Research: towards a European area

2000/2075(COS) - 18/05/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament in its first reading adopted the resolution drafted by Elly PLOOIJ-VAN GORSEL (ELDR, Netherlands) on the Commission communication on a European research area. Parliament stated its belief that European research will be at its most efficient if there is a joint European research area in which joint action is taken to define joint objectives and to make the best possible use of resources to achieve them. Such joint efforts must not, however, stand in the way of competing research programmes by the Member States. The latter must set a target of at least 3% of GDP for research. Member States should not regard national research programmes solely as programmes intended primarily to strengthen their own economies but as programmes for promoting economic growth, competitiveness, employment and cohesion throughout the European Union. Operating at EU level with research programmes rather than relatively small projects in a wide range of subfields, greater coordination of resarch work will be fostered. This will promote economies of scale, improve competitiveness within the EU and stimulate employment. Cooperation must be constantly stimulated in the newly established sixth framework programme; the framework programme should be conceived sufficiently flexibly to make it possible to respond rapidly and without substantial administrative involvement to new challenges comparable, for instance, to the BSE crisis, through a process of self-organisation by European science. A European research Area requires an important contribution to be made by the European institutions, in particular the Commission. The contribuion of the institutions should remain quite tightly focused on those objectives that can only be achieved at the Union level, and ancillary activities, such as monitoring progress, communicating information, fostering best practice, developing Framework Programmes in areas requiring Union-level support, improving the legal framework particularly as regards patent law and facilitating research networks. The Commission should work more closely with industry to help establish a genuine European research area and to specify what role the European business community might play in such efforts.