Research 5th EC framework programme 1998-2002: results dissemination, participation of undertakings, universities

1997/0309(SYN) - 10/07/1998 - Council position

The Council common position generally follows the Commission's initial proposal and differs on only a few points. (a) The main change concerns the definition of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The Council has decided to restrict the scope of the definition to independent legal entities with fewer than 250 employees (full-time equivalents) and an annual turnover not exceeding ECU 40 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding ECU 27 million. This decision is in line with Commission Recommendation 96/280/EC concerning the definition of SMEs, which the Commission has decided to apply to all programmes it manages from 31/12/1997. (b) The common position also includes changes to the rules for participation by legal entities from associated states and other third countries to bring them into line with the Council common position on the Fifth Framework Programme for RTD. (c) Provisions have been included to facilitate Member States' access to relevant information with regard to policy formulation. The common position has incorporated the substance of 3 of the 15 amendments proposed by Parliament. Among the amendments not incorporated are those concerning the following aspects: - cluster of SMEs and one large enterprise; - special provisions for innovative projects in changing markets ; - possibility for contracting parties to negotiate during the preparatory phase; - withdrawal of Commission approval if the contract is not concluded within four months; - contents of contracts; - ownership of knowledge resulting from indirect RTD activities up to 50% funded by the Community; - protection of financial interests and anti-fraud measures.