Education, training: Community action programme Socrates, 2nd phase 2000-2004

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In adopting the report by Mrs Doris PACK (PPE, D) on the second phase of the Socrates programme, the European Parliament called for the programme to contribute to the development of quality education and encourage lifelong learning. Its objective is to attain a participation rate of at least 10% of the target groups at whom the programme is aimed. Parliament therefore called for the budget to be increased from the figure of EUR 1.4 bn proposed by the Commission to EUR 2 bn. Parliament considered that Socrates should aim to: - strengthen the European dimension in education by encouraging the acquisition of language skills (by learning two other Community languages, one of which should be of a neighbouring country) and knowledge of other cultures; - promote cooperation in the field of education and remove obstacles to such cooperation, by encouraging mobility among teachers and students, cooperation between educational institutions, better recognition of diplomas and periods of study and improvements in the exchange of information; - encourage innovation in particular where such innovation is associated with new technologies and the learning of languages. Parliament wished the programme to be devoted to five actions (rather than eight, as proposed by the Commission): - school education (Comenius), - higher education (Erasmus), - other educational pathways (Grundtvig), - teaching and learning of languages (Lingua), - education and multimedia (Minerva), as well as horizontal measures. It wished the programme to be addressed to all pupils and students, all categories of staff involved in education, all types of educational institutions, local and regional authorities and other bodies, associations, companies, organisations of both sides of industry and research centres and bodies. Parliament called for cooperation with other local, national or European initiatives to be stepped up (including cooperation with Community agencies) and for Parliament to be informed of reports on the implementation of the programme. These reports must contain information about the programme's contribution to the establishment of a European education system and on measures taken to combat discrimination. Amendments were made to the annex to the programme in accordance with the rationalisation of activities called for by Parliament (5 actions rather than 8) and stressing support for cultural diversity and learning of neighbouring languages (Parliament particularly suggested that a multilingual European school television be established under Minerva).