Energy sector: multiannual framework programme 1998-2002

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The Commission has presented a Communication on its comments comments on the conclusions of the Mid-term Assessment of the Energy Framework Programme (1998-2002). The mid-term assessment was conducted by a committed Panel of high-level, independent experts. The Commission considers that the Panel produced a balanced and comprehensive report, combining recognition and criticism, and covering the whole framework programme activities. Four main messages emerge from the overall report: - there is a real need for a new energy programme to follow on from the current EFP. It is recommended that the current framework programme should evolve to a single programme that retains three of its current areas of activity - energy efficiency, renewable energy, and international co-operation and includes an new, additional area on the energy aspects of transport. - the new programme should be designed to take account of and influence the energy components of other Community programmes. It is recommended that the programme should be managed within a structure that assures that an effective guiding and co-ordinating role can be played. - the EFP has virtually no public image and has been operating as six separate programmes. As a result, the links between the programmes were generally weak and hardly any synergy has been created. The exceptions are SAVE and ALTENER. At the same time, specific programmes were considered to be generally well run, funding good projects and producing useful outputs. - in spite of sectoral achievements and successes, all six programmes were considered to suffer from a serious lack of resources, both financial and human. All programmes paid insufficient attention to dissemination of project outputs and impact assessment. The Panel considers that the future energy programme should be given a substantially greater budget than the EUR 175 Million that the EFP has had for the period 1998-2002. Furthermore, consideration should be given to externalising the day-today management of the new programme, notably by means of establishing an agency for that purpose. In preparing its proposal for a multiannual energy programme "Intelligent Energy for Europe, 2003-2006", the Commission has taken due account of the recommendations of previous EFP evaluations, as well as of the preliminary findings provided by the Panel in their interim report. In this context, the Commission is proposing a single energy programme covering the four identified areas of activity in which the work programme will include detailed rules for coordination and linkage with other Community policies and Member States' actions in the energy field. The proposal also emphasises the need for more effective and systematic dissemination and impact assessment of future programme developments. However, the Commission is still examining alternative management structures in order to identify the most cost-effective solution for the implementation of the programme.