

22. calls on the Commission not to attempt to use the control of subsidies to broaden its powers, as seems to be its intention in relation to subsidies for cinema and television production;
23. calls on the Commission to work to ensure that Europe remains a strong economic and cultural force in the audiovisual sector, and, in so doing, to help strengthen the audiovisual industry and thus boost growth and employment in Europe;
24. advocates a greater role for the regions in audiovisual policy in the digital age.

Brussels, 14 June 2000.

The President
of the Committee of the Regions
 Jos CHABERT

Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the 'Proposal for a Council Decision modifying Decision 1999/311/EC of 29 April 1999 adopting the third phase of the trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education (Tempus III)'

(2000/C 317/09)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,

having regard to the proposal for a Council Decision modifying Decision 1999/311/EC of 29 April 1999 adopting the third phase of the trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education (Tempus III) (2000-2006) (COM(2000) 184 final — 2000/0074 (CNS));

having regard to the Council decision of 5 May 2000 to consult it on this subject, in accordance with the first paragraph of Article 265 of the Treaty establishing the European Community;

having regard to the decision of its president of 12 May 2000 appointing Mrs Morsblech 9D/ELDR as rapporteur-general, in accordance with Rule 40(2) of its Rules of Procedure;

having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the proposal for a Council decision adopting the third phase of the trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education (Tempus III) (2000-2006) (COM(1998) 454 final) (CdR 301/98 fin)⁽¹⁾,

unanimously adopted the following opinion at its 34th plenary session of 14 and 15 June 2000 (meeting of 14 June).

The Committee of the Regions

1. reaffirms its view that the Tempus higher education programme is to be seen as a reflection of the European Union's political commitment to cooperation and dialogue with the countries of central and eastern Europe and that within the framework of that cooperation priority is to be given to education and training and to human resource development, which are also excellent topics for regional cooperation;
2. appreciates and expressly acknowledges the moves towards democracy in the Republic of Croatia, as reflected in particular in the parliamentary and presidential elections at the beginning of 2000, and sees this as a development which successfully brings Croatia closer to the EU;
3. welcomes the fact that the Council of Ministers also acknowledges developments in Croatia and has called for closer cooperation between the EU and Croatia and, above all, for the admission of Croatia to the Tempus programme;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C51, 22.2.1999, p. 86.

4. thinks that because democratic structures in Croatia have been consolidated, conditions are now in place for Croatia to participate in the Tempus programme;
5. regards the development of systems of higher education, the development and overhaul of curricula and the development of vocational training as important areas where the EU, with the aid of the Tempus programme, can provide an important impetus in support of Croatia's development;
6. therefore expressly supports the proposal for a Council Decision modifying the list of countries eligible for support under the Tempus programme;
7. sees no reason at present, however, to extend Tempus beyond Croatia to other non-associated countries in the region.

Brussels, 14 June 2000.

The President
Of the Committee of the Regions
Jos CHABERT

Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the 'European Commission White Paper on Environmental Liability'

(2000/C 317/10)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,

having regard to the European Commission White Paper on Environmental Liability (COM(2000) 66 final);

having regard to the decision of the Bureau of 17 November 1999 to draw up, in accordance with the fifth paragraph of Article 265 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, an opinion on the subject, and to instruct the Commission 4 — Spatial Planning, Urban Issues, Energy and Environment — to prepare the Committee's work on the subject;

having regard to the draft opinion (CdR 13/2000 rev. 1) adopted by Commission 4 on 11 May 2000, for which the rapporteur was Mr McChord (UK, PES),

adopted the following opinion at its 34th plenary session on 14 and 15 June 2000 (meeting of 14 June) unanimously:

1. Views of the Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions:

1.1. welcomes this proposal from the European Commission as a first step towards the establishment of an effective European environmental liability regime. This will provide important protection to key habitats and will make a major contribution to quality of life in the EU;

1.2. believes that the proposal appears to address one of the main areas outstanding from the Fifth Environmental Action Programme;

1.3. believes that the proposed European regime should be comprehensive and help to improve implementation of key environmental principles such as the 'polluter pays', prevention and precaution of existing European environmental laws;

1.4. supports the intention of the European Commission to secure the adoption of measures which will ensure the decontamination and restoration of the environment, as well as the better integration of environment into other policy areas. The COR believes that this holistic approach is long overdue and may help to create a level playing field across the Single European Market;