Science and technology: production and development of Community statistics

2001/0197(COD) - 27/08/2001 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to develop a new generation of statistical variables for Community science and technology purposes. CONTENT: since the expiry in 1997 of the former Council Decision on statistics a legal vacuum on the definition and clarification of statistics has existed. Given the importance of statistics on defining EU science and technology policies as well as their importance on EU businesses a harmonised set of statistics is considered both relevant and important. The new draft European Parliament and Council Decision is based on the former Decision and on research into statistics which has taken place in the interim period. Users comments, the views of Member States and the advice of the SPC have all been taken into account when drafting the Decision. The objective of this Decision is to maintain and improve the Community statistical information system on science, technology and innovation. Such a system would be able to support and monitor Community policies. Developing a legally defined set of statistics would be of further use to a wide range of users. Care has been taken to ensure that any burden on the national statistical authorities should be limited and that any additional costs should be kept to a minimum. It is hoped that the response burden of units surveyed, especially enterprises will be confined. Specifically, the draft Decision envisages the implementation of individual statistical actions, the aim being: - to continue working on existing Community statistics based on the delivery of data by the Member States as well as from other sources; - to develop new statistical variables to be produced on a permanent basis. Under this specific action, priority will be given to statistics on innovation, human resources devoted to science and technology, patent statistics, high technology statistics and general gender statistics on science and technology. - to improve and update existing standards and manuals on concepts and methods and to improve data quality in specific comparability and timeliness. The specific objectives of the Decision are as follows: - to consolidate and improve the Community reference framework for statistics on science and technology defining the most appropriate concepts and methods; - to consolidate and extend the Community statistical information system for science and technology of regular delivery and dissemination of existing and new indicators. In particular statistics in the service industry and gender statistics on science and technology will require closer examination; - to promote and support comparability and coherence of statistics on science and technology in the Member States; - to improve the timeliness of data and to facilitate the accessibility of the statistical information.