

**Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on:**

- the 'Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision amending Decision No 2085/97/EC establishing a support programme, including translation, in the field of books and reading (Ariane Programme)', and
- the 'Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision amending Decision No 719/96/EC establishing a programme to support artistic and cultural activities having a European dimension (Kaleidoscope programme)'

(1999/C 51/15)

**THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,**

having regard to the Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision amending Decision No 2085/97/EC establishing a support programme, including translation, in the field of books and reading (Ariane Programme) and a Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision amending Decision No 719/96/EC establishing a programme to support artistic and cultural activities having a European dimension (Kaleidoscope programme) (COM(98) 539 final — 98/0282 COD — 98/0283 COD) <sup>(1)</sup>;

having regard to the decision taken by the Council on 16 October 1998, under Article 128 and the first paragraph of Article 198c of the Treaty establishing the European Community, to consult the Committee of the Regions on this matter;

having regard to the Decision of its Bureau of 23 October 1998 to direct Commission 7 — Education, Vocational Training, Culture, Youth, Sport and Citizens' Rights — to draw up an Opinion on this subject;

having regard to the Committee of the Regions Opinions on the Kaleidoscope 2000 programme (artistic and cultural activities) (CdR 145/95) <sup>(2)</sup> and the Ariane programme (books and reading) (CdR 146/95) <sup>(3)</sup>;

having regard to the Draft Opinion (CdR 227/98) adopted by Commission 7 on 1 October 1998 (Rapporteurs: Mr Muñoz Ganuza and Ms Tallberg),

unanimously adopted the following opinion at its 26th plenary session of 18 and 19 November 1998 (meeting of 19 November).

**1. Introduction**

1.1. The Commission proposes the extension of Ariane (the support programme, including translation, for books and reading) and Kaleidoscope (the support programme in the field of artistic and cultural activities having a European dimension) (which both come to an end on 31 December 1998) to the 31 December 1999. This is proposed in the light of the need to ensure continuity for cultural actions provided for in the programmes until the single framework programme in support of culture (2000-2004) enters into effect. The Commission also proposes a budgetary increase to cover the extended period: 3 million euro for Ariane giving a total allocation of 10 million euro for the entire programme (1997-1999) and 7,9 million euro for Kaleidoscope giving a total allocation of 34,4 million euro for the entire programme (1996-1999).

**2. Specific comments**

2.1. The COR supports the extension of the programmes to 31 December 1999 in the light of the results of the evaluation of these programmes which have outlined their positive contributions to developing cooperation in the cultural sector across the EU.

2.2. It notes the Commission's conclusions that in just a short time and with limited financial resources the Ariane programme has helped to develop high-quality cooperation across borders, especially cooperation based on partnership and cultural networks, and to bring literary works from the Member States to the notice of and within the reach of Europe's citizens. It also notes that despite its limited duration and modest financial resources, Kaleidoscope has led to high-quality cooperation beyond national boundaries, particularly on the basis of partnerships and cultural exchanges, while improving access for the European public to a familiarity with and experience of the Member States' culture, especially music, theatre, opera, dance, art and multi-media events.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 319, 16.10.1998, p. 13-14.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 100, 2.4.1996, p. 30.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 100, 2.4.1996, p. 35.

2.3. The COR concurs with the Commission's observation that the programmes need to be extended in order to ensure continuity of cultural actions prior to the adoption of the framework programme in support of culture.

2.4. The COR notes the conclusions of the tripartite agreement between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on 21 September 1998 which supports an increase of 4,1 million euro for Ariane and 10,2 million euro for Kaleidoscope. This has been agreed in the light of the need to ensure that the budget corresponds to 1998 allocations. The Commission has explained that it was however unable to propose this amount in its proposal for a decision, due to technical constraints in having to respect the preliminary draft budget.

Brussels, 19 November 1998.

### 3. Conclusion

3.1. The COR supports the Commission's proposal to extend the programmes Ariane and Kaleidoscope until 31 December 1999.

3.2. The COR supports the tripartite agreement, between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission which proposes an increase of 4,1 million euro for the Ariane programme, raising the global allocation for the entire programme under Article 6 for the new duration of the programme (1997-1999) to 11,1 million euro. It also supports the tripartite agreement's proposed increase of 10,2 million euro for the Kaleidoscope programme, raising the global allocation for the entire programme under Article 6 for the new duration of the programme (1996-1999) to 36,7 million euro.

*The President  
of the Committee of the Regions*

Manfred DAMMEYER

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