



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**Proposal for a
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION**

establishing the second phase of the Community action programme
in the field of education "Socrates"

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

INTRODUCTION

In presenting its three decision proposals in the field of education, training and youth, extending and broadening the scope of the current Community action programmes which finish on 31 December 1999, the Commission is making concrete the strategic guidelines announced in "Agenda 2000" and, in the three domains in question, in its Communication of November 1997 "*Towards a Europe of Knowledge*"¹. In that document, the Commission has already indicated what should be the principal dimensions and strategic axes of Community action aiming to contribute to a progressive construction of a European educational space oriented towards the development of competences, the enrichment of citizenship and the development of employability through the acquisition of competences. The central common objective of these three proposals is to support, at all levels, the process of lifelong education and training.

These three proposals translate the willingness to implement an integrated approach: together they translate the political will to stress the central objective of lifelong education and training in a European context characterised by the progressive construction of a European educational space oriented towards the development of knowledge, the enrichment of citizenship and the development of employability through the acquisition of competences. The joint actions envisaged in each decision proposal will contribute to strengthening this integration. In a world which is rapidly changing, notably from the effects of technological evolution and the information society, the divide between "education" and "training" is becoming more and more porous; the same goes for the distinction between initial and continuing training or even the distinction between "formal" and "informal" education.

The same approach is envisaged for implementation and management. As compared to the current programmes, they translate the same desire for simplification, concentration, and decentralisation whilst ensuring greater transparency which is likely to strengthen access for those using the programmes.

Different elements have been taken into account in the approach proposed:

* **The acquired experience of the programmes:** all the current programmes (as well as the preceding ones) have been the subject of in-depth evaluations which have brought out the impact of the three programmes on the policies and systems of Member States in the domains concerned. They have also highlighted the European added value of the actions undertaken in the different programmes both in terms of mobility for the different groups targeted in the domains of education, training, and in terms of transnational cooperation partnerships. They have also drawn attention to a certain number of weaknesses - essentially arising from the complexity and slowness of procedures which the present proposals intend to correct. In this respect the table below

¹ COM(97) 563 final.

shows how and in what ways the decision proposals take into account this desire for concentration, simplification and transparency.

* **Complementarity and coherence** with the other interventions of the Community in the domains covered by these three proposals: as much with the policy of knowledge - in particular the Fifth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development - as other domains such as culture and audio-visual, the completion of the internal market, the information society, environment, consumer protection, SMEs, social policies, employment and public health, it is necessary to ensure this coherence and this complementarity in order to reinforce the effectiveness of interventions and the value added of Community action.

In this context, the three proposals also stress, notably as far as vocational training is concerned, the close and continuing link to be implemented at Community level and in the Member States with the interventions of the Structural Funds, in particular those relevant to the European Social Fund. Education and training, as well as the full exercise of citizenship, contribute to strengthening economic and social cohesion.

* **The new context introduced by the coordinated strategy for employment:** this strategy, defined by the extraordinary European Council on employment in November 1997, and the Employment Guidelines which resulted from this, clearly indicate that formal and informal education as well as training, taken in the widest sense, are an essential dimension of employability and adaptability; they can strongly support the development processes of the capacity for entrepreneurship and are a significant support for equal opportunities. The three decision proposals strongly integrate this dimension - notably as to the nature of the contribution of these three programmes (in particular Leonardo da Vinci) to the implementation of a Community strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises.

* **The opening of the programmes:** extending the cooperation already entered into with the EFTA/EEE countries and the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well as with Cyprus, which, thanks to a considerable effort, have already resulted in active participation in the current programmes, the three proposals clearly indicate (Article 10) the willingness to open up the Community action programmes to applicant States in the pre-accession phase. The three domains concerned, do indeed provide a positive and concrete support mechanism for the process of enlargement. The same approach is proposed for Turkey and Malta in the context of their association agreements.

* **The principle of subsidiarity and the European added-value of Community action:** the Community actions and measures proposed in each of the decision proposals do not do not call into question, in accordance with the treaty provisions, the competences of Member States. In fact, Community action supports and complements the actions undertaken by Member States, and the procedures proposed for implementation and management strengthen cooperation in this respect by ensuring a greater transparency in the running of the programmes. Conversely, the European dimension of the actions implemented, notably in terms of physical and virtual mobility in the form of transnational pilot projects and European networks as well as the support for actions to promote linguistic competences enrich education and training practices in Member States.

I. PUTTING IN PLACE A KNOWLEDGE POLICY

A. *A priority objective*

Both the Treaty of Amsterdam and Agenda 2000 resolutely place knowledge policy at the heart of future developments in the European Union: "*knowledge policies, research, innovation, education and training – are of decisive importance for the future of the Union... Like research, education and training represent essential immaterial investments*".

As stated in the Commission communication *Towards a Europe of Knowledge*, the objective is to "promote the highest level of knowledge [...] through broad access to education and its permanent updating".

Education, lifelong training and youth-related policy involve three objectives:

- (a) to promote employment, in line with the Luxembourg European Council decisions, by developing the skills and competences and an enterprise culture which changes in work and its organisation have made necessary;
- (b) to increase the potential of knowledge in order to create the social and technical conditions of innovation which represents a major asset for economic growth and for improving standards of living;
- (c) to guarantee citizens access to a European experience likely to strengthen a common feeling of identity with and belonging to a Common space.

B. *A coordinated and simplified approach*

The proposals submitted take the utmost account of what has been achieved through the programmes now coming to an end, particularly with regard to three major aspects:

- (a) a legal basis: drawn up for these programmes and these actions, and underpinned by experience, it sets out clearly the Community's responsibilities in this area,
- (b) implementation which has constantly sought to act as a fulcrum for action by the Member States,
- (c) a common core of activities which has built up on the basis of six measures: physical and virtual mobility, importance of networking, promotion of language skills, support for innovatory projects and products, better knowledge of systems.

The partnerships formed at the European level have by and large raised the profile of Community action by improving its quality and opening up opportunities for access to knowledge for the citizens of Europe. Thanks *inter alia* to this experience, two thirds of them today would like to see Europe play a specific role in the areas of education, vocational training and youth.

In the context of the implementation of these three programmes, the Commission will also put in place working groups made up of well known people from the relevant areas. When these groups are set up, the Commission will aim to ensure an equal participation

of women and men and will encourage the Member States to do the same when forming the programme Committees.

The expectations of the various publics and players concerned by these programmes have prompted the Commission to present them in a coordinated manner, which means that after 31 December 1999 it will be possible to better cater for the major objectives of Community action in the areas of education and vocational training and in youth-related matters.

In its communication *Towards a Europe of Knowledge*, the Commission set out the advantages of closely coordinating the three decisions in an overall approach. To do this, it used the experience amassed and which at all levels of involvement points to the need to develop common 'channels' and 'bridges' conducive to the emergence of a genuine European education area.

The proposals submitted to attain the objective of lifelong education and training reflect a more coordinated approach which comes out at three levels:

(a) Firstly, the implementation of the three programmes sets out clearly to gradually build up this European education area as an open and dynamic framework giving tangible expression to the objective of lifelong education and training. While each programme has specific actions as a function of the objectives pursued, these actions are nevertheless implemented by using one or more of the six measures:

- **physical mobility** for people undergoing training and for teachers;
- various forms of **virtual mobility** and arrangements for using the new ICTs,
- the development of **cooperation networks** at European level;
- the promotion of **language and cultural skills**;
- the development of **innovation** through European cooperation using pilot projects based on transnational partnerships;
- the constant improvement of **Community references for the systems and policies** relating to education, training and youth in the Member States (data base, good practices).

(b) Secondly, the proposals for European Parliament and Council decisions in each of these three fields, and therefore the features of the formal arrangements proposed, while not being absolutely identical on account of the specific characteristics of these areas, are assembled along the same lines and contents, and are based on arrangements which often differ little on essential points, e.g. committee procedures.

(c) Lastly, these three proposals contain specific provisions for launching joint actions.

The Commission will accordingly be putting forward appropriate initiatives, in the form of joint calls for proposals, for instance, in close cooperation with the programme committees concerned.

These joint actions should in particular make it possible to develop:

- a common information system;
- a coordinated system for observing good practices with regard to lifelong education and training;
- joint actions on education and training multimedia;
- European knowledge centres located regionally.

II. THE "SOCRATES" PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

The present proposal concerns the second phase of the Community action programme in the field of education, entitled Socrates². The aim of the programme is to promote the quality of education by encouraging cooperation, increasing mobility and developing the European dimension in all sectors of education. Its contribution to the further development of the European Community is threefold:

- Socrates is a cornerstone of the policy to bring the European Community closer to all its citizens. Some 70 million young people in the Community are taught by over 4 million teachers. Some 11 million students are studying at over 5 000 higher education institutions and millions of adult learners are attending full- or part-time classes. The potential of Socrates for encouraging a positive sense of identification with the process of building Europe is manifest.
- Socrates has a vital role to play in developing high-quality human resources, a key factor in stimulating employment, promoting competitiveness and achieving greater economic growth.
- Socrates is centre-stage in the process of enlarging the Community to embrace the wider Europe through the pre-accession extension of strategically important programmes to the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus. Six pre-accession countries are already fully participating in the programme, which is likely to be opened to other countries before long.

On the basis of the experience gained during the first phase of the programme (Report on the first two years of the programme - COM(97)99 final), the results of the interim evaluation and the evaluations of the preceding programmes, as well as the reactions to the abovementioned Commission communication on a Europe of knowledge, the proposal for a decision stresses Community action designed to contribute to quality education in support of and as a complement to action taken in and by the Member States.

² Decision 819/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 1995, OJ L 87, 20.4.1995, p.10, as modified by Decision 576/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 1998, OJ L 77, 14.3.1998, p.1.

It is proposed that Community action be focused on four objectives:

- to strengthen the European dimension in education at all levels;
- to promote cooperation in all sectors and at all levels of education;
- to help remove the obstacles to such cooperation;
- to encourage educational innovation in the Community.

A. The salient elements of the programme's first phase

(a) *Very promising results*

- The first phase of the Socrates programme produced a significant quantitative and qualitative boost to European cooperation, especially in areas such as school education, adult education and open and distance learning.
- During the discussions on increasing the funding of the Socrates programme for the last two years of its first phase, the European Parliament and the Council referred in 1998 to the "outstanding results achieved by the programme during the first two years following its adoption". Noting that Socrates "has been particularly well received in the educational community, and that there is a need to maintain its forward momentum towards achieving its objectives", the two institutions unequivocally recognised how important the programme is for taking the construction of Europe into the new millennium.
- The programme has in particular:
 - ◊ helped to bring about a substantial intensification of mobility: the grants awarded have allowed up to 496 000 higher education students to follow a course in one of the participating countries; more than 60 000 teachers and assistants have carried out teaching placements to another country; around 110 000 young people have taken part in joint projects and exchanges to encourage them to communicate in other European languages; almost 30 000 people have taken part in continuing training courses for teachers, including language teachers in particular;
 - ◊ stimulated large-scale cooperation between educational institutions of all levels: nearly 1 500 universities have received institutional contracts to promote their European dimension activities; 2 800 partnerships have been established involving some 8 800 schools; over 650 transnational projects have been launched, involving almost 3 900 establishments in all fields of education;
 - ◊ given new impetus to the academic recognition of periods of study spent abroad and qualifications obtained there, especially in higher education;
 - ◊ promoted the teaching and learning of the languages of the Community, especially those that are less widely used and taught.
- Thus 86% of the persons interviewed in the context of the interim evaluation of the programme considered that Socrates had contributed - in accordance with the programme's central objective - to an improvement of educational quality in the Community. This figure even reached 97% in the school sector, where furthermore 95% expressed the view the programme had broadened the mentality of participants

and 87% saw it as having strengthened the concept of citizenship and reinforced the sense of European identity. Organisations representing both sides of industry expressed very positive views concerning the value of the programme.

(b) Certain difficulties have been encountered

In spite of this globally positive assessment, the implementation of the first phase of the programme has nevertheless had to face a number of obstacles which have prevented it from attaining its objectives in full. Over and above the difficulties resulting from the nature and diversity of educational systems or the administrative practices and regulations at Member State level, the evaluations carried out have revealed two types of obstacle:

- the lack of financial resources, a problem that came to light in several ways, in particular:
 - ◊ with regard to students: the real level of Community scholarships is around ECU 100, whereas the true cost of their mobility is normally some five times this figure;
 - ◊ the support given to schools participating in partnerships is only around ECU 2 000, whereas their needs are far higher;
 - ◊ the amounts awarded to universities for their institutional contracts - an average of some ECU 16 000 for their entire European dimension activities - have been found to be insufficient;
 - ◊ with regard to the national structures for the administration of the programme, the Community provides limited support for information activities only;
- the structure and operational functioning of the programme itself, for example:
 - ◊ the proliferation of actions supported under the programme seems to have given an impression of over-diversification and even disjointedness;
 - ◊ the intended synergies between the various parts of the programme did not materialise sufficiently;
 - ◊ difficulties were encountered in coordination between the (sometimes too numerous) management structures at national level and in the information flows between these structures and the Commission;
 - ◊ the plethora of procedures and administrative rules was sometimes deemed cumbersome;
 - ◊ insufficient information on the grants available, especially at the beginning of the programme;
 - ◊ inadequate dissemination of the results of the projects supported, thus potentially reducing the lasting impact of the products.

B. Key elements of the second phase

- In summary, it may be stated that the second phase will ensure *inter alia*:
 - ◊ **Underpinning** the achievements of the first phase and introduce major innovations, e.g. action on the education of adults and persons who left school with no qualifications.
 - ◊ **Rationalising** the structure of the programme by merging or withdrawing certain actions.
 - ◊ Greater **decentralisation** of management by strengthening arrangements in the Member States (integrated management structures at national level) and a higher degree of involvement of local and regional structures.
 - ◊ **Streamlining** the programme's operational procedures around two selection options, viz. "decentralised" or "centralised".
 - ◊ **Combining** action under this programme with action based on the Community's vocational training and youth programmes, e.g. through joint actions and the creation of 'European Knowledge Centres'.
- All the consultations - and they were numerous - held before this proposal was drawn up emphasised the need to give the education community in Europe more time to familiarise itself with the programme in its current form. However, they also stressed the need to place more emphasis on innovative activities, in order to be able to respond positively to new needs emerging from a society undergoing swift evolution from an economic, social, cultural, scientific and educational point of view.
- The present proposal is structured in accordance with the general orientations set out in the communication "Towards a Europe of knowledge".

1. *A more accessible, visible and user-friendly programme*

- ◊ The **objectives of the programme** have been reduced from nine to four: to strengthen the European dimension in education at all levels, to promote European cooperation in all sectors of education, to help to remove obstacles to this cooperation and to encourage innovation. These objectives are supplemented by a firm commitment to equal opportunities;
- ◊ the **programme's structure** comprises eight (instead of 27) actions covering the three fundamental stages of lifelong learning (school, university and others) and the horizontal policies (languages, multimedia, information exchange, etc.). This has clarified the structure of the programme as a whole;
- ◊ the **types of activity eligible** for Community support are clearly set out in the Decision:
 - (a) mobility of individuals within Europe;
 - (b) promotion of critical and effective use of the new information and communication technologies in order to promote virtual mobility;

- (c) European partnerships and networks;
- (d) promotion of language skills;
- (e) the targeted development of innovation;
- (f) the dissemination of good practices and the monitoring and dissemination of the results;

◊ the **application and selection procedures** have been considerably simplified. In the future, there will be only two instead of five, for the centralised and decentralised actions of the programme respectively.

2. *Improved interactivity of the Community measures*

A considerable effort is made to improve the interactivity and interrelationships between the various Community measures. The aim is not only to permit optimum use of all the available funds, but also, and above all, to seek genuine synergy at several levels. To this end, a series of provisions are included in order to promote:

- projects creating bridges between the various sectors of education with a view to encouraging lifelong learning;
- support for joint measures in the areas of education, vocational training and youth;
- the application of certain parts of Socrates in close cooperation with other Community programmes, especially as regards language learning, the use of multimedia and the monitoring of education systems and developments.

3. *Enhanced partnership between the Community and the Member States*

The success of Community action in the area of education depends largely on the solid and effective partnership between the Community bodies and the competent authorities in the Member States. This partnership must concern not only the joint management of the programme (decentralised actions, committee) and the joint funding of the projects supported, but must also facilitate more generally, the establishment of the right conditions for ensuring the broadest possible access to the programme (information measures), effective implementation (relaxing of administrative measures that tend to discourage active participation and the recognition of the experience gained) and a lasting impact through the use of the products and good practices developed (measures for disseminating and transferring the results).

In order to derive maximum benefit from the support of the competent authorities in the Member States, it is proposed to bolster the regular bilateral consultations between the Commission and these authorities, to establish national objectives for the implementation of the programme, and to invite each Member State to draw up a report every two years on its contribution to the achievement of the programme's objectives and to the actual establishment of the European education area during the period in question.

Efforts will also be made to step up cooperation at regional and local levels in order to bring the programme closer to the people and to ensure that the results of the projects and other activities funded by Socrates are reflected to a greater extent in the fabric of

education. To this end, the Commission will encourage, in cooperation with the national structures, the establishment of "European Knowledge Centres", which will group together at regional and/or local level the various activities supported within the programme. The purpose of these "Centres", account being taken of the specific needs of the regions, is to facilitate access to the programme for the largest number of end-users possible by real dissemination of information and results. The "Centres" could also cover the activities supported within the vocational training and youth programmes as well as other Community actions.

In order to streamline the programme's implementation, the Commission proposes that all forms of individual mobility carried out within the programme be the subject of decentralised management, apart from "Arion" visits for educational decision-makers, which are more a form of multilateral cooperation.

Certain aspects of the formulas for distributing Community funds to the Member States will be slightly altered in order to ensure that reliable and comparable statistics are available for all the Member States for all the parameters listed.

At the same time, several aspects of the programme's system of decentralised management will require improvement in the second phase in order to ensure the optimum conditions for the funds managed in this way (the vast majority of the programme's budget). To this end, the Member States will guarantee:

- the introduction of an "integrated management structure" for the programme, thereby ensuring improved coordination at national level and more effective interaction with the Commission and the management structures in the other Member States;
- widespread dissemination of information and of outputs.

4. *Closer links with the players on the ground*

In order to ensure greater transparency in access to Socrates, a new article sets out clearly the 'players' who could become involved in the various actions of the programme. The Commission would like to see greater cooperation with and between all the players working in the area of education, including parents. To this end, the consultation of the players remains a requirement in the Decision. Provision is also made for support to be given to the associations working at European level in the area of education or to the national and regional associations that wish to strengthen the European dimension of their work. The national structures should attach greater importance to cooperation with the national branches of the European associations.

5. *Funding consonant with the programme's objectives, and the principle of complementarity*

If the programme is to achieve its objectives, the level of funding must be consonant with the volume and scale of the planned actions. This is the only way to avoid creating unrealistic expectations, to ensure that the activities supported achieve a critical mass as regards the target groups and that the projects selected have sufficient resources to achieve significant results.

The Commission's budgetary proposal for the second phase of the programme is the minimum amount required to meet its stated objectives. It reflects the higher priority given to education in the financial perspectives for 2000-2006 and in *Agenda 2000*, and will facilitate a favourable response to the major role which education is called upon to play in implementing the coordinated national employment policy strategy adopted at the extraordinary European Council on Employment in November 1997.

However, the funding earmarked for the programme will not be enough to ensure that a genuine Europe of knowledge emerges. This makes it necessary for the responsible authorities in the Member States to ensure improved complementarity with other national initiatives. At European level, the task of ensuring this dovetailing with other Community initiatives will be one of the main priorities in programme implementation. This applies particularly to the dovetailing at Community level with the measures provided for under the Structural Funds, and with the programmes in the areas of research and technological development, vocational training and youth, culture and audiovisual policy.

6. *Opening up the programme to the pre-accession associated countries*

The fact that Community action in the area of education is, in principle, open to the participation of a significant number of European countries, notably the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe that are currently in the pre-accession phase, constitutes a major challenge for the programme, not only for the management of the Community measures in this area, but also in order to ensure that implementation allows all the participating countries to derive maximum benefit from the wide range of opportunities for cooperation on offer.

C. Conclusions

The first phase of the Socrates programme has made a good start on preparing people for life in the Europe of tomorrow. The programme has shown its potential for improving quality, creativity and the spirit of innovation in education.

The Commission believes the second phase of the programme will consolidate activities that have proved successful and will enable new activities to be launched which will help to make Europe an open education area.

SOCRATES PROGRAMME : INNOVATIONS FOR THE SECOND PHASE

While preserving a strong basis of continuity, the second phase of the Socrates Programme will be distinguished from the first by a number of innovative aspects - from a substantive as well as formal point of view:

| Phase 1 | Phase II |
|---|---|
| | Clearer objectives |
| 9 objectives | 4 objectives : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to strengthen the European dimension in education at all levels; - to promote cooperation in all sectors and at all levels of education; - to help remove the obstacles to such cooperation; - to encourage educational innovation. |
| | Rationalised structure |
| 3 chapters 8 Actions 16 sub-actions | 8 actions |
| | Concentration of the measures targeting each 'player' |
| School-related measures dispersed | Grouping of all school-related measures in one action, including various Lingua activities related to schools Possibility for schools to include all the projects in which they wish to participate across the different parts of the programme within their "Plan for inter-school cooperation in Europe" |
| Teacher-related measures dispersed | All measures relating to the initial and in-service training of school staff, including various forms of practical training for future teachers, are grouped together within a single action |
| Multiplicity of contracts with each university relating to its involvement in various different actions | Possibility for universities to include in their institutional contract all the projects which they coordinate across the various parts of the programme |

| New actions | |
|---|---|
| Limited action in the area of adult education | Introduction of a new action relating to new non-formal educational approaches designed to facilitate the acquisition of new competences throughout life |
| Weak links with the programmes relating to vocational training and youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint actions explicitly provided for in the decision - Joint launching of "European knowledge centres" at regional and local level |
| No possibility of introducing innovative actions which are not envisaged in advance | Possibility of developing innovative projects guaranteeing the flexibility of the programme and its capacity to respond to new needs which may emerge during the life-span of the programme |
| More structured provision for information and dissemination of results | |
| Absence of measures specifically designed to facilitate dissemination of results | An action specifically designed to facilitate dissemination of results |
| Dispersal of actions relating to the exchange of information and experience | Activities relating to the exchange of information and experience, including the Eurydice network, will be grouped together to form an instrument for observing the field of education |
| Absence of relay points at regional and local level | Recognition of the important role which regional authorities and other local bodies could play in linking the programme's end-users, in particular by encouraging the establishment of "European knowledge centres" |
| Simplified administration | |
| 5 selection procedures | 2 selection procedures |
| 7 actions to be managed on a decentralised basis | 4 consolidated actions to be managed by the national structures (2 for schools and 2 for universities) |
| Multiplicity of structures at national level | Integrated management structure |
| Weakness of links between the Commission and the Integrated management structures at national level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased Community co-financing of these management structures - On-line electronic communication systems |

**Proposal for a
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION**

establishing the second phase of the Community action programme
in the field of education "Socrates"

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community and in particular
Articles 126 and 127 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission³,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee⁴,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions⁵,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 189b of the Treaty⁶,

1. Whereas the Treaty establishing the European Community stipulates that the latter's action shall inter alia contribute to the development of quality education and training; whereas this was resolutely reiterated by the Amsterdam Treaty signed on 2 October 1997, which states that the Community's objective is also to promote the highest possible level of knowledge for its peoples through wide access to education and through a continuous updating of knowledge;
2. Whereas Decision No 819/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁷, as amended by Decision No 576/98/EC⁸, establishes the Community action programme Socrates;
3. Whereas the extraordinary European Council on Employment held in Luxembourg on 20 and 21 November 1997 adopted a coordinated employment strategy in which lifelong education and training have a fundamental role to play in implementing guidelines⁹ for the Member States' employment policies in order to enhance employability, adaptability, and the culture of entrepreneurship¹⁰ and to promote equal opportunities;

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7 OJ L 87, 20.4.1995, p. 10.

8 OJ L 77, 14.3.1998, p. 1.

9 OJ L 30, 28.1.1998, p. 1.

10 Communication from the Commission to the European Council "Fostering entrepreneurship in Europe: priorities for the future" (COM(1998) 222 final/2 of 21 April 1998).

4. Whereas the Commission in its communication "*Towards a Europe of Knowledge*"¹¹ set out guidelines on the gradual creation of an open and dynamic European education area capable of achieving the objective of lifelong education and training, defining six types of measures to be developed at Community level, focusing on transnational cooperation and designed to bring added value to the action taken by the Member States, in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity, and in a context of simplified procedures;
5. Whereas the White Paper¹² *Teaching and learning - Towards the learning society* states that the emergence of the learning society entails encouraging the acquisition of new knowledge and to this end providing motivation to learn at every opportunity; and whereas the Green Paper¹³ *Education, training, research: the obstacles to transnational mobility* highlighted the advantages mobility brings to people and competitiveness in the Union;
6. Whereas there is a need to promote active citizenship, to strengthen the links between measures pursued under this programme, and to step up the fight against exclusion in all its forms, including racism and xenophobia; whereas special attention should be focused on removing all forms of inequality and on promoting equal opportunities for women and men;
7. Whereas the Parliament and the Council in their Decision No XXX/99/EC [Youth]¹⁴ and the Council in its Decision No XXX/99/EC [Training]¹⁵ have established Community action programmes for the youth and training fields respectively, which contribute together with the Socrates programme to implementing a knowledge policy;
8. Whereas it is necessary, in order to reinforce the added value of Community action to ensure, at all levels, a coherence and a complementarity between the actions implemented in the framework of this Decision and the Community interventions, in particular in the domains of culture¹⁶, audio-visual media, the completion of the single market, the environment, consumer protection, the information society, SMEs, social policies, employment and public health;

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¹¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - *Towards a Europe of knowledge*, COM(97) 0563 final, 12 November 1997.

¹² Commission's White Paper: *Education and training: Teaching and learning - Towards the learning society*", Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 1996.

¹³ Commission's Green Paper: *Education, training, research: the obstacles to transnational mobility*, COM(96) 462 final, 2 October 1996.

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¹⁶ Proposal for a Parliament and Council Decision establishing a single financing and programming instrument for cultural cooperation (Programme Culture 2000), OJ C 211, 7.7.1998, p. 18.

9. Whereas the Commission's proposals for reforming the Structural Funds¹⁷, particularly the European Social Fund, and the Community initiatives stemming therefrom, are based on objectives designed to support the adaptation and modernisation of policies and systems relating to education, training and employment;
10. Whereas provision should be made to open up this programme to participation by the associated Central and Eastern European countries, in accordance with the conditions established in the relevant association agreements, notably the association agreements and the additional protocols to these agreements, to Cyprus on the same terms as those applied to the EFTA/EEA countries as well as to Turkey and Malta according to procedures to be agreed with those countries;
11. Whereas this programme should be monitored and continuously evaluated in cooperation between the Commission and the Member States in order to allow for readjustments, particularly in the priorities for implementing the measures;
12. Whereas, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as defined in Article 3b of the Treaty, the objectives of the proposed action concerning the contribution of European cooperation to quality education cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States because *inter alia* of the need for multilateral partnerships, multilateral mobility of people and Community-wide exchange of information, and can therefore be better achieved by the Community thanks to the transnational dimension of Community actions and measures; whereas this Decision does not go beyond what is necessary to achieve these objectives;
13. Whereas this Decision establishes, for the entire duration of the programme, a financial framework offering the budgetary authority the principal point of reference, within the meaning of point 1 of the Declaration by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission of 6 March 1995¹⁸, during the annual budgetary procedure;
14. Whereas an agreement on a *modus vivendi* between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission concerning the implementing measures for acts adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 189b of the EC Treaty was reached on 20 December 1994¹⁹,

¹⁷ Agenda 2000 Reform of the Structural and Cohesion Funds - Pre-accession structural assistance - Pursuing the cohesion effort - A new reform of the Structural Funds, COM(1998) 131 final, 18 March 1998.

¹⁸ OJ C 102, 4.4.1996, p. 4.

¹⁹ OJ C 102, 4.4.1996, p. 1.

HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Establishment of the programme

1. This Decision establishes the second phase of the Community action programme in the field of education "Socrates", hereinafter referred to as "this programme".
2. This programme shall be implemented in the period starting on 1 January 2000 and ending on 31 December 2004.
3. This programme shall contribute to the Community's knowledge policy through the implementation of a European education area fostering the development of lifelong education and training. It shall permit the development of the knowledge and skills conducive to the full exercise of citizenship.
4. This programme shall support and supplement action taken by and in the Member States, while fully respecting their responsibility for the content of the education and the organisation of education systems, and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

Article 2

Aims of the programme

1. In order to contribute to the development of quality education, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States, the aims of the programme shall be:
 - (a) to strengthen the European dimension in education at all levels, in particular by granting wider access to European educational resources and through the teaching and dissemination of languages, while promoting a better gender balance throughout all fields of education;
 - (b) to promote cooperation in the field of education, in particular by encouraging exchanges between educational institutions and by promoting open and distance education;
 - (c) to help remove the obstacles to such cooperation, in particular by encouraging improvements in the recognition of diplomas and periods of study, and by developing the exchange of information;
 - (d) to encourage innovation, in particular where such innovation is associated with new technologies.
2. In implementing these objectives, the Commission and the Member States shall ensure that action under the programme is consistent with the Community's other actions and policies, particularly with regard to employment, to the removal of inequalities, to equal opportunities for women and men, and to social policy.

Article 3
Community actions

1. The aims of this programme shall be pursued through the following actions, the operational content and the application procedures of which are described in the Annex:
 - (a) school education (Comenius);
 - (b) higher education (Erasmus);
 - (c) other educational pathways (Grundtvig);
 - (d) teaching and learning of languages (Lingua);
 - (e) education and multimedia (Atlas);
 - (f) observation and innovation;
 - (g) joint actions;
 - (h) accompanying measures.
2. The actions shall be implemented through the following types of measure, in the form of operations which may use several of them in combination:
 - (a) support for the mobility of people in the field of education in Europe;
 - (b) promotion of virtual mobility in the context of education, particularly by promoting access to educational multimedia;
 - (c) support for the development of European-level cooperation networks permitting the mutual exchange of experience and good practice;
 - (d) promotion of language skills and understanding of different cultures;
 - (e) support for innovatory pilot projects based on transnational partnerships designed to develop innovation and quality in education in order to create educational products, instruments of skills accreditation or in order to test out any new approach;
 - (f) the constant improvement of the Community terms of reference through support for the dissemination of good practice and through the observation and dissemination of innovation.

Article 4
Access to the programme

1. Under the conditions and in accordance with the definitions and arrangements for implementation specified in the Annex, this programme is aimed in particular at:

- (a) all pupils, students or other learners;
 - (b) all categories of staff involved in education;
 - (c) all types of educational institutions;
 - (d) the people and bodies responsible for education systems and policies at local, regional and national level within the Member States.
2. Public or private bodies cooperating with educational institutions may also take part or be actively involved in several actions under this programme, in particular:
- (a) local and regional bodies and organisations;
 - (b) associations working in the field of education, including parents' associations;
 - (c) companies and consortia, trade organisations and Chambers of Commerce and Industry;
 - (d) organisations of both sides of industry at all levels;
 - (e) research centres and bodies.
3. Every Member State shall draw up a list of universities, types of schools and other educational institutions eligible to participate in the programme.

Article 5

Implementation of the programme and cooperation with the Member States

1. The Commission shall ensure the implementation of the Community actions covered by this programme in accordance with the Annex.
- It shall consult both sides of industry and the competent associations in the field of education at European level and shall inform the Committee referred to in Article 7 of their opinions.
2. In conjunction with the Member States, the Commission shall take the steps described in the Annex to make the best use of what has been achieved through the action undertaken under the first phase of the Socrates programme.
3. The Member States shall take appropriate action to secure, nationally, the coordination, organisation and the follow-up needed for the attainment of the objectives of this programme, involving all the parties concerned by education in accordance with national practice.

To that end, they shall set up an integrated management structure for the operational implementation of the programme's actions and shall ensure that appropriate information and publicity is provided on actions co-financed by the programme.

4. Each Member State shall endeavour to take the necessary steps to ensure the efficient running of this programme and to take appropriate measures to remove any obstacles to access to it.
5. The Commission, in conjunction with the Member States, shall ensure the transition between those actions developed within the framework of the preceding "Socrates" programme in the field of education and those to be implemented under this programme.

Article 6 **Joint actions**

As part of the process of building up a Europe of knowledge, the measures of this programme may be implemented as joint actions with other Community actions forming part of the knowledge policy, particularly Community programmes in the area of vocational training and youth-related matters.

Article 7 **Committee**

1. The Commission shall be assisted by a committee composed of the representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission.
2. The committee shall be assisted by two subcommittees in the areas of school education and higher education. They shall be composed of representatives of the Member States. The Commission shall ensure coordination between the committee and the subcommittees. Specific questions may be referred to the subcommittees for final decision.
3. The representative of the Commission shall submit to the committee a draft of the measures to be taken as regards:
 - (a) the arrangements for implementing this programme, including where appropriate the annual plan of work for the implementation of the programme's actions;
 - (b) the criteria applicable for establishing the indicative breakdown of funds among the Member States for the purpose of the actions to be managed on a decentralised basis;
 - (c) the arrangements for evaluating the programme.
4. The committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft within a time-limit which the Chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter. The opinion shall be delivered by the majority laid down in Article 148 (2) of the Treaty in the case of decisions which the Council is required to adopt on a proposal from the Commission. The votes of the representatives of the Member States within the Committee shall be weighted in the manner set out in that Article. The Chairman shall not vote.

5. The Commission shall adopt measures which shall apply immediately. However, if these measures are not in accordance with the opinion of the committee, they shall be communicated by the Commission to the Council forthwith.

In that event,

- the Commission may defer application of the measures which it has decided for a period of up to one month from the date of such communication;
 - the Council, acting by a qualified majority, may take a different decision within the time-limit referred to in the first indent.
6. The Commission may consult the Committee on any other matter concerning implementation of the programme.

In that event, the Commission representative shall submit to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The Committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft, within a time-limit which the Chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

The opinion shall be recorded in the minutes; in addition, each Member State shall have the right to ask to have its position recorded in the minutes.

The Commission shall take the utmost account of the opinion delivered by the Committee. It shall inform the Committee of the manner in which its opinion has been taken into account.

Article 8 **Funding**

1. The financial resources for the implementation of this programme for the period specified in Article 1 shall be set at ECU 1 400 million.
2. The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspectives.

Article 9 **Consistency and complementarity**

1. The Commission shall, in conjunction with the Member States, ensure overall consistency with other Community policies and actions. There shall be coordination between the activities of this programme and the other Community actions, in particular those covered by the knowledge policy.

The Commission shall, in conjunction with the Member States, ensure consistency between implementation of this programme and the other Community actions relating to education in the area of culture and the audiovisual sector, the completion of the internal market, the information society, environment, consumer protection, SMEs, social policies, employment, and public health.

The Commission shall ensure an efficient link-up between this programme and the programmes and actions in the area of education undertaken as part of the Community's external relations.

2. The Commission and the Member States shall ensure that the measures of this programme are, as part of the implementation of the coordinated employment strategy, consistent with the orientations established annually for the employment guidelines and in conjunction with the other actions contributing to the implementation of the action plans.
3. The Commission and the Member States shall ensure consistency and complementarity between action undertaken under this programme and Community action under the Structural Funds.

Article 10

Participation of the associated Central and Eastern European countries, Cyprus, Turkey and Malta

1. This programme shall be open to the participation of the associated Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Europe agreements or in existing or anticipated additional protocols governing the participation of these countries in Community programmes. This programme shall also be open to the participation, funded by additional appropriations, of Cyprus under the same rules as those applied to the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which belong to the European Economic Area (EEA) according to the procedures to be agreed with this country. This programme shall also be open to participation by Turkey according to the procedures to be established with that country.
2. This programme shall also be open to participation by Malta according to the procedures to be agreed with that country.

Article 11

International cooperation

The Commission shall strengthen its cooperation with non-Community countries and with the relevant international organisations, particularly the Council of Europe.

Article 12

Monitoring and evaluation

1. The Commission shall continually monitor this programme in cooperation with the Member States.

This monitoring shall be effected through the reports referred to in paragraph 3 and through specific activities.
2. The Commission shall evaluate this programme periodically, in conjunction with the Member States. The evaluation shall seek to appraise the effectiveness of the actions implemented, by reference to the objectives set out in Article 2.

The evaluation will also examine the complementarity between actions under this programme and those pursued under other Community programmes, particularly those supported by the European Social Fund.

In accordance with criteria established using the procedure described in Article 7(3), there shall be periodical external evaluations of the results of the Community actions.

3. Member States shall submit to the Commission by 31 December 2002 and 30 June 2005 respectively reports on the implementation and the impact of this programme.
4. The Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions:
 - an interim evaluation report on the implementation of this programme no later than 30 June 2003;
 - the final report on the implementation of this programme, no later than 31 December 2005.

Article 13 **Entry into force**

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The actions proposed in this Annex contribute to the achievement of the objectives laid down in Article 2 of the Decision and implemented through the Community measures provided for in Article 3.
2. Provisions relating to the timetable, the conditions for the submission of applications and the eligibility criteria are published regularly by the Commission, following consultation of the programme committee, in the "Socrates Guidelines for Applicants".
3. In the context of activities involving the mobility of persons, there should be some linguistic preparation so that the beneficiaries possess the necessary competence in the language(s) of instruction in the host establishment.
4. As a general rule, Community financial assistance granted to the projects selected under this programme is intended to partially compensate for the estimated cost necessary to carry out projects and may cover a maximum period of three years, subject to an annual review of the results. Assistance may be granted in advance to enable preparatory visits to the projects in question.
5. The projects coordinated by universities under the various actions of the programme may form part of the "institutional contract" of the institutions concerned, provided for in Action 2.
6. In accordance with Article 2 paragraph 2 of the Decision, the projects selected must respect the principle of equal opportunities and avoid any type of exclusion. Positive actions may be introduced in some areas where such action is required. Projects giving special emphasis to multicultural aspects will be a priority, and the specific needs of disabled people should also be taken into account when establishing the amount of financial assistance.

II. COMMUNITY ACTIONS

This Annex contains two main types of actions:

- *the first, Actions 1 - 3, are aimed at the three basic stages of lifelong education (school, university, others);*
- *the second, Actions 4 - 8, concern transversal measures such as languages, multimedia and the exchange of information, as well as matters of horizontal interest such as innovation, the dissemination of results, joint actions.*

ACTION 1 "COMENIUS": SCHOOL EDUCATION

Action 1.1: School partnerships

Action 1.2: Staff involved in school education

ACTION 2: "ERASMUS": HIGHER EDUCATION

Action 2.1: European inter-university cooperation

Action 2.2: Mobility of students and teachers

ACTION 3: "GRUNDTVIG": OTHER EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Action 3.1: New educational approaches

Action 3.2: Adult education

ACTION 4: "LINGUA": TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LANGUAGES

ACTION 5: "ATLAS": EDUCATION AND MULTIMEDIA

ACTION 6: OBSERVATION AND INNOVATION

Action 6.1: Observation of education systems and policies

Action 6.2: New innovatory initiatives

ACTION 7: JOINT ACTIONS

ACTION 8: ACCOMPANYING MEASURES

ACTION 1: "COMENIUS": SCHOOL EDUCATION

Comenius seeks to reinforce the European dimension of school education, to encourage transnational cooperation and to promote the learning of languages.

Comenius also promotes the creation of school partnership networks and partnership networks for the training of school education staff to enable cooperation on subjects of mutual interest, the dissemination of good practice and discussion of qualitative and innovatory aspects of school education. The staff training network is to be developed in close cooperation with the university "thematic networks" provided for in the Erasmus action.

Action 1.1: School partnerships

1. The Community encourages the creation of multilateral partnerships between schools by making use of the facilities offered by multimedia and by encouraging in particular those which also involve teacher training establishments, local authorities and businesses, as well as parents.
2. Schools taking part in one or more of the activities contained in this Action shall submit a "Plan for inter-school cooperation in Europe" covering all the activities proposed. The plans shall be examined by the national structures set up in

accordance with Article 5, paragraph 3, of the Decision, involving, with due respect for national systems, the supervisory bodies at regional and local level, on the basis of the guidelines established by the Commission in consultation with the programme committee.

3. Activities eligible for Community assistance may include the following:
 - (a) partnerships involving:
 - the mobility of teachers to prepare and monitor partnerships or to teach abroad, including in-company placements;
 - the development of teaching material and the exchange of good practice;
 - the involvement of pupils in partnership activities, including mobility for a limited number of them;
 - (b) partnerships aimed specifically at promoting the Community's official languages. The partnerships may in exceptional circumstances be bilateral if they target the less widely used languages and may also include exchanges of pupils in addition to the activities referred to in point (a);
 - (c) cooperation projects meeting the specific needs of the children of migrant workers, gypsies and travellers and itinerant workers.

Action 1.2: Staff involved in school education

1. This action seeks to contribute to the career development of staff working in the school education sector, by reinforcing the European dimension in initial and continuing training.
2. The Community supports multilateral projects from establishments and bodies involved in the training of educational staff, also by making use of the facilities offered by multimedia. The participation of schools and other players involved in the field of education - such as parents' representatives - and socio-economic affairs is encouraged, as is the involvement of supervisory bodies at regional and local level, where appropriate.
3. Activities eligible for Community assistance in the context of the partnerships referred to above may include the following:
 - (a) the development and/or adaptation of curricula, teaching material or European modules;
 - (b) aspects of school management;
 - (c) the mobility of school staff - future or already in service - for the purpose of initial or continuing teacher training, including practical training periods and language assistantships in schools or adult education centres;

- (d) aspects of specific training relating to the integration of the children of migrant workers, gypsies and travellers and itinerant workers.

ACTION 2: "ERASMUS": HIGHER EDUCATION

Erasmus seeks to reinforce the European dimension of higher education at all levels and to encourage transnational cooperation between universities.

Participating universities conclude "institutional contracts" with the Commission covering all the activities approved.

Erasmus also promotes the development and consolidation of thematic networks enabling universities to cooperate on topics relating to one or more disciplines or on matters of mutual interest in order to facilitate the spread of good practice, encourage discussion of qualitative and innovative aspects of higher education, improve teaching methods and stimulate the development of joint programmes and specialised courses. The involvement of representatives of learned societies, professional associations and socio-economic circles is encouraged.

Action 2.1: European inter-university cooperation

1. The Community supports inter-university cooperation activities carried out by universities in conjunction with partners in other Member States, with the participation, where appropriate, of other players involved in education and the socio-economic world.
2. The following inter-university cooperation activities, which should, wherever possible, make use of the facilities offered by multimedia, are eligible for Community assistance under the "institutional contract" referred to above:
 - (a) the organisation of mobility of students, teachers and other members of university staff involved in European cooperation;
 - (b) joint development and implementation of curricula, modules, intensive courses or other curricular activities, in particular multidisciplinary activities, including the teaching of subjects in other languages;
 - (c) consolidation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), designed to facilitate academic recognition.

Action 2.2: Mobility of students and university teachers

1. The Community encourages the mobility of students and teachers between the Member States, organised in the framework of "institutional contracts".
2. Students benefiting from mobility and spending significant periods of study in another Member State, such periods being fully recognised under the inter-university agreements forming part of the institutional contracts, will be considered as Erasmus students, regardless of whether or not an "Erasmus grant" has been allocated in accordance with point 3 below. The host universities will not charge

tuition fees to Erasmus students and any loans or grants which they might receive will continue to be paid during their stay abroad.

3. The Community encourages the mobility of students and teachers by providing financial support under Erasmus.

ACTION 3: "GRUNDTVIG": OTHER EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

The Grundtvig Action seeks to encourage lifelong learning, in particular by offering - as a complement to Actions 1 (school education) and 2 (higher education) - other educational pathways for all citizens desirous of acquiring new knowledge. The Action is targeted in particular at young people who have left the school system with insufficient basic training, those who wish to begin or resume formal studies after a break from the education system and adults wishing to acquire or improve their knowledge for personal reasons.

Grundtvig thus encourages the creation of European networks to strengthen the links between the various parties involved in this area to enable them to cooperate on a more stable basis on matters of mutual interest.

Action 3.1: New educational approaches

1. This action seeks to encourage initiatives aimed at developing more flexible, less formal educational methods which are more suited to the specific needs of each individual wishing to acquire recognised skills or qualifications.
2. Community financial assistance may be granted in particular for projects seeking to promote:
 - (a) the development of new educational approaches, making use in particular of multimedia;
 - (b) the development of appropriate teaching material;
 - (c) the dissemination of innovative approaches and good practice;
 - (d) the development of accreditation, validation or certification schemes for skills acquired in this manner;
 - (e) the training of educational staff working in this sector.

Action 3.2: Adult education

1. The aim of this action is to improve the quality of education available to adult learners, in particular by reinforcing cooperation between the various bodies working in this field, and to strengthen the European dimension of adult education by highlighting the richness of the linguistic and cultural diversity of nations, thus developing a sense of belonging to a European citizenship.
2. The Community supports projects developed by multilateral partnerships whose purpose is in particular to:

- (a) stimulate adults' individual demand for learning, so that they continue to remain active participants in a society undergoing rapid change;
- (b) develop support services for adult learners and the providers of such education;
- (c) develop teaching material which may be adapted to multimedia methods of learning and to exchange good practice;
- (d) develop accreditation, validation or certification schemes for the skills acquired;
- (e) support the training of educational staff working in this sector.

ACTION 4: "LINGUA": TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LANGUAGES

1. The aim of this action is to enable the Commission, in partnership with the Member States, to ensure the coordination and consolidation of measures relating to the learning of languages, with a view to promoting and maintaining linguistic diversity within the Community, helping to improve the quality of language teaching and learning and promoting easy access to lifelong language learning opportunities tailored to individual requirements.
2. In this context, language teaching covers the teaching and learning as foreign languages of all the official languages of the Community, including Irish and Luxembourgish. Special attention will usually be given throughout the whole programme to the teaching of the least widely used and taught languages of the Community.
3. Community financial assistance may be allocated in the context of this action to general transnational language-learning projects and activities, such as in particular:
 - awareness-raising activities;
 - activities seeking to promote and/or spread innovations such as the early learning of languages or multilingual comprehension;
 - the development and exchange of curricula, innovative teaching material and methods and instruments for the recognition of language proficiency;
 - the networking of national, regional or local resource centres.

ACTION 5: "ATLAS": EDUCATION AND MULTIMEDIA

1. The aim of this action is to ensure the coordination and consolidation of measures relating to open and distance education and the use of new information and multimedia communication technologies in the field of education. All these measures serve a dual purpose: to promote better understanding and the critical, responsible use of tools and methods which apply new technologies, and - at European level - to promote the access to and enhance the availability of improved educational resources.

2. Community financial assistance may be granted under this action to general transnational projects for the use of new technologies and/or the development of open and distance education, in particular in the context of three types of measure:
 - projects and studies dealing with understanding the innovatory processes under way and the development of quality criteria, in particular with regard to educational multimedia products;
 - projects to develop pilot modules, methodologies and multimedia resources;
 - projects to develop information services and systems on educational multimedia resources, and communication systems to support the exchange of ideas and experience, including the networking of resource centres, experts, decision-makers and project coordinators on subjects of mutual interest.

ACTION 6: OBSERVATION AND INNOVATION

Action 6.1: Observation of education systems and policies

1. The present Action contributes to the transparency of education systems in Europe through the exchange of information and experience and turns the specificity of national systems into a source of quality European education. It is based on arrangements involving a variety of activities to be linked together and supported by the Community:
 - creation of Community terms of reference;
 - development of indicators and evaluation of the quality of education, in particular through the networking of the bodies involved and pilot projects;
 - development and upkeep of databases of innovatory experiments;
 - linking up the organisations engaged in analysing educational systems and policies;
 - studies and pilot projects on the recognition of diplomas, qualifications and periods of learning at all educational levels in other Member States.
2. Community support is also granted to:
 - the European education information network “**Eurydice**”, comprising the European Unit and national Units, set up by the Commission and the Member States respectively, to enable it to make a full contribution to the implementation of this action;
 - the organisation of and participation in “**Arion**” multilateral study visits;

- the Community network of national academic recognition information centres **Naric**, in order to enable the intensive exchange of information between the various parts of the network and the launch of pilot projects on matters of mutual interest designed to facilitate recognition.
3. Close cooperation with the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) is ensured in the implementation of the Action.

Action 6.2: New innovatory initiatives

In addition to the cooperation activities provided for in the various actions of the present programme, the Community also supports transnational projects aimed at developing innovations in one or more specific sectors of education. The subjects given priority are reviewed regularly to enable adaptation to the new requirements which will emerge during the period covered by this programme.

ACTION 7 : JOINT ACTIONS

1. For the joint actions described in Article 6 of this Decision, Community support may be provided for joint actions with other actions under the knowledge policy, in particular Community vocational training and youth programmes designed to widen access to knowledge.
2. Coordination between the three programmes can be achieved by common calls for proposals. The Commission intends in particular to develop a joint information and observation arrangement with regard to good practice in the field of knowledge, and joint actions on education and training multimedia. These projects may encompass a range of measures covering several sectors, including education. They may be supported in a complementary manner by various Community programmes.
3. Appropriate steps, a significant one being the setting up of "European knowledge centres", will be taken to ensure regional and local contact and interaction between the players taking part in this programme and in vocational training and youth-related programmes. This will contribute to the implementation of a policy of lifelong learning in the regions and local districts concerned.

ACTION 8 : ACCOMPANYING MEASURES

1. Financial assistance may be granted to initiatives aimed at promoting the objectives of this programme, provided that such initiatives are not eligible for assistance under other actions of the programme. Community assistance may be given to the following:
 - awareness-raising activities to promote cooperation in the field of education, including support for the organisation of the "Europe in the School" competition in cooperation with the Council of Europe;
 - activities aimed at training the persons involved in the management of European cooperation projects in the field of education;

- transnational activities carried out by associations and other non-governmental bodies active in the field of education;
 - conferences and symposia on innovations in the sectors targeted by the programme;
 - measures to optimise and disseminate the results of projects and activities carried out with the support of this programme or its previous phase, including by means of instruments such as the Ortelius information system.
2. Community assistance may be provided to carry out the information activities necessary to implement the programme, support the activities of the integrated management structures set up by the Member States in accordance with Article 5 of the Decision, and to ensure an effective monitoring and evaluation system of the actions contained in this Annex.
 3. In carrying out the programme the Commission can have recourse to technical assistance organisations the financing of which may be provided for within the overall envelope for the programme. It can, under the same conditions, have recourse to experts. Furthermore, the Commission will be able to organise seminars, colloquia or other meetings of experts, likely to facilitate the implementation of the programme. The Commission can also take forward information, publication and dissemination actions.

III. PROCEDURES FOR THE SUBMISSION AND SELECTION OF PROJECTS

Procedures for the proposal and selection of the projects referred to in this Annex are as follows:

1. Requests for financial assistance for projects submitted under Actions 1.1 and 1.2 point 3(c), which are considered decentralised, as well as for preparatory visits under all Actions except Action 2, shall be submitted to the integrated management structures designated by the Member States in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 3, of the Decision. These structures shall select the projects and allocate financial assistance to the selected projects in accordance with the general guidelines established under Article 7, paragraph 3, of the Decision.
2. The awarding of the financial assistance provided for in Action 2.2 point 3 to students and academic teachers carrying out mobility assignments within the institutional contracts mentioned in Action 2.1, shall be carried out by the integrated management structures designated by the Member States in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 3, of the Decision, in accordance with the general guidelines established under Article 7, paragraph 3, of the Decision.
3. Requests for financial assistance for projects mentioned in other parts of the programme, considered to be centralised, shall be submitted to the Commission which will forward them to the integrated management structures. Decisions on financial assistance for projects shall be taken by the Commission after receiving the opinion of the Committee in accordance with Article 7, paragraph 6, of the Decision.

IV. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

1. The Community funds intended to provide financial support under Actions 1.1, 1.2 point 3(c) and 2.2 point 3, will be shared out between the Member States according to the formulas contained in point 5 below.
2. The Community funds thus distributed shall be administered by the national structures provided for in Article 5, paragraph 3, of the Decision. These structures shall also ensure coordination with the financial resources available in the Member States aimed at encouraging participation in European cooperation activities.
3. The Commission, acting in cooperation with the Member States, shall take the necessary measures to encourage balanced participation at Community, national and regional level, and, in the case of higher education, in the various fields of study. The proportion allocated to these measures must not exceed 10% of the annual budget for financing each of the actions in question.
4. In order to ensure as wide a distribution as possible in each Member State, and the efficient monitoring and exchange of experience between the projects and the activities supported, national structures shall be encouraged to work in close cooperation with the appropriate authorities at regional and local level in their respective countries. They may, in cooperation with the Commission, take initiatives aimed at promoting an equitable participation of the various establishments at national or regional level, in particular through the dissemination of information and awareness-raising activities.
5. *Distribution formula for :*
 - Action 1.1*
 - Action 1.2 point 3(c)*
 - Action 2.2 point 3*
 - (a) a minimum amount to be determined in accordance with budgetary availability will be allocated to each Member State;
 - (b) the remainder will be allocated to the various Member States on the basis of:
 - (i) the country's per capita gross domestic product;
 - (ii) the distance between the Member State of origin and the host Member State;
 - (iii) the country's total number of:
 - pupils and teachers in school education for Action 1.1 and Action 1.2 point 3(c);
 - students in higher education for Action 2.2 point 3 (students). The number of graduates could also be taken into account;
 - teachers in higher education for Action 2.2 point 3 (teachers).

6. The arrangements for the allocation of funds to each Member State for the support of preparatory visits shall be decided upon by the Commission. after receiving the opinion of the Committee in accordance with Article 7, paragraph 6, of the Decision.

V. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this programme:

- **“lifelong learning”** means the education and training opportunities offered to individuals throughout their lives to enable them continually to update their knowledge and skills;
- **“decision-makers”** includes staff with managerial, assessment, training, guidance and inspection duties in the field of education, persons responsible for this area at local, regional and national level and within the ministries;
- **“open and distance education”** means any type of education involving the use of traditional or advanced information and communication technologies and services, backed up by individualised counselling and tutoring;
- **“pupil”** means persons enrolled in that capacity at a school;
- **“teacher/educational staff”** means persons who through their duties are involved directly in the educational process in the Member States, in accordance with the organisation of their respective education system;
- **“company”** means all companies in the public or private sector whatever their size, legal status or the economic sector in which they operate, and all types of economic activities, including the social economy;
- **“school”** means all types of institutions providing school education, whether providing general (nursery, primary or secondary), vocational or technical education;
- **“student”** means persons registered in universities, whatever their field of study, in order to follow higher education studies leading to a degree or diploma, up to and including the level of doctorate;
- **“virtual mobility”** means all the resources, methods, services and simulations which make it possible, through the use of information technologies and telecommunications networks, to gain access to information available in other places, exchange ideas and cooperate with geographically distant partners;
- **“both sides of industry”** at national level means employers’ and workers’ organisations in conformity with national laws and/or practices; at Community level means employers’ and workers’ organisations taking part in the social dialogue at Community level;

- **“European knowledge centre”** is the term used to denote a grouping together at regional or local level of actors participating in the present programme and the Community programmes in the fields of vocational training and youth, for the purpose of supporting regional or local lifelong learning policies in particular by means of disseminating information and results and promoting active interaction across the three programmes;
- **“Community terms of reference”** means all the analyses, studies, surveys and identification of good practice which make it possible to locate, at Community level, the relative position of the various Member States and the progress made on a given subject or in a given area;
- **“university”** means any type of higher education institution which offers qualifications or diplomas at that level, whatever such establishments may be called in the Member States.

SECOND PHASE OF THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAMME "SOCRATES"

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. TITLE OF OPERATION

Second phase of the Community Action Programme Socrates

2. BUDGET HEADING INVOLVED

B3-1001 and Part A

3. LEGAL BASIS

Article 126 and 127 of the EC Treaty

Parliament and Council Decision No 99/.../EC of ../../1999 establishing the second phase of the Community Action Programme in the field of education Socrates

4. BUDGETARY CHARACTERISTICS

4.1. Classification of expenditure, Financial Regulation section

Non-compulsory expenditure, differentiated appropriations, Financial Regulation section: 3

4.2. Period covered and arrangements for renewal or extension

The programme covers the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2004.

If appropriate, the Commission will present a proposal for extension of the programme in accordance with Article 12 of the Decision.

5. TYPE OF EXPENDITURE

Generally speaking: grants, co-financed with other public or private sources, some monetary, some not. The Community aid will be used more particularly to help cover all or part of the costs constituting a genuine burden for organisations involved in the projects (institutional partnerships: universities and schools, associations, NGOs, adult education establishments, local authorities, businesses) and/or persons taking part in mobility schemes. Internal project resources (in the

form of service provision, provision of staff, material or installations, for example) will be deemed complementary to the Community contribution.

The Community funding rate will depend on the co-financing arrangements for the proposed projects and activities, although it will normally not exceed 75% of the total cost, which is the level which may apply in particular to projects:

- in a new field of action at European level, where the Community has a major interest in stimulating cooperation;
- involving organisations which would have trouble (because of their legal status or nature) in acquiring substantial co-financing and organisations which have little experience of European cooperation.

100% financing is envisaged only for studies and analyses done by third parties, and in other exceptional cases where the grounds are fully justified.

6. NEED FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT; OBJECTIVES

6.1. Grounds for Community involvement, having regard to the principle of subsidiarity

Pursuant to Article 126 of the Treaty, the Socrates programme supports and supplements measures taken by the Member States. The actions under the programme are designed to yield - principally by way of multilateral cooperation, transnational mobility and European networking - effects which could not be achieved if the action were to be taken by only one Member State or on the basis of bilateral cooperation.

The second phase has been designed having regard to the conclusions of the report on the first two years of the programme (COM(97) 99 final of 14 March 1997), and the feedback from the interim evaluation, with the Commission's interim report being due for 30 September 1998.

6.2. General objective

Following on from the objectives set out by the Commission in its Communication "For a Europe of Knowledge" (COM(97) 563 final of 12 November 1997), the general objective of the programme is to contribute, in close conjunction with the programmes on vocational training and youth, to the implementation of a knowledge policy at Community level. The aim is to create a European educational area to encourage lifelong learning, with a view to developing knowledge, skills and citizenship.

As far as Socrates is concerned, this involves contributing to the development of high-quality education in the Community, by encouraging cooperation between the Member States, and enhancing the capacity of teaching to adapt and anticipate in response to political, social, economic and

technological change, so that young people and adult learners receive an education which will enable them to live and work in a European Union which is becoming more and more integrated.

6.3. Specific objectives

With a view to contributing to a high-quality education within the Community, the programme is concerned with:

- (a) strengthening the European dimension of education at all levels;
- (b) promoting cooperation in all sectors and at all levels in the field of education;
- (c) helping to remove obstacles to such cooperation;
- (d) encouraging innovation in education.

6.4. Target populations

The target groups are varied and numerous. The programme can potentially address:

- (a) any pupil, student or other learner;
- (b) any category of staff involved in education;
- (c) all types of educational establishment;
- (d) persons and organisations responsible for education systems and policies at local, regional and national level within the Member States.

The programme may also involve public or private organisations cooperating with educational establishments in pursuing the programme's objectives (see Article 4 of the Decision).

The structure of the programme reflects the dual concern of reaching a critical mass of the various target categories, and stressing the multiplier and demonstration effects. There are today, within the 15 Member States, more or less:

- 310 000 schools;
- 4 million school teachers;
- 5 000 higher education establishments, including almost 2 000 large-scale multidisciplinary universities;
- 11 million students at these universities;
- 800 000 university teachers.

In order to have a significant impact on these populations, the following provision has been made:

- *School education*

- support from the start of the programme (in the year 2000) for some 9 000 schools within 3 000 school partnerships. Since co-financing is normally limited to three years, it will be possible to add some 4 000-5 000 extra schools each year, with some of the schools ceasing to receive aid, with the result that $(4 \times 5\,000 =)$ 20 000 schools will be added to the initial 9 000. The objective then is to impinge on 10% of all schools by the end of the programme;
- in order to keep the effect of support measures going, even after the co-financing period has elapsed, provision is made for facilitating networking arrangements for schools which have already been involved in partnerships;
- arrangements are also envisaged for training for educational staff, given their key role in the quality of education and their multiplier effect;

- *Higher education*

- by the end of the programme, almost all of the large-scale establishments will have signed an institutional contract, this being the new basic instrument governing the European cooperation strategy;
- to achieve the direct involvement of representatives of a number of faculties and disciplines (a minimum of something like 20 teachers per university), the programme will contribute to the mobility - covering something like 30% of the cost on average - of some 200 000 teachers during the second five-year phase, i.e. a significant proportion of the total of 800 000 university teachers;
- there will be support for subject-related networks, each linking dozens of universities within a specific discipline. Starting with 40 networks and a moderate annual growth rate, it will be possible to cover virtually all of the major groups of university disciplines;
- as far as students are concerned, calculations are based on an initial target of around 180 000 students. Assuming a course of between four and five years, this would represent a participation rate of between 7 and 8%. With a moderate rate of increase, and a fall in the drop-out rate (thanks to an improved average grant), a rate of 10% might be achieved by the end of the second phase. At the same time, there will be consolidation in Erasmus students' status (guaranteed administrative supervision, with or without a grant).

For both school and university teaching, the use of the new technologies will enable the programme to reach a critical mass of the target population in all the 15 Member States.

6.5. Main characteristics and grounds for the various programme actions

ACTION 1: SCHOOL EDUCATION (*Comenius*)

This was a new instrument under Socrates I, involving all types of establishment: pre-school, primary and secondary. Apart from the sheer scale of the challenge (see 6.4), one of the problems is the lack of any real tradition of international cooperation among such establishments.

Interim evaluation shows that the Action has taken root strongly and deserves to be continued. To this end, and in response to the rationalisation suggested by the interim evaluation of Socrates I, the new Comenius Action will incorporate elements from the old "Lingua" Action applying to the school sector.

Action 1.1: School partnerships

Bringing together a number of establishments from at least three Member States, the eligible activities are concerned mainly with involving pupils closely in the cooperation arrangements through the use of new technologies and new means of communication, accompanied by teacher exchange schemes and visits by headmasters, with pupil mobility being restricted to a few specified situations.

As unit costs are very low, the Action offers a high cost-effectiveness ratio and a lasting effect given the scale of the target population, with future generations of citizens having the chance to become acquainted with the process of building Europe.

There will also be specific partnerships covering the educational needs of the children of migrant workers, Gypsies, Travellers and itinerant workers.

Action 1.2: Educational staff in schools

This Action has enormous multiplier potential, and is targeted in the first instance at professionals responsible for initial training and in-service training of educational staff. The practical arrangements seek to add a European dimension to training, to transfer positive experiences and to create teaching material, with potential for substantial economies of scale. One important aspect concerns the training of language teachers and teachers of disadvantaged persons.

Having institutions from different countries involved in preparing courses, and with the participation of teachers in transnational courses, there is a very clear added value here compared with nationally organised training activities.

ACTION 2: HIGHER EDUCATION (Erasmus)

Action 2.1: European university cooperation

Erasmus activities have been rigorously and continuously evaluated, and the repercussions are multiple. Universities achieve higher standards of teaching through shared expertise and experience.

The basic instrument underlying this Action is the *institutional contract*, which was introduced for the first time in 1997-98. Evaluation has shown very clearly that the underlying philosophy of making the institutions responsible effectively forces universities to adopt a proper strategy on European cooperation. Institutional contracts cover the following activities:

- *joint curriculum development*: European-scale courses designed for all students, masters-type study programmes (in response to targeted sectoral needs, in the absence of such courses hitherto in Europe); European modules; integrated courses (specific training accompanied by language learning);
- *intensive programmes*: exchanges of ideas and experiences, and development of shared teaching materials;
- support for contacts between universities to ensure optimum quality of the *organisational framework for student and teacher mobility schemes*;
- *European Credit Transfer System - ECTS*: an evaluation of the pilot phase has shown the scheme's potential for facilitating and boosting the quality of student exchange arrangements.

By means of *Thematic Networks*, the Community not only supports cooperation between faculties, but also encourages longer-term reflection on the future of particular disciplines.

Action 2.2: Student and teacher mobility

With their Erasmus experience, graduates find it easier to get work and are more likely to be recruited to jobs requiring international knowledge and experience. The need to manage Erasmus mobility has had considerable effects on the professionalism of the departments working on mobility schemes within universities.

Regarding *teacher mobility* (management of this aspect will be decentralised in the second phase of the programme), the cost-efficiency ratio is a double one based on improved curriculum quality and methodologies, and the incorporation of a European experience in the lives of students who cannot benefit themselves from a mobility scheme.

ACTION 3: OTHER EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS (Grundtvig)

This new Action addresses population groups other than school or university populations in the conventional sense of the term.

Under Action 3.1, which uses new educational approaches (e.g. multimedia, specially adapted teaching material, development of accreditation/validation/certification of skills) aid will be available to people who have dropped out of the school system without acquiring an adequate basis of education or who would like to get back into the system. The point is to make contact between, and compare, the approaches adopted in the 15 Member States.

Action 3.2 concerns adult education, and has been one of the main fields of innovation in the Socrates programme. The aim is to strengthen the European dimension in all adult education sectors - general, cultural and social.

ACTION 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LANGUAGES (Lingua)

The point of this Action is to boost the recognition of the importance of languages in a Community context and to promote cooperation in the production of teaching material and methods and means of verifying newly acquired skills, particularly for the less used and less widely taught languages.

ACTION 5: EDUCATION AND MULTIMEDIA (Atlas)

This Action serves to support transnational partnerships between organisations involved in distance teaching or in the use of new information and communication technologies, particularly educational multimedia. As confirmed by the report of the Task Force on "Educational and Multimedia Software", Community action is designed to make up Europe's quantitative and qualitative shortfall in the design and production of teaching support media. The experience of Socrates I has shown clearly that we are on course for generating a significant increase in the volume and quality of European cooperation in this field, more especially by facilitating cooperation between a wide range of "players" who have little previous tradition or experience of partnerships at European level.

ACTION 6: OBSERVATION AND INNOVATION

Action 6.1 covers the exchange of information and experience by reference to matters of common interest concerning education policy:

- *analyses, exchanges of experts and pilot projects in fields such as education quality assurance* relate to key policy aspects, of a clearly European dimension, identified in close conjunction with the Council;
- *the Eurydice network* supplies comparative data on the development of education systems and policies. The network is highly productive in relation to cost, as is evidenced by the evaluation of the first two years of Socrates;
- regarding *Arion study visits*, the feedback from thousands of reports and contact meetings with local organisers, national agencies and the participants themselves has shown that such visits give experts and decision-makers a unique opportunity to discuss their concerns on a multilateral basis. Lasting contacts and networking arrangements are set

up between persons occupying key positions in education in the participating countries;

- under the *National Academic Recognition Information Centre Network (NARIC)*, the Commission is responsible for the networking arrangements, generating enormous benefits at European level at minimum cost.

Apart from the cooperation activities provided for in the various Actions covering specific education sectors, the Community will provide support, under Action 6.2, for targeted innovation transnational projects affecting one or more education sectors, with the priority themes being subject to regular review. More particularly, the Action will seek to support projects addressing a number of educational sectors in an integrated way - i.e. the transversal dimension required in the context of lifelong learning, the absence of which has often been noted in the interim evaluation.

ACTION 7: JOINT ACTIONS

This new Action comprises two elements requiring Community support:

- integrated projects aimed at promoting lifelong learning by creating closer links between education, vocational training and youth, by reference to common themes;
- the creation of "European knowledge centres" to promote contact and interaction between the players in the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes, with a view to creating synergy, and promoting lifelong learning at regional and local levels.

ACTION 8: ACCOMPANYING MEASURES

This is by its very nature a varied Action, pursuing the following aims:

- to disseminate the results of projects and activities run with the support of this programme or its previous phase;
- to make target groups aware of the benefits of European cooperation;
- to promote the training of persons involved in running European cooperation projects;
- to encourage transnational activities run by associations and other non-governmental organisations, acting as a major go-between with the educational community;
- to organise the necessary monitoring and evaluation activities;
- to finance studies, meetings of experts, conferences, information and publications required for the programme's implementation;
- to support the activities of the Member States' integrated management structures;

- to organise effective technical assistance facilities at Community level. For the purposes of the Socrates programme (together with the Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes), the Commission will secure the help of a joint technical assistance office. The requisite help will be of an administrative nature, and will be as follows:
 - assistance in implementing the necessary programme logistics (e.g. computer back-up, production and circulation of vade-mecums and applicants' guides;
 - assistance in receiving, examining, processing and assessing some of the applications for funding submitted to the Commission in the framework of the centralised procedure;
 - preparation of financial agreements for some of the applications; projects will be selected by the Commission, and the agreements will be signed by the Commission;
 - making of payments and issue of recovery orders.

The use of technical assistance facilities is justified by the fact that these are "mass" programmes requiring a large number of standardised transactions covering, in most cases, relatively minor amounts of money. The office will do its work under the Commission's guidance, and the procedure will not require the delegation of any public service tasks.

The contribution made by the Socrates programme to the office's annual operating costs will not exceed 3% of the amount set aside annually for Socrates. The contract with the office will include clauses on sound practice to obviate any conflicts of interest, lay down what is deemed to be incompatible, and impose confidentiality terms.

6.6. Changes vis-à-vis the first phase of the programme

In the light of experience and evaluation of the first phase of the programme, a number of changes have been introduced, viz.:

- amalgamation of the measures concerned with the initial training and continuing training of school staff under a single Action;
- new Action for "other educational pathways", including adult education;
- Lingua activities for schools now included in Comenius;
- coordinated educational observation arrangements, bringing together all activities concerning the promotion of information and experience exchange, including the Eurydice network;
- targeted innovation projects: flexible handling of new needs;
- European networks for the various programme Actions;

- recognition of the important role that the regions and other territorial bodies could play as a meeting point for beneficiaries, more especially by encouraging the creation of "European knowledge centres";
- enhanced cooperation with programmes in the field of vocational training and youth.

Educational establishments will be encouraged to adopt strategic approaches to cooperation at European level. It will thus be possible for universities to include in their institutional contracts all projects which they coordinate within the various aspects of the programme. In the school sector, the concept of a "Plan for inter-school cooperation in Europe" will encourage each school to adopt a consolidated approach to its participation in cooperation activities.

6.7. Measures

6.7.1. Types of measure selected

The specific objectives (cf. 6.3) will be pursued by means of the actions and types of Community measures specified in Article 3 of the Decision and set out in detail in the Annex.

6.7.2. Coordination with other relevant actions at Community and national levels

The Commission will, in cooperation with the Member States, be responsible for the overall consistency with other Community policies and activities, pursuant to Article 9 of the Decision.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1. Method of calculating the cost

7.1.1. General context

During the first phase, the programme was faced with major budget shortfalls, requiring a new co-decision midway through the programme.

The programme can only have the desired impact if it is given adequate financial resources to reach a critical mass of the target groups. Equally, the average amount of aid must not fall below the minimum threshold required to ensure that the grant is effective and to maintain the principle of equal opportunities as set out in the Decision.

7.1.2. *Method of calculation*

The method of calculation is based, firstly, on the amount judged appropriate for the various types of activity, as a function of their specific characteristics and bearing in mind, where the measures were already included in the first phase of the programme, of experience from this first phase, and, secondly, on the number of projects/persons constituting a critical mass for each of the Actions (see 6.4). Account also has to be taken of the need to renew support for an appropriate period, not exceeding three years in total in general, and to support a sufficient number of new projects to guarantee the programme's innovative effect. The approximate number of beneficiaries and the average amounts which are likely to be granted under the main Actions in 2000 are as follows.

| ACTION 1 - COMENIUS | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Actions | | Number | Average amounts (ECU) | Total |
| Action 1.1 - Partnerships | | | | 40.000.000 |
| Basic activities | | | | |
| - participating schools | | 5 800 | 2 200 | 12 760 000 |
| - coordinating schools | | 2 900 | 3 300 | 9 570 000 |
| Mobility (including preparatory visits) | | | | |
| - staff | 1 per school | 8 700 | 500 | 4 350 000 |
| - pupils | 20 pupils + 2 accompanying teachers | 1 800 | 7 000 | 12 600 000 |
| Networks of partnerships | | 15 | 48 000 | 720 000 |
| Action 1.2 -School educational staff | | | | 20 000 000 |
| Partnerships/projects | | 150 | 35 000 | 5 250 000 |
| Mobility | | | | |
| - initial traineeships | | 3 000 | 700 | 2 100 000 |
| - continuing traineeships | | 9 000 | 1 000 | 9 000 000 |
| - assistantships | | 800 | 4 200 | 3 360 000 |
| Networks | Sub-networks of the training network | 6 | 48 000 | 290 000 |
| Total | | | | 60 000 000 |
| ACTION 2 - ERASMUS | | | | |
| Action 2.1 - European university cooperation | | | | 24 000 000 |
| Institutional contracts | | 1 655 | 12 570 | 20 800 000 |
| Thematic networks | | 40 | 80 000 | 3 200 000 |
| Action 2.2 - Student and teacher mobility | | | | 94 000 000 |
| Students | 180 000 x 6.75 months per student | 1 215 000 months | ECU 70/month | 85 000 000 |
| Teachers | | 30 000 | 300 | 9 000 000 |
| Total | | | | 118 000 000 |

| ACTION 3 - GRUNDTVIG | | | | |
|--|--|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Actions | | Number | Average amounts (ECU) | Total |
| Action 3.1 - Other educational pathways | | | | 4 000 000 |
| Projects | | 15 | 250 000 | 3 750 000 |
| Project networking | | | | 250 000 |
| Action 3.2 - Adult education | | | | 6 000 000 |
| Projects | | 70 | 80 000 | 5 600 000 |
| Project networking | | | | 200 000 |
| Preparatory visits | | | | 200 000 |
| Total | | | | 10 000 000 |
| ACTION 4 - LINGUA | | | | |
| Projects | Miscellaneous activities | 40 | 95 000 | 3 800 000 |
| Curricula and validation | innovations, awareness-raising measures, utilisation and networking of resource centres etc. | | | 1 700 000 |
| Total | | | | 5 500 000 |
| ACTION 5 - ATLAS | | | | |
| Projects | | 70 | 103 000 | 7 200 000 |
| Networking | | | | 100 000 |
| Preparatory visits | | | | 200 000 |
| Total | | | | 7 500 000 |

| ACTION 6 - OBSERVATION AND INNOVATION | | | | |
|--|---|-------|--------|-------------------|
| Action 6.1 - Observation | | | | 8 000 000 |
| Transnational activities | comparative analyses, study visits, conferences, exchanges of experts, pilot projects | 22 | 90 000 | 1 980 000 |
| Eurydice | European Unit and national units | | | 4 100 000 |
| Arion | | 1 380 | 1 100 | 1 520 000 |
| Networking of centres specialising in the analysis of educational systems | | | | 100 000 |
| Naric | | 15 | 20 000 | 300 000 |
| Action 6.2 - New innovative initiatives | | | | 3 000 000 |
| Total | | | | 11 000 000 |

| ACTION 7 - JOINT ACTIONS | | | | |
|---|--|--------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Actions | | Number | Average amounts | Total |
| Joint projects Education - Training - Youth | | | | |
| European knowledge centres | | | | |
| Total | | | | |
| ACTION 8 - ACCOMPANYING MEASURES | | | | |
| Awareness-relating activities and support for associations and NGOs | | 150 | 12 500 | 1 900 000 |
| Dissemination and exploitation of results | | 40 | 30 000 | 1 200 000 |
| Dissemination of information on the programme | | | | |
| - Community level | | | | 1 500 000 |
| - Member States | | 15 | 80 000 | 1 200 000 |
| Technical assistance | | | | 5 700 000 |
| Integrated national structures | | 15 | 100 000 | 1 500 000 |
| Total | | | | 13 000 000 |

7.2. Breakdown by Action elements (in million ECU)

| ACTION | | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | TOTAL |
|-----------------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| ACTION 1 | School education (Comenius) | 60 | 68 | 75 | 86 | 90 | 379 |
| Action 1.1: | School partnerships | 40 | 46 | 50 | 60 | 62 | 258 |
| Action 1.2: | Education staff | 20 | 22 | 25 | 26 | 28 | 121 |
| ACTION 2 | Higher education (Erasmus) | 118 | 128 | 139 | 158 | 170 | 713 |
| Action 2.1: | European university cooperation | 24 | 26 | 33 | 44 | 45 | 172 |
| Action 2.2: | Student and teacher mobility | 94 | 102 | 106 | 114 | 125 | 541 |
| ACTION 3 | Other educational pathways | 10 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 68 |
| Action 3.1: | New educational approaches | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 30 |
| Action 3.2: | Adult education | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 38 |
| ACTION 4 | Language learning (Lingua) | 5.5 | 6 | 6.5 | 9 | 10 | 37 |
| ACTION 5 | Education and multimedia (Atlas) | 7.5 | 8 | 8.5 | 10 | 11 | 45 |
| ACTION 6 | Observation and innovation | 11 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 17 | 73 |
| Action 6.1 | Observation | 8 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 53 |
| Action 6.2 | Innovation | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 20 |
| ACTION 7 | Joint Actions | | | | | | |
| ACTION 8 | Accompanying measures | 13 | 15 | 17 | 20 | 20 | 85 |
| Total | | 225 | 250 | 275 | 315 | 335 | 1 400 |

7.3. Schedule of commitment appropriations/payment appropriations

Overall budget for the full duration of the second phase of the programme (principal reference): ECU 1 400 million.

Period of application: 2000-2004 (in million ECU)

| CA in million ECU | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | Total |
| Commitment appropriations | 225.0 | 250.0 | 275.0 | 315.0 | 335.0 | 1 400.0 |
| Payment appropriations | | | | | | |
| 2000 | 198.8 | | | | | 198.8 |
| 2001 | 26.2 | 220.4 | | | | 246.6 |
| 2002 | | 29.6 | 241.2 | | | 270.8 |
| 2003 | | | 33.8 | 274.8 | | 308.6 |
| 2004 | | | | 40.2 | 293.0 | 333.2 |
| 2005 | | | | | 42.0 | 42.0 |
| Total | 225.0 | 250.0 | 275.0 | 315.0 | 335.0 | 1 400.0 |

8. FRAUD PREVENTION MEASURES

All contracts, agreements and legal undertakings entered into by the Commission and the beneficiaries provide for first-degree and second-degree in situ checks to be carried out (i.e. on the premises of the direct beneficiary of a Community grant or on the premises of the second-degree beneficiary, where an activity is managed decentrally) by the Commission and the Court of Auditors, and bestow the power to require evidence of any expenditure made under such contracts, agreements and legal undertakings for a period of five years following the end of the contractual period. Beneficiaries are subject to reporting and financial accounting obligations, and these are analysed from the point of view of content and eligibility of expenditure, bearing in mind the purpose of the Community funding, and taking account of contractual obligations and of the principles of economy and sound financial management.

Appended to the financial agreements is information of an administrative and financial nature, designed to specify the kind of expenditure which is eligible under such agreements. Where appropriate, Community coverage of certain cost elements will be limited to items which are real, identifiable and verifiable in the beneficiary's book-keeping arrangements, so as to facilitate checking and auditing (and evaluation for selection purposes) of projects in receipt of funding.

Agreements entered into between the Commission and the designated organisations for managing decentralised activities specify the minimum clauses which such organisations must insert into agreements with the end beneficiaries, so as to provide the greatest possible protection of the interests both of the end beneficiaries

and of the Community. These organisations are invited to formulate and apply an audit policy vis-à-vis the end beneficiaries.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

9.1. Monitoring

Ongoing programme monitoring is based on the information available directly to the Commission (i.e. data from the projects receiving support under the centralised actions) and on the information submitted by the national structures (for decentralised actions). The beneficiaries and the national management structures are required to submit annual final activity and financial reports and, where appropriate, interim reports. In addition, the Commission regularly convenes monitoring meetings with the national structures and with the project coordinators. With a view to strengthening the monitoring arrangements and facilitating the flow of information and feedback on the various parts of the programme, and especially those which are managed decentrally, new computerised tools have been developed: *SocLink*, which facilitates unified gathering and coding of data and information on projects throughout the Member States, and *Network for Education, Training and Youth (NETY)*, a network designed to improve communication between the national management structures, the Commission and the technical assistance office.

9.2. Selected performance indicators

For purposes of illustration, the performance indicators may include some of those set out below. The data required for using the quantitative indicators will be gathered regularly by way of the application forms and from the interim and financial reports submitted by the beneficiaries and the national management structures (see 9.1).

9.2.1. Output indicators

9.2.1.1. Quantitative indicators

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <i>Action 1.1:</i> | - | number of partnerships and schools participating in the school partnership arrangements |
| | - | number and categories of persons taking part in exchanges, traineeships and study visits |
| <i>Action 1.2:</i> | - | number of partnerships and participating organisations |
| | - | number of persons on traineeships and courses |
| <i>Action 2.1:</i> | - | number of faculties, students and teachers involved |
| | - | number of curricula, products and intensive programmes organised |

- number of universities and departments using the ECTS system
- Action 2.2*
 - number of student grant-holders and students on Erasmus mobility without a grant
 - average amount of the student grant
 - number and average amount of support allocated to mobility teachers
- Action 3.1:*
 - number of new educational approaches developed
- Action 3.2:*
 - number of projects, participating organisations and results generated
- Action 4:*
 - number of projects, participating organisations and products developed
 - number of networked resource centres
- Action 5:*
 - number of projects, participating organisations and results generated
- Action 6:*
 - number of projects run and products generated on education policy priority themes
 - number of establishments participating in the European network of analysis centres
 - number of beneficiaries of Arion study visits
 - number of products arising from the Eurydice network
 - number of cases of academic recognition facilitated by the Naric network
 - number of targeted innovation projects, number of participating organisations and number of results generated
- Action 7:*
 - number of projects and participating organisations from the education sector and results generated
 - number of European centres created and number of participating educational organisations
- Action 8:*
 - number of educational associations in receipt of support
 - number of other awareness-raising activities run

- scale of dissemination activities

9.2.1.2. Qualitative indicators

- Action 1.1:*
 - nature and quality of results emanating from European partnerships
 - nature and relevance of mobility activities
- Action 1.2:*
 - quality and relevance of results generated by partnerships
- Action 2.1:*
 - level of satisfaction of establishments
 - degree of penetration of European cooperation in the establishment
 - quality and relevance of intensive programmes, modules and curricula
 - quality of ECTS arrangements
- Action 2.2:*
 - level of satisfaction of participating students and teachers
 - degree of integration of teachers in the host establishment
- Action 3.1:*
 - quality and relevance of new educational approaches in receipt of support
- Action 3.2:*
 - quality and relevance of results emanating from the projects
- Action 4:*
 - quality and relevance of products developed by the projects
 - nature and intensity of cooperation between resource centres
- Action 5:*
 - quality and relevance of results of projects
- Action 6.1:*
 - quality and relevance of activities in receipt of support
 - relevance and validity of data and analyses supplied by Eurydice
 - relevance of themes and quality of dissemination of the results of Arion visits
- Action 6.2:*
 - quality and relevance of the results of projects

- Action 7:*
- quality and relevance of the results of projects
 - quality and relevance of activities of the European knowledge centres
- Action 8:*
- relevance and scale of information and awareness-raising activities
 - effectiveness of activities run by the national structures
 - relevance and quality of activities run by associations
 - effectiveness of dissemination activities

Indicators affecting all actions

- consideration of the needs of disabled teachers and learners
- consideration of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men
- degree of satisfaction with the implementation of actions
- degree of satisfaction with amounts granted

9.2.2. Impact indicators

- Action 1.1:*
- changes within schools (European dimension in the curriculum and in school life)
 - enhancement of skills and motivation to learn a language
 - enhancement of educational supply to the children of migrant and itinerant workers, Gypsies and Travellers
- Action 1.2:*
- enhancement of skills of school education staff
 - integration of training schemes in receipt of support in the national system
- Action 2.1:*
- enhancement of the quality of teaching resulting from institutional contracts
 - availability and quality of services offered by institutions
- Action 2.2:*
- effects imputable to student mobility (e.g. academic aspects, employability)
 - enhancement of the quality of teaching due to teacher mobility

- Action 3.1:* - degree of real or foreseeable use of new educational approaches
- Action 3.2:* - enhancement of the quality and strengthening of the European dimension in adult education
- Action 4:* - impact on the innovation and diversification of language learning
- Action 5:* - diversified use of approaches based on open and distance learning
- consideration of pedagogical needs in the multimedia
 - teacher awareness of the new technologies
 - recognition of qualifications obtained by open and distance learning
- Action 6:* - use of the information and experience exchange arrangements in the evolution of educational systems
- enhancement of academic recognition due to the Naric network
 - use of the results of targeted innovation projects
- Action 7:* - use of the results of projects to strengthen cooperation between education, vocational training and the youth sector
- enhanced interactivity between education, vocational training and youth under the influence of the European centres
- Action 8:* - interest shown by the educational community in European cooperation
- use of the results of the programme attributable to dissemination measures
 - performance of the integrated management structures
 - enhancement of activities run by associations

9.3. Selected spin-off and multiplier effects expected

Over and above its primary objectives, the programme is of relevance to the process of enlargement of the European Union to take in the new applicant countries.

By encouraging educational establishments to adopt strategies, administrative structures and staff trained in transnational cooperation, the programme fosters the development of external cooperation on the part of the Community in general.

9.4. Main factors of uncertainty which could affect the specific results of the action

Given the subsidiarity background to the programme, it will – if it is to attain its objectives fully – need to receive substantial support from points outside the jurisdiction of the Community instances, in terms of:

- co-financing by Member States' public and private instances. The economic situation will therefore have an effect on the way the programme is put into effect;
- the need on the part of players in the programme to operate in a propitious administrative and judicial environment. The competent authorities in the Member States are called upon to take the necessary measures in this regard, pursuant to the principles set out in the Decision.

9.5. Evaluation arrangements

Pursuant to Article 12 of the Decision, the Commission will regularly monitor the programme in cooperation with the Member States with a view to making changes where necessary.

The interim evaluation will be based on contributions to be submitted by the Member States by 31 December 2002, and on an external evaluation. It will examine the initial results, the relevance of the objectives, and the initial impact, as well as taking a look at the equal opportunities aspect. It will take a look at how the programme has been put into effect and at its complementarity with other Community action. On the basis of the Member States' contributions and the external evaluation, the Commission will draw up an interim evaluation report by 30 June 2003 and – along similar lines – an ex-post evaluation report by 31 December 2005.

The Commission is required to present to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions:

- by 30 June 2003: the interim evaluation report on the implementation of the present programme;
- by 31 December 2005: the ex-post evaluation report.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE

The real allocation of the administrative resources needed will depend on the Commission's annual decision on the allocation of resources, considering in particular the additional staffing and financial levels agreed by the budget authority.

10.1. Effect on the number of jobs

| Type of job | | Staff to be allocated to management functions | | Of which | | Duration |
|-------------------------------|---|---|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| | | permanent jobs | Temporary jobs | by making use of existing resources within the DG or department concerned | by recourse to additional resources | |
| Officials or temporary agents | A | 17 | 1 | 18 | | |
| | B | 6 | | 6 | | |
| | C | 10 | | 10 | | |
| Other resources (DNE - A7003) | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| Total | | 36 | | 36 | | 2000-2004 |

10.2. Overall financial impact of human resources

(ecus)

| | Amount | Method of calculation |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Officials ²⁰ | 17 820 000 | 108 000 x 33 man/years x 5 years |
| Temporary agents | 540 000 | 108 000 x 1 man/year x 5 years |
| Other resources (DNE - A7003) | 370 000 | 2 DNE = 2 x 37 000 x 5 years |
| Total | 18 730 000 | |

²⁰ By using existing resources allocated to management functions (calculation based on A-1, A-2, A-4, A-5 and A-7) - annual cost.

10.3. Financial impact of other operational expenditure resulting from the action

(ecus)

| Budget heading (Number and title) | Amount | Method of calculation |
|---|------------------|---|
| A-7010 Mission expenses | 975 000 | 15 Member States x 20 missions x ECU 650/mission = ECU 195 000x 5 years See 1 below |
| A-7030 Cost of meetings | 2 583 750 | (2 meetings x 4 participants x 15 Member States x ECU 650) + (30 meetings x 1.5 participants x 15 Member States x ECU 650) x 5 years See 2 below |
| A-7031 Cost of meetings of committees whose consultation is mandatory | 341 250 | 3 + (2x2) meetings x 1 participant x 15 Member States x ECU 650 x 5 years See 3 below |
| Total | 3 900 000 | |

The appropriations will be found in DG XXII's existing financial envelope.

1. Based on the number of missions considered necessary under the current programme and bearing in mind the fact that there will be more recourse to decentralised management arrangements requiring more in situ monitoring, the theoretical estimate of some 20 days missions per Member State per year would seem to constitute a minimum.
2. Covering the following expenses: two meetings per year of the integrated management structures of the programme to cover horizontal questions relating to all the aspects of the programme, involving four participants per Member State; thirty or so meetings per year (covering the eight programme Actions) of the integrated management structures relating to specific problems, involving one or two participants per Member State.
3. Covering the following expenses: three meetings per year of the programme committee, requiring one representative per Member State; two meetings per year of each of the two sub-committees, involving one representative per Member State.

SME IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impact of the proposal on the business community, with particular emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision establishing the second phase of the Community education programme "Socrates"

Document reference number

xxx

The proposal

1. *In the light of the principle of subsidiarity, why is Community legislation necessary in this field and what are its main objectives?*

The proposal for a Decision presented by the Commission follows on from the Commission's Communication "Towards a Europe of knowledge" (COM(97) 563 final), backed up by the provisions of Articles 126 and 127 of the Treaty aimed at promoting European cooperation in the fields of education, youth and vocational training. It builds on the experience gained from the first phase of the programme, as specified in the Commission's report on the first two years of operation (COM(97) 99 final). Through greater European-level cooperation between the different parties involved in the field of education, the aim is to create a European education area fostering the development of lifelong learning.

The creation of this European area, within which lifelong education and training should flourish, entails:

- giving European citizens access to the entire spectrum of Europe's education resources, both formal and informal, in support of and as a complement to the policies pursued in the Member States;
- innovation in these resources, through the development of new approaches based on the pooling of experience in different countries;
- wide dissemination of good practice in education, training and active individual participation, and better mutual awareness of systems and arrangements.

In accordance with Article 126 of the Treaty, the Socrates programme supports and supplements the action taken by and within the Member States, while fully respecting their responsibility for the content of teaching and organisation of education systems, and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

The operational dimension of the proposal (in particular, the six transnational measures described in Article 3 and in the Annex to the Decision) ties in with the relevant provisions of the Treaty and with the implementing powers thereby conferred on the Commission.

The programme is geared chiefly to raising the quality of education by reinforcing the European dimension of education at every level; promoting cooperation in all sectors and at every level in the field of education; developing exchanges of information and experience, and encouraging innovation in the field of education within the Community. The transnational nature of the programme, clearly brought out by these objectives, ensures strong overall added value as a result of the activity at Community level. All the Actions forming part of the programme are devised in such a way as to engender - mainly through multilateral cooperation, transnational mobility and European networking - effects which would not be achievable through action taken either by the Member States on their own or on the basis of bilateral cooperation.

2. Who will be affected by the proposal?

The Commission's proposal is aimed at a large number of target groups, with the primary focus on those involved chiefly in the education field. In line with the conditions and implementing procedures set out in the Annex to the Decision, the programme focuses in particular on:

- a) all pupils, students and adult learners;
- b) all categories of teaching staff;
- c) all types of educational establishment;
- d) individuals and bodies responsible for education systems and policies at local, regional and national level within the Member States.

Participation in, or active association with, various actions of the programme is open also to public or private bodies cooperating with educational establishments in pursuit of the programme's objectives, including:

- local and regional authorities;
- associated bodies active in the education field, including parents' associations;
- enterprises, groups of enterprises, professional organisations and chambers of commerce and industry;
- organisations representing the social partners at all levels;
- research centres and bodies.

From the business point of view, the programme makes no distinction in terms of a company's size. SMEs are therefore placed on the same footing as large companies and - in view of the nature of the programme's actions (see below) - are expected to participate fully, interacting closely with the educational establishments in their respective regions. Such involvement on the part of SMEs will be all the more significant, given the strategic importance of the European education area in conjunction with the development of a coordinated strategy for employment (as decided by the Luxembourg European Council in November 1997) and enterprise policy, with SMEs being the main players.

3. *What measures will companies be required to take in order to comply with the proposal?*

Companies and/or professional organisations representing them at different levels (including European level) can participate in various actions under the programme, and their active involvement is welcomed. The main actions are as follows:

- school partnerships (Action 1.1): short-term company placements for school teachers, with wide-ranging contacts between schools and businesses geared to familiarising teachers and pupils with the realities of the world of work in another Member State;
- cooperation by companies within higher-education thematic networks, aimed mainly at fostering innovation and making departments and faculties more aware of economic requirements (Action 2);
- involvement of companies in transnational activities to develop university curricula, especially in the areas characterised by lack of suitably qualified human resources in Europe (Action 2.1);
- trainee placements for students, insofar as such placements form an integral part of their studies and are conducted in cooperation with a university in the host country (Action 2.2);
- participation by companies in projects targeting people who left the education system without adequate basic qualifications (Action 3.1);
- participation by companies in innovative pilot projects supported jointly by the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci (vocational training) and Youth programmes (Action 7);
- collaboration between companies and the other partners within “European knowledge centres” bringing together participants in the three programmes (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth) at regional and local level (Action 7);
- participation, within various actions, by types of company themselves operating in the education field, such as publishing houses or businesses producing educational software.

SMEs (and their representative organisations) will feature prominently among the companies thus participating in the programme.

The actions implemented in the field by means of partnerships will greatly encourage companies to comply with the general common principles of quality underlying the programme, as regards objectives and methods of implementation. This applies especially to the procedures for educational follow-up and supervision of trainees, and evaluation of the products and methods deriving from the partnerships.

4. *What economic effects is the proposal likely to have?*

(a) on employment

The development of knowledge and skills on a lifelong basis, and in particular the capacity to operate in a European context (command of other languages, inter-cultural awareness, direct experience of other Member States, etc.), is highly likely to enhance the employability of the people concerned, thus supporting the Community and national measures geared to maintaining and creating employment, with particular emphasis on the Community Guidelines and the National Action Plans.

(b) on the competitiveness of businesses

The competitiveness of businesses stems as much from the knowledge and skills mobilised by workers as from the methods of work organisation and production. Seen from a longer-term perspective, the Socrates programme contributes appreciably towards improving the quality of human resources, thereby fostering innovation and, indirectly, the competitiveness of businesses and of the Community as a whole.

5. *Does the proposal contain measures to take account of the specific situation of small and medium-sized enterprises (reduced or different requirements, etc.)?*

Not applicable (see para. 2 above).

Consultation

6. *Organisations which have been consulted about the proposal and summary of their main viewpoints*

The Commission's Communication "Towards a Europe of knowledge" (see above) has been discussed within the Economic and Social Committee. The social partners have been consulted at European level in regard to their experience with the first phase of the programme and their wishes for the second phase. They have stressed the importance which they attach to the programme, particularly as an instrument for upgrading the quality of human resources in terms of European skills.

It should be noted that, as for the first phase of the programme, the proposal for a Decision establishing the second phase of Socrates provides for compulsory regular consultation of the social partners' representatives at Community level.

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