

Research RTD, 7th EC Framework Programme 2007-2013: trans-national Cooperation specific programme on policy-defined themes

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the report drafted by Teresa **RIERA MADURELL** (PES, Spain) on the proposal for the Specific Programme "Cooperation" implementing the Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013).

The following amendments were adopted in plenary:

- actions under the programme should be made as effective as possible by enhancing complementarity and synergy with other Community programmes and actions, in particular those on structural funds, agriculture, education, training, culture, competitiveness and innovation, industry, health, consumer protection, employment, energy, transport, environment and the information society;
- special consideration should be given to multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity;
- the Programme should focus in particular on the transfer of knowledge, results and technologies from the public research sector to businesses, particularly SMEs, and on mechanisms to ensure that business needs are passed on to research teams in an effective and coordinated manner;
- it should take due account of the important role played by regions in implementing the European Research Area;
- the Programme should contribute to the grant to the European Investment Bank for the constitution of a "Risk-Sharing Finance Facility" in order to improve access to EIB loans. Similarly, it should provide an equal amount of financial support with a view to covering the risks arising from SME involvement in projects, sparing them the need to provide bank guarantees. Given the importance to EU competitiveness of SME development, particular attention will be paid to helping high-tech SMEs to get access to research, in accordance with Article 169 of the Treaty (the EUREKA and "EUROSTARS" programmes);
- research activities must confirm the civic and humanistic value of research, with due regard for ethical and cultural diversity;
- despite the interconnections between space and security, these two subjects must be treated as two separate and well-defined priorities;
- the Commission shall take all necessary steps to verify that the actions financed are carried out effectively and in compliance with the provisions of Regulation 1605/2002;
- the overall administrative expenditure of the Specific Programme, including internal and management expenditure for the executive agency which it is proposed to set up, should be proportional to the activities undertaken under the Specific Programme and is subject to the decision of the budgetary and legislative authorities. Budget appropriations shall be used in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, namely in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, as well as the principle of proportionality;

- as with all the specific programmes, Parliament inserted a new clause stating that the Commission shall provide prior information to the budgetary authority whenever it intends to depart from the breakdown of expenditure stated in the remarks in and annex to the annual budget;
- the work programme will specify the criteria on which proposals for indirect actions under the funding schemes shall be evaluated and projects selected, while recognising the compatibility of the participation of researchers and groups in national and European programmes simultaneously;
- the Commission shall regularly inform the Committee of the overall progress of the implementation of the Specific Programme, and shall provide it with information about all RTD actions funded under the programme;
- Parliament makes it clear that the primary purpose of research should be to increase knowledge. The overarching aim is to contribute to an increase in knowledge and also to sustainable development within the context of promoting research at the highest level of excellence. Research is a fundamental instrument for encouraging social inclusion, active citizenship and participation, economic growth, competitiveness, health and quality of life;
- in the case of university-industry partnerships, the Commission will undertake to disseminate the results of basic and applied research, where these are of public interest and directed to the common good;
- special attention will be paid to enhancing cohesion between EU Member State and regions in the sphere of science and technology, with particular reference to measures to reduce the technology gap between various areas by selective boosting of the technological capacities of undertakings at all levels. To this end, Framework Programme activities will be coordinated with the action lines of other Community policies, particularly regional policy and competitiveness and innovation policy;
- tourism-related technologies, green engineering and chemistry, and environmental health are included under pluridisciplinary and cross-thematic research;
- the work programme will specify the activities that are to be subject to special coordination with those coming under other specific programmes and will establish the mechanisms required in order for such coordination to be effective;
- Parliament defined "Foresight actions" as identifying at an early stage developments and trends with significant prospective applications;
- international cooperation must create the basis for research activities and capacities in the developing countries and to consolidate and strengthen the bodies responsible: universities and public and private centres for the training of researchers;
- the programme must support the mobility of third country scientists to ensure that they have the best conditions enabling them to work in and with Europe and facilitating their subsequent return home.