

(2002/C 81 E/159)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-2225/01****by Stavros Xarchakos (PPE-DE) to the Commission**

(18 July 2001)

*Subject:* Framework Programme for the creation of the European Research Area

The Commission recently unveiled its new Framework Programme for the creation of the European Research Area. This Programme, which has been defended by the Director General for Research before the European Parliament, has unleashed a storm of protests because, unlike its immediate predecessor, the Fifth Framework Programme, it clearly gives priority to drawing up reports and studies rather than to funding specific and tangible research projects.

Apart from this 'report industry', another aspect of the new Framework Programme that has been strongly criticised is the fact that cultural initiatives, for example the initiative on the city of tomorrow and the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage (which was a priority in the previous Framework Programme), have been totally deleted and their research content dropped. No other similar initiative has been included in the new Framework Programme which allocates funds as a matter of priority to drawing up reports of questionable value.

How does the Commission view the fact that cultural initiatives have been deprived of funding from the enormous budget of the proposed Framework Programme? Why are precious funds being earmarked for drawing up reports, rather than for the implementation of specific projects with a tangible added value for Europe as a whole? How can it correct this obvious bias and revive initiatives which seek to protect Europe's innumerable cultural monuments?

**Answer given by Mr Busquin on behalf of the Commission**

(13 September 2001)

The proposal for the next Framework programme (FP) and for the creation of the European Research Area <sup>(1)</sup> aims to promote the European research efforts for the benefit of the citizen through the creation of a real integrated 'research area' in Europe. As in the past, it is clearly directed at tangible results and not simple studies or reports. This plainly appears from the description of research priorities that are focused precisely to maximise the impact of Community efforts and are underpinned by the use of new instruments aimed at creating the critical mass necessary.

Research related to cultural topics is by no means marginalised or forgotten in the proposal for the next FP. More particularly, it is foreseen that various activities concerning the protection of the cultural heritage will be covered under the priorities 1.1.2. (Information Society technologies), 1.1.7. (Citizens and governance in the European knowledge-based society), 1.2.1 (Anticipating the Community's scientific and technological needs, in the context of the support for research necessary for the formulation, implementation and enforcement of Community policies) and 2.4. (Science/society). The Community will endeavour to keep all the scientific and technological expertise and knowledge gained in the field of conservation of cultural heritage during the last 15 years in order to maintain and enhance, for this area of research, its leading role in the world.

Specific details, that shed further light on the priorities and the aims of the next FP and elaborate on the above mentioned priority areas, are to be found in the Commission's proposal for the specific Programmes implementing the next FP, that was formally transmitted to the Parliament in early June 2001.

<sup>(1)</sup> COM(2001) 279 final.