Community programmes in training, youth and education: participation of the Czech Republic

1997/0024(CNS) - 18/07/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

By adopting the report by Mrs Odile LEPERRE-VERRIER (ARE, F), the European Parliament approved the participation of the Czech Republic in the Community's programmes in the fields of training, youth and education, albeit drawing attention to the fact that the existing financial endowment of the SOCRATES programme was not adequate to permit balanced exchanges between the Union and associated countries. Accordingly, Parliament called for the Czech Republic to be allowed to participate in this programme only on condition that the budget for the programme had been increased as called for by the European Parliament on 12 June 1997 (see procedural file COD97103 on increasing the budget for SOCRATES. In connection with this procedure, the European Parliament called, at first reading, on 12.6.1997, for the overall funding to be increased from ECU 850 m to 950 m rather than the 900 m proposed by the Commission, particularly to enable the Community to cope with the participation of Central and Eastern European countries in the programme). It also stated that if it was decided to grant the Czech Republic a financial supplement for its participation in Community programmes as laid down in the additional protocol to the Association Agreement between the European Community and the Czech Republic, the Commission must inform the budgetary authority of this beforehand. At the same time, Parliament called for language training activities under the various programmes to concern not only the official languages of the Community but also the official languages of Central and Eastern European countries which were future EU Member States (especially since some of these languages already have official language status in parts of the EU, e.g. Slovene in Austria and Italy). In exceptional circumstances, other languages (e.g. Romany) could be accepted, particularly if the aspect 'respect for lesser-used languages' were to be developed in the programmes concerned. Lastly, Parliament called for the Czech Republic to be closely involved in decisions taken in connection with its association with the Community programmes concerned and for a steering committee to draw up, at the end of the programme, an extremely precise assessment of the activities undertaken and of their impact on the adaptation of the Czech Republic's educational systems.