RTD Euratom framework programme 2002-2006: participation of undertakings, research centres and universities

2001/0327(CNS) - 15/01/2002 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in the implementation of the framework programme 2002-2006 of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)

PROPOSED ACT : Decision of the Council

CONTENT : The current proposal is a revised draft of the proposal concerning the rules for participation adopted by the Commission on 06/12/2001. (Please refer to the preceding summary.) This revision of the initial proposal is intended to ensure consistency by aligning the EURATOM rules for participation on the revised version of those relating to the EC Framework Programme, while taking into account their specificities.

The revision of the initial proposal consists in the deletion of Chapter II (“Instruments”) and the Annex (“RTD activities and Community financial contribution according to type of instrument”), since these two parts will be transferred either to Annex III to the Framework Programme or Annex III to the EURATOM Specific Programme.

To assist in the creation of the European Research Area, the 2002-2006 framework programme applies the following principles, especially through the networks of excellence and integrated projects:

-The principle of opening projects to new participants;

-Flexibility in operational conditions, including procedures for launching new activities;

-Great autonomy in project implementation, with participants carrying out their tasks in largely self-determined conditions and internal arrangements best suited to completing projects successfully.

The following new features have been introduced into the rules for participation and financing to apply the above principles and to bring the rules into line with the characteristics and objectives of the new framework programme:

-Participants from Member States and from Associated candidate countries have exactly the same rights and obligations;

-European scientific co-operation organisations are entitled to participate in the framework programme on exactly the same footing as any entity established in a Member State (this is not the case at present);

-General criteria have been drawn up for the selection of proposals taking account of the specific objectives of the new instruments;

-The Community will make its financial contribution in new forms of 'grants for integration' for the networks of excellence or 'grants to the budget' for integrated projects, providing important flexibility and involving less cumbersome and more effective controls, essentially ex post controls;

-Consortia responsible for networks and integrated projects are given the opportunity to change the partnership, including through competitive calls, subject to clearly defined conditions, and on the basis of simplified Commission consent;

-Specific rules for participation to Research and Training activities under the priority thematic area “Fusion Energy Research” have been defined to take into account the characteristics of this field.

As such, the rules have been drawn up so as to guarantee the smooth operation of projects, capable of involving large numbers of participants and conducted through evolving partnerships.