
(2001/C 116/20)

On 15 September 2000 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 152 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the above mentioned proposal.

The Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, which was responsible for preparing the Committee’s work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 14 November 2000. (The rapporteur working without a study group was Mr Fuchs).

At its 377th plenary session on 29 and 30 November 2000 (meeting of 29 November) the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion with 110 votes in favour and three abstentions.

1. Introduction

1.1. The proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the extension of the Community public health programmes forms part of the health strategy which the Commission recently presented (1).

1.2. The new health strategy comprises a framework for action in the field of public health and inter-linked and mutually-supportive components in other Community policies and activities that have an influence on factors that affect health. As part of the public health framework, a new, overall, programme for action in the field of public health has been proposed by the Commission for adoption by the European Parliament and the Council pursuant to Article 152 of the EC Treaty (2). The new programme will replace the current programmes of action in the public health field.

1.3. In view of the need for completion of the co-decision procedure concerning the proposal for the new public health programme, it is possible that adoption of the relevant decision of the European Parliament and of the Council will not take place before the end of some of the existing programmes.

The following Community action programmes and plans expire on 31 December 2000:

— action programme on health monitoring (3);
— action programme on pollution-related diseases (4).

The following Community action programmes and plans expire on 31 December 2001:

— action programme on health promotion, information, education and training (5);
— action programme on the prevention of drug dependence (6);
— action programme on the prevention of AIDS and certain other communicable diseases (7).

The following Community action programmes and plans expire on 31 December 2002:

— action plan to combat cancer (8);
— action programme on the prevention of drug dependence (9).

1.4. Actions under the existing programmes are vital for pursuing the public health objectives of the Community and damage will be caused, in policy and field activity terms, if they are discontinued.

1.5. The extension of the programmes that are due to end in 2000 and 2001 should, however, be limited in time until the new public health programme comes into force. For this reason, it is proposed to extend these six programmes until 31 December 2002.

2. General comments

2.1. The Economic and Social Committee welcomes the Commission proposal that the six Community public health programmes be extended to 31 December 2002.

3 Decision No. 645/96/EC — OJ L 95, 16.4.1996.
4 Decision No. 646/96/EC — OJ L 95, 16.4.1996.
5 Decision No. 647/96/EC — OJ L 95, 16.4.1996.
2.2. Until the new, comprehensive public health action programme, which is to replace the current action programmes, is adopted the Committee considers it necessary to make it possible for the measures implemented under these programmes to continue.

Brussels, 29 November 2000.

The President
of the Economic and Social Committee
Gökte FRERICHS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the ‘Proposal for a Council Regulation extending the programme of incentives and exchanges for legal practitioners in the area of civil law (Grotius — civil)’

(2001/C 116/21)

On 2 October 2000 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 262 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the above-mentioned proposal.

The Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, which was responsible for preparing the Committee’s work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 14 November 2000. The rapporteur was Mr Cavaleiro Brandão and the co-rapporteurs were Ms Florio and Mr Hernández Bataller.

At its 377th plenary session (meeting of 29 November 2000), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion with 112 votes in favour and two abstentions.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Grotius programme was adopted in 1996 on the basis of Article K.3 of the EU Treaty. The programme was to run from 1996 to 2000, so is due to expire at the end of this year.

1.2. The programme is designed to facilitate judicial cooperation between Member States by fostering mutual knowledge of legal and judicial systems. It is aimed at legal practitioners, and provides funding for training, exchange and work-experience programmes, organisation of meetings, studies and research, and the distribution of information.

1.3. With the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, judicial cooperation in the areas of civil and criminal law now has two separate legal bases (Title IV of the EC Treaty and Title VI of the EU Treaty respectively). The present regulation only concerns the extension of the part of the Grotius programme relating to judicial cooperation in civil matters (‘Grotius-civil’), which is explicitly covered by Article 61 of the EC Treaty.

1.4. The Commission has been considering the future of the Grotius-civil programme, and particularly its relations with the Robert Schuman project to raise awareness of Community law among members of the legal profession. This project expires at the end of 2001.

1.5. The Commission proposes to continue the civil law strand of the Grotius programme for a further year, allocating it EUR 650 000.

1.6. Grants will be available for five types of activity: training in languages and in comparative law, work experience and visits abroad, organisation of conferences, coordination of research on subjects relevant to judicial cooperation, and dissemination of information on foreign law and judicial cooperation.

2. General comments

2.1. The Committee endorses the aims of the Grotius programme and its intended linkage with the Robert Schuman