

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1983-1984

10 October 1983

DOCUMENT 1-752/83/ANNEX

ANNEX

to the report by Mr B. SÄLZER
drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Energy,
Research and Technology

Opinions of the Committee on Budgets and
the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

PE 85.119/fin/Ann.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the acting chairman to Mrs WALZ, chairman of the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology

Subject: Opinion of the Committee on Budgets on the draft decisions concerning structures and procedures for decision-making in the field of science and technology and the coordination of Community research, development and demonstration activities (Doc. 170/83).

Dear Madam chairman,

At its meeting of 21 and 22 September 1983, the Committee on Budgets unanimously approved the proposal to set up a Higher Policy Committee for Science and Technology and a consultative system to help the Commission implement and manage Community research, development and demonstration activities.

This unanimous decision was taken by the Committee on Budgets after it had been informed that the consultative system assisting the Commission would, without encroaching on the latter's management responsibilities, enable it to rationalize its activities in this field.

p.p. (signature)

C. BARBARELLA
acting chairman

Present: Mrs BARBARELLA, acting chairman; Mr ADAM (deputizing for Mr ARNDT); Mr BALFOUR; Mr BARBAGLI; Mr BARBI (deputizing for Mr ADONNINO); Mr FICH; Mr LOUWES; Mr NEWTON-DUNN; Mrs SCRIVENER and Mr WOLTJER (deputizing for Mrs HOFF).

OPINION

(Rule 101 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

Draftsman: Mr SCHINZEL

At its meeting on 25-26 May 1983 the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs appointed Mr Schinzel as draftsman of an opinion for the Committee on Energy and Research.

The Committee considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 27-28 September 1983 and adopted it unanimously.

The following took part in the vote :

Mr MOREAU (Chairman); Mr ROGALLLA (replacing Mr Wagner and presenting the opinion in the absence of Mr SCHINZEL); Mr BEAZLEY; Mr BEUMER (replacing Mr Vergeer); Mr BONACCINI; Mr DAMSEAUX (replacing Mr Nordmann); Mrs DESOUCHES; Mr von ROMPUY; Mr WEDEKIND (replacing Mr Franz); Mr von WOGAU.

The Commission's proposals

1. The Commission's proposals are aimed at improving the management procedures for Research and Development at Community level, and are thus complementary to the Commission's framework programme for a European scientific and technical strategy, as well as other related programmes such as that promoting the utilization of the results of Community sponsored R and D.
2. The Commission's document contains two draft Council Resolutions. The first, dealing with structures and procedures for decision-making in the field of science and technology, would dissolve the existing Scientific and Technical Research Committee (CREST) and a number of other specialised groups, and replace them by a new Higher Policy Committee for science and technology (HCST). This would examine the priorities of Community research as a whole and, in particular, participate in the decisions that need to be taken on the Commission's proposed framework programme.
3. The second draft Council decision would dissolve the existing subcommittees of CREST, the Advisory Committees on Programme Management, and the Concerted Action Committees, and replace them by a series of new Management and Coordination Consultative Committees (CGC's). These would examine and make recommendations on Community R and D activities in specific fields.

CONCLUSIONS

4. The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs welcomes proposals leading to the more efficient management of Community R and D activities, and replacing the existing complicated structure of committees and subcommittees by a somewhat simplified structure. It would, however, have welcomed an

evaluation by the Commission of how the existing structure has functioned over the last few years, and of the strengths and weaknesses that have emerged. The Committee wonders, furthermore, why the Commission is putting forward so many separate proposals in this field, and why it is not combining all of its various proposals within its suggested framework programme for a European scientific and technical strategy.

5. The Committee notes additionally that among the Management and Coordination Consultative Committees (CGC's) that would be set up by the second draft decision are ones concerning information technology (including automatic translation) and industrial technology (except ECSC steel research). The Committee welcomes the creation of these two CGC's in particular, (especially in view of the fact that there was no industrial technology group among the lengthy list of scientific and technical committees to be dissolved), and insists on being kept informed of their work and recommendations.

By letter of 8 April 1983 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion on the proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for I. a decision dealing with structures and procedures for decision-making in the field of science and technology and II. a resolution dealing with structures and procedures for the management and coordination of Community research, development and demonstration activities.

On 16 May 1983 the President of the European Parliament referred these proposals to the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology as the committee responsible and to the Political Affairs Committee, the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs for opinions.

At its meeting of 21 April 1983 the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology appointed Mr SÄLZER rapporteur and at the same time decided to include in its examination the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs WALZ and others (Doc. 1-814/82), on which the committee had been asked for an opinion.

The committee considered the Commission's proposal and the draft report at its meetings of 21 April and 20 September 1983.

At the last meeting the committee decided unanimously to recommend to Parliament that it approve the Commission's proposal with the following amendments.

The Commission stated before the committee that it had not taken a decision on amendment No. 2 and that it was prepared to accept amendments Nos. 1 and 3.

The committee then unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution as a whole.

The following took part in the vote: Mr SELIGMAN, acting chairman; Mr SÄLZER, rapporteur; Mr BERNHARD, Mr CAROSSINO (deputizing for Mr IPPOLITO), Mr Karl FUCHS, Lord HARMAR-NICHOLLS (deputizing for Mr NORMANTON), Mr MORELAND, Mr PEDINI, Mrs PHLIX, Mr PURVIS, Mr RINSCHÉ, Mr SCHMID and Mr VERONESI.

The opinions of the Political Affairs Committee, Committee on Budgets and Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs will be published separately.

This report was submitted on 22 September 1983.

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The Committee on Energy, Research and Technology hereby submits to the European Parliament the following amendments to the Commission's proposals and motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

- I. Proposal from the Commission for a Council Decision dealing with structures and procedures for decision-making in the field of science and technology

Unchanged

- II. Proposal from the Commission for a Council Resolution dealing with structures and procedures for the management and coordination of Community research, development and demonstration activities

Amendments tabled by the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology

Text proposed by the Commission of the European Communities

Preamble and recitals unchanged

Articles 1 and 2 unchanged

Amendment No. 1

Article 3

CGCs shall be composed of, at most, three representatives of each Member State and the Commission. The representatives of Member States shall be nominated by the Commission in agreement with their Governments on the basis of their scientific experience and knowledge of national scientific and technical policies in the field for which they are responsible. Their term of office shall be four years, renewable.

Article 3

CGCs shall be composed of, at most, three representatives of each Member State and the Commission. The representatives of Member States shall be nominated by the Commission in agreement with their Governments. Their term of office shall be four years, renewable.

Article 4 unchanged

Amendment No. 2

Article 5

The Commission shall ensure that all necessary liaison between the CGCs takes place. The opinions and reports emanating from CGCs shall be passed to the Council and the Parliament by the Commission in each case. Their members shall be subject to questioning by the European Parliament and its committees.

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The Commission shall ensure that all necessary liaison between the CGCs takes place. The opinions and reports emanating from CGCs shall be passed to the Council and the Parliament by the Commission as required.

Amendments tabled by the Committee
on Energy, Research and Technology

Text proposed by the Commission of
the European Communities

Amendment No. 3

Article 6 unchanged

Annex 1

Annex 1

List of CGCs set up by this
Decision:

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Decision:

- Industrial technology (except ECSC steel research),
- Information technology (including automatic translation),
- Biotechnology,
- Raw and other materials,
- Non-nuclear energy (except ECSC coal research),
- Health and Safety (except ECSC hygienic safety),
- Environment,
- Development aid,
- Linguistic problems (including automatic translation).

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- Information technology (including automatic translation),
- Biotechnology,
- Raw and other materials,
- Non-nuclear energy (except ECSC coal research),
- Health and Safety (except ECSC hygienic safety),
- Environment,
- Development aid,
- Linguistic problems (including automatic translation).

This list shall be reviewed as and when the Council takes new programme decisions and after consulting the European Parliament.

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A.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

closing the procedure for consultation of the European Parliament on the proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision

- I. dealing with structures and procedures for decision-making in the field of science and technology and
- II. dealing with structures and procedures for the management and coordination of Community research, development and demonstration activities

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposals from the Commission to the Council¹,
 - having been consulted by the Council (Doc. 1-170/83),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular
 - on the proposals from the Commission for a European scientific and technical strategy: framework programme 1984-87²,
 - on the common research policy: problems and prospects³,
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs WALZ and others (Doc. 1-814/82),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology and to the opinions of the Political Affairs Committee, the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (Doc. 1-752/83),
 - having regard to the result of the vote on the Commission's proposal,
- A. Recalling its repeated reminders and requests for proper reorganization and rationalization of the system of advisory bodies in the field of the research and development policy of the European Communities;
 1. Welcomes the Commission's initiative as an important step towards improving the system of advisory bodies;

¹OJ No. C 113 of 27.4.1983, p. 4

²OJ No. C 184 of 10.6.1983, p. 151 (SÄLZER report)

³OJ No. C 334 of 20.12.1982, p. 96 (LINKÖHR report)

2. Supports in particular the Commission's proposal to reduce drastically the large number of Advisory Committees on Programme Management (ACPMs) and Concerted Action Committees (COMACs) which have so far existed and to set up a single Management and Coordination Consultative Committee (CGC) for each field of activity;
3. Supports, in addition, the proposal to bring together the responsibilities currently divided up between CREST and various working groups attached to the Council in a Higher Policy Committee for Science and Technology (HCST);
4. Welcomes the plan to achieve, by means of this restructuring, a clearer distinction between the advisory and decision-making bodies of the Commission and Council of Ministers;
5. Repeats its request to the Commission to forward to Parliament lists of the officials and experts nominated to the various advisory bodies and to submit them to questioning and control by the European Parliament and its competent committees;
6. Insists that Parliament's opinion must be obtained before setting up further CGCs;
7. Requests the Commission, when nominating the members of these committees, to ensure that it is not just representatives of national research bodies and research institutes who are nominated, and that the scientific experience of the persons being nominated is also taken into account;
8. Requests the Commission to submit to the European Parliament within two years after the CGCs have been set up a report on the activities of these committees;
9. Requests the Commission to adopt the amendments proposed by the European Parliament;
10. Instructs its President to forward to the Council and Commission, as Parliament's opinion, the Commission's proposals as voted by Parliament and the corresponding resolution.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

I. Introduction

1. The document submitted by the Commission contains two proposals for Council decisions aiming to modify and adapt the specific structures and procedures relating to the Community policy in the field of science and technology.
2. The Commission bases itself on the following principles:
 - 'multiple and interdependent consultation;
 - reconciling the political, scientific and technical, and financial examinations;
 - streamlining procedures'.
3. In its discussions on the Commission's proposals on the scientific and technical activities of the Community (framework programme 1984-1987) the members of the committee endorsed the view of the rapporteur that support should be given to the Commission's stated intention of using the adoption of that framework programme for the first time as an opportunity to carry out a long overdue reform and rationalization of the complex system of advisory bodies in the field of the Community's research and development policy.
4. In various previous reports drawn up by the committee and resolutions adopted in plenary sitting Parliament had criticised the 'excessive complexity and inflexible decision-making arrangements' and called for a curb on 'bureaucratic tendencies and red tape'¹. In addition, the committee, 'aware of the large number of advisory panels and assessors appointed by the Commission to assist in supplementing the work of their own staff' had increasingly raised the question as to the role these panels play and their composition².
5. Another aspect criticised by Parliament was the lack of control over the work of these advisory bodies. Parliament therefore requested in its resolution of 29 October 1982³ that the Commission should 'publish

¹ See HOLST report, Doc. 361/77 of 14.11.1977, p. 16

² NORMANTON report, Doc. 1-670/82, p. 13

³ OJ No. C 304 of 22.11.1982, p. 263 et seq., paragraph 7 (NORMANTON report)

lists of officials and experts nominated by the governments of Member States to advisory panels and of officials responsible for implementing demonstration projects, and to submit officials and experts to questioning and control by the European Parliament and its competent committees.

II. The Commission's proposals

6. The Commission now proposes:

- (a) to set up a Higher Policy Committee for Science and Technology (HCST) with the task of helping the Council to take a decision on the framework programme and sectoral action programmes. The HCST is to replace CREST and the specialized groups responsible to the Council;
- (b) to introduce a consultative system which is to help the Commission in implementing and managing Community research and development activities as well as in the coordination of national research, development and demonstration activities; it is proposed that a Management and Coordination Consultative Committee (CGC) should be set up for each field of activity.

The CGCs are to replace the subcommittees of CREST as well as the Advisory Committees on Programme Management (ACPMs) and the Concerted Action Committees (COMACs).

7. Thus all in all the Commission proposed to replace 26 Advisory Committees on Programme Management (ACPMs), 9 Concerted Action Committees (COMACs), 1 ad hoc expert group and 8 CREST subcommittees by 9 Management and Coordination Consultative Committees (CGCs) for the present.

This rationalization of the system of advisory bodies should in principle be welcomed. However, the fact that 44 different advisory bodies are now being replaced by 9 new committees should also give food for thought. Your rapporteur leaves it to each member of the Committee to draw the appropriate conclusions as to the actual efficiency of the previous system.

8. In the Commission's view the number of Management and Coordination Consultative Committees, of which there are 9, could be reviewed as and when the Council takes new programme decisions. In order to counteract the danger of a fresh flood or 'mushrooming' of advisory bodies it is important at this stage for Parliament to consider carefully during its discussions in committee whether, in the case of each new programme

decision, there is an objective need to set up a new CGC. The Commission should not already be given full powers at this stage to set up further advisory bodies.

9. It is also particularly important for Parliament to be given effective powers of control over the work of these bodies. For this reason we request that it should not be left to the Commission's discretion as to whether it forwards opinions and reports drawn up by the CGCs to the Council and to Parliament. The Committee on Energy, Research and Technology requests, in the contrary, that such documents should be forwarded to those institutions on a regular basis. In addition, Parliament should be given the right to hear members of these advisory bodies.
10. Under the Commission's proposals, each CGC is to consist of at most three representatives of each Member State who are to be nominated by the Commission in agreement with their governments. In order to ensure that these members are not recruited merely from State research institutes and State laboratories, thereby being too dependent upon their governments, the committee proposes that these members should be nominated primarily on the basis of their scientific experience and their knowledge of national scientific and technical policies.
11. Your rapporteur wishes to be brief as regards the Commission's proposal to replace CREST and the Council's specialized groups by a Higher Policy Committee for Science and Technology (HCST), since this comes within the Council's advisory and decision-making structures. In principle the setting-up of the HCST should however be approved since the Commission has rightly recognized that a sharper dividing line must be drawn between the Commission's advisory bodies and those of the Council. This is dictated not merely by the desire to rationalize and streamline the procedure but rather by the need to ensure that the Commission is not influenced by the same bodies which prepare decisions within the Council.

III. Conclusions

12. The Commission's proposals are welcomed in principle by this committee as a constructive suggestion for the improvement of the system of advisory bodies in the field of the Community research and development policy.

In most respects they correspond to Parliament's repeated requests and deal with the misgivings which have been expressed. They are, in addition, a consequence of the Commission's experience with the hitherto far too complex system of Advisory Committees on Programme Management, some of which are obviously superfluous.

13. Experience has shown that such a system must be tested to see how it operates in practice within the Commission's routine and, if necessary (as has, in this instance, however, occurred much too late), modified and adapted to changing requirements. The Commission is therefore requested to submit to Parliament, not more than two years after the new system of advisory bodies has been set up, a comprehensive report on the activities of the CGCs.