EC/United States agreement for scientific and technical cooperation: renewal

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PURPOSE : the renewal of the Agreement for scientific and technical cooperation between the EC and the USA. PROPOSED ACT : Council Decision. CONTENT : the conclusion of the Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the EC and the United States of America was concluded 1998, and entered into force on 14 October 1998. It was for an initial period of five years with provision for review and extension. An independent Panel of experts carried out a review. Certain recommendations are of special interest, and will be followed up during the preparation and the implementation phase of the agreement: - to raise awareness of the Agreement the EU in order to increase its relevance and the involvement of the Member States in relation to the European Research Area and the conclusions of the Lisbon Council, including to identify target areas for communication in relevant sectors (science, industry, government)"; - that the Joint Consultative Group of the Agreement be better exploited as a communication vehicle so that scientific and other relevant communities are aware of its agenda and the outcomes of its deliberations. - to establish a strategy that will build effectively on the foundation in the first five years and better exploit the potential of the Agreement. In addition, the Commission will pay particular attention to the recommendations concerning the balance of reciprocity, a general framework for the question of funding, and to ensure good direct communication with the relevant US government institutions. The USA wants a straightforward renewal, without changing the text of the current Agreement so as to maintain continuity in the scientific and technological relations between the USA and the Community. Rapid renewal is in the best interest of both parties. A one-step procedure is suggested (a single procedure and a single act concerning signature and conclusion). In the light of the above considerations, the Commission requests the Council: - to approve the conclusion of the Agreement, after consulting the European Parliament; - to authorise the President of the Council to designate the person empowered to sign the Agreement. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS : - budget line : costs will be charged to the specific budget headings of the programmes with the RTD Framework Programme (Chapter B6-6013.) - Overall figures for total annual cost: preparatory activities, review of the cooperation : EUR 50 000; scientific and technical workshops/meetings : EUR 60 000; - type of expenditure : 100% grant (missions to the USA by Commission officials and experts, organisation of workshops). Administrative and technical operating expenditure included in Part B: Commitments and appropriations for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively - EUR 0.11 million per year.