EC/Canada Agreement: amending the scientific and technical cooperation agreement

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The agreement between the European Community and Canada on scientific and technical cooperation came into force in February 1996. The Commission now proposes to amend Article 4 of the agreement in order to extend the scope of the agreement to all areas covered by Article 130g(a) of the EC Treaty. More specifically, the aim is to bring within the scope of the EC/Canada cooperation the implementation of research, technological development and demonstration programmes by promoting cooperation with undertakings, research centres and universities, in the framework of networks linking infrastructure operators and other related projects. In addition, the training and mobility of researchers in the EU must continue to be encouraged. The proposal should also lead to integration of joint projects in the context of the Fifth RTD Framework Programme 1998-2002. This programme provides for action in the areas of quality of life and the management of biological resources. This includes a key action on "farm cells" aimed at developing multi-disciplinary technologies based on the exploitation of the properties of microorganisms, plants and animals, at cellular and intercellular level, in order to gain an understanding of the functioning of cells and to develop high-value-added biomolecules and bioprocesses that help to improve the quality of life and health. Key action in the area of marine technology is also envisaged. Rapporteur Jup WEBER (ERA, L), supported by the Committee, welcomes the Commission proposal and recommends its approval by the House.