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

2002/0303(COD) - 29/04/2003 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission can accept fully or in the essence 24 of the 27 amendments adopted by the Parliament; Concerning the amendments fully accepted by the Commission, they deals with the following issues: - as regards the scope of the programme, there is a series of amendments stressing the importance of teacher training for the overall objectives of the eLearning programme, and of the e-twinning action area as a tool for "in-service" teacher training in the use of ICT and in European cooperation; - a second series of amendments introduce references to specific target groups, such as the disabled, rural areas, or immigrants, and to gender issues; - as regards financing, several amendments call for keeping the programme's budget at the same level as preparatory actions and can be accepted. A compromise amendment changes the Commission proposal, allocating a higher share of funding to the etwinning schools in Europe action line and reducing consequently the percentage for action line 1 "e-learning for fighting the digital divide"; - adding to the programme's objectives the promotion of the development of high quality multimedia European software, contents and services, can also be accepted. The same can be said for the amendments calling for simplification of the programme's management and those which develop the concept of international cooperation, calling for attention to known good e-learning practice, namely to that of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. As regards the amendments accepted in part or in principle by the Commission, these are as follows: - again on the scope of the programme, one amendment develops the teacher training aspects of the schools twinning action, with a particular emphasis in the exchange of good practice and the development of cooperation at teacher level. While there is agreement in the essence, the proposed wording of the amendment is very long and has a repetitive sentence on good practice. It is proposed to shorten it and to eliminate this repetition. It is also proposed to take away the reference to "virtual training rooms", a concept that would present a problem for some Member States. Lastly, concerning the amendments not accepted by the Commission, these concern those which state the importance of digital television, and calls for guaranteeing interoperability in accordance with Article 18 of the Directive on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive). While fully agreeing with the essence of the amendment, the actions called for are beyond the competences of education and training programmes. This amendment is therefore rejected. Another amendment proposes an augmentation of the total budget from EUR 36 million to EUR 54 million. However, at this stage, the Commission must stay with its original proposal. The amendment asking for "European teacher training programmes" cannot be accepted. Teacher training is an exclusive competence of Member States.