research, support for major infrastructure and key actions which make up the new Community framework; - to identify a range of qualitative/quantitative indicators to guide and control key action activity, in order to help improve the socioeconomic foundations for the development of sustainable growth and employment potential, e.g. the potential take-up rate, level of strategic visibility and European dimension, interaction between Community, European and national action, involvement of SMEs in the sector, potential spin-offs in terms of new business start-ups, new jobs and new occupations; - to distribute the ECU 11,491 million overall funding for the thematic programmes so that a substantial proportion is reserved for key actions, keeping an average quota that would be flexible from one thematic programme to another, of around 25% for generic RTD activities and major infrastructure; - to integrate and thereby streamline the content of the proposed key actions by refocusing them - where possible - within the framework of the thematic programmes proposed by the Commission; - to select ten or so key actions relating to the Community RTDD Framework Programme and one to the Euratom Programme, and provide them with sufficient funding to achieve critical mass, take-up rate, scientific excellence and strategic visibility; - to make the provision of funding for the key actions contingent on performance assessments, in order to avoid a five-year freeze, during which RTDD activities with a low level of scientific excellence and innovation are funded merely as a matter of routine; - to provide simple, modern, transparent management procedures capable of capping administrative costs and red tape by assigning clear responsibilities to a restricted number of bureaucratic and decision-making levels, with collective decisions being confined to the highest levels, i.e. the Commissioners responsible.