

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

2005/0185(CNS) - 19/12/2006 - Final act

PURPOSE: to adopt the Specific Programme “**Co-operation**” under the 7th Framework Programme.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2006/971/EC concerning the Specific Programme “Co-operation” implementing the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013).

CONTENT: the adoption of the Specific Programme “Co-operation” stems from Council Decision 1982 /2006/EC concerning the Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013). See: [COD/2005/0043](#). The new 7th Framework Programme is centred on four research pillars: : Co-operation; Ideas; People; and Capacity.

The Co-operation programme has been designed to offer leadership in key scientific and technological fields. It does so by supporting co-operation between universities, industry, research centres and public authorities at a European as well as global level. Within this context, the Co-operation programme will provide trans-national collaboration and assistance at every level of the research phase. In short, the overarching aim of the specific programme is to promote research at the highest level of excellence through the exchange of ideas and research. The Programme has been awarded a **EUR 32 413 million** budget to help realise these objectives.

Nine themes have been chosen to support this heading. They are:

- 1) health;
- 2) food, agriculture and bio-technology;
- 3) information and communication technology;
- 4) nano-sciences, nano-technologies, materials and new production technologies;
- 5) energy;
- 6) environment (including climate change);
- 7) transport (including Aeronautics);
- 8) socio-economic sciences and humanities;
- 9) space; and
- 10) security.

Pluri-disciplinary and cross-thematic research, including joint calls, will be encouraged. Special attention will be given to projects that cut across themes such as marine sciences and technologies. In order to make projects as industrially relevant as possible, the Commission is setting up “European Technology Platforms”, which will act as agents revising and updating emerging sciences.

Within this context, ‘bottom-up’ applications for presenting research proposals have been approved, whereby researchers, who have identified exciting research topics, can present them directly to the Commission for funding. These will be grouped under either ‘Adventure’ or ‘Insight’ actions. Another action, classified as ‘Pathfinder’, allows the Commission to consider initiatives which focus on specific, highly challenging objectives in emerging scientific fields. In addition the Commission is offering the possibility of altering the annual work programme in cases where an unforeseen policy need has been identified – such as a sudden epidemic or an unexpected food scare.

A further key feature of the Co-operation programme is the successful application of knowledge transfer. A number of measures have therefore been introduced to help facilitate and encourage the dissemination of European research. This will be implemented in each thematic area by integrating and disseminating knowledge transfer actions within projects through, for example, financing schemes. Other measures include offering dissemination actions, which actively seek to disseminate results from past, present and future research projects.

The role of SMEs in furthering the strengthening of a European Research Area has been recognised and particular attention is given to their needs under the Co-operation Specific Programme. SME participation will be facilitated across the entire thematic areas through improved financial and administrative procedures and enhanced flexibility in terms of choosing what financial scheme is most appropriate to a given need.

Collaborative research will form the bulk as well as the core of Community research funding. The main objective being to establish excellent research projects and networks capable of attracting the brightest researchers and investment to Europe.

A further scheme being presented under the Co-operation programme is the Joint Technology Initiative. The Joint Technology Initiative responds to the need for long term public private partnership in certain fields of large-scale and on-going research activities. The research referred to typically involves a small number of highly selective research fields. The European Investment Bank will be involved in offering loan finance. Funding for JTI will be decided on the basis of separate proposals and will be selected on the basis of a few key criteria. The initiatives must be able to prove that they offer added value for Europe as a whole, prove they have the support of industry, offer industrial competitive advantages, contribute to broader policy objectives and show national support. Scientific areas, which have already been identified as JTI compatible, include, *inter alia*, global environment monitoring, nano-electronics and embedded computing systems.

The co-ordination of non-Community research programmes is also listed as a key objective of the Co-operation programme. In this case the action makes use of two main tools, namely ERA-NET and the participation of the Community in jointly implemented national research programmes. Existing ERA-NET research from the 6th framework programme will be allowed to submit follow-up proposal or to broaden the consortia to new participants. In addition, the scheme will be opened to public bodies planning a research programme but which is not yet in operation. The action seeks to enhance synergies between the EU’s framework programme and inter-governmental structures such as EUREKA.

Lastly, the Co-operation specific programme will offer international co-operation in order to promote European competitiveness and to address specific problems faced by third world countries. International co-operation will be implemented according to each of the nine thematic fields of research. It will work by

opening up all activities carried out in the thematic area and will co-ordinate with the other specific actions foreseen by the 7th framework programme – specifically under the heading “People” and “Capacities”.

On a final point there will be a strong accent on ethical considerations including the protection of human dignity and life, protection of personal data and privacy and environmental considerations, in line with Community law.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 2 January 2007.