

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

SEC (89)1191 final - SYN 168

Brussels, 20 July 1989

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENT

Declaration by the Commission on
The Council Common Position of 20 June 1989 concerning
the Commission proposal to adopt
two specific research and technological development programmes
in the field of the environment

STEP: Science and Technology for Environmental Protection

EPOCH: European Programme on Climatology and Natural Hazards
(1989 - 1992)



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COM(88) 632 final, as modified by COM(89) 134 final - SYN 168

1. BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND CONTENT

In November 1988 the Commission submitted a proposal for a Council Decision to adopt two specific research and technological development programmes in the field of the environment (1989-1992) - STEP (Science and Technology for Environmental Protection) and EPOCH (European Programme on Climatology and Natural Hazards).

The European Parliament on 12 April 1989, in delivering its opinion on STEP and EPOCH at first reading, approved the Commission proposal subject to three amendments of which the following were accepted by the Commission in their substance although not necessarily in their wording:

- the indicative breakdown of funds (part two of amendment no. 1; article 2, technical annex)
- extension of Research Area 5 to underwater soils (amendment no. 3; technical annex).

Accordingly on 22 May 1989, the Commission transmitted to the Council its modified proposal which also took into account the new structure of the advisory committee for the programmes (articles 5 and 6).

The Council, at its meeting of 20 June 1989, unanimously adopted its Common Position.

2. COUNCIL TREATMENT OF PARLIAMENTS AMENDMENTS

The Common Position follows very largely the Modified Proposal. It includes the two amendments of the European Parliament which were fully or in part accepted by the Commission.

3. OTHER CHANGES INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL

Recitals: The Common Position completes recital 2 by including a reference to the amendment of the Framework Programme and replaces recital 3 with a new recital which sets out in more detail the objectives of the programmes, based on the provisions of the Framework Programme itself.

The Commission agrees to these changes.

Articles: The small reduction in staff expenditure (28 posts instead of 30) can be accepted. The Commission will ensure that this does not hinder the effective implementation of the programme. Council has introduced a new article after article 6 which specifies the tasks of the Committee of an Advisory Nature which will assist the Commission during the implementation of the programme. The Commission can accept these specifications. In article 8, the Common Position limits to European non-Member states and international organizations the possibility to negotiate participation in the programmes. This limitation is in line with other recently adopted specific programmes and is therefore acceptable to the Commission.

Programme objectives and evaluation criteria (Annex I): The Common Position combines the programme objectives and evaluation criteria in one annex and adds the strengthening of industrial competitiveness within the Community as part of the third objective of the programmes, as well as the corresponding evaluation criteria. As the combination does not change the objectives and evaluation criteria themselves and the addition of objective 3 is a consequence of the new recital 3 (see recitals above), the Commission can accept these changes.

Contents and indicative allocation of funds (Annex II): The modified wording of a number of sub-research areas introduced in the Common Position does not change the contents of the programmes and is in line with the intentions of the Commission. The allocation of 5% of the total funds for staff costs is acceptable to the Commission (see articles above).

Implementation: The Common Position provides that shared-cost research projects should in general be carried out by participants from more than one Member State. Whilst ensuring greater flexibility this also ensures that in the case of research projects involving a third country, participants from at least two Member States should also be involved.

The conditions for the association and involvement of non-Member States are provided for in article 8 and not under implementation. The new provision that shared-cost contracts be awarded on the basis of public calls for proposals corresponds to the intentions of the Commission.

All these modifications are acceptable to the Commission.

