Thermie II: financial support for the promotion of European energy technology 1995-1998

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The committee unanimously adopted the report, which would be debated during the November sitting in Strasbourg. The rapporteur stressed the importance of the demonstration projects within the framework of the Thermie I programme for the period 1990-1994. It involved hundreds of projects from research to industrial exploitation in the field of non-nuclear energies (rational use of energy, renewable energy, "clean" combustion of coal and hydrocarbons). She also referred to the evaluation report of December 1993 which gave a positive analysis of Thermie I. Mrs MCNALLY highlighted the fact that the integration of demonstration projects in the Fourth Framework Programme led to the decrease in appropriations for "non-nuclear energies" for the demonstration section. In fact, the level of Community effort would fall from ECU 713 million for 1990-94 to around ECU 500 million for 1995-98. As a result, she supported measures to promote the market penetration of projects in the area of renewable energies since this was of great interest in terms of energy provision and employment (particularly for SMEs and in the peripheral areas) and because it contributed to the protection of the environment. Through the amendments adopted, the report stated that the appropriations to finance actions in the area of non-nuclear energies for 1995-98, within or outside the Fourth Framework Programme, should not "be lower than they had been over the previous corresponding period". The report recommended that financial support could exceed 35% of the cost of the eligible projects proposed by the Commission where the projects were the result of collaboration between entreprises established in different Member States. Through other amendments, the report aimed to simplify the procedures involved, increase transparency, provide for an evaluation by independent experts and ensure adequate information for the EP and for the consultative committees. It also called for the coordination and promotion of demonstration projects within the framework of international cooperation (Phare, Tacis and Mediterranean programmes, Asia/Latin America agreements, etc.). Finally, the Committee on Research proposed that the appropriations be broken down among the various areas of the programme as follows: - rational energy use: 45%, - renewable energy sources: 35%, - clean combustion of solid fuels: 13%, - hydrocarbons: 7%.