Higher education: co-operation with third countries, Erasmus Mundus programme 2004-2008

2002/0165(COD) - 29/09/2003

The committee adopted the report by Marielle DE SARNEZ (EPP-ED, F) approving the Council's common position under the 2nd reading of the codecision procedure, subject to several amendments. In particular, following lengthy talks with the Council, the committee proposed to set the budget at EUR 230 million, rather than EUR 180 m as the Council was proposing. At 1st reading Parliament had called for a budget of EUR 300 m, as opposed to the figure of 200 m originally proposed by the Commission, provided this did not affect existing programmes and was within the limits laid down by the financial perspective. The committee hoped that this new figure would be accepted by the Council and that the codecision procedure could thus be concluded at 2nd reading without going to conciliation. Other amendments stressed the need for the 'Erasmus Mundus Masters Course' label to guarantee a particular quality of training and also of hosting of students. Moreover, as part of the programme's goal of promoting language skills, the committee recommended that students should be given the possibility of acquiring a knowledge of at least two languages spoken in the countries where the institutions offering the Masters Course are located.