Education and training systems: eLearning programme 2004-2006 for integration of information technologies

2002/0303(COD) - 17/03/2003

The committee adopted the report by Mario MAURO (EPP-ED, I) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure. The key amendments were as follows: - given the ambitious scale of this multiannual programme and the fact that e-learning counts as one of the EU's political priorities, its budget should be increased from EUR 36 million to EUR 54 million. The committee pointed out that current spending on preparatory measures was already EUR 17 million a year and that the programme should be implemented at least on the same financial basis; - the balance of expenditure amongst the five areas of the programme should be altered: for example, fighting the digital divide should account for no more than 10% of the total budget, (rather than 25% as proposed by the Commission), while e-twinning should account for around 40% rather than 25% as originally proposed; - e-twinning projects should also apply to primary schools, and the funding for such action should be divided "approximately equally" between primary and secondary schools; - there should be two levels of twinning: (1) the basic and further training of teachers, involving exchanges of 'good practice' between teachers in various Member States or setting up 'virtual training rooms' for updating professional skills; (2) exchanges of experience between schools as regards specific learning targets with a view to disseminating 'good practice', creating a database of educational material, etc.; - greater emphasis should be placed in general on training teachers, for example by ensuring that the programme also includes the development of European teacher training programmes under the Action Line 'European Virtual Campuses'; - one of the aims of the programme should also be to promote the development of high-quality multimedia European software, content and services, in order to lessen dependence on US-manufactured software; - projects aimed at combating the "digital divide" should focus especially on the gender dimension and on the needs of immigrants, people living in rural areas and the disabled; - particular attention should be paid to the experience gained in Australia, New Zealand and Canada with regard to e-learning networks and, following on from this, the funds allocated to travel expenses for experts from non-EU countries should be increased.