Implementation of Socrates programme

2000/2315(INI) - 12/02/2001 - Document attached to the procedure

This report concerns the implementation of the SOCRATES programme during the period 1995-1999, which corresponds to the first phase of the programme. It takes into account all analyses available, particulary the conclusions of the interim evaluation and of four external evaluations completed in November 2000. In the interests of transparency, all these external evaluations are available on the Commission's Internet site. This document has undergone thorough consultation within the SOCRATES Committee and the support groups set up by it. The analysis and information gathering carried out must also inform the debate at broadcast level in order to contribute inter alia to the success of the new phase of the SOCRATES programme by drawing on the experienced amassed between 1995 and 1999. The report comprises an examination of the results achieved by the programme in relation to the objectives set by Decision 819/95/EC. This analysis is followed by a summary of the main developments in the programme from its initial phase to the second phase and the political environment in which SOCRATES evolved. It is intended to be a synthetic report and priority is given to qualitative analysis. A few key figures are included in an annex. This report hopes to contribute to the success of the second phase of the SOCRATES programme (2000-2006) by highlighting the experience of the first phase. This experience shows that SOCRATES is very successful in that it has contributed to asserting the European dimension throughout education in general. Nevertheless, improvements are needed so as to make programme management more user-friendly. The gap between the programme's objectives, the ambition of which is enthusiastically shared by the education community, and the sometimes inadequate resources for implementation both at European and national levels. It is also important for the SOCRATES programme, beyond the individuals and institutions actively involved within it, to be able to more strongly linked than before with the whole of the policy debate taking place at the European level in the area of education. Strengthening this policy dimension of the programme can indeed enable it to contribute effectively to enhancing the quality of the national education systems, with due respect for the responsibilities defined by the Treaty. Spread over a long period (seven years), the management of its actions decentralised to a greater extent, and underpinned by a more active monitoring and evaluation policy, the new phase of the programme should strengthen the impact of SOCRATES, particularly in the most recent areas of cooperation at European level, such as school education and lifelong learning. Lastly, as a pioneering programme in opening up to candidate countries of central and eastern Europe, SOCRATES must also help pave the way for the next round of enlargement of the EU, the success of which will hinge as much as on the commitment of the policy decision markers as on that of the people.