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*(Preparatory Acts)***ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE****Opinion on the proposal for a Council Decision adopting the Second Phase of the Trans-European Cooperation Scheme for Higher Education (Tempus II)⁽¹⁾**

(93/C 73/01)

On 21 October 1992 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 198 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on the abovementioned proposal.

The Section for Social, Family, Educational and Cultural Affairs, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its Opinion on 14 January 1993. The Rapporteur was Mr Connellan.

At its 302nd Plenary Session (meeting of 27 January 1993), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion unanimously.

1. Introduction

1.1. Tempus, the aim of which is to support the development and renewal of the higher education system in the context of economic reform and recovery in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe through co-operation with appropriate partners in the European Community, was adopted for an initial pilot phase which began on 1 July 1990. A later Council decision extended the pilot phase for one year lasting until the end of June 1994 (Council Decision 92/240/EEC).

1.2. An annual report has been presented by the Commission covering the period 7 May 1990-31 July 1991. This report deals in a factual sense with the results of the initial calls for Applications.

1.3. As part of a formal evaluation process, the Commission contracted Coopers and Lybrand Europe to evaluate the Tempus programme. The results of this analysis were presented in May 1992. The report focused primarily on the central plank (Joint European Projects) of the Tempus strategy in reforming higher education systems in the context of economic reform and recovery.

1.4. The Commission now proposes the initiation of a second phase (Tempus II) and has produced a draft Council Decision. This document draws heavily on the results of the external evaluation of the programme which concluded in broad terms that the Tempus Programme has made an impressive start and enjoys wide popularity in both East and West. The second Tempus (Tempus II) would have a four-year perspective beginning on 1 July 1994.

2. Commission proposal

The Commission proposes in broad terms the following:

2.1. Extension of the programme beyond the current ten participating eligible countries, Central and Eastern European countries, to include the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union, currently in receipt of Community Assistance as part of the Tacis Programme.

2.2. Focussing of the programme on both the objectives of:

(i) Tempus targeted to reform of higher education.

(ii) Tempus targeted to short-term economic restructuring needs (i.e. skill shortages, etc.).

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 311, 27. 11. 1992, p. 1.

2.3. Concentrating on JEP's as the most successful means to achieve the aims of the programme as distinct from pure 'mobility grants'.

2.4. Identification by each of the eligible countries

Year	Programme budget (mn ECU)	Number of Eligible Countries	Applications	Acceptances	% Success rate
1990	25	3	1 338	152	11,4
1991	74,5	6	1 401	314	22,7
1992	104	10	1 979	244	12

3.2. *Types of Project*

The different forms of project are threefold:

- (i) Joint European Projects which comprise universities/enterprises from an eligible country and two Member States and which focus on areas important to the process of higher education reform.
- (ii) Mobility grants.
- (iii) Youth Exchanges.

3.3. The Committee is requested to furnish the Commission with both specific and general comments in relation to the proposal. The following are the Committee's comments.

4. General comments

4.1. *Support for broad thrust*

4.1.1. The Committee welcomes the Tempus II programme, supports its extension to include the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, and also welcomes the Commission's assurance that the splitting-up of certain former Central and Eastern European countries will not interrupt their participation in the programme. It endorses the view that the long-term higher educational and economic restructuring objectives (including the elimination of skill shortages) should be more clearly targeted and considers that the Commission is right to focus on Joint European Projects (JEPs) as distinct from pure 'mobility grants'.

4.1.2. In the monitoring of the Tempus programme particular attention should be given to ensuring equality of participation opportunities for the sexes.

4.2. *The 'bottom-up' approach*

4.2.1. The 'bottom-up' approach, based on calls for applications from individual institutions, is clearly the

themselves of their particular areas of priority need in order to better focus aid.

3. Some background information

3.1.

core and dynamic component of the programme and has resulted in it being very successful. A light regulatory framework has been, and will continue to be, crucial to this success. The need to set it within a clearer national strategy is paramount, both for reasons of clarity and fairness in the application procedure. Otherwise, the low success rate (12%), reflecting the budgetary limits of the programme in dealing with an overwhelming number of high quality applications (according to the Commission about 50%), could generate some ill feeling and reduce the current enthusiasm for promoting joint projects. However, it is recognised also that the quality of applications from certain eligible countries may have been inadequate due to their relatively weak state of economic development. In such cases particular attention should be paid to the probable greater impact of the programme on the weaker economies.

4.3. *Coordination*

4.3.1. In the same context, the Committee would urge closer coordination, between eligible States and the Commission, in jointly setting the application criteria. Likewise, close coordination amongst the various operational services concerned in the Commission might be more evident were it to publish an inter-service 'Vademecum' of all those involved in Tempus including the various Directorates-General concerned and the Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth, together with an appended summary of projects undertaken. The Vademecum for each Community programme concerned with higher education enterprise linkages should include a synopsis of the key elements of complementary programmes (Comett, Erasmus, Lingua, and relevant research and development programmes).

4.4. *The role of the social partners*

4.4.1. The role of the social partners in helping to draw up and assess joint projects within Tempus should also be better emphasized in the programme. In the

overall context of social and economic reform, the Committee recommends the establishment of a joint liaison committee between the ESC and the social partners in Central and Eastern European countries, similar to that which has existed since 1975 between the EC and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The involvement of European representative organisations in this way would ensure that the social partners have greater opportunities to influence the economic and social restructuring of eligible countries.

4.5. *Involvement of enterprise*

4.5.1. The emerging involvement of enterprise, as defined in Article 3 of the Commission proposal, in JEPs is a welcome development and must be encouraged and broadened to ensure the proper involvement of all categories of enterprise, both private and public. In order to increase the effectiveness of the programme in the process of economic and social reform, the Committee would wish to see greater involvement of enterprise and the social partners in JEPs from eligible countries and Member States. The Committee recommends that involvement of enterprise in JEPs could be considered a priority option for the future. The involvement of enterprise should be monitored to ensure that any factors which inhibit their participation are removed.

5. *Specific comments*

5.1. *Application criteria and procedures*

5.1.1. Eligible States should draw up tighter definitions concerning their priority requirements under the programme within the context of a national strategy for economic and social reform, (while respecting the autonomy of the applying institutions and the need for flexibility) together with a closer overview and coordination of elimination criteria, in order to move away from the unfair 12% acceptance rate of 1992. If tight priorities prove difficult to establish jointly, a filter process dealing at a first stage with 'outline applications' should be considered in order to make savings on the time, money and emotional investment of applicants, as well as of the selection services.

5.1.2. The Commission might also reflect on the need to promote positively a broader linguistic balance in the acceptance criteria. At present there appears to be a disproportionate emphasis on some Community languages.

5.1.3. The Committee would further urge that high quality applications (meeting the revised criteria) deemed eligible but turned down for purely budgetary

reasons should be included in the next application round.

5.2. *Setting Tempus in the context of economic and social reform*

5.2.1. It might be useful to persuade all eligible States to be clearer as to their restructuring objectives, manpower needs and the development of corresponding skills, and to be more stringent in requiring the active involvement of industry and of the social partners in the Tempus programme. The Committee also urges the Commission to establish a link between the Tempus programme and the Phare-democracy programme (ECU 5 million for 1993).

5.3. *Involvement by enterprise*

5.3.1. The Committee recommends greater enterprise involvement in JEPs (at present industry from Member States is involved in almost one third of the JEPs and industry from eligible countries is involved in about one sixth of the projects). Without neglecting the importance of fundamental/basic research, greater enterprise involvement would ensure that universities respond to industrial needs in the development of curricula: in meeting skills shortages and ensuring that industry itself becomes more active in staff development. Furthermore, it would act as a catalyst in linking firms from the EC and Central and Eastern European countries.

5.3.1.1. The Committee recommends that the Advisory Committee proposed in Article 5.2 of the proposal should, in addition, comprise one industry representative from each Member State. There would then be one representative each from the academic community and industry thus reflecting the importance of the higher education/industry partnership in the programme.

5.4. *Impact evaluation*

5.4.1. Eligible countries alone decide on the proportion of their Phare fund allocation, which they wish to allocate to Tempus. The Committee recommends that in countries such as Poland and Hungary, (where a high proportion of funds have been allocated and the programme is well established), a pilot National Impact Study could be conducted which would serve as a guide to improving the effectiveness of the programme in the other eligible countries.

5.5. *Integration with other related programmes*

5.5.1. Tempus is an external aid programme under the overall Phare programme for eligible countries in Central and Eastern Europe. A similar Tempus programme is proposed under the aegis of the Tacis programme for the former member states of the USSR. For practical reasons, including the relative state of development of the two areas, and political relationships, the Committee recommends that the Tempus programme for each area should be operated with separate budgetary allocations. This procedure would recognize that eligible countries in each area are at different stages of development and have quite varied needs.

5.5.2. Within the Community, the Committee recommends that the national Tempus offices should liaise

where practicable with the coordination offices which have been established to service Comett or Erasmus projects, when providing promotional and administrative support for universities and industry wishing to participate in Tempus projects. This procedure could simplify the process of setting up new JEPs by using or expanding existing networks.

5.5.3. Lastly, the Committee stresses the need to facilitate access of all potential participants and integration of the various initiatives by providing clear, comprehensive information on the opportunities offered to universities, industry and enterprises by Tempus and other directly or indirectly related EC programmes.

Done at Brussels, 27 January 1993.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee*

Susanne TIEMANN

Opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 89/107/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning food additives intended for human consumption

(93/C 73/02)

On 3 July 1992 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 100a of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on the abovementioned proposal.

The Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its Opinion on 5 January 1993. The Rapporteur was Mr Hilkens.

At its 302nd Plenary Session (meeting of 27 January 1993), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion unanimously.

1. Introduction

1.1. The completion of the internal market in foodstuffs requires the EC to introduce a common foodstuffs policy. In the past all the Member States have legislated in this area, especially in connection with public health and quality control. This must now be replaced with EC legislation.

1.2. In 1988 the Council adopted a Directive (89/107/EEC) which provides a framework for the use of additives in foodstuffs in the Community.

1.2.1. This Directive worked from the principle that there should be a positive list of permitted additives and, where necessary, of permitted quantities in the Community. It also stated that the framework laid