RTD Euratom framework programme 2002-2006: participation of undertakings, research centres and universities

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The committee adopted the report by Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL (EPP-ED, D) broadly approving the proposal under the consultation procedure, subject to a number of amendments, as follows: - the minimum number of participants for each research project should be at least three independent legal entities established in three different Member States or Associated States, of which at least one legal entity must have its registered office in a Member State or associated State; - the evaluation of projects should follow a two-stage procedure. Many potential participants were deterred by the disproportionate cost-benefit ratio, and a two-stage procedure, particularly in the case of very complex tenders, would mean that expensive, detailed applications would not have to be made until benefits were likelier. Applicants could opt to include other partners before the second stage but the nature of the proposal could not be changed as a result. Moreover, the selection procedure should be so designed that in its two stages it lasted no longer than the present single-stage procedure; - the scientific and technological quality of an application and the degree of innovation should be the first criterion for selection, as this reflected the strategic objectives of the Lisbon summit; - as regards fusion research, under the 6th framework programme (FP) the support rate should be kept as close as possible to the support rate of the 5th FP in order to maintain an adequate level of fusion work in the Associations within the integrated European fusion programme. The committee therefore proposed a support rate of 23 %, as opposed to the Commission's proposed rate of 17.5 %. The committee was also concerned to clarify the consortium contracts and adopted a number of amendments specifying the relationship between the members of the consortium. Lastly, it wanted calls for tender to be publicised as widely as possible, including on the internet.