Basic information

2000/2075(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Research: towards a European area **Subject** 3.50.01 European research area and policy	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	PLOOIJ-VAN GORSEL Elly (ELDR)	27/01/2000

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market	MACCORMICK Professor Sir Neil (V/ALE)	28/03/2000
CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Research	2272	2000-06-15

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Research and Innovation	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/01/2000	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2000)0006	Summary
13/03/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
09/05/2000	Vote in committee		Summary

09/05/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0131/2000	
17/05/2000	Debate in Parliament		
18/05/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0234/2000	Summary
18/05/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
15/06/2000	Debate in Council		Summary
23/02/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2000/2075(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/5/12445

Research: towards a European area

2000/2075(COS) - 16/10/2002 - Follow-up document

Thirty months after it was launched, the ERA initiative can be seen to have played a part in reshaping the European research policy landscape. Its implementation has raised awareness of a European dimension of research and substantially redefined the Framework Programme for Research. The ERA, does, however, seem to be hampered by insufficient participation by the Member states. This is reducing the impact of the activities being undertaken, thereby jeopardising the chances of the project achieving its objectives: the creation of a genuine Internal Market in research, and the establishment of a co-ordination of national research policies. In this Communication, the Commission assesses the activities undertaken. It concludes that the general objectives at this halfway point should be: -to achieve a substantial increase in Member State involvement and the level of mobilisation of national activities; -to increase the impact of the activities underway; -to consolidate the conceptual and policy framework in which the project is being implemented. The Commission analyses the actions undertaken and suggests a series of actions for consideration. It concludes that the analysis confirms the following observations: -the ERA initiative has changed the research environment and research policies in Europe quite radically. -the progress made has varied from one area to another in terms of scale. -structural constraints have limited the scale of results achieved to date and could jeopardise the achievement of objectives. The actions suggested in this Communication, such as concentration on a smaller number of targeted topics, are aimed at reinvigorating the initiative, on the basis of the results achieved so far, and to give the initiative a stronger operational basis. They call for a debate before the European Council of spring 2003.

Research: towards a European area

2000/2075(COS) - 03/10/2001 - Follow-up document

The European Commission has adopted a strategy paper on the regional dimension of the European Research Area. The paper is designed to incite local and regional authorities, especially those from the least developed regions, to benefit from the new possibilities offered by the European Research Area, and to provide new perspectives to the EU's research and regional policies alike. Regions have by now come to be recognised at large as significant players in the drive-up to the knowledge-economy in Europe. Building on their developing qualities, experience and commitment, they will be increasingly present in Europe's efforts for growth and competitiveness. Enhancing this capacity and equipping them with the appropriate tools and strategies remains a challenge for the Union. Regions are supported in their efforts by an increasing number of European policies, of which research and innovation and cohesion ones, emerge as decisive. While there is no doubt that cohesion policy is playing a major role for the regions, research policy remains instrumental for creating the necessary conditions for advancing the regions in the knowledge-based economy. Together with innovation and education and training, research brings a new message to regional economies, allowing for new forms of advancement, that keep pace with local but also international developments. The key message of this Communication is thus, that European regions may now prepare to fully play their part in the new European and global economy, by developing consistent agendas in research and innovation. To this end, integrated strategies supported by relevant Community policies (as it is the case with research and cohesion policy) will bring faster results, interconnecting regions into the fabric of a truly European Research Area.

Research: towards a European area

2000/2075(COS) - 18/05/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament in its first reading adopted the resolution drafted by Elly PLOOIJ-VAN GORSEL (ELDR, Netherlands) on the Commission communication on a European research area. Parliament stated its belief that European research will be at its most efficient if there is a joint European research area in which joint action is taken to define joint objectives and to make the best possible use of resources to achieve them. Such joint efforts must not, however, stand in the way of competing research programmes by the Member States. The latter must set a target of at least 3% of GDP for research. Member States should not regard national research programmes solely as programmes intended primarily to strengthen their own economies but as programmes for promoting economic growth, competitiveness, employment and cohesion throughout the European Union. Operating at EU level with research programmes rather than relatively small projects in a wide range of subfields, greater coordination of resarch work will be fostered. This will promote economies of scale, improve competitiveness within the EU and stimulate employment. Cooperation must be constantly stimulated in the newly established sixth framework programme; the framework programme should be conceived sufficiently flexibly to make it possible to respond rapidly and without substantial administrative involvement to new challenges comparable, for instance, to the BSE crisis, through a process of self-organisation by European science. A European research Area requires an important contribution to be made by the European institutions, in particular the Commission. The contribuion of the institutions should remain quite tightly focused on those objectives that can only be achieved at the Union level, and ancillary activities, such as monitoring progress, communicating information, fostering best practice, developing Framework Programmes in areas requiring Union-level support, improving the legal framework particularly as regards patent law and facilitating research networks. The Commission should work more closely with industry to help establish a genuine European research area and to specify what role the European business community might play in such efforts.

Research: towards a European area

2000/2075(COS) - 04/10/2000

The aim of the European Research Area is to create conditions making it possible to increase the impact of European research efforts by strengthening the coherence of research activities and policies conducted in Europe. However, Europe is still suffering from structural weaknesses where research is concerned, compared to the United States for example. Against this background, in January 2000 the Commission proposed the creation of a European Research Area. The purpose of this paper is to propose guidelines for future measures in support of EU research, and more specifically the research Fraemwork Programme, for the period 2002-2006. In addition, this paper contains the Commission's mid-term review of the 5th research Framework Programme. In this respect, it also constitutes the mid-term Communication provided for in Articles 6 of the Decisions 182/1999/EC and 1999/64 Euratom on the Fifth Framework Programme. The main points contained in the report are as follows: - supplementing the European intergovernmental scientific co-operation initiatives launched since the 1950s, the EU's Framework Programmes have made a significant contribution to strengthening European research capabilities. - the collaboration networks and the forms of co-operation to which they have given rise (250,000 transnational co-operational links between 1995 and 1999) represent a considerable achievement. However, these Framework Programmes have up to now to a large extent been additional to the 15 series of national programmes conducted independently of one another; - in order to be able to play a more strucutring role in support of the realisation of the European Research Area, they need to be closely linked with national activities and European intergovernmental co-operation initiatives. Their funding should be combined to a greater extent with other public and private sector funding; - the European Research Area project requires the full application of the principle, enshrined in the Treaty, of complementarity between EU research activities and Member States' research activities; - new instruments and new methods of intervention need to be conceived and used for this purpose, specifically designed to help correct the structural weakness of European research; - European research efforts should be focused on a more limited number of priorities which should be subject to a political choice on the basis of objective assessment criteria.

Research: towards a European area

2000/2075(COS) - 15/06/2000

The Council proceeded to an in-depth debate on the European Research Area (ERA). This debate was held in light of these conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23/24 March 2000, the Commission communication on ERA as well as of a Commission document entitled "First steps towards a European Research Area". The Ministers warmly welcomed the Commission's initiatves in this respect and the plans which were outlined by Commissioner BUSQUIN on how the Commission intends to bring the work forwards, with particular regard to the preliminary work on the 6th RTD Framework Programme. Following the debate the Council adopted a resolution which: 1) encourages the networking of national and joint research programmes on a voluntary basis, around freely chosen objectives, in order to take greater advantage of the concerted resources devoted to research and technological development in the Member States. To this end: - Member States will cooperate, in association with the Commission, in devising a simple means for improved information exchange, wherever possible using existing mechanisms, on research activities of strategic importance on the European level; - Member States will bring forward work already underway with a view to developing mechanisms for opening progressively their national research programmes, including where appropriate the participation of non-national experts in evaluation panels. In additon, the Council welcomes the initial work undertaken by the Commission with a view to developing an open method of coordination for benchmarking national research policies in relation to the following themes for benchmarking indicators aiming to assess the development of European research policies in relation to the development of research in the rest of the world: - human resources in RTD; - public and private investment in RTD; - scientific and technological productivity; - impact of RTD on economic competitiveness and employment. Furthermore, the Council invites the Member States and the Commission to take the necessary steps towards: - increasing the participation of women in science by accelerating the implementation of the action plan "Women in Science"; - working closely with the European Investment Bank, to support the development of a globally competitive economy based upon a thriving SME and start-up sector through the exchange of best practices on technology transfer and innovation measures in respect of, inter alia, venture capital funds, incubators, promotion of high-tec start-ups, etc. In conclusion, the Council considers it necessary to review regularly European Science and Technology policies and assess progress made towards achieving a European Research Area. To this end, invited the Commision to present a regular report on the state of RTD in Europe to the Council and the European Parliament and thereafter forwarded annually to the Spring European Council.

Research: towards a European area

2000/2075(COS) - 18/01/2000 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : Commission Communication to investigate ways of progressing towards a better organisation of research in Europe and to put forward suggestions for consideration and debate. CONTENT : By the creation of new products, processes and markets, research and technology provide one of the principal driving forces of economic growth, competitiveness and employment. They are the best way of modernising European companies, which is necessary to improve Europe's competitive position. The Communication compares European investment in research and the growth of jobs with that of the United States. The Commission believes that the current situation concerning research in Europe is worrying, and produces figures to support this contention. Notably, the average research effort in the Union is currently only 1.8% of Europe's GDP, as against 2.8% in the United States and 2.9% in Japan. The gap is increasing. The trade balance in high tech products has shown a deficit of EUR 20 billion per year in Europe over the past ten years, and this deficit seems to be increasing. The principal reference framework for research activities is national funding. At the European level, it is the Union's framework programme for research, which accounts for only about 5.4% in financial terms of the total public effort. Decompartmentalisation and better integration of Europe's scientific and technological area is an indispensable condition for invigorating research. A European research area should embrace the following aspects: - a stock of material resources and facilities optimised at the European level. This includes the networking of centres of excellence and the creation of virtual centres of excellence, in particular universities and companies. It also includes the development of a European approach to infrastructures covering the creation of new installations and the functioning of existing ones. Better use of the potential offered by electronic networks must be encouraged. - more coherent use of public instruments and resources. This involves a more co-ordinated implementation of national and European research programmes and closer relations between European organisations for scientific and technological cooperation. - more dynamic private investment. This includes the better use of fiscal instruments for indirect support to research, and the development of effective tools for the protection of intellectual property. The European patent must be started up as soon as possible. Europe must encourage the creation of high-tech companies by researchers, or companies where researchers have a stake in the capital. The level of risk capital investment in high tech sectors must be increased. Initiatives aken could be built upon. - a common system of scientific and technical reference for policy implementation. The JRC could play a significant role in the establishment of a common system. - more abundant and more mobile human resources. Greater mobility of researchers in Europe should be encouraged, as should the introduction of a European dimension to scientific careers. There should be a greater place and role for women inresearch, and young people should be made more aware of careers in research. - a dynamic European landscape, open and attractive to researchers and investment. The regions should have a reinforced role in the European research effort. - an area of shared values, which is the result of the development of a shared vision of the ethical issues of science and technology. There is an urgent need for a broad-based debate. The range of possibilities provided by the Treaty should be re-examined and a full panoply of instruments available to the union should be brought into play.