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Proposal for a

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION

establishing the Community action programme "SOCRATES"

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

INTRODUCTION

1. Articles 126 and 127 of the Maastricht Treaty establish a general objective to contribute to the development of quality education and training.
2. As stated in the working paper on guidelines which the Commission adopted on 5 May 1993¹, the essential aim of Community action on education and training is therefore to enable all European citizens to reach their full potential and display initiative and creativity so that they can participate fully in society and in the building of Europe. This objective is based on the gradual establishment of an open European area for education and training.
3. It is now widely recognised that the development of human potential is a precondition for attaining the economic, social and quality of life objectives the Community has set. The quality of human resources and the continuous adaptation of the skills of the workforce are a comparative advantage for Europe when it comes to international competition. They are also a key factor in combatting social exclusion and unemployment. Broadening out access to education and training should contribute to better social cohesion between the Member States and equality of opportunities between people. All of which contributes to building up a European culture which is forward- and outward-looking, to putting flesh on the bones of European identity and citizenship, particularly among young people, and is a powerful factor in rallying citizens around the construction of Europe.
4. Education and training have new roles to play in the process of economic and social change which Europe now faces. This will mean deep-seated changes in the education and training systems of the Member States. This ever greater pace and scale of change gives rise to new needs for individuals to be able to gain access to lifelong education and training so that they can take part in society and remain competitive within the economy. The systems of education and training should therefore create a more flexible, more diversified approach in response to these needs.
5. The Commission's proposal to establish a programme of Community action "SOCRATES", is based on substantial discussion in various fora and, more particularly, in the European Parliament and the Education Council; in a series of bilateral talks organised by the Commission with the representatives of each of the Member States on the experience and evaluation of the two major Community programmes in the field of education, ERASMUS and LINGUA; the results from the various pilot projects undertaken in the area of cooperation in education; and the feedback from consultations held in each Member State to discuss the Memoranda of the Commission on higher education, on vocational training and

on open and distance learning, and on the Green Paper on the European dimension in education.

This proposal is intended to ensure the continuation of Community action already undertaken, particularly under the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes, and enable such action to rise to the challenges of the 1990s and guarantee rationalisation between the activities under ERASMUS and LINGUA as well as the other budget headings available for cooperation in education.

I. THE RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF COMMUNITY ACTION

Mutual political concerns

6. In education and training the Community's future policy must consolidate and build on the solid achievements of recent years in order to meet the new challenges faced by the Community and its Member States. In its White Paper on "growth, competitiveness and employment" which was submitted to, and received favourably by, the European Council of 10 - 11 December 1993, the Commission acknowledged that education and training policies should be among the areas used to support jobs and contribute to fighting effectively against unemployment. From experiences and successful innovations undertaken in the Member States, it is possible to see indications of a cultural change, affecting not only the reform of school systems but, increasingly, the emergence of a society which is more open to the teaching dimension: reform of the contents of teaching, concerned to increase knowhow without neglecting the skills of learning, initiative, communication, teamwork, identifying problems, overseeing quality and making critical assessment.

Cooperation at the Community level in all these areas will be beneficial to the Member States and the Community as a whole.

7. By publishing three discussion documents, a Memorandum on higher education², a Memorandum on open and distance learning³ and a Green Paper on the European dimension in education⁴, the Commission's aim was to stimulate the widest possible debate among all the players involved about the importance and scope of education policies at the level of the Member States and circumscribe the main thrusts of complementary and subsidiary Community action in this field.
8. The criticisms which emerged from this debate⁵ that the approach had been overly based on economic concerns should provide a platform for opening up the perspective and giving greater consideration to social factors. Arguments and

² COM (91) 349 final

³ COM (91) 388 final

⁴ COM (93) 457 final

⁵ The outlook for higher education in the European Community: Responses to the Memorandum. TFRH - Studies No 2 - 1993

proposals for action related to competitiveness and economic growth should be linked to the fundamental purpose of education - especially higher education - which is to contribute to the progress of knowledge through research, methodical training and in necessary specialist areas. This mission is to shape open, critical and creative spirits and direct them towards initiative, practical application and communication. It should strengthen the spirit of citizenship in a democratic and caring society based on Europe's cultural heritage.

Significant operational achievements

9. The various Community initiatives in the field of education are not all at the same stage of implementation; they were launched at different dates and, more to the point, were allocated different levels of financing. These two factors were duly taken into account by the Commission in a preliminary horizontal assessment of the programmes and the added value they represent⁶.
10. The programmes have all contributed, directly and indirectly, to encouraging contacts and exchanges between people in positions of responsibility across the Member States. The positive reception given to Community programmes shows the extent to which the Commission has succeeded in arousing substantial interest and an immense goodwill towards trans-European cooperation between the many institutions active in education and training. Much of this success is owed to the enthusiasm and commitment shown by education institutions, teaching staff, students and their families, and the political leaders in the Member States. Despite the comparatively small sums invested in these programmes, their impact as catalysts has been illustrated by the fact that additional funding has been made available by the various Member States, regions and teaching institutions concerned through which a substantial public has now been reached.
11. In the design and implementation of the two major programmes, ERASMUS and LINGUA, the catalytic effect of Community action was secured thanks to three main instruments:
 - a) use of transnational networks of institutions or people facing similar problems and difficulties, with a view to promoting a structured exchange of ideas and the dissemination of good practice;
 - b) active encouragement of teaching staff and students to acquire direct experience in another Member State through mobility and exchange and thus to foster a lasting cooperation between teaching institutions;
 - c) création of joint transnational projects between partners in different Member States, and relating to the organised transfer of innovatory approaches to educational problems in a European framework and the introduction of a European dimension into the contents of studies.

⁶ COM (93) 151 final

12. The cooperation potential afforded by the ERASMUS programme since 1987, and Action II of the LINGUA programme since 1990, has resulted in 2 200 inter-university cooperation programmes involving 1 300 higher education institutions and 14 000 partnerships providing the structures necessary for:
- the mobility of over 200 000 students and 15 000 teaching staff;
 - the implementation of 700 intensive programmes and 800 joint curricula.
 - 145 higher education institutions taking part in a pilot project to introduce the ECTS (European Community Course Credit Transfer System) to facilitate academic recognition of studies undertaken abroad;
 - study visits to other Member States of 20 000 teaching staff, administrators from higher education institutions or from NARICs (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) ;
 - the setting up of 100 associations of teaching staff and 30 students' associations thanks to the encouragement of the ERASMUS programme, spanning a broad range of subject areas and activities at European level.
13. Since its inception in 1990, the LINGUA programme has permitted the development of:
- 70 European cooperation programmes involving 280 continuing training institutions which have enabled 20 000 language teaching staff to take a continuing training course abroad;
 - exchanges of 80 000 young people under joint educational projects;
 - 240 projects involving 1 100 institutions in an endeavour to encourage learning of languages in the business world;
 - 80 projects involving 350 institutions to disseminate innovation in the learning of languages and 80 projects for the development of teaching material for the languages less widely used and taught.
14. The development of transnational pilot projects in the field of cooperation in education has yielded significant results in terms of experience, even though the scale of the projects is limited:
- creation of a network of 208 training institutions (RIF) to promote the European dimension in the training of teaching staff and their trainers;
 - 1 600 teaching staff have taken part since 1989 in exchanges designed to establish links between schools in order to develop activities to promote the European dimension in education;

40 school partnerships involving 160 schools have been set up to promote school cooperation;

6 000 education specialists have taken part since 1978 in study visits organised under the ARION initiative in specific priority areas designated by the Council or the Member States;

300 projects concerning schooling of the children of migrants, itinerant workers and gypsies;

200 projects in the area of new information technologies in education have allowed the exchange of information, practice and methodology.

15. Open and distance teaching is recognised as a stage towards the establishment of more flexible and effective systems of education, especially through taking account of the growing importance of more powerful and interactive technologies. Community education and training programmes⁷ have welcomed this development and give support to the broad move to innovate, for example, through the Community systems offering open and distance teaching or individual projects drawing on the new approaches of distance teaching. These programmes have been able to reinforce the work of networks created by the Community's open universities and have helped to bring about the establishment of new open universities in countries where such institutions have not existed up till now, such as in Portugal and Greece.
16. The compilation of a corpus of comparable data is an essential step in the improvement of exchanges of information and experience across the Member States. As a result of the Conclusions of the Council and Ministers of Education of 25 November 1991, which covered research and statistics in the field of education⁸, the services of the Commission, and in particular, EUROSTAT, undertook certain studies in conjunction with the competent authorities in the Member States and certain international organisations (OECD, UNESCO), notably on indicators and the collection of relevant statistics in areas of priority for cooperation in education.
17. The Council and the Ministers of Education have in recent years shown substantial interest in education and this is reflected in the adoption of a range of conclusions and resolutions which have enabled Member States and the Community to give consideration to certain categories of young people in need of special attention within the education system, such as children with disabilities, or to develop environmental education, health education, or the fight against drugs. Furthermore, these conclusions and resolutions have permitted the development of a number of pilot projects and several activities proposed under the present programme are

⁷ COM (93) 151 final

⁸ OJ C 321 of 12.12.91

based on the very positive results achieved by these pilot projects as these would now warrant a more structured approach.

18. Alongside the formal opinions which the European Parliament has delivered on the documents submitted by the Commission in the field of education (for example, the Memorandum on higher education), the Parliament has on its own initiative adopted a series of important resolutions:

- higher distance education
- the transition from education to working life;
- the eradication of illiteracy;
- the outlook for cooperation on education 1989-1992;
- the promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

The European Parliament has also played an active role as a budgetary authority by adopting annual budget increases for the education chapter and, at its own initiative, a number of new headings were introduced into the 1990 Community budget including intercultural education and "Europe at school".

Linkage with national actions

19. Assessing the linkages and impact of Community action relative to national action has become a question which is central to this first phase of the programmes. In addition to general considerations of subsidiarity, this linkage could be improved by putting greater emphasis on the procedures and infrastructures set up.

- The advisory committees which assist the Commission in implementing the programmes in conjunction with the national authorities and the representatives of the educational world have provided fora for discussing the impact of Community actions and their contribution to the management and direction of national policies. In certain programmes a number of Member States have, significantly, pursued these discussions in national fora, and the conferences organised at the time the above-mentioned memoranda were debated have increased the interest of the various players concerned with these aspects.
- The "bilateral meetings" organised for planning projects between the Commission and both national and education representatives have facilitated understanding of current trends and the degree of correspondence between transnational projects and national priorities.
- The compilation of regional statistics on the participation of the different regions in each Member State in activities pursued under the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes have also enabled the national authorities to identify the regions where national or Community efforts need to be stepped up.

II. A NEW CONTEXT

The competences established by the Treaty

20. The new Chapter 3 of the Treaty, introduced by the TEU and concerning "Education, vocational training and youth", gives the Community an important contributory role for the development of quality education and for the implementation of a vocational training policy in the Community.

The implementation of the Community programmes such as ERASMUS, LINGUA, COMETT, PETRA, have demonstrated that the opportunities for cooperation given to the institutions of education and training in the Member States by the Community are an important factor in the improvement of teaching quality.

According to the rulings of the Court of Justice, particularly as decisions in the cases of *Gravier*⁹, *Blaizot*¹⁰ and *Humbel*¹¹, higher education falls within the domain of vocational training and, as a result, the first two phases of the ERASMUS programme have been based on Article 128 of the EEC Treaty. The new Community competence in the field of education, which requires it to contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States, as already recognised by the judgement of the Court in the area of higher education, is now widened by the introduction in the Treaty of Article 126 which covers the full range of educational activities at all levels of teaching.

The text of Article 126 and 127 stipulates explicitly that Community action excludes harmonisation of legal and statutory provisions in the Member States and confirms their responsibility for the content of teaching or of training and the organisation of their own education and training systems.

The decision process envisaged under Article 126 is for the adoption of incentive measures by the Council and the Parliament under the "co-decision" procedure, whereas decisions are to be taken under Article 127 on the basis of the "cooperation" procedure. In both cases, the Council acts by qualified majority.

For the adoption of incentive measures planned under Article 126, the decision-making process also requires consultation with the Committee of Regions, a new body created by the Treaty on European Union. Given that the programme "SOCRATES" allows for considerable decentralisation, the Regions can thus make an effective contribution to the fulfilment of the programme's objectives.

⁹ decision of the Court of 13.2.1985 (case 293/83)

¹⁰ decision of the Court of 2.2.1988 (case 293/85)

¹¹ decision of

21. Given the range of activities included in the Community action programme "SOCRATES", and that they focus equally on education and training, especially at the level of higher education, the programme uses a dual legal base, namely Articles 126 and 127 of the Treaty. With this proposal, the existing Community legal order is retained, particularly with regard to higher education, while ensuring that all levels of education are covered in a single programme, thus permitting a genuine European dimension in all studies at all levels.

The link with other policies

22. The specific objectives of Community action in the field of education are directly linked with other areas of Community action, notably:
- the general objective of economic and social cohesion (Article 130A) as one of the fundamental objectives of the European Union means that all Community policies must take due account of this objective. The new rules of the Structural Funds take account of the role that education can play in the economic development of less-favoured regions (objective 1), provide for the consolidation and improvement of the systems of secondary and higher education as well as for improving research capability and technological development (Objectives 1, 2 and 5b). The structures thus financed by the Structural Funds will facilitate involvement of educational institutions of these regions in the cooperation activities encouraged under the Community action programme "SOCRATES";
 - the objective of reinforcing the scientific and technological base of industry in the Community through, amongst others, the promotion of high quality projects for research and development based in the universities (Article 130F and 130G), as well as the training and mobility of researchers and other personnel qualified in sciences and technology; the fourth R&D framework programme sets out to develop synergy between research and training in order to promote the mobility of researchers, the diffusion of research results and to introduce innovation into educational systems through a programme targetted at widening the impact of completed socio-economic research, especially research concerned with education and training;
 - the objective of encouraging cooperation between Member States in order to improve the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and histories of the European peoples (Article 128). The role of education in the spreading of cultural values and in furthering the process of European integration is indisputable. The humanist study tradition puts the individual, their interpersonal and social relations, and their relations with their environment at the centre of their studies and educational objectives.
 - the objective of encouraging operational synergy between the various activities of the Community action programme "SOCRATES" and other Community actions with an educational perspective, such as the action

programme on equality of opportunities for young girls and boys in the field of education, the third medium-term programme (1991-1995) for equality of opportunities between men and women, the third programme concerned with disabled people (HELIOS II 1993-1996), the Community programme concerning the environment and the resolution and conclusions of the Council on the development of health education in schools.

Complementarity between education and training

23. The new elements to do with vocational training policy and the inclusion in the Treaty of a specific article on education for the first time call for an integrated approach to education and training at Community level, even if the levels of competence remain different. The link-up between these two contexts is as important as the definition of the specific measures for each of them in order to develop the new policy concept of "life-long learning" as a prospect for the Community in conjunction with the construction of a European citizenship.
24. This complementarity of the two fields should be reinforced and given tangible expression in the arrangements and actions proposed. Operationally, Community-backed actions should strengthen cross-fertilisation of education and training arrangements through the practical projects of the institutions concerned. In this connection, coordinated activities could be undertaken on issues of mutual interest to the two fields such as language training, open and distance learning and training, guidance, life-long learning and the monitoring of professions and qualifications.
25. As regards the players involved, the universities are the central players in cooperation in the field of education, but they are also the key players in the development of continuing training, the transfer of technological innovations, for meeting the objectives of quality training and for cooperation with the business community. This complementarity should also be sought at other levels in the education systems, whether for the occupational and social integration of young people or the continuing training of adults.

Subsidiarity

26. The principle of subsidiarity on which Community action is based is a "common sense" principle and means that action at the Community level is only undertaken if it cannot be done by the Member States themselves or if, in the opinion of the Member States or for reasons of scale, such action can be better performed at the Community level.
27. The achievement of an open European area for education should provide a potent stimulus for promoting quality education and training. A major effort has been made in all the Member States to develop broad-based education, to open up access to higher education, to set up mechanisms and pathways for basic vocational training, to widen opportunities for continuing training and in encouraging open and distance teaching. The Community's action should make it

possible to enhance and sustain the quality objective seen from the point of view of the internal operation of the systems both as regards the training products and as regards the processes and methods used to achieve them.

28. The added value brought by Community action in promoting exchanges, encouraging dialogue and comparisons is shown in a better mutual knowledge of education systems and educational contents in the different Member States. The catalytic and stimulatory role of Community action is designed to encourage educational institutions to undertake certain activities on a voluntary basis and for a limited period of time, with a commitment from these institutions to pursue these activities insofar as they contribute to the European dimension in education. It should be noted that, further to the selection policy for projects under the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes and other pilot projects in the field of education, the opportunities for cooperation have been highlighted in those Member States who have had little experience in this area because of their language or geographical position (Greece, Portugal, Spain, Denmark).
29. Respect for the diversity of the education systems, the voluntary cooperation of the different players and the free choice of partners to undertake certain activities jointly, all guarantee the autonomy of institutions, particularly in higher education, and provide the impetus for developing the European dimension in education and for introducing improvements.
30. The promotion and dissemination of innovation is a major means for the attainment of the main objective of improving the quality of education. Enhanced and broader dissemination of technological innovations and new production systems is vital to the competitiveness of Europe. As the Community is comparatively behind in terms of the general level of qualifications and particularly in certain strategic professions in comparison with its main competitors on the world markets, the development of education and training is an ideal way of disseminating technological innovation and productivity gains.

This goes hand in hand with a necessary process of innovation in education and training systems themselves. It means, in particular, that new technologies for transmitting and processing information for educational purposes in order to stimulate greater intellectual mobility of knowledge across the Community should be used more widely so that a large number of academics and students will be able to benefit from Community cooperation without being committed to transnational mobility.

31. The first phase of the Community programmes in the field of education was extensively and successfully based on individual initiative and motivation on the part of the students and the project leaders. The bulk of Community support has therefore been focused on projects whose products could be transferred to others but which unfortunately go no further than the organisers. Without calling into question the approach based on voluntary initiative, the concern for the multiplier effect should also argue for giving priority to networking and the setting up of more durable and better-structured cooperation partnerships. The balance between

the dynamism of individual initiative (for example in the ICPs) and the more institutional approaches arising from the operation of networks should therefore be examined carefully.

32. The objective of a higher degree of decentralisation of administrative and financial responsibilities will be pursued whenever possible provided decentralised management is genuinely seen to achieve greater effectiveness for project leaders without any loss in quality. It will also be necessary to make sure that this decentralised management secures an improvement in the transparency of action and Community support.

Relations with international organisations and third countries

33. The Commission will reinforce its collaboration with international organisations which develop activities in the domain of education. Effective cooperation already exists with UNESCO in the area of higher education, with the Council of Europe for school-level activities (such as the organisation of European days in schools) and for higher education (joint meetings between the NARIC and NEIC networks for considering issues of academic recognition, joint organisation of conferences on access to higher education, etc), and with the OECD, particularly for evaluation of quality in teaching, and for the encouragement of open and distance teaching.
34. The Commission will ensure coordination between activities developed in the framework of the Education programme and other activities promoted at Community level in the area of the Community's external relations and in the Community support to the development of third countries, as, for example, the pilot project EC-USA, and the actions MEDCAMPUS and COLOMBUS. These projects may be based on the networks of cooperation set up at Community level under the current Community programmes: ERASMUS, LINGUA, COMETT.

Closer cooperation with the TEMPUS programme is assured so that experiences in cooperation gained in the Community can be transferred to certain third countries, of particular importance given the possibility that Community programmes will be open to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEEC) further to the Conclusions of the European Council at Copenhagen in June 1993.

35. The ERASMUS programme has been open to the countries of EFTA since 1991 on the basis of bilateral cooperation agreements concluded between the Community and each of these states. Under the terms of the Agreement on the European Economic Area (and of its supplementary protocol, especially Protocol 31) concluded between the Community and the EFTA countries, the initiatives, activities, and cooperation under Community programmes in the domain of education will be open to participants from those EFTA countries agreeing to the EEA (from 1 January 1995).

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME "SOCRATES"

36. In order to achieve the ambitious goal of a citizens' Europe, cooperation between educational institutions at all levels is one of the best ways of giving concrete expression to the European dimension in education. It is this cooperation which will bring out the European dimension in education and enable the notion of European citizenship to flourish through education.

In the area of higher education, the ERASMUS Programme and Action II of LINGUA have made a significant contribution to the development of this cooperation, and many higher education institutions - particularly Universities - are now involved in this cooperation as a result. Naturally, this cooperation is still fairly fragile and needs to be consolidated, a point which was stressed in the external evaluations of ERASMUS and LINGUA.

Changes in society, the generalisation and increased duration of studies, new technologies and changes on the labour market, as well as the new links established between education and the business world, have had a profound effect on school education. School has now become the centre around which various partners (teaching staff, administrative staff, pupils, parents, local communities) are grouped; there is dynamic interaction between this centre and its social and cultural environment. This new situation requires more adaptability from school education, the introduction of a European dimension at this level and cooperation between schools at Community level.

37. There are three chapters to the Community action programme "SOCRATES":

Chapter I	-	Higher education
Chapter II	-	School education
Chapter III	-	Horizontal actions of promotion: language skills open and distance education and learning information and exchange of experiences.

CHAPTER I

38. Chapter I (higher education) covers the activities under the ERASMUS Programme and Action II of the LINGUA Programme.
39. Higher education institutions enjoy varying degrees of autonomy, which is recognised by the supervisory authorities of the Member States, and which gives rise to a certain degree of flexibility and hence adaptability of education. These institutions will accordingly be encouraged to develop a policy designed to give administrative and teaching staff and students opportunities to increase their

appreciation of the role and importance of the European dimension in their working life and to encourage them to take up these opportunities.

Two groups of activities by institutions will be promoted by the Community:

- activities designed to give a European dimension to the studies of all students, and in particular of students who are not mobile, by fostering the specific cultural and socio-political characteristics of the other Member States, the teaching of languages of the Community etc.;
- activities stemming from inter-university cooperation: mobility of students and teaching staff, development of joint curricula or advanced courses, the introduction of the ECTS system into all departments, intensive programmes etc.

This process of institutionalising the European dimension in higher education will involve an institutional contract through which the Community will be able to provide the relevant institutions with its support for all the activities mentioned above.

40. The inter-university cooperation programmes (ICPs) currently supported by the ERASMUS Programme and Action II of LINGUA will pave the way for the gradual establishment by discipline or faculty of large networks. Accordingly, the 2 500 ICPs currently supported under ERASMUS and Action II of LINGUA could be included in a limited number (150-200) of thematic networks which would be open to all institutions interested in developing cooperation. Apart from offering institutions a wide choice of partners, the networks will also make it possible to develop activities for improving the quality of education in each subject area and establishing European-level forecasts.

CHAPTER II

41. Chapter II on school education draws on the experience gained under Action IV of the LINGUA programme and in pilot projects which, although of relatively limited scope, aroused considerable interest and an ever increasing desire for participation in educational circles.
42. All the measures proposed in this chapter are designed:
- to help to fulfil the basic tasks of school education, which include contributing to equal opportunities for all; giving all young people a sense of responsibility in an interdependent society; developing their ability to work unsupervised, their judgement, critical ability and capacity for innovation; making it possible for them to achieve their full potential in their personal and working lives; providing them with training and a qualification to make it easier for them to enter working life, notably by adjusting successfully to technological change;

- to motivate all those involved in the educational process to familiarise themselves with the socio-economic and cultural situation of the other Member States;
- to promote equality of opportunity for all children by proposing specific measures for the children of migrants and gypsies;
- to meet the need to update the knowledge of educators and establish a European area for education which will allow them to redefine and reassess the content of their task.

43. The main idea behind this chapter is to promote cooperation between schools at Community level. Schools are at the hub of the educational process and are today increasingly affected by new approaches which involve their personnel in the development of the educational plans of schools and introduce new types of cooperation with other schools.

Community action for promoting cooperation between schools will involve the establishment of partnerships based on the concept of a European educational project. These partnerships will be able to take on different forms, such as exchanges of correspondence or electronic mail, joint development of curriculum components or teaching modules, preparation of teaching material, development of educational innovations, exchanges of pupils and teaching staff.

In order to ensure that partnerships produce added value, the Community will also help to promote the gradual grouping of partnerships into a network for the large-scale dissemination of the results of cooperation, which will spread the benefits and provide stimulation to schools not involved in the network.

44. Ensuring that everyone enjoys equality of opportunity in a quality education system, providing everyone with the knowledge needed to obtain a vocational qualification, combatting all forms of exclusion - these are economic, social and human priorities. Particular attention must be paid to the children of migrant workers and gypsies if they are to receive a complete school education and experience Europe in their own way. There are many children in these target groups, and the number is set to rise substantially in the coming years. The specific problems faced by these children can be dealt with satisfactorily only by well-informed and specialised practitioners and teaching staff who have regular opportunities to update their knowledge.

45. The accelerating pace of technological change is making it increasingly necessary for educational staff to be able to update their knowledge and skills so that they can provide quality teaching. With this in mind, it is essential that their initial training is but the first stage in a process of continuing training and that it makes them sufficiently adaptable and open-minded to want to take advantage of any opportunities to update their knowledge in an open European area for education.

CHAPTER III

46. The horizontal measures concern all levels of education and all educational staff. They supplement the preceding measures and give the programme its political objective of building a citizens' Europe. The main areas in which the Community would like to provide assistance in order to achieve this end are:

- the promotion of language skills,
- the promotion of open and distance education and learning
- the promotion of information and exchange of experiences.

The same concepts of joint project, partnership and network form the theoretical framework of this chapter. Those who train teaching staff and the training institutions concerned with updating the skills of teaching staff are crucial elements in the framework of cooperation under horizontal measures.

47. Knowledge of an increasing number of languages of the Community is fundamental for strengthening understanding and interaction between peoples, facilitating the application of freedom of movement for people and completing the internal market.

There is consequently a need to build on the achievements of the LINGUA Programme, especially its Actions I and V, and to supplement them by new measures targeted at the players willing and capable of playing a part in the improvement of linguistic knowledge in the Community: present and future teachers, institutions which train and update the skills of current teaching staff, and all other interested parties.

48. Open and distance education and new information technologies applied to education play a key role in making it possible for citizens to enjoy the advantages currently offered by an open area for education, without there necessarily being any need for physical mobility. There is an extremely wide choice of options, ranging from traditional educational methods such as print-based courses and inter-school contacts through to multi-media technologies, tele-teaching and computer-based learning. All of these teaching tools foster independence in those being educated by giving them access to new teaching materials and promote creative autonomy in institutions by opening up to them a variety of sources of information.

As regards open and distance education, the idea of the network is of particular importance as a way of strengthening the cohesion of European education and training systems by means of centres for receiving and disseminating updated information, and of contact points for exchanges.

49. Given the diversity, but also the shared characteristics, of education systems and policies in the Member States, information is an essential tool for facilitating and developing cooperation in this area. This cooperation should promote exchanges

of experience between the Member States and guarantee improved mutual understanding, thereby helping to improve the quality of education.

The EURYDICE network is an excellent way of producing and exchanging information. Community action will help to develop this tool which, as has been emphasised on many occasions, provides a very useful and relevant service. The development of the network should help it to respond more effectively to qualitative and quantitative information requirements. The range of information offered will be expanded in order to meet the growing needs resulting from the development of cooperation in education and there will be a periodic review of the data held. Accordingly, prospective studies and forecasts on developments in education and its socio-economic environment will be produced and made available to the Community.

50. The gradual move away from teaching staff working alone towards a more concerted approach increasingly highlights the importance of the role of administrative and educational managers as a driving force behind the teaching teams. The main staff concerned are heads of educational institutions and, depending on the Member State, educational inspectors and/or advisors.

On the basis of experience gained under the Action ARION, the Commission will support this work of awareness-raising, informing and training managerial staff by proposing study visits in order to facilitate the exchange and comparison of ideas, the analysis of experience and the joint implementation in institutions of measures with a European dimension.

51. A range of complementary activities could be developed with the encouragement of the Community and have a major impact on the understanding of the objectives of the programme and to help set up activities under other Chapters. Once an open educational area has been set up, each person concerned with education should be able to contribute in their way: teaching staff and researchers, students and pupils, parents, etc.

The experience gained under Action IV of the ERASMUS programme in setting up associations of teaching staff and students will be a useful model for creating other types of association at European level linking the players of the educational world and aiming to promote the objectives of the Education programme.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

52. This explanatory memorandum accompanies the Commission proposal for a Council Decision setting up a Community action programme in the area of education, and the financial statement setting out its financial aspects. The programme is based on the experience gained in the implementation of Community programmes in education such as ERASMUS and LINGUA, as well as on pilot projects developed by the Commission, and covers all levels of teaching. The attempt at rationalisation proposed by the Commission should increase the impact and the ease of comprehension of Community action in this area, as well as its complementarity to other Community actions.
53. The Commission believes that this programme is a dynamic instrument based on cooperation between the Member States and respect for their own responsibilities in the area of education, which will allow the Community to make a dynamic and effective contribution to the establishment of quality education and to the creation of a European area in education based on the mutual interests of the various peoples in Europe.

**Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council
establishing the Community action programme
"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 Commission¹

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee²

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions³

1. Whereas the treaty establishing the European Community (hereafter "Treaty"), as modified by the Treaty on European Union, stipulates in its Article 3 p) that Community action should include a contribution to education and training of quality; that the Treaty henceforth includes a Chapter 3 devoted specifically to education, to vocational training and to youth.

1 OJ

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2. Whereas by virtue of Article 126, paragraph 1 of the Treaty, the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.
3. Whereas by virtue of Article 127, paragraph 1 of the Treaty, the Community shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organisation of vocational training.
4. Whereas the Council, by its Decision 87/327/EEC⁴ as amended by Decision 89/663/EEC⁵ based on Article 128 of the EEC Treaty, adopted the ERASMUS programme to promote the mobility of university students and, by its Decision 89/489/EEC⁶ based on Articles 128 and 235 of the EEC Treaty adopted the LINGUA programme to promote foreign language ability in the Community.
5. Whereas the Council, by its Decision .../... of⁷, adopted, on the basis of Article 127 of the Treaty, a decision establishing an action programme for the implementation of a European Community vocational training policy; that it is appropriate to complete this first programme by the adoption of a second; taking into account the implementation of the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes and including three types of action, covering specifically
 - higher education
 - school education and

⁴ OJ L 166, 25.6.1987, p. 20

⁵ OJ L 395, 30.12.1989, p. 23

⁶ OJ L 239, 16.8.1989, p. 24

⁷ OJ L

- horizontal measures including the promotion of language skills in the Community, of open and distance education and learning, and the promotion of information.
6. Whereas while school education constitutes education in the sense of Article 126 of the Treaty, the other measures envisaged under the current decision are inextricably linked to both education and vocational training; that this is especially the case in the realm of higher education, in so far as student and teaching staff mobility, or measures for the promotion of language skills, may be combined with the training of teachers; that it is appropriate, henceforth, to base the current decision on Articles 126 and 127 of the Treaty.
 7. Whereas the reports evaluating the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes, the conclusions of which are set out in the Commission report on the results and achievements of these programmes⁸, point out that cooperation in the field of education significantly enhances the value of measures taken by Member States, and that Community action in this field is therefore of great importance.
 8. Whereas the Commission Memorandum on higher education⁹ and the summary report of discussions within the Member States¹⁰, together with the Parliament Resolution on this subject¹¹, place particular emphasis on the need for a Community strategy to promote the European dimension in courses followed by all students, whether in their own country or abroad, and on the catalytic role of the Community in this connection.
 9. Whereas the Council and the Ministers of Education have agreed guidelines for the introduction of the European dimension into educational study, particularly

⁸ COM (93) 151 final, 5.5.1993

⁹ COM (91) 349 final, 5.11.1991.

¹⁰ "Studies" series No 2, TFHR - 1993

¹¹ OJ C 255, 20.09.1993, p.161.

through the Resolution on the European dimension in education¹²; that the Green Paper presented by the Commission on this matter¹³ as well as the comments received from the Member States on the same subject, aim to introduce the European dimension in primary and secondary teaching.

10. Whereas the European Council, meeting in Brussels on 10-11 December 1993, adopted, in the light of the White Paper presented by the Commission, an action plan on growth, competitiveness and employment, inviting the Member States in particular to pay specific attention to the improvement of education and training systems.
11. Whereas the European Parliament has, on its own initiative, adopted two reports on the European dimension in education at university level, with the emphasis on mobility of students and teaching staff¹⁴, and on education and training policy from the standpoint of 1993¹⁵.
12. Whereas open and distance education and learning offers considerable new opportunities for enriching education and for economies of scale, with an increased impact especially on the promotion of a European dimension in the studies at all levels.
13. Whereas it is necessary to simplify and rationalise Community actions in the field of education and training, reinforcing those aspects which are most promising as regards added value and European impetus; that it is appropriate, in this matter, to encourage transnational projects linking partners from different Member States who are involved in the transfer of innovation through exchanges, taking due respect of the diversity of the educational systems and the responsibility of the Member States.

¹² OJ C 177 of 6.7.1988, p.5

¹³ COM (93) 457 final of 29.9.1993

¹⁴ OJ C 48, 25.02.1991, p.216

¹⁵ OJ C 150, 15.6.1992, p.366.

14. Whereas specific measures need to be taken in favour of migrant workers' and gypsy children in order to combat exclusion and racism; it is appropriate to ensure equality of opportunity as well as the integration into the standard education system of children and adolescents with disabilities.
15. Whereas the EURYDICE network should be developed and diversified in order to be able to respond to requirements for qualitative and quantitative information on education.

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Establishment of the Community Action Programme "SOCRATES"

1. This Decision establishes the Community Action Programme "SOCRATES", hereinafter referred to as "Programme SOCRATES", for the period 1 January 1995 - 31 December 1999. The programme is intended to contribute to the development of quality education and training and of an open European area for education. It will come into force on 1 January 1995.
2. The education programme shall comprise three areas of Community action:

Chapter I - Higher education

Chapter II - School education

Chapter III - Horizontal activities in the areas of language learning, of open and distance education and learning, and information.

Article 2

Definitions

1. In the context of this programme,
 - the term "university" shall cover all types of higher education institutions which offer qualifications or diplomas at that level, whatever such institutions may be called;
 - the term "school" shall cover all types of institutions at nursery, primary and secondary school levels providing general, vocational or technical education and, exceptionally, and for the promotion of exchanges of pupils within the framework of language projects, non-school institutions providing apprenticeship training;
 - the term "educator" shall cover persons whose duties involve them directly or indirectly in the educational process (teachers, inspectors, educational advisers, etc.);
 - the term "student" is used for persons registered in universities (see definition of this term, above), whatever their field of study, in order to follow higher education studies leading to a degree or diploma (or equivalent), up to and including the level of doctorate;
 - the terms "open and distance education and learning" are used to describe all forms of flexible education, including the use of technologies and advanced facilities in information and communication, especially telematic systems, and personal educational support systems of an advisory and tutorial nature;

- the terms "information and communication technology" are used to describe the use of systems (technological and associated facilities) of information (acquisition, processing, viewing, storage of information) and communication (by satellite, cable or Hertzian means) such as the multi-media tools, telematic facilities designed for education, and access to electronic information services, whether local (interactive or otherwise compact disk) or at a distance (knowledge based systems);
- 2. Each Member State shall specify the types of institutions referred to in this Article.

Article 3

Objectives

The specific objectives of the programme "SOCRATES" shall be:

- i) to develop the European dimension in studies at all levels so as to strengthen the spirit of European citizenship, drawing on the cultural heritage of each Member State;
- ii) to promote knowledge of the languages of the Community so that the citizens of the Community may take advantage of opportunities arising from the completion of the European Union, leading to greater understanding and interaction between the peoples of the Community;
- iii) to increase mobility for the Community's students, especially those in higher education, so that they have the opportunity to complete part of their studies in another Member State;

- iv) to promote broad and intensive cooperation between institutions at all levels of education in every Member State, and to realise their intellectual potential through the mobility of their teaching staff and other educators thus helping to improve the quality of teaching;
- v) to encourage the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study, in particular through the introduction of academic credits and modules aimed at facilitating such recognition at Community level;
- vi) to develop the use of communication and information technologies as a tool and subject for education, including use of multi-media materials and information, and telematics at all levels of education;
- vii) to promote intellectual mobility of knowhow and experience, in particular through the development of open and distance education and learning at all levels of teaching;
- viii) to foster exchanges of information and experience with a view to ensuring that the Member States may learn and benefit from each other's educational systems.

Article 4

Committee

The Commission shall be assisted by an advisory committee composed of two representatives from each Member State and chaired by the Commission representative.

Twelve representatives of the social partners, educators, parents, students and young people, appointed by the Commission on the basis of proposals from non-governmental

organizations operating at European level, shall participate in the work of the Committee as observers.

The Commission representative shall submit to the Committee plans for the measures to be taken. The Committee shall deliver its opinion on these proposals within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

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

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

Article 5

Implementation

1. The Commission shall ensure the implementation of the programme "SOCRATES" under the arrangements set out in the Annex.
2. Decisions in the following areas shall be subject to the procedure defined under Article 4:
 - a) priorities in the Community measures described in the Annex and the annual workprogramme deriving therefrom;
 - b) the financial support to be provided by the Community (amounts, duration and beneficiaries);
 - c) the breakdown between the different strands;

- d) the procedures for selection, evaluation, and dissemination and transfer of results.

Article 6

Cooperation with Member States

1. The programme "SOCRATES" shall support the policies adopted and implemented by Member States under their internal structures, having regard to the characteristics and scope of their educational systems, with the aim of achieving the objectives set out in Article 3.

In terms of the development of linguistic skills as a fundamental means of communication within the Community, the Community shall support Member States' policies which encourage all citizens to learn new languages by increasing the opportunities for learning and increasing the range of languages offered.

2. Member States shall entrust the implementation of the actions described in the Annex to the various competent authorities responsible at national level.
3. The Commission shall cooperate closely with these authorities for the purposes of promoting and providing information on the actions described in the Annexe, and disseminating the results of the programme.

Article 7

Consistency and complementarity

1. The Commission shall strive to ensure overall consistency between this programme and the action programme for the implementation of a Community policy on vocational training.
2. The Commission, in partnership with the Member States, shall foster an element of complementarity between the operation of this programme and the interventions of the Structural funds, especially Community initiative programmes.
3. The Commission, in partnership with the Member States, shall encourage the coordination of activities between this programme and the Fourth Research and Development Framework Programme.

Article 8

Monitoring and evaluation

1. The programme shall be continuously monitored on a partnership basis involving the Community and the Member States. This monitoring shall permit, as necessary, the reorientation of the programme in the light of any needs becoming apparent in the course of its operation.

Monitoring, financial management and control shall be implemented by the Commission.

2. The programme shall be subject to a regular evaluation on a partnership basis between the Commission and the Member States. The results of Community measures shall be evaluated by external bodies at regular intervals.

3. The Commission shall submit to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, before 30 September 1998, an interim report on the launch phase, and before 30 September 2000, a final report on the implementation of the programme.

Done at, on

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

The purpose of the "SOCRATES" programme is to support the transnational actions planned in the different chapters of the programme.

CHAPTER I

HIGHER EDUCATION

This chapter describes three "ERASMUS"-type actions aimed at:

- promoting the European dimension in higher education institutions;
- setting up European university networks;
- funding student mobility grants.

ACTION 1

PROMOTION OF THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

1. Drawing on experience gained from the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes, the Community will continue to encourage transnational cooperation between universities, especially through the development of inter-university cooperation programmes (ICPs). These programmes aim to achieve the gradual setting up by

the universities of a policy to give a European dimension to higher education studies in general.

2. The following inter-university cooperation activities may qualify for Community financial assistance:

- student mobility providing university students with an opportunity to undertake a period of study in another Member State, accompanied by practical experience where appropriate, such periods being fully recognized as an integral part of their diploma or academic qualification
- introduction or extension of the ECTS course credit transfer system which greatly enhances the transparency of procedures for academic recognition of diplomas or periods of study completed abroad;
- joint development of initial or advanced curricula geared to facilitating academic recognition and contributing, through exchanges of experience, to the process of innovation and improvement of the quality of education at Community level;
- mobility of teaching staff for the purpose of providing instruction forming an integral part of the curriculum in another Member State, or enabling them to carry out study visits to pave the way for cooperation. Study visits may also be carried out by administrative staff of universities and by students assisting the university in connection with activities to promote inter-university cooperation;
- intensive courses for students from different Member States, particularly in areas of study which do not lend themselves to long periods abroad;

3. Priority will be given to student mobility programmes and activities connected with their preparation (language courses, in particular for the lesser used languages of the Community, information on social and cultural aspects of the host country etc.). Students in the first year of their studies will not be eligible for mobility grants.

The following conditions must be fulfilled in order to ensure that periods of study spent abroad are of maximum benefit to students:

- a. studies abroad shall be carried out on a full-time basis and for a significant period of time (a minimum of three months or one term, and a maximum of one academic year);
 - b. studies undertaken in other Member States shall be fully recognized by the university of origin;
 - c. students shall have a satisfactory knowledge of the language in which courses are given by the host university;
 - d. host universities shall not charge tuition fees to students participating in mobility schemes.
4. The Community will also encourage universities to develop activities designed to bring a European dimension to all areas of study for the benefit of each and every student. The following activities could receive Community support:

- the incorporation into curricula of elements designed to enhance understanding of the cultural, political, economic and social characteristics of other Member States as well as elements relating to European integration, especially through the creation of multi- or inter-disciplinary modules;

- learning of the languages of the Community as an integral part of studies, with the emphasis on lesser used or lesser taught languages;
5. Universities wishing to set up the activities with a European dimension, described above, at institutional level will be able to conclude an "institutional contract" with the Commission covering all the activities eligible for Community assistance. Community financial assistance will cover a maximum period of three years initially, subject to regular reviews of the results.
 6. Financial assistance may also be granted to groups of universities at regional, cross-border or other levels, for the purpose of developing jointly one or more of the activities mentioned in point 4 above, in cooperation with regional or local communities and interested parties from the economic and social spheres.
 7. Member States may consider the possibility of using financial resources provided through the Community's Structural Funds in order to facilitate the development of activities with a European dimension by universities.

ACTION 2

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY NETWORKS

1. The Community will lend its support to the establishment of Community university networks for specific themes, disciplines or fields of higher studies and for any other joint objective. The thematic networks will mainly be made up of departments or faculties of the universities involved in inter-university cooperation programmes which will be encouraged to forge links in a specific area of study,

providing its members with a framework for pan-European discussion and planning which will enable them to exchange their experiences and spread their knowhow, as well as discuss the qualitative and innovatory aspects of higher education, improvements in teaching methods and the comparability of curricula.

This sharing of the considerable intellectual capital existing in the universities (in terms of their ability to analyse and innovate, and as sources of expertise and knowledge) will thus contribute to the fulfilment of the objectives of the European Union.

More specifically, the activities for which the thematic networks will be able to apply for Community support are as follows:

- evaluation of curricula for specific disciplines;
 - design of joint programmes and specialised courses;
 - scientific analysis and reflection on a specific area of studies;
 - information services for network members.
2. Network activities relating to the design of joint programmes and specialised courses should be developed between several universities participating in these networks.
 3. One of the participating universities should act as a coordinator for activities in each network.

ACTION 3

FINANCING OF MOBILITY GRANTS FOR STUDENTS

1. The Community will continue to develop a system of direct financial aid to students who complete a period of study in another Member State and who fulfil the conditions set out in Action 1, paragraph 3 of this Chapter.
2. The Community funds contributing to students' mobility grants will be shared out between the Member States according to the following formula: subject to budget availability, a minimum sum of 200 000 ECU will be allocated to each Member State. The remainder will be allocated depending on the total number of students at university, as defined in Article 2 of the Decision, and the total number of young people between 18 and 25 in the various Member States, the average cost of travel between the country of origin and the host country and the difference in the cost of living between the country of origin and the host country.

Furthermore the Commission will take any measures necessary to encourage balanced participation between various disciplines, to take account of the flows of students and deal with specific problems such as the financing of some grants which, due to the structure of the programme of study, cannot be managed by the competent authorities mentioned in paragraph 3 below. The funds set aside for these measures may not exceed 5% of the annual budget for students' grants.

3. The Community funds shared out as mentioned in paragraph 2 above and intended for students grants will be administered by the national authorities (NGAA - national grant awarding agencies) established by all the Member States in the framework of the ERASMUS programme. These authorities shall ensure

coordination with the national systems of student grant/loans or other financial resources intended to encourage mobility of students. The NGAAs may, in cooperation with the Commission, take action to ensure an equitable participation of universities or faculties at the national or regional level.

4. The Community grants are intended to defray part of the additional costs incurred by mobility, that is, cost of travel, any preparatory language training which might be required and a higher cost of living in the host country. These grants may not exceed 5 000 ECU per student for a maximum of 12 months abroad.
5. Priority will be given to students who follow courses in activities supported under the terms of Action 1. In exceptional cases grants may be allocated to other students attending courses for which special provisions are made outside university cooperation programmes (free movers) as long as they satisfy the eligibility criteria mentioned in Action 1 paragraph 3.
6. Priority in allocating Community grants is given to students who require financial aid, bearing in mind the principle of equality of opportunity, particularly between men and women. The specific needs of disabled students should be taken into consideration when the amount of grant is determined.
7. As the Community's contribution only covers part of the costs of students' mobility, Member States are invited to help provide the necessary funds. Grants or loans available to students in their own country should continue to be paid in full during the period of study in a host Member State.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL EDUCATION

1. This chapter presents three actions intended to encourage:
 - cooperation between nursery, primary and secondary schools and the establishment of networks;
 - schooling of the children of migrant workers and gypsies;
 - updating of skills of educational staff in charge of teaching, guidance and/or psycho-pedagogical care of school children and their families.

These activities are based on the experience of implementing the LINGUA Community programme, and pilot projects undertaken in the areas of primary and secondary education, as well as those focusing on the introduction of information and communication technologies in education.

They are also based on experience with European schools and Community activities to provide schooling for the children of migrant workers and gypsies.

2. The Community funds aimed at promoting Actions 1.A and 3 in Chapter II will be shared between the Member States according to the following formula: subject to budget availability, a minimum of 200 000 ECU will be allocated to each Member State. The remainder will be allocated to various Member States depending on the total number of children attending school, the number of

schools, the number of teaching staff and the ratio between the gross domestic product of each Member State and the Community average.

3. The Community funds for Action 1.A and 3.2 shared out according to the formula mentioned in paragraph 2 above will be managed by the national authorities designated in each Member State. These authorities may, in collaboration with the Commission, take action to promote equitable participation of schools at national or regional level.
4. The Commission will take any measures necessary to encourage equitable participation by schools in the Member States. The funds for these measures may not exceed 5% of the annual budget for financing the activities described in Chapter II.
5. The Community financial aid provided for in Chapter II is intended to defray part of the costs deemed necessary for implementing the projects.
6. Community funds are awarded according to the principle of equality of opportunities, especially between men and women. The specific needs of disabled persons participating in the activities developed in the framework of this chapter should be taken into consideration when the level of grant is agreed.

ACTION 1

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS

A. PARTNERSHIPS

1. The Community shall encourage the development of multilateral partnerships between schools which are built around the concept of the European Education Project (EEP).

A multilateral partnership is a group of at least three institutions from three Member States; one of the institutions shall act as the coordinator. The partnership might be bilateral if the aim is solely to promote knowledge of languages of the Community which are less widely used and taught.

A European Education Project comprises a set of educational activities and measures intended to promote themes of mutual European interest. These activities, forming an integral part of the schools' curricula and conducted jointly by partner schools in other Member States, may include the following, amongst others:

- the development of activities which increase pupils' involvement in subjects of mutual European interest such as the promotion of knowledge of the languages of the Community, its cultural heritage, protection of the environment, artistic education, and the promotion of scientific and technological culture;

- the mobility of school children, particularly for those participating in partnerships where the aim is to improve knowledge of languages;
 - joint development and distribution of teaching materials;
 - development of innovatory teaching methods;
2. Financial aid may be allocated for visits to prepare partnerships and for exchanges of staff between schools to support partnerships and to develop European Education Projects. It will be granted for a maximum period of 3 years initially, subject to periodic review. Financial assistance may also be given to groups of schools at the regional, cross-border or other level, which intend to develop jointly particular activities mentioned above.
3. The following priority criteria shall be used for the disbursement of Community funds in support of projects submitted by the partnerships:
- the learning of the languages of the Community, particularly those which are less widely used and taught;
 - wider knowledge and understanding of European cultures;
 - the integration of issues of Community interest with a horizontal link such as environmental education and health education;
 - innovative elements aiming particularly to improve the level of achievement of all school children;
 - schools with a significant number of pupils disadvantaged for cultural, physical, geographic, or socio-economic reasons.

B. EUROPEAN SCHOOL NETWORKS

1. A network is a group of partnerships as described above, which has been formed in the same thematic field. The role of the networks is to facilitate exchange of experience, to contribute to improving teaching methods and to raise the profile of the partnerships' activities in order to multiply their effect and publicise their achievements. One of the partner schools should coordinate the activities of each network.
2. Financial assistance may be allocated for conducting certain network activities such as:
 - exchanges of information and experience;
 - pooling and improvement of teaching methods, including those using new information and communication technologies;
 - production of teaching materials, including multimedia material;
 - dissemination of good practice to interested persons;

ACTION 2

PROMOTION OF SCHOOLING OF CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS AND GYPSIES

Financial assistance may be allocated to projects aiming to:

- promote the integration of and equal opportunities for children of migrant workers and gypsies;
- improve their schooling and the quality of the education they receive;
- meet their specific educational needs and exploit their potential.

These projects, which may be organised either by individual schools or groups of schools at transnational level, may include:

- exchanging information and experience on all aspects mentioned above;
- design of specialised course and teaching material;
- updating the skills of teaching staff and workers particularly involved in actions designed to ensure the successful schooling and integration of these children.

ACTION 3

UPDATING THE SKILLS OF EDUCATIONAL STAFF

1. Financial aid may be allocated to transnational projects submitted by institutions engaged in updating the skills of educational staff responsible for the teaching and/or guidance and psycho-pedagogical care of pupils.

These projects are intended to promote:

- the exchange of information and experience, in particular in the area of information and communication technologies;
 - the development of teaching methods and materials, especially those adding a European dimension to the updating or acquisition of certain skills for staff, responsible for the teaching, guidance or psycho-pedagogical care of school children and their families;
 - the formation of partnerships and networks in the above fields.
2. Projects for updating the skills of staff involved in education may also provide for a limited number of periods to be spent in another Member State so that staff may attend seminars organised jointly by the institutions concerned.

The Community contribution to the travel costs for these staff, shared between the Member States according to the formula described in Chapter II.2, will be paid by the national authorities mentioned in Chapter II.3.

CHAPTER III

HORIZONTAL MEASURES

1. The activities described in this chapter apply at all levels of education. They are intended to promote:
- language skills in the Community;
 - open and distance education and learning;

- the broader spread of information and the exchange of experiences in the field of education.

These activities, which will be supplemented by those in the foregoing chapters, will provide a framework for and will constitute a coherent set of measures aimed at:

- supporting those implemented by the Member States;
- supplementing or creating synergies between those presented in the first two chapters.

2. The Commission will take any steps which are necessary to encourage equitable participation by educational institutions in the Member States. The funds for these measures may not exceed 5% of the annual budget for financing the activities set out in Chapter III.
3. The Community financial aid provided for in Chapter III is intended to defray part of the estimated cost of implementing the projects.
4. Community aid shall be awarded according to the principle of equality of opportunities, particularly between men and women. The specific needs of disabled persons who participate in activities developed in the framework of this chapter should be taken into consideration when the amount of grants is agreed.

ACTION 1

PROMOTION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE COMMUNITY

1. **The promotion of language skills is a key factor in establishing the open European area for education and for strengthening understanding and interaction between the peoples of the European Union without sacrificing any of their linguistic and cultural diversity.**

These actions will be based on the experience acquired in implementing the LINGUA Community programme.

2. **Apart from the measures for encouragement set out in Chapter I, Actions 1 and 2 and in Chapter II, Action 1, Community financial assistance may also be allocated to those transnational projects aiming to undertake the following activities:**

- a) **the development of European Cooperation Programmes (joint design and creation of innovatory training schemes and teaching materials), submitted by institutions specialising in training language teachers and aiming to update, reinforce and expand the language and teaching skills of present or future language teachers;**
- b) **immersion courses abroad for language teachers, for teaching staff retraining as language teachers and for teaching staff of other disciplines intending to teach in a foreign language. The duration of these courses will be between two and four weeks.**
- c) **assistantships abroad for future language teachers to enhance their knowledge of the languages which they will be teaching. These will last**

not less than 3 months and should be spent in a Member State where one of the official languages is the language which the assistant will be teaching.

d) design and implementation of curricula, production of new teaching materials for all educational circles, and the recognition of linguistic experience. These projects may also involve the public at large as well as covering language preparation for students and pupils, whether in school or in training centres, to help them take part in mobility schemes.

3. Community funds set aside to promote the activities provided for in b) and c) above will be shared between the Member States according to the following formula: subject to budget availability, a minimum of 200 000 ECU will be allocated to each Member State. The remainder will be allocated depending on the total number of students and language teachers, the average cost of travel between the country of origin and host country and the difference in the cost of living between the country of origin and the host country.

The maximum allocation per beneficiary will be 1 500 ECU for immersion courses and 5 000 ECU for assistantships.

4. Priority will be given to projects and activities:

- relating to the teaching of languages of the Community which are less widely used and taught;
- including the use of new educational technologies.

ACTION 2

PROMOTION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION AND LEARNING

The introduction of information and communication technologies and the development of open and distance education and learning are key factors enabling citizens of the Community to take advantage of the open area for education.

These areas contribute to educational quality by making use of teaching innovations and helping to increase access to every level of education, especially for those who, because of their geographical situation or personal circumstances, are not in the position to follow the kind of teaching that requires their constant physical presence.

Information and communication technologies, in addition to open and distance education and learning, is applicable at all levels of teaching, and the use of such facilities may have considerable multiplier effects on the development of the activities included in the Community action programme "SOCRATES".

The following activities may benefit from Community financial assistance:

1. Transnational projects aiming to: improve the quality of products in order to adapt them more precisely to the needs of their users; design and preparation of courses and materials aimed at all citizens and/or adapt them in the languages and to the cultures of the Community; widen the recognition of diplomas, credits and qualifications obtained through open and distance teaching. More specifically:

in the area of higher education, the universities will be encouraged to develop, through means of partnerships with universities specialising in open and distance

teaching, activities aiming to bring a European dimension to all higher education subjects. A limited number of mobility grants will be awarded, according to the procedures outlined in Chapter 1, Action 3, to students registered on distance education courses in order that they may visit other Member States to follow intensive courses in the framework of cooperation agreements concluded between competent institutions.

- at school level, schools will be encouraged to introduce the use of information and communication technologies, including the opportunities offered through open and distance education and learning, in order that, in particular, achievements and experiences of partnerships may be widely disseminated, benefitting schools not directly participating in the projects. As regards the updating of skills for all staff involved in education, the opportunities offered by open and distance education are of considerable importance, given the vast numbers of such personnel and the need for specific training in aspects concerning the European dimension.
 - in the other fields included in this programme, and especially for the promotion of language skills, open and distance education and learning may be able to contribute most effectively to the devising and preparation of teaching material which is then accessible to all citizens of the Community.
2. Networks of resource centres for multimedia, open and distance education and for the introduction of the new information technologies as applied to education.

ACTION 3

PROMOTION OF INFORMATION AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE

Information improves mutual understanding and provides a vital platform for Community cooperation in education and the development thereof. It also provides everybody involved in education with the key to exploiting the potential and enjoying the benefits of an open European area for education.

The measures outlined below will equip decision makers and educators with an up-to-date and reliable information service. The activities are based on the experience acquired by the EURYDICE network, the NARIC network, through the ARION programme and Action 4 of the ERASMUS programme.

1. EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION (EURYDICE)

Action taken in this field will ensure that information is available on educational systems and policy, reforms, innovations and the results of research in education.

The following activities will be eligible for financial assistance:

- a) pooling and production of documents, data and comparative analyses on themes of mutual interest and tools facilitating better comparison of information;
- b) dissemination of such information through existing public and private information and distribution channels and relays at national, regional and Community level;

- c) creation of Community data bases, development of close links between existing data bases and improving access to them;
- d) use of new information processing and electronic technologies to ensure that exchanges are interactive and that there is more efficient sharing of resources. Activities attracting aid will take account of Community developments in the field of trans-European networks, especially telematic links between government departments.
- e) studies to analyse trends and anticipate requirements in the field of education, and any other forward-looking study on education and its socio-economic environment (activities similar to those conducted by observatories).

The Member States will designate the organisations helping to implement the above activities. These will act as interfaces with sources of information on education and existing expert knowledge on education at national level. The Community may lend additional support to these organisations.

When these activities are being implemented close links will be developed with comparable activities of CEDEFOP in the field of information on vocational training, with EUROSTAT in the field of statistics, with the Community network of NARICs (information centres on the academic recognition of awards) and any other information network in the field of education at national European and international level.

2. STUDY VISITS ("ARION"-TYPE MEASURES)

Grants may be awarded for the organisation of multilateral study visits for all staff involved in education. These are intended to facilitate exchanges of information and experience on themes of mutual interest to the Member States, and between educators likely to induce a multiplier effect in the Member State.

In this context of this action, staff involved in education means persons whose duties include management, assessment, training, guidance and coordination of European projects and people in responsible positions in the Ministries.

The Community funds set aside to help to organise these visits will be shared between the Member States according to the formula described in Chapter II.2 and administered by the same national authorities indicated in Chapter II.3.

The average grant per beneficiary is estimated at 900 ECU for one week.

3. COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES

The Commission will also lend its support to the following complementary measures intended to further the programme objectives:

- projects developed at European level by associations of teaching staff, students, and parents of school children;
- projects aimed at expanding the European dimension of education and training submitted by organisations responsible for the education of adults, in order to raise awareness of the European dimension of certain issues in the widest possible number of citizens;
- organisation of awareness-raising activities to promote cooperation in the field of education and training;
- activities concerned with monitoring and evaluation of the actions described in this Annex.

**COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME
"SOCRATES"**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. TITLE OF ACTION

"SOCRATES" programme

2. BUDGET HEADING INVOLVED

B3 - 100 - Education (formerly headings B3-1000, B3-1001, B3-1002, B3-1003, B3-1004, B3-1005)

3. LEGAL BASIS

Council Decision No 94/... of (OJ L ...)

4. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

4.1. General objective of action

On the basis of experience acquired through the implementation of the Community programmes ERASMUS and LINGUA, and of other actions and pilot projects carried out in the field of education, the main objective of the programme is to contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States.

The activities carried out under the programme are intended to promote the gradual creation of an open European area for education by rendering education more adaptable to and more in tune with political, social, economic and technological changes, in order to give young people an education which enables them to live and work within the new framework of the European Union.

In proposing this action programme, the Commission is following a policy which is in line with the objective of rationalising and coordinating activities in the field of education as set out in its document "Guidelines for Community action in the field of education and training" (COM(93)183 final).

In this context, the main objectives of the programme are as follows:

- a) To promote the European dimension in higher education institutions and to encourage the physical and intellectual mobility of students and teaching staff;

- b) To encourage the creation of European university networks;
- c) To promote cooperation between schools through the creation of multilateral partnerships and the introduction of thematic networks;
- d) To promote quality education for children of migrants and gypsies;
- e) To promote the updating of skills of all those involved in education. Particular attention will be paid to the development of open and distance education in this area;
- f) To promote foreign language ability within the Union, inter alia by encouraging the mobility of language teachers, cooperation between institutions concerned with the training of language teachers and the development of innovative teaching material;
- g) To promote open and distance education;
- h) To promote exchanges of information and experience and the dissemination of results to the educational sectors concerned.

4.2. Period covered and arrangements for renewal or extension

Five year action programme (1995-1999)

5. CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

5.1. Non-compulsory expenditure

5.2. Differentiated appropriations

5.3. Type of revenue involved: None

6. TYPE OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

- 100% subsidy: Yes, for studies and surveys undertaken by third parties
- Community grants cover only part of the cost of the actions (generally 50%). Where the participation of disabled people involves extra cost, the Community contribution may exceed the percentage of assistance.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1. Method of calculating total cost of action (definition of unit costs)**
Set out in accordance with the Annex to the proposal for a Council Decision.

7.2. Indicative itemised breakdown of cost of action

"SOCRATES" PROGRAMME
in current ECU million

Breakdown by Chapter and Action	Budget 1995	Budget 1996	Budget 1997	Budget 1998	Budget 1999	TOTAL
Chapter I - Higher Education						
Action 1. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education institutions	35.5	36.6	37.6	38.4	39.4	187.5
Action 2. European university networks	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.6	31.6
Action 3. Funding of students' mobility grants	70.0	71.1	72.5	74.0	75.6	363.2
Sub-total Chapter I	111.5	113.9	116.4	118.9	121.6	582.3
Chapter II - School education						
Action 1. Cooperation between schools: partnerships and networks	18.9	23.8	31.8	39.7	41.2	155.4
Action 2. Promotion of education for children of migrants and gypsies	4.9	5.6	6.3	7.4	8.0	32.2
Action 3. Updating training for education staff: cooperation between institutions and mobility grants	2.0	2.6	3.4	5.6	7.0	20.6
Sub-total Chapter II	25.8	32.0	41.5	52.7	56.2	208.2
Chapter III - Horizontal measures						
Action 1. Promotion of language skills	21.2	22.4	24.4	27.8	32.1	127.9
Action 2. Promotion of open and distance teaching	2.3	4.5	5.5	7.1	12.0	31.4
Action 3. Promotion of exchange of information and experience	8.2	9.9	11.6	12.0	14.1	55.8
Sub-total Chapter III	31.7	36.8	41.5	46.9	58.2	215.1
TOTAL	169.0	182.7	199.4	218.5	236.0	1005.6

The distribution of requested appropriations between the three chapters and that for the appropriations for the particular actions will be determined by the overall allocation of appropriations from the budgetary authority.

Notes:

The 1995 budget may be reconciled with the 1994 budget on the basis of the figures for the 1994 PDB as follows:

- PDB 1994 (headings B3 1000-1005):	142 million ECU
- Exclusion of an item transferred from the "SOCRATES" programme to the Vocational Training programme (LINGUA III action)	- 8.1 million ECU
Total	<hr/> 133.9 million ECU

The difference between the PDB 1994 (ECU 133.9 million) and the amount deemed necessary for 1995 (ECU 169 million) is accounted for by the quantitative and qualitative progress expected from the new "SOCRATES" programme in relation to the programmes and actions from which it derives, namely:

- 15 million ECU added to Chapter I (higher education) which is the minimum amount which must be allocated during the first year to activities relating to the European dimension for all students, European centres and networks (new actions which did not exist in 1994);
- 6.3 million ECU added to Chapter II (school education) to reinforce those activities included in the programme which currently exist on a smaller scale (pilot projects): activities in favour of migrants and gypsies, updating training for staff involved in education, and in particular school partnerships, intended to reach a much wider target;
- 9.5 million ECU added to Chapter III (horizontal measures), mainly intended to finance new actions included in this Chapter (assistantships for future language teachers), and especially for the promotion of open and distance education.
- For all other activities of the programme a trend of minimal increase is planned.

7.3. Indicative schedule of appropriations

7.3.1. Schedule for proposed new action

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 + 5 and subsequent years	TOTAL
Commitment appropriations	169.0	182.7	199.4	218.5	236.0	1005.6
Payment appropriations						
1995	152.1					152.1
1996	16.9	164.4				181.3
1997		18.3	179.5			197.8
1998			19.9	196.7		216.6
1999 + 5 and subsequent years				21.8	212.4 23.6	234.2 23.6

8. FRAUD PREVENTION MEASURES; RESULTS OF MEASURES TAKEN

All contracts, agreements and legal undertakings by the Commission make provision for the possibility of spot checks by the Commission and by the Court of Auditors. Amongst other things, beneficiaries of actions are obliged to provide reports and financial statements which are analysed with regard to the content and the eligibility of expenditure, in accordance with the aim of Community financing.

9. ELEMENTS OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

9.1. Specific and quantifiable objectives; target population

The aim of the proposed "SOCRATES" programme is to achieve greater coordination between all the actions previously carried out in this area and to launch new actions which, according to various Commission documents (external evaluation reports, summary of discussions on the Memorandum on higher education, Green Paper on the European dimension in education, etc.), have Community added value and contribute to quality education. The programme, far from being a simple collection of activities, is intended to generate synergy between the various sectors of education and to target those involved in education in a consistent, simplified manner, commensurate with their role and their requirements (mobility, joint curricula, etc.).

In addition, the programme will rationalise management structures, encourage decentralisation and, as a result, be closer to the target population.

This integrated approach is intended to produce an impact with a more powerful knock-on effect. It will help the new actions to act as catalysts and will enable the most promising developments of each of the education systems to be disseminated for the benefit of all the Member States.

The "SOCRATES" programme comprises three chapters.

Chapter I

The implementation of the two large Community programmes in the field of higher education - ERASMUS and LINGUA Action II - revealed, firstly, the considerable interest among universities and students in transnational cooperation and mobility and, secondly, the capacity to introduce curricular changes in order to adapt to and take into account the socio-economic and intellectual developments resulting from the process of European integration.

The most innovative aspect of Chapter I is the institutional contract which will be concluded with universities and which will result in the rationalisation of cooperation activities, economies of scale in areas of mutual interest (languages, management, accommodation, etc.) and the involvement of all the teaching staff and university authorities in cooperation activities. This is a qualitative step forward, which will encourage those academic institutions which have not previously been involved in international cooperation or have only been involved to a slight extent to play a more active role and will promote the active participation of a wide range of leading staff in each university.

A. Specific objectives

Action 1: Promoting the European dimension.

Universities are encouraged to carry out the following activities:

- (a) activities based on inter-university cooperation already promoted under ERASMUS and LINGUA Action II: activities to encourage the mobility of students and teachers, joint development of curricula, intensive programmes. Community action has played a crucial role in promoting these activities, opening up the academic world on an unprecedented scale and having beneficial effects on the level of qualification of higher education graduates;
- (b) activities to strengthen cooperation on the basis of the experience acquired through implementation of the ECTS pilot project (European Community course credit transfer system) which has provided greater clarity concerning courses, which is essential for the development of academic recognition. These activities will make it possible to extend the ECTS system to a substantial proportion of universities;
- (c) new activities which aim to give a European dimension to every student's education. Such activities may involve the development of courses with a specific European content (on Community law, for example) intended for all students. Consideration must be given to the 95% of students who do not take advantage of physical mobility, but who can benefit from intellectual mobility by acquiring knowledge relating to the European Union and a spirit of openness enabling them to make use of intellectual and cultural material conceived and developed beyond their national borders.
- (d) The regrouping of universities at regional or cross-border level into "European centres" will also be encouraged, as will cooperation with local authorities and

business circles in order to rationalise certain areas of mutual interest (such as student accommodation, the joint organisation of language courses, in particular for the official languages of the Union which are less widely used and taught (known as "modimes"), etc.) This regrouping will ensure greater efficiency in meeting these requirements as a result of the economies of scale generated.

Action 2: European University networks.

On the basis of experience acquired through the implementation of inter-university cooperation and exchange programmes (ICPs), the Community will encourage the establishment of networks, including thematic networks, in order to promote contact between faculties and to examine educational prospects in each discipline. These networks will act as centres of cooperation, particularly adapted to developing harmonised curricula and undertaking the analysis of future needs and will thereby be the guiding force behind universities' efforts to offer quality education while taking into account the socio-economic developments in progress. The networks will thus promote greater efficiency and savings in the investments made by each institution to adapt and improve the education on offer.

Action 3: Funding of mobility grants for students.

The Community will continue to develop the grant system set up under the ERASMUS programme which has promoted the mobility of over 200 000 students to date. The specific needs of financially disadvantaged students or disabled students are taken into consideration. The Community will also continue to reinforce one of the most remarkable aspects of this action, namely its ability to encourage students to study in Member States which, above all on account of their official languages, would not otherwise have attracted young people from other Member States into their universities. It should be noted that the cost to the Community of evening out the numbers of students and of encouraging mobility in general is actually very small and is only a tiny proportion of the total cost of mobility but it has, however, prompted co-financing measures by public and, in some cases, private bodies, which attests to Member States' awareness of the need for and value of mobility in higher education.

B. Target population

4 000 higher education institutions; 500 000 university lecturers and 7 500 000 students. In accordance with the ERASMUS model, the programme is open to all fields of study and all types of higher education. However, particular attention will be focused on non-university establishments which do not have the same infrastructures as universities and on certain areas of study which need special encouragement, such as languages and teacher training.

C. Budget

Approximately 30% of the total Chapter I budget is earmarked for Action 1. 70% of this budget is allocated to the activities listed under a) above which constitute the basis for cooperation.

Community financial assistance to the universities for such activities has decreased by an average of 75% in recent years, which means that they have been highly cost effective. The main purpose of the budget will therefore be to extend cooperation to include all higher education institutions.

This applies particularly to the course credit transfer system (ECTS) which, in its pilot phase, has proved an extremely effective for registering the results of inter-university cooperation on a permanent official basis - ultimately to benefit all students. (2 million are to be earmarked for the extension of this system)

Activities to introduce a European dimension into the studies of all students will have priority. Six million ECU in the first year, or approximately 23% of the budget for this Action, will be earmarked for them. It will be of considerable strategic value for 95% of our students (those who are non-mobile), enabling them to acquire intellectual and social "qualifications" on a European scale and to progress in the new framework of the Union, to benefit from it and to provide their own Member State with the openness and expertise which the socio-economic situation demands. The potential impact of these activities will make them extremely cost effective.

The estimated budget for the setting up of the European centres is 1 million ECU. It is difficult at the moment to assess the savings these groupings of universities will represent for each participating institution but they are likely to be quite substantial in terms of student residential accommodation and the variety of languages taught.

Action 2 is a new activity and its portion of the total budget for Chapter I represents +/- 5%. The 6 million ECU allocated will mean that thematic networks can be set up leading to improved, more effective efforts by the universities to adapt their curricula, which should no longer be haphazard but rather convergent. There are expected to be +/- 200 networks created, covering every discipline.

Action 3 takes up the largest part of the budget allocated to Chapter I (62%) and of the total budget for the "SOCRATES" Programme (36%).

The added value of Community action in the field of student mobility is recognised by the national authorities, universities, young people and their families. In terms of the large number of students who benefit and the part this physical mobility has played in encouraging cooperation, this action would once again appear to be highly cost effective. For these reasons student mobility will continue to be given priority under the "SOCRATES" Programme and Chapter I in particular.

Chapter II

Chapter II represents an innovation in Community action in the field of education.

- For the first time, measures relating to education at school level will be brought together so that a synergic effect can be created to give each activity the maximum

knock-on effect. For example, action to help the children of migrant workers will be much more effective once the partnership networks are able to distribute teaching materials and methods to establishments involved in other types of cooperation but which also have a minority of migrants' children.

- What are basically pilot projects will develop to become full-scale and effective measures with a significant impact on the educational system.

- Community work in this field will be backed up by measures to help all staff involved in education which, while covering all those involved in school education, will include only activities with a high Community added value which are designed to respect and make the most of the diversity of approaches to education in the Member States.

A. Specific objectives

Action 1: School partnerships and thematic networks

The partnerships represent a particularly effective way of fostering transnational cooperation between establishments. Grouping together a number of establishments from at least three Member States, these partnerships form an extremely valuable pedagogic framework for cooperation based on educational projects (European Education Project) adopted by all members of the establishment. They are thus of educational, social and personal value to both pupils and teachers, producing a lasting impact on the quality of education offered to young people at these establishments in return for a comparatively small Community contribution.

As the educational establishment itself is involved and the pedagogic worth of the European Education Project forms the backbone of the partnership, a multiplier effect and a positive spin-off for the socio-economic environment of the establishment is guaranteed.

Networks will seek a multiplier effect for their activities as well as ensure the quality of the products coming out of the partnerships. They will be able to pass on to establishments not directly benefitting from Community action the basic tools to enable their educational personnel to reach a critical threshold of effectiveness.

The partnerships and networks should help a significant number of establishments, teachers and pupils at a relatively modest unit cost. In fact activities eligible for Community aid are nearly always collective and aim mainly to facilitate cooperation without necessarily requiring physical mobility, except in the case of partnerships with a linguistic objective. A considerable and lasting effect is thus expected at minimum cost.

Action 2: fostering the education of the children of migrant workers and gypsies

There is a certain amount of urgency about this matter because of the resurgence of racism and the influx of migrants' families and gypsies. Furthermore, educational systems often have to be adapted to deal with this specific population group. Facilitating the exchange of experiences and improving the training of teachers particularly affected by these special educational needs will not only

make the measures introduced more effective but will also mean that they can be applied to other population groups which are facing similar problems even if they have not been migrants in the recent past. Considerable economies of scale will be achieved and the quality of the special schemes introduced - which could also have wider applications - will be improved. There will be a spin-off for others. A particular aim of this action will therefore be to ensure that the achievements can be applied to education as a whole to foster intercultural education for all.

Here, too, the Community contribution will be concentrated on transferable activities with considerable educational potential, and their dissemination.

While sufficient funds will have to be made available for an area which is of vital importance to our educational systems today, the action is still expected to be very cost effective.

Action 3: updating the skills of all staff involved in education

This action also by its nature has considerable multiplier potential. It is geared firstly to those responsible for updating the skills of all staff involved in education and secondly to all educationalists who have a vital role to play in the quality of education. Thus, it will provide great effectiveness in return for a modest input by approaching education as a whole and making provision therein for the guidance and psycho-pedagogical care of pupils.

The action, in particular, is designed to complement measures being taken in the Member States. It aims above all to add a European dimension to the updating of skills, to share out positive experiences and generate material thus achieving considerable economies of scale while at the same time broadening the range of tools available for continuing training of this personnel.

B. Target population.

Educational establishments of all levels (+/- 300 000 in the Community). Pupils, children of migrant workers and gypsies (approximately 70 million pupils). Teaching staff - 4 million in the European Union.

The approach recommended by the programme should produce many more indirect beneficiaries. Direct beneficiaries will represent only a small proportion of this very broad target population.

C. Budget

The measures proposed are by nature intended to promote collective rather than individual contributions - such as mobility and the creation of the right framework to achieve a multiplier effect without resorting to further Community financing.

The provisional appropriations for these three Actions are based on the following requirements:

- Action 1: the broadest target (300 000 establishments and approximately 70 million pupils)

Over 70% of the provisional budget for Chapter II is earmarked for this action. The proportion will be reduced slightly over the five years as the aim is to achieve a "critical mass" of activities and beneficiaries.

- Action 2 has a variety of targets.

The children of migrant workers and gypsies are on the increase. There are already migrant children in a large number of schools; gypsies' children should have access to an education which genuinely allows them equality of opportunity.

Because of the political and social situation a determined effort is required to provide intercultural education for all. The specific measures under Action 2 represent both a testing ground and a useful source of innovation for all young people. For this reason the estimated budget for this action increases by nearly 63% over five years.

The dissemination of results from this action, which forms an integral part of the action as well as of Chapter II in general, in particular through the networks and decentralised management structures at national level, should ensure Action 2 is very cost effective.

- Action 3 is of strategic importance for the reasons already mentioned. The provisional budget increases gradually, particularly the first two years for financing the mobility of trainers of all staff involved in education, and to broaden the scope of the actions to cover those educationalists who, while relatively few in number, play a key role in improving the quality of education for all child-guidance personnel and those giving psycho-pedagogical assistance. The aim is ultimately to reach all skill-updating institutes in the Community. With modest financing this action could have a very great impact on the quality of education and ongoing efforts to combat failure at school. In fact, now that all the Member States are faced, despite all their efforts, with this persistent phenomenon (which affects between 20 and 30% of school pupils) the Community has a specific role to play in fostering action to make better use of educationalists to promote success for all.

The action comprises joint projects, the preparation of teaching material, the establishment of a network of institutions with a view to transferring the most promising aspects of approaches used in the Member States while respecting their differences.

Chapter III

This Chapter covers horizontal actions applicable to all levels of education and complements the first two Chapters. In addition to reinforcing certain existing measures there are two new actions:

Action 1:

This covers a range of interrelated activities designed to promote knowledge of languages of the Community in the field of education. They include and expand the measures, targeted at the educational world, under the LINGUA programme.

A - Specific Objectives:

- to promote transnational cooperation in this field to improve the quality of the continuing training of teachers through joint training projects for language teachers.
- to encourage the mobility of present and future language teachers to ensure they have a direct contact with the language and culture of another Member State of the Union
- to promote cooperation on innovatory teaching material and methods, particularly for the official languages of the Union which are less widely used and taught ("modimes").

B - Target population:

Teachers and future teachers of foreign languages in the Union.

Institutions for continuing training for teachers and the authorities involved in the preparation of teaching material.

C - Budget for Action 1:

The provisional budget for these actions must be seen in the light of the following factors:

- the introduction of a new action to encourage the mobility of future teachers by providing grants for periods as foreign assistants presupposes a level of financing which will make it possible to award a minimum number of grants per Member State.

Furthermore, on the basis of experience gained in the implementation of the LINGUA programme, it will be essential to increase the number of language teachers who can obtain grants to take language immersion courses. The effects of these courses on the work of the teacher and on the establishment in which he is teaching justifies stepping up this mobility element by means of an increase of 75% over five years.

The budget for the other Actions increases by only 30% over the five years.

Action 2:

Open and distance education is a particularly effective way of expanding the availability of education with a European dimension for all, and especially for those who are unable to benefit from the kind of teaching which requires constant physical presence.

A - Specific Objectives:

At the level of higher education it can help increase the numbers benefitting from an intellectual mobility to reach the majority of students, while for school level education it is useful for assisting fruitful exchanges and an enriching of teaching practice. Its role is perhaps even more important in the area of updating of skills of all those involved in education, particularly the European dimension. Given the number (around 5 million) of such personnel, open and distance education is of particular value, since they will be able

to derive benefit without necessarily having to resort to physical mobility, which can pose considerable financial problems as well as those of organisation.

Community action, by increasing the area of application of this type of education, will enable its development since it will no longer be subject to the limitations of the national market. It will also encourage economies of scale in the creation of teaching support materials.

Open and distance education is thus an area for which Community added value seems particularly poignant.

B - Target population

All citizens wishing to improve their education and especially those who are unable to benefit from face-to-face teaching.

C - Budget for Action 2

This is a completely new action. Its budget should increase gradually, most of all from the third year of implementation, in order to enable a gradual implementation leading to establishment of a critical mass to guarantee the effectiveness of the Community action.

Action 3:

There are two complementary aspects to the promotion of information and the exchange of experience

- the exchange and provision of information, including comparative and prospective analyses,
- study visits for educational specialists,

Action 3 also includes complementary measures aiming to further the objectives of the programme.

A - Specific objectives:

These activities are geared to a specific part of the information chain and a specific target population.

- The exchange and provision of information is designed in the first place for decision-makers in the field of education. It will mean that they are better informed about trends and educational matters in the Union and will be provided with reliable and precise references.
- Study visits provide equally information and opportunities to increase the awareness of topics of mutual interest to the Member States, and the means to facilitate cooperation in the field of education. It is aimed at specialists chosen according to various themes, likely to have a multiplier effect in their Member State.
- The complementary measures will address a wider audience, that is, all the players in the field of education, through awareness-raising and general provision of information.

B - Target population:

All staff involved in education, particularly decision-makers and educational specialists, every player in the field of education (see above).

These people have different roles but they are all of vital importance to the quality of education in the Member States because they all contribute to the multiplier effect at national or local level.

C - Budget for Action 3:

Within this is included studies and analyses to evaluate the functioning of the programme and to help target its actions, awareness-raising and information activities, which are particularly important when new actions under the education programme are being launched, as well as the support of European associations of teachers and students.

9.2 Justification for the action

9.2.1 The Community's role in the field of education is to help to promote good quality education through the establishing of cooperative activities. At a time when society expects its citizens to have increasingly sophisticated levels of knowledge and know-how, and when society's progress depends mainly on its ability to produce human resources capable of developing in a wider context, particularly that of the European Union, it is up to the Community to help the education systems in the Member States to meet this challenge.

9.2.2 The Community also wished to give fresh impetus to its activities in the field of education by including a specific article on the subject in the Treaty on European Union.

9.2.3 For over a decade now the Member States and the Council have consistently shown interest in and support for the development of the Community's activities, by adopting action programmes in this field and taking an active part in their implementation.

9.2.4 The European Parliament has also constantly supported the development of these activities and has promoted a number of pilot projects in school education. It also declared its support for the Commission's decision to rationalise existing actions, which are mainly intended to make it easier for those who could benefit from Community measures to have access to them, and to extend and refocus these measures on school education, up to now a relatively neglected area.

9.2.5 The approach proposed by the Commission is therefore entirely consistent with its working paper on Guidelines in the field of education and training and the Green paper on the European dimension in education. It will involve developing new measures and reorganising previous actions in a single programme based on Article 126 of the Treaty on European Union.

9.2.6 The measures are now divided into three complementary but separate chapters. They will reinforce and supplement actions organised by the Member States and enable them to take advantage of cooperation in the education field to improve the quality and efficiency of their education systems and practices.

9.2.7 Activities can now be based on the substantial experience gained from the implementation of the action programmes (ERASMUS, LINGUA) or pilot projects. From the reports and evaluations of these actions the Community can now focus its activities more accurately on those which have proved to give a high level of Community added value.

9.2.8 The proposed measures are therefore structured around cooperation programmes between educational establishments, partnerships and networks, which have all proved effective in giving education a European dimension. Their objectives, taking due note of the principle of subsidiarity, cover fields where the Community level contribution produces increased effectiveness: knowledge of the languages of the Union, transnational mobility, fostering exchanges of information and experience, open and distance education.

9.2.9 Community measures form a particularly effective complement to the measures taken by the Member States in that the budget available for the Community measures is extremely limited in comparison with that of the Member States, and is concentrated on sectors which generally receive less national funding and which are generally hardest hit by budget restrictions in times of economic austerity. These are sectors related to transnational activities and teaching innovation.

In some sectors, for example in open and distance education, the opportunities to make more widely available those teaching materials developed with Community support will certainly unblock the restrictions on the production of quality products tailored to the various target groups.

9.2.10 Through these measures the education programme will make a definite contribution to the quality of education and therefore to the cohesion of the European Union. It is intended to create an open European area for education where comparisons of methods and references will lead to a wider range of teaching options, making education generally more accessible for all. Furthermore, by disseminating the most successful aspects of the various education systems, the programme will help them to develop and will encourage transfer of results which could lead to considerable savings at national level.

9.2.11 In higher education Community action will continue to promote mobility among students. The impact that mobility has had on universities and the growing interest which national and local authorities are showing in it - particularly in the form of sizeable co-funding - are evidence of the dynamic role played by students in the development of the university system and of the Member States' need for young qualified workers with first-hand experience of another country in the Union.

However, the measures proposed for higher education also take a more integrated approach, in which all the academic authorities will be involved in transnational cooperation. This will produce economies of scale, give all students the advantage

of an education with a European dimension, and lead to greater clarity and recognition of qualifications, a basic prerequisite if people are to have genuine freedom of movement.

9.2.12 In school education the main aim is to promote transnational cooperation in an area where there is so much controversy and which is subject to considerable and sometimes contradictory demands.

School education should be able to benefit from the combined efforts of the education systems in the Member States, which often lead to considerable progress. Huge investment is required here, and in being able to disseminate and encourage innovation and by cutting costs through the better use of resources, particularly for teaching materials and methods, the Community can provide very valuable assistance for all education systems.

9.2.13 What the proposed measures all have in common is that they set up a flexible framework which gets the best out of the different types of education system. They aim to establish practical cooperation which is firmly rooted in schools' real needs and produces transferable products. Since the spreading of such products is built in to the various actions, both specific and complementary (networks), these can be expected to have a major impact despite the relatively small amount of funding available to them.

9.2.14 Finally, it should be stressed that the Community's activities in the education field do much to increase the Community's profile in this area and to give the construction of Europe a more tangible form for its citizens. Education is a field which concerns everyone and is often a subject of society's debates, which attract considerable public attention, affecting as it does individuals', families' and Member States' futures. Through being geared towards children, young people and their teachers, the Community's measures in the education field will be a major factor in stimulating awareness of Europe, developing enlightened attitudes towards it and encouraging a feeling of belonging and support for the basic values on which the European Union is founded.

Main factors of uncertainty which could affect the specific results of the actions:

The proposed programme incorporates existing activities developed as part of Community programmes such as ERASMUS and LINGUA, both of which the Council and the Parliament have repeatedly said they would like to see continued or even expanded in view of the impact they have had in the Community.

A series of European-wide activities in the field of education at school level (partnerships, intercultural network of teacher-training institutions, etc.) have been developed on a restricted scale as pilot projects, and these now need to be intensified and expanded.

The new measures planned in the programme cannot be launched without additional funding from the Community, whose catalytic role is universally emphasised.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the action

9.3.1 Performance indicators selected

The performance indicators vary according to the aims of the measures listed in the Annex to the Decision.

Generally speaking a distinction must be drawn between:

- qualitative performance indicators, which cannot always be measured in quantitative terms;
- quantitative performance indicators which can be used to measure quantitative or qualitative results;
- value indicators which can be used to obtain a certain level of achievement at low cost.

As a guideline, the following could be used as performance indicators:

CHAPTER I - HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Output from university contracts:

a) Inter-university cooperation activities:

- number of faculties, students and teaching staff involved and satisfaction level;
- services offered by institutions (careers guidance, accommodation, administrative facilities, linguistic preparation for students in all languages, follow-up and reintegration, academic recognition procedures, more widespread application of ECTS, etc.);
- flows of students and teaching staff to all the Member States and in all subjects;
- number of advanced courses or intensive programmes organised jointly with other institutions, particularly in more topical subject areas;
- funding additional to Community finance;
- measures taken to continue activities once Community funding has been withdrawn;
- involvement in regional or other groups to organise certain activities jointly (courses in less widely used languages, open and distance education resource centres, etc.);
- number of study visits by teaching staff in less common subjects.

b) Activities with a European dimension for everyone:

- quality and range of social/economic/cultural courses about the other Member States available in all subjects;
- availability of modules on European integration;
- availability of courses in all the languages of the Community for students and teaching staff;
- use of open and distance education for the above activities.

c) Promotion of open and distance education in higher education:

- number of teaching materials produced;
- number of different subjects covered by these materials;
- number of students involved in open and distance education.

2. Output from European university networks:

- number of faculties involved in the network;
- group work within the networks;
- communication medium (newsletter, electronic mail, etc.);
- analysis of comparability of courses in the same subject in the Community;
- consideration given to the organisation, content and requirements of specific fields of study;
- organisation of seminars or summer schools for teaching staff in a given field.

3. Output from Community funding for student mobility grants:

- number of grants awarded by Member State and by region, by participating institution, by subject area, etc.;
- number of students in need of funding for mobility;
- level of satisfaction among students;
- level of funding additional to Community finance and sources of this funding;
- average amount of grant.

It is too early to try to predict impact here. For the impact of the Community's measures to promote mobility, see the ERASMUS evaluation report.

For higher education, a series of studies, surveys and analyses (by country, region, subject area and group of participants) already exists, but needs to be brought up to date. Furthermore, in view of the wider scope of the activities, new studies are to be carried out and seminars or workshops organised in each subject field. University Rectors' Conferences from the Member States have already indicated their interest in having such activities organised.

CHAPTERS II AND III

1. Cooperation between schools and updating the skills of staff involved in education:

- range and prevalence of Community languages taught;
- changes to curricula to incorporate a European dimension;
- number of school or parallel activities associated with the introduction of a European dimension into studies;
- number of updating courses involving modules or sections on the Community;
- number of staff studying these modules.

2. Activities to foster language skills:

- number of teachers involved in immersion courses and assistantships;
- range of languages covered by immersion courses and assistantships;
- number of language teaching products and joint projects;
- changes to curricula and teaching methods in updating the skills of language teachers as a result of transnational cooperation.

3. Activities to foster open and distance education:

- number of teaching products developed and/or available in European resource centres;
- range of subjects covered by these products;
- numbers involved in open learning, particularly among staff involved in education.

4. Activities to promote information:

- number of documents exchanged or pooled;
- number of different topics dealt with;
- number of studies or analyses promoted;
- numbers involved in study visits;

9.3.2 Under the terms of Article 9 of the proposal for a Decision establishing a Community action programme "SOCRATES"

- the Commission must take the necessary measures to ensure the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the programme, taking account of the objectives referred to in Article 3 of the Decision;
- during the third year of the programme the Commission is to present an evaluation report covering the first two years of implementation.

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