Research RTD, 6th EC Framework-programme 2002-2006: strengthening the European Research Area

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By adopting the report by Mr W.G.VAN VELZEN (EPP-ED, NL) by 521 votes for, 3 against and 0 abstentions, the European Parliament adjusted in detail the first specific programmes of integration and strengthening of the European Research Area under the Sixth Framework Programme. The aim of the non-binding amendments is to clarify the thematic priorities, that is: - Life sciences, genomics and biotechnology for health: Parliament stresses that the priority should be preventing and curing diseases. Diagnostic tools should be supported primarily if they are linked to therapeutic efforts. Parliament calls for priority lines of research in diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases and it stresses the objective of the fight against cancer. The House also adopted an amendment saying that control on disease-related conditions, for example the advancement of knowledge in the field of palliative medicine and care should be supported; - Information Society technologies: the amendments request that research be centred on interactive and intelligent systems for health, which allow medical doctors and health professionals who have completed their studies to continue to keep their knowledge up to date, as well as being used for pharmacovigilance. It is also stated that research shall focus on new technologies for valorisation of artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage. Other amendments adopted stress the need to develop mobile, wireless, optical and broadband communication infrastructures and computing technologies that are reliable, pervasive and can be adapted to accommodate new applications and services. The importance of including the further rapid development of the next-generation pan-European gigabit research network - GEANT - into a network with a capacity of 100 Gb/s was also stressed by the Parliament; - Nanotechnologies and nanosciences: according to Parliament the main objective should be to support research into the integration of biological and non-biological entities, opening new horizons in many applications, such as for processing and for medical, environmental and food analysis systems; - Aeronautics and space: in addition to the basic objective of enabling the aeronautics industry to increase its competitiveness, the competitiveness of European commercial aircraft should also be improved. Furthermore, emphasis should be placed on space science and study of the solar system, including research on the sun and the climate and geology of the earth; - Food quality and safety: Parliament thinks that the priority should be to protect human health and to ensure food safety by control and prevention of food-related risks, by developing food technologies more in keeping with the fundamental role that nutrition plays as regards health and disease prevention, and by control of health risks associated with environmental changes. In addition, research shall focus on the role of trace chemical substances, health risks linked to food contamination, novel food profiling techniques, development, improvement and establishment of methods to control chemical, biological conditions and allergenic risk throughout the food chain from animal feed to consumers throughout the food chain. - Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems: in addition to a greater understanding of marine and terrestrialecosystems, this sector should also include research into the impact of climate change on fish stocks and into the effects of fishing activities; - Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society: MEPs believe that priority should be given to understanding Europe's history, its peoples and its cultural heritage, the evolution of European social and political thought and institutions, the unity and diversity of European culture and the European contributions to world civilisation.