

12. Assessment of 1998 and annual programme for 1999

B4-1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076 and 1077/98

Resolution on the Commission's work programme for the year 1999

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the interinstitutional declaration on democracy, transparency and subsidiarity of 25 October 1993 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission concerning transparency in the decision-making process of the Union institutions⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the Code of Conduct agreed on 15 March 1995 between the European Parliament and the Commission⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission report on implementation of the legislative programme and other activities in 1998 (COM(98)0610),
 - having regard to the Commission's work programme for 1999 (COM(98)0604) and the new legislative initiatives (COM(98)0609),
 - having regard to the statement of 15 December 1998 by the Commission and the debate on this subject,
- A. whereas the annual legislative programme constitutes an indispensable interinstitutional instrument for coordinating, evaluating and monitoring the Union's activities in a transparent and efficient way and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity,
- B. whereas it is essential to involve the Council more closely in the legislative programming exercise;

I. As far as the assessment of the 1998 programme is concerned

1. Recalls its hopes, set out in its resolution of 18 December 1997⁽³⁾, for improved and closer interinstitutional cooperation as regards the preparation of the annual legislative programme and the monitoring of its implementation by reinforcing and improving the existing cooperation mechanisms; deplores the Commission's failure, despite the undertakings given, to sustain the mid-term review which was planned for the current year and, specifically, the regular assessment, on the basis of a written document, of the implementation of the legislative programme involving meetings between representatives of Commission, Council and Parliament;
2. Notes that the 1998 programme has been implemented to a large extent; notes that of the 31 new legislative proposals promised by the Commission, Parliament had received 27 by 10 December 1998; expects detailed reasons why proposals announced in former years but not brought forward are now no longer even included in the 1999 legislative programme;
3. Deplores the fact that by the end of November 1998, 181 dossiers were pending in Council awaiting a final decision and 89 were awaiting a common position, without Parliament having been informed in each case of the reason for the blockage, and without the Commission having made use of its right of initiative to unblock the dossiers; calls on the Commission to draw up a list of legislative proposals under way and currently pending before the Council, indicating those which should be withdrawn or replaced by new proposals;
4. Calls on the Council and the Member States to end the practice of adding unilateral declarations to the Council minutes, in particular where the codecision procedure is concerned, and requests the Commission to apply fully the Code of Conduct on transparency and no longer associate itself with any such declarations from the Council;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 329, 6.12.1993, p. 133.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 89, 10.4.1995, p. 69.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 14, 19.1.1998, p. 185.

Wednesday 16 December 1998

5. Reminds the Commission of the promises made by Presidents Delors and Santer that the withdrawal of proposals would take place with the agreement of the European Parliament and that in each case Parliament would be informed by an official letter from the Commission President of the intended withdrawal; points out in this context that several parliamentary committees have given the Commission indications of proposals to be withdrawn or replaced; deplores the withdrawal by the Commission on 7 February 1998 of 15 proposals without prior consultation, and insists that such a breach of the Code of Conduct should not be allowed to recur;

II. As far as the 1999 work programme is concerned

6. Urges the Commission strongly to undertake reforms in the next months to ensure significant and visible changes in order to modernise and make more transparent and efficient its functioning as an institution; considers swift moves and initiatives in this direction indispensable to restore trust among EU institutions as soon as possible; specifies its political priorities and calls for the legislative programme for 1999 to be applied and supplemented by the following measures;

7. Calls on the Commission to communicate the results of its action plan for 1997-2000 with regard to the environmental aspects of its administration; calls on the Commission to urge the other institutions to draw up an action plan integrating the environmental aspects of their administration, no later than 1 April 1999;

8. Insists that both Commission and Council commit themselves to the adoption of all measures related to Agenda 2000 before the end of the parliamentary term, and reminds the Commission and the Council of its request to be fully involved in the further decision-making on Agenda 2000 and the possible modification of existing accession partnerships, notwithstanding the different legal bases;

9. Demands a draft Regulation on access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents as provided for in Article 191a of the Amsterdam Treaty, which must also include clarification of the boundaries between legislative and executive acts;

10. Recalls its resolution of 19 November 1997 on the Amsterdam Treaty⁽¹⁾ and calls urgently on the Commission to submit a report with proposals for a comprehensive reform of the Treaties immediately after completion of the procedure of ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty and before its entry into force; calls for the Community method to be used for the next revision of the Treaties;

11. Urges the Commission to press ahead with proposals aimed at improving the functioning of the international economic and financial system, e.g. by increasing the transparency of the financial markets, so as to prevent a recurrence of the recent financial crises;

12. Recalls that the Commission is obliged to follow up the requests for legislative initiatives from Parliament in accordance with Article 138b of the EC Treaty; requests the Commission to make proposals as soon as possible on the requests addressed to it in its resolutions of 20 April 1994 on hotel fire safety⁽²⁾, 4 May 1994 on environmental damage⁽³⁾, 17 April 1996 on health cards⁽⁴⁾, 30 January 1997 on forestry strategy⁽⁵⁾ and 17 June 1998 on network access for renewable energies⁽⁶⁾;

13. Asks, in order to establish full transparency, that the new legislative initiatives be submitted to Parliament simultaneously with the overview of adaptations or technical amendments to existing legislation, and be given the status of a Commission document containing the legal basis of proposals, as well as a timetable for their presentation and other information essential for the interinstitutional coordination of work;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 372, 8.12.1997, p. 99.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 128, 9.5.1994, p. 165.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 205, 25.7.1994, p. 163.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 141, 13.5.1996, p. 104.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 55, 24.2.1997, p. 22.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 210, 6.7.1998, p. 143.

Wednesday 16 December 1998

14. Welcomes the fact that, in keeping with earlier demands, all strategy documents (White Papers, etc.) will be transmitted to Parliament, but is deeply concerned that these documents are too wordy and insufficiently results-oriented and that they rarely give rise to legislative proposals;

Internal policies of the European Union

15. Welcomes the fact that the Commission gives high priority to the employment strategy; calls in this respect on the Commission to ensure a better coordination between economic and social policies and to consult it properly on proposals put forward by the social partners;

16. Welcomes the initiatives planned by the Commission concerning action against discrimination and in favour of incentive measures for social inclusion; considers that the Union's social dimension must not be limited to employment, and therefore urges the Commission to bring forward proposals, taking into account the growing poverty in the European Union;

17. Requests a new legislative initiative in the field of pensions, which should in particular guarantee to women an individualised access to pensions, independent of their husband's pension rights in order to provide for their economic autonomy;

18. Calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal on the future of civil dialogue, with the understanding that civil dialogue should consist of more than the bi-annual European Social Policy Fora;

19. Supports the Commission's efforts to create an area of freedom, security and justice, and calls for an interinstitutional conference to analyse the implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty in the field of justice and home affairs and to allow for a broad public debate on issues which concern citizens directly;

20. Calls on the Commission to present a proposal on the incorporation of the Schengen *acquis* into the Treaty, and to submit proposals on free movement of persons and related measures as soon as the Amsterdam Treaty is in force;

21. Calls on the Commission to take the necessary initiatives with a view to full implementation of Article 13 of the EC Treaty in the version of the Treaty of Amsterdam (non-discrimination);

22. Urges the Commission to give priority to the conclusion of a new Interinstitutional Agreement and the adoption of a financial perspective in the framework of Agenda 2000;

23. Calls on the Commission to produce a follow-up to its report on the operation of the own resources system (COM(98)0560) in order to respond to the challenges which the EU's financial rules and Regulations will be facing in the transition to the twenty-first century;

24. Reiterates its call for a proposal to establish an operationally independent anti-fraud office (OLAF) within the framework of the Commission; stresses that a Regulation for a new external agency, with only some of OLAF's current functions, does not fulfil Parliament's requirements;

25. Considers that the 1999 work programme, as presented by the Commission, lacks ambition in the field of the environment and consumer protection, as well as that of public health; expects the Commission to come up with proposals to achieve the EU target of 8% reduction of CO₂ emissions, the integration of environment policy into other policy areas, and the promotion of sustainable development;

26. Urges the Commission in particular to come forward with proposals to implement the programmes of the White Paper on renewable energies for the promotion of wind energy, photovoltaics and use of biomass and their integration into the European Union's other policy areas;

27. Looks forward to the evaluation which the Commission intends to present of the Fifth Environment Action Programme, and confirms its intention to make an early input into the setting of priorities for the next programme;

Wednesday 16 December 1998

28. Expresses its surprise at the Commission's continued failure to propose Directives outlawing the production and use of asbestos, given that a large majority of Member States have declared their support for such a ban; insists that an initiative must be taken as a matter of urgency, despite the fears of possible commercial conflicts in the WTO;
29. Expresses its consternation at the fact that the Commission does not present any new legislation in the field of consumer policy; emphasises that food safety, and in particular the new commercial releases of genetically modified food, as well as consumer information in this area, should be dealt with according to the demands expressed in its resolution of 10 March 1998 on the Green Paper on food law in the European Union ⁽¹⁾;
30. Encourages the Commission to pursue the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, seeking to negotiate the pending international fisheries agreements, taking into consideration the balance of resources; asks for a new draft Regulation on the FIFG, for a proposal on the common market organisation for fisheries and aquaculture products and for measures to encourage the creation of joint enterprises in the fisheries sector; demands that social questions and the cooperation of the fishermen's organisations be taken into account in negotiating fisheries agreements;
31. Welcomes the proposals on a new Northern Dimension Policy as a tool to integrate different policies in a transparent way and improve the efficiency of their implementation;
32. Urges the Commission to draw up a basis for the development of the specific measures to be applied to the ultraperipheral regions as provided for in Article 299(2) of the Amsterdam Treaty;
33. Welcomes the continued commitment to encouraging investment in TENs as a motor for the development of sustainable transport, increased competitiveness and jobs; demands that TEN projects be submitted to mandatory strategic environmental assessment; emphasises the relevance of public-private partnership for the financing of the TENs;
34. Calls upon the Commission to make proposals aimed at maintaining good-quality universal services in the postal sector;
35. Encourages the Commission to speed up its programme concerning the new common system of VAT;
36. Calls for a draft Directive on bankruptcies involving companies which operate in several Member States;

The Union's presence in the world

37. Requests that the Commission submit proposals in order to simplify and make more transparent the implementation procedures of the Community cooperation programmes (MEDA, PHARE, TACIS);
38. Considers that, in the context of the reopening of the peace process in the Middle East, the Commission must put in place all measures of aid and economic cooperation necessary to the Palestinian authorities, Israel and other countries of the region;
39. Welcomes the Commission's priorities concerning Russia and the New Independent States, the Balkans, ex-Yugoslavia and Albania, which correspond to the priorities already indicated by Parliament;
40. Asks the Commission to indicate the means it envisages to improve the management and organisation of human rights and democratisation programmes, which have caused a setback for the EU's efforts to promote human rights and democracy internationally; proposes that solutions should be examined by the interinstitutional working group established in the 1998 budget procedure;
41. Calls for the inclusion of a human rights and democracy clause in fisheries agreements concluded with third countries;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 104, 6.4.1998, p. 60.

Wednesday 16 December 1998

42. Calls on the Commission to clarify its proposals concerning the application of the Treaty of Amsterdam in the field of the common foreign and security policy and to discuss with Parliament its proposals concerning the putting in place of the Planning and Analysis Unit; calls for the rapid implementation of the Franco-British proposals on defence policy with a view to promoting a common European Union policy in this field;

43. Calls on the Commission to submit a communication laying down the guidelines and criteria for the development of fair trade within the Union, based on Parliament's resolution of 2 July 1998 on fair trade ⁽¹⁾, with a view to preventing abuse;

44. Calls for the communitisation of the EDF budget;

*
* *
*

45. Calls, finally, on the Commission to:

- implement a fundamental review both of its own internal coordination mechanisms and the process whereby the institutions express, according to their respective political priorities, their coordinated input into the work programme;
- put into practice a monitoring system whereby the state of implementation of the work programme is subject to periodic review with Parliament, as indicated in paragraph 1;
- integrate Parliament's institutional and sectoral priorities into its work programme;

46. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the European Council, the Council, the parliaments of the Member States, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 226, 20.7.1998, p. 73.

13. Information strategy on euro

A4-0485/98

Resolution on the communication from the Commission on the information strategy for the euro (COM(98)0039 – C4-0125/98)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the communication from the Commission (COM(98)0039 – C4-0125/98),
- having regard to the communication from the Commission on the update on the practical aspects of the introduction of the euro (COM(98)0061 – C4-0142/98),
- having regard to Commission recommendation 98/286/EC concerning banking charges for conversion to the euro ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Commission recommendation 98/287/EC concerning dual display of prices and other monetary amounts ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Commission recommendation 98/288/EC on dialogue, monitoring and information to facilitate the transition to the euro ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 January 1998 on the Euro and the Consumer ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 March 1998 on the practical aspects of the introduction of the euro and the Commission Working Paper entitled 'Preparations for the changeover of public administrations to the euro' ⁽⁵⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 130, 1.5.1998, p. 22.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 130, 1.5.1998, p. 26.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 130, 1.5.1998, p. 29.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 34, 2.2.1998, p. 38.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 104, 6.4.1998, p. 69.