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

1997/0119(COD) - 19/12/2000

The annual report on the research and technological development activities of the European Union (2000) outlines many new developments in this area. First of all, in the aftermath of the European Parliament elections and a new Commission, the European Union's (EU) research policy acquired an increased political and ambitious dimension. On the 18 January 2000, the Commission adopted the Communication "Towards a European Research Area" which noted that the research efforts of the European Union are catching-up with its main competitors and second, it called for a concerted mobilisation of relevant policies and instruments at all levels. The research activities of the EU are represented by the Fifth Framework Programme for Research and Development. The first call for research proposals was in March 1999 and more than 16 000 proposals were received during the year, a large amount coming from the pre-accession countries. The key actions concentrated 85% of resources on thematic programmes, resulting in large-scale partnerships (an EU contribution of EUR 1,7 million on average) as well as important synergies between the projects and the participation of SMEs (22% of participants). Henceforth, important measures shall be taken in order to achieve the European Research Area. From a long-term perspective, this autumn the Commission will adopt a strategic Communication presenting the first research orientations for the post-2002 period.