

Research RTD, 7th EC framework programme 2007-2013: participation of undertakings, research centres and universities

2005/0277(COD) - 12/09/2006

The committee adopted the report by Philippe BUSQUIN (PES, BE) amending - under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure - the proposed regulation on rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in actions under the 7th Framework Programme and for the dissemination of research results.

The large number of amendments were designed to achieve greater simplification and rationalisation of procedures, for example through practical suggestions such as the creation of a database for the submission of applications and the setting up of a joint unit in the Commission to provide applicants with information and advice. To avoid cumbersome bureaucracy, the committee also introduced new provisions whereby audit certificates would not be required in the case of grants of less than EUR 25 000 towards involvement in an indirect action or in the case of indirect actions entirely reimbursed by lump sums or flat rates.

Other amendments sought to provide greater clarification in certain areas, such as the arrangements for calls for proposals, the definition of evaluation principles and selection and award criteria, the definition of the various categories of eligible costs, arrangements for a Guarantee Fund, etc. The committee also addressed the question of flat-rate costs in more detail, stipulating that the flat rate to cover indirect costs should gradually be decreased from 60% of the total direct costs in the first three years (2007-2009) to 45% in 2010-2012 and should then be set at 30% from 2012 onwards.

While agreeing with the Commission that the ceiling for the Community financial contribution for R&D activities should be 50% of total eligible costs, the committee wanted the upper funding limit for space and security research to be 75%. In the case of non-profit public bodies, secondary and higher education establishments, research organisations and SMEs, the Community financial contribution should be "at least" 75% of the total eligible costs.

A new Article 53a stipulated that the Commissioner responsible for research and the Commissioner responsible for regional policy should meet annually to establish how to reinforce synergy between the 7th Framework Programme and the Cohesion and Structural Funds. Lastly, the committee introduced new reporting requirements under which the Commission would supply Parliament and the Council with detailed information (e.g. the number of applicants in the completed year, the average duration of the procedure, the average period before the concluding evaluation and final payment, etc.) making it possible to judge how successfully the programme is being implemented. It also called for the Commission to carry out a mid-term review - no later than 2010 - of the participation rules and to put forward proposals for them to be amended where necessary.