Further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education

2004/0239(COD) - 13/10/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Ljudmila **NOVAK** (EPP-ED, SI) making some amendments to the Commission's proposal. Parliament approved a package of 18 compromise amendments to the Commission proposal. The compromise amendments were brokered by the rapporteur in talks with Council and Commission ("informal trialogue") after her report had been adopted by the Education and Culture committee. (Please refer to the summary of 30/08/2005.)

Recommendation A: Member States must encourage, rather than require, all higher education institutions to introduce rigorous internal quality assurance mechanisms**,** in accordance with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area adopted in Bergen in the context of the Bologna process.

Recommendation B: Instead of being required, as the Commission proposed, quality assurance or accreditation agencies should now be encouraged by Member States to be independent in their assessments. For assessment purposes, the agencies should apply common features of quality assurance agreed in Bergen, in such a way as to protect and promote diversity and innovation.

Recommendation C: Parliament replaced "European Register of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies" by "European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies". Member States must encourage representatives of national authorities, the higher education sector and quality assurance and accreditation agencies, together with social partners, to set up a "European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies" based on national review, that takes account of the principles set out in the Annex, and to define the conditions for registration and the rules for management of the register. Parliament deleted the requirement on Member States to accept the assessments by all registered agencies as a basis for decisions on licensing or funding of higher education institutions, including eligibility for student grants and loans.

Recommendation E is split into three parts:

-Member States are to allow higher education institutions to work towards a complementary assessment by another agency in the European register, for example to enhance their international reputation,

-They should promote cooperation between agencies in order to build up mutual trust and the recognition of quality assurance and accreditation assessments, thus contributing to the recognition of qualifications for the purpose of study or work in another country,

-They are to ensure public access to the assessments made by the quality assurance or accreditation agencies listed in the European register.

Finally, in the event of an initial refusal of registration, reassessment is possible on the basis of improvements made.