Quality assurance in higher education: European cooperation

1997/0121(SYN) - 02/02/1998 - Modified legislative proposal

Following the European Parliament's opinion of 18 November 1997, the Commission tabled an amended proposal incorporating almost half the amendments proposed by Parliament on first reading. The amendments are centred in particular on: - the definition of higher education establishments, - diversity of education systems, - independence of higher education establishments, - consideration of the European dimension of teaching and rapid global development (particularly in the technological sector), - calling on the Member States to contribute to the creation of a European quality assurance network, taking account of developments in the field of modern technologies and information. The amendments not incorporated include: - a number of amendments seeking to define the fundamental principles characterizing national quality assessment systems, the stages of this assessment and those involved at each stage. The Commission considers that such amendments raise the problem of subsidiarity, since the area touched upon by this area is relatively new. - an amendment to eliminate the link between quality assurance and the labour market needs. The Commission considers that this link is important in view of the legal basis of the proposed recommendation (Article 127 of the Treaty) and the implications of this in terms of the employability of graduates. - Amendments seeking to include the CEEC, which the Commission considers inappropriate, - the amendment seeking to introduce systems of quality assurance in the field of research, since the Commission considers that this is outside the scope of the proposal, - certain superfluous amendments concerning the autonomy of higher education institutions.