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

1998/0195(COD) - 13/10/1998

The Committee has adopted an important report establishing a Community framework for measures for young people (whether or not they are students) for the period 2000-2004. Both the Socrates programme and the various youth programmes have been great successes, involving more than half a million young people. It was therefore important to ensure their future by giving them more resources. The Culture Committee sought to do this by adopting a large number of amendments to the Commission's initial proposals. The committee unanimously adopted the report by Doris PACK (EPP, D) on Socrates II (2000-2004), under the codecision procedure, 1st reading. It wishes to give this programme a budget (over ECU 2 billion) more in keeping with its declared objectives. As the Commission points out, a student grant under the Socrates I programme is around ECU 100, whereas an amount five times as much as this is needed. For this reason, and also to meet new objectives included in Socrates II, such as to extend the programme to the education of adults or people who have left the education system, the committee voted for increased funding. The report also seeks to expand certain objectives such as language learning and to remove obstacles to cooperation through better recognition of educational qualifications and periods spent in education. This would involve greater use of the education credit transfer system (ECTS). It also proposes to divide the measures into three major types: Actions 1-3: the three basic stages of lifelong education (Comenius/school, Erasmus/university, Grundtvig/others); Actions 4 and 5: horizontal measures (Lingua/languages, Minerva/multimedia); Action 6: horizontal measures (e.g. joint actions with other Community programmes).