

## I

*(Information)*

## COUNCIL

## COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 16 November 2000

**on making a reality of the European area of research and innovation: guidelines for the European Union's research activities (2002-2006)**

(2000/C 374/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING the Research Council's Resolution of 15 June 2000 establishing a European area of research and innovation <sup>(1)</sup> on the implementation of the conclusions of the European Council held in Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000 and in Santa Maria da Feira on 19 and 20 June 2000 aimed, with a view to job creation and economic growth, at the rapid establishment of a European area of research and innovation (ERA),

UNDERLINING the importance of the Commission communication on 'Making a reality of the European research area: guidelines for EU research activities (2002-2006)' for an in-depth debate on the future of European science and technology policy and future framework programmes, and on their coordination with other European research activities in the context of the establishment of the ERA,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Commission communication on 'Innovation in a knowledge-driven economy' and RECALLING the importance of the research/innovation interface,

CONSIDERING the importance of implementing the e-Europe action plan and its close links with research, in particular information and communication technologies,

NOTING the five-yearly evaluation report on the framework programmes, the annual report (1999) of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the report submitted to the Commission by the high-level panel of experts, and the opinions on the latter two reports delivered by the JRC Board of Governors,

(1) SUPPORTS the Commission's overall approach as described in its communication aimed at pursuing efforts to make a reality of the ERA; CONSIDERS that this must be the

product of joint and voluntary effort and partnership between the European Union, the Member States, the applicant countries, the associated countries under the fifth framework programme, and all scientific and technical research stakeholders.

(2) NOTES the importance of the framework programmes as strategic tools for finally establishing the ERA and increasing the effectiveness of research activities in Europe.

(3) NOTES, in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, the importance for Member States of coordinating their research and technological development activities to ensure that national policies and Community policy on research and development are mutually consistent, and the role that the Commission can play in promoting that coordination, in close cooperation with the Member States; RECALLS also the importance of Community activities which complement those undertaken in Member States in accordance with Article 164 of the said Treaty, and the need to carry through coordination efforts to achieve the objectives of the ERA.

(4) WELCOMES in this context the activities already under way to develop an open method of policy coordination, and recalls the need to make active progress on networking and the gradual voluntary opening-up by the competent authorities of national research programmes and on the exchange of information and TAKES NOTE of the progress made on the benchmarking of policies (indicators).

(5) RECOGNISES the positive achievements of the current framework programmes, while noting the need to improve their operation and the advisability of making use at Community level of new forms of activity in partnership with the Member States while observing the criterion of scientific excellence.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 205, 19.7.2000, p. 1.

- (6) EMPHASISES, while taking account of the principle of subsidiarity, the importance of the key concepts of 'scientific excellence' and 'European added value', which must be used to prioritise the Union's efforts on major research and development issues in future framework programmes, through the application of strict and coherent criteria; AFFIRMS that Community support for scientific and technical research should help towards the construction of a Europe of knowledge, the implementation of Community policies and, in accordance with Article 163 of the Treaty, the strengthening of the scientific and technological base of Community industry, by encouraging undertakings and others involved in research to carry out advanced or long-term research projects and by giving support to demonstration projects for innovative technologies.
- (7) WELCOMES the importance given in the communication to the networking of national public research programmes, RECALLS the importance of the experience acquired in the framework of key actions and generic activities of the framework programme and NOTES the benefits of developing these concepts by considering, for example, the setting-up of large-scale targeted projects, which could include clusters of projects, without prejudice to the importance of small and medium-scale projects, and the establishment of networks of excellence.
- (8) Also WELCOMES the importance that has been attached to the question of human resources; ENCOURAGES pursuit of the action already in hand to increase the role and number of women in the European research effort, to develop training, to foster the mobility of researchers, including hosting researchers from other continents, and to encourage young researchers.
- (9) EMPHASISES also the benefits of a European approach to research infrastructures in order to maximise their effectiveness in a coordinated manner.
- (10) REAFFIRMS the essential link between research and innovation and the major role of enterprises and particularly high technology or traditional SMEs in the innovation process; RECALLS the need to have a Community patent available by the end of 2001 as well as a utility model; EMPHASISES the importance of promoting the scientific and technological performance of all the regions of the Member States and participating countries, including the cross-border dimension, both within the ERA in future framework programmes and in other relevant Community initiatives.
- (11) SUPPORTS the need to make the debate on the role of science in society more profound and to assist public decision-making by strengthening links between research policies and the needs of society, including the ethical dimensions of progress; REITERATES the importance of the Commission setting up an independent advisory body to boost the effectiveness of European RTD policies; NOTES the essential contribution of the human and social sciences and the need to improve tools for the dissemination of scientific and technical information and to enhance scientific and technical knowledge.
- (12) EMPHASISES the importance of the international and global dimension in European research activities in the interest of obtaining mutual benefits, and in order to promote European scientific and technological interests.
- (13) EMPHASISES that, for the achievement of the European Research Area, it is advisable to develop in order to implement the Union's research framework programme and according to the nature of the actions and priorities involved new instruments and means of action; these must make it possible, in compliance with the principles of transparency and equal access, to promote partnerships between Member States and the Union and to improve the efficiency of research activities, in particular through:
- promotion of a broader, programme-based approach, in which the Community is one of the players,
  - closer linkage with international structures and organisations for scientific cooperation (e.g. COST, Eureka, ESF, etc.),
  - development of synergies with national research-funding bodies,
  - the possibility of action to structure research activities in the longer term, around strategic subjects,
  - extension of the scope of some of the Union's current activities, for example in the areas of training and mobility, or optimising infrastructures,
  - recourse to Community participation in programmes undertaken by several Member States, for example through the implementation of Articles 168 and 169 of the Treaty.
- (14) RECALLS the role of nuclear research and of the activities associated with it in the future Euratom framework programme, an integral part of the European research area; POINTS TO the role of the JRC in this respect in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community and the role of the JRC in research and technological development, under its specific programme; CONFIRMS the importance of the JRC's role as a centre serving the common interests of the European Union by providing independent advice.

(15) EMPHASISES the need to differentiate the means of implementing Community research framework programmes according to the nature of the activities and the priorities, while complying with the principle of the selection of projects on the basis of competitive public calls for tender with transparent evaluation rules; SUPPORTS the need for more efficient management, and the Commission's determination to refocus on its essential tasks.

(16) TO THAT END, THE COUNCIL INVITES THE COMMISSION:

- to send the Council as soon as possible its contributions on the next stages in furtherance of the implementation of the ERA and its formal proposal for Decisions on the sixth framework programme during the first quarter of 2001, so that those Decisions may be taken well before the end of

the fifth framework programme (2002), and preferably by the end of the first half of 2002,

- to give details of new management methods in its formal proposal, including as regards the possible outsourcing of certain tasks,
- to submit to the Council as soon as possible, so that it can hold an in-depth discussion before the framework programme is adopted, a communication on the implementation of the JRC's mission, covering management styles, methods and governance, the focusing of research efforts, the matching of human resources to the task, the improvement of links with other national research institutes, and the response which the JRC might provide to the needs of users, particularly the Commission's Directorates-General, and public authorities.

## COUNCIL OPINION

of 27 November 2000

**on the updated stability programme of Germany for the period 2000-2004**

(2000/C 374/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1466/97 of 7 July 1997 on the strengthening of the surveillance of budgetary positions and the surveillance and coordination of economic policies <sup>(1)</sup>, and in particular Article 5(3) thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation of the Commission,

After consulting the Economic and Financial Committee,

HAS DELIVERED THIS OPINION:

On 27 November 2000 the Council examined Germany's updated stability programme, which covers the period 2000-2004. The Council welcomes the fact that this update makes distinct progress in terms of compliance with the code of conduct.

The Council notes with satisfaction that the budgetary target for the current year is maintained in spite of a slightly worse

than expected outcome in 1999. However, the Council notes that this is due also to higher than projected tax revenues. The fact that the projected consolidation path depends heavily on the budgetary developments of levels of government other than the federal one shows the importance of an improved cooperation on government finances at the national level as already emphasised in the Council opinion of 28 February 2000 on the updated stability programme of Germany for the period 1999 to 2003 <sup>(2)</sup>.

The Council considers the macroeconomic scenario presented in the programme, which assumes average annual output growth of around 2,5 % between 2001 and 2004, to be realistic. However, the Council recommends that, with a view to making the economy more resilient to external shocks, reforms be implemented which render the labour market more flexible. Furthermore, benefiting from the favourable development of employment, the government should adhere to its announced policy of a further clear reduction of social security contribution rates. The Council notes that the underlying growth scenario presupposes that wage moderation will prevail throughout the programme period. A moderate outcome of the wage negotiation round for the year 2002 will be crucial in this respect.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 209, 2.8.1997, p. 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 98, 6.4.2000, p. 1.