COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

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1274th meeting of the Council

- Research -

Brussels, 17 November 1988

President: Anastassios PEPONIS

Minister for Industry, Energy
and Technology
of the Hellenic Republic

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The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Marcel COLLA	State Secretary for Science Policy

Denmark:

Mr Jakob Esper LARSEN	Ambassador, Permanent Representative

Germany:

Mr Gerhard ZILLER	State Secretary, Federal Ministry for Research and Technology

Greece:

Mr Anastassios PEPONIS	Minister for Industry, Energy and Technology

Spain:

Mr Javier SOLANA MADARIAGA	Minister for Education and Science
Mr Juan Manuel ROJO ALAMINOS	State Secretary for the Universities and Research

France:

Mr Hubert CURIEN	Minister for Research and Technology

Ireland:

Mr Sean McCARTHY	Minister of State at the Department of Industry and Commerce, with responsibility for Science and Technology

Italy:

Mr Antonio RUBERTI	Minister for Scientific Research and Universities

Luxembourg:

Mr Fernand BODEN	Minister for Education and Youth

Netherlands:

Mr P.C. NIEMAN	Ambassador, Permanent Representative

Portugal:

Mr Luis VALENTE DE OLIVEIRA	Minister for Planning and Territorial Administration
Mr José SUCENA PAIVA	State Secretary for Science and Technology

United Kingdom:

Mr Tony NEWTON	Minister of Trade and Industry

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Commission:

Mr Karl-Heinz NARJES	Vice-President

COHESION IN THE RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY SECTORS

At the Presidency's instigation, the Council held a general exchange of views on the question of cohesion in the research and technology sectors.

To this end, it had before it a Presidency note on the contribution which science and technology could make towards reducing the gap between regions of the Community and achieving economic and social cohesion.

During detailed discussion, delegations generally welcomed the Presidency's move to set in motion a dialogue within the Council and stated the views underlying their individual approach to this major issue.

At the close of the discussion, the Presidency felt that it would be useful if the Commission assessed the impact of R&D programmes currently in hand under the framework programme on economic and social cohesion, so as to enable the Council to discuss the matter further at a forthcoming meeting under the Spanish Presidency.

THE COMMUNITY AND SPACE

The Council heard a statement by VIce-Presidency NARJES introducing the Commission communication entitled "The Community and Space: a coherent approach" and, in particular, the action lines proposed by the Commission to guide the development of Community activities in this sector.

The Council held a preliminary policy debate on the Commission initiative, during which it was recognized that the communication required thorough examination. In this connection, particular emphasis was placed on the complementarity of the Community's potential effort in this area and activities already being deployed within other European organizations, in particular the European Space Agency (ESA).

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to examine the communication further.

STATE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN EUROPE

The Council heard an introductory statement by Vice-President NARJES on the main thrust of the first report just submitted by the Commission on the state of science and technology in Europe.

The Council will begin examining this communication at a forthcoming meeting.

COMMON POSITIONS ON THREE SPECIFIC R&D PROGRAMMES

The Council adopted common positions on the following three programmes:

- Experimental Community plan to support and facilitate access to large-scale scientific facilities of European interest (1989-1992)

- First multiannual programme (1988-1993) for biotechnology-based agro-industrial R&D development - ECLAIR

- Stimulation plan for economic science (1989-1992) - SPES

which will be forwarded to the European Parliament under the co-operation procedure.

Access to large-scale facilities

Under this plan, which has been allocated a 4-year 30 MECU budget (and a staff of 3), the Community will provide financial support to facilitate access to large-scale scientific facilities situated in the European Community and thereby promote their exploitation. It aims, inter alia, to help improve competitiveness in the field of research and at the same time to strengthen economic and social cohesion.

The Commission will be responsible for implementing the plan, with the assistance of an Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the Member States.

The objectives and implementing procedure of the plan are as follows:

The plan takes the form of a number of temporary financial support measures, aimed at encouraging access to large-scale scientific and technical installations within the Community. It is of potential benefit to all researchers in the exact and natural sciences who are nationals of one of the Community Member States.

1. OBJECTIVES

The precise objectives of the plan take the following form:

- to encourage access by researchers who are nationals of Community Member States to major scientific and technical installations within the Community to which they would not normally enjoy access;

- to increase training opportunities available to European researchers so as to enable them to make better use of major scientific and technical installations;

- to develop the use of large-scale scientific and technical facilities within the Community, where necessary by adaptation and/or the addition of special features.

2. POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES

Community financial support may be made available to:

- any organization within the Community which possesses major scientific and technical equipment or an installation of interest to the exact and natural sciences;

- any researcher or engineer who is a national of one of the Community Member States and is currently working in a public or private sector laboratory in one of the Member States. All fields of the exact and natural sciences are eligible.

3. PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Call for proposals and selection procedure

(a) The Commission will publish a call for preliminary proposals from organizations or groups of organizations within the Community having one or more major scientific and technical installations with experimental and/or test facilities which could be made available to scientists or research workers who have hitherto been unable to use them.

The Commission will also ensure that scientists and research workers who could potentially benefit under the plan from access to the facilities in question are informed of the possibilities likely to become available.

The preliminary proposals received from those responsible for the large-scale facilities should be accompanied by a written statement of interest expressed by potential new users.

(b) The Commission will draw up a draft preselection list of preliminary proposals to be retained. The Committee referred to in Article 3 will be informed of the proposals received and will give an opinion on the draft preselection list according to the procedure set out in Article 3(3). The Commission will then establish a preselection list of facilities which will be published in the Official Journal.

(c) On the basis of the preselection list, the Commission will ask for "joint proposals" from the installations and potential users concerned. The Commission may, if necessary, assist in the organization of meetings between those responsible for the installations and potential users (financing of joint meetings, etc.).

(d) The Commission will submit the list of joint proposals received to the Committee, which shall, in accordance with the procedure set out in Article 3(3), give an opinion on the operations with a view to financial support from the plan. The Commission will then proceed to the final selection of the operations to benefit from Community support.

3.2. Choice of installations to receive Community support

Criteria of selection

The assessment of the value of Community support will be based upon an evaluation of the proposal put forward, on the basis of the following criteria:

(a) Quality of the facility:

- specific characteristics
- originality or uniqueness
- up-to-dateness
- range of experiments or tests possible
- backup and technical support available.

(b) Interest shown by potential users:

- Priority will be given to researchers from Member States other than that in which the major installation is situated.

(c) Cost/benefit ratio of Community support:

- the number and quality of opportunities made available at the facility in return for Community support.

(d) Value to the Community:

- importance of the facility in respect of the Community's overall scientific and technical potential;

- value of the experimental opportunities made available in terms of achieving the Community's scientific and technical objectives (potential links with sectoral R&D objectives);

- value of the facility in terms of strengthening the scientific and technical potential of certain countries or regions of the EEC.

3.3. Mechanisms for giving Community support to selected installations

The Commission will conclude an agreement with the recipient organization or institution which will set out:

- the level of Community funding;

- the uses to which it may be put, including a quantification of the opportunities for access to visiting scientists;

- the obligations imposed upon the recipient organization.

The obligations imposed on the recipient organization include, inter alia:

- enabling the use of the equipment and installations forming the subject of the agreement at no extra charge by researchers not belonging to the recipient organization or institution, this being for a fixed period of time over the year;

- ensuring access by visiting scientists to the scientific and technical back-up services on site.

The contracts will also specify:

- the payment from Community funds to visiting scientists and research workers of all eligible expenditure covered by the plan;

- the methods by which the results arising from research carried out under the agreement are to be protected, disseminated and exploited.

Finally, the Commission will, in co-operation with the installations concerned, take all appropriate measures to ensure the best possible implementation of the operations selected (programming, availability of machine time, etc.).

3.4. Implementation report

At the end of each year of Community support, the beneficiary organization or institute will make a report to the Commission upon the use to which the funds awarded to them were put, and the results arising from the use which outside researchers made of the facilities made available to them in the context of the agreement signed with the Commission.

First ECLAIR programme

This programme has an 80 MECU budget (and a staff of 13). Through financial support for research contracts, co-ordination activities and training/mobility grants, the programme aims to involve in the research effort in this area industrial or agricultural undertakings, research institutions, universities or combinations of them, established in the Community whose existing competitive capabilities might otherwise remain scattered.

The Commission will be responsible for implementing the programme, with the assistance of an Advisory Committee composed of representatives from the Member States.

This first multiannual action programme has the following features:

AIMS

The objective of the programme proposed is to promote in Europe the useful application of recent developments in the life sciences and biotechnology. This shall be achieved by a programme of precompetitive research and technical development projects and co-ordination activities, based on close collaboration between agriculture and industrial activities, and supported by training/mobility grants. The programme will contribute in the medium and longer terms to enhancing Europe's competitiveness in the economic activities which will be based on these developments and to strengthening economic and social cohesion in the Community.

The programme shall avoid adverse effects on public health and the environment, and the creation of problems in respect of the protection and enhancement of nature.

The principle objectives of this programme are enumerated below:

(i) research, adaptation and development of agricultural products destined for industrial use, as well as the research and promotion of new industrial techniques for processing and transforming agricultural raw materials with a view to obtaining, under economically viable conditions, industrial products which respond to the needs of the market;

(ii) research and development of industrial inputs in agriculture, such as pesticides, fertilizers and of eradication and disease control systems less harmful or better adapted to the environment; the reduction and elimination of by-products of processing by recovering resources and reducing waste.

CONTENT

The programme shall be pursued through the measures set out below:

1. EVALUATION TRIALS AND PRODUCTION OF NEW SPECIES OR ORGANISMS

This sector shall consist of test trials at appropriate scale and under various conditions of novel or modified species or organisms (plants, livestock, others) in order to test performance, pest resistance, input requirements, and aspects relevant to suitability for industrial processing, animal nutrition and market acceptability of the organism, its constituents, and the products derived from them with special emphasis on the use of new biotechnological methods in the identification, characterization, selection, modification, propagation, cultivation or other aspects of developing and appraising the candidate organisms.

2. INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This sector shall consist of:

2.1. more precise and effective inputs to agriculture through research and development work, based on the use of life sciences and biotechnology, aiming at the creation of products and services for use in agriculture, offering advantages in terms of precision, cost-effectiveness, enhanced plant or animal performance, suitability for subsequent product processing and/or marketing, and avoiding possible undesirable side effects;

2.2. more precise and effective extraction, transformation and production processes through research and development work on methods to increase the use and value of agricultural produce, by extraction, transformation or other processes, in industry or elsewhere, which by biotechnological or other means make greater or more valuable use of the intrinsic properties of these materials.

3. INTEGRATED APPROACHES

This sector shall consist of:

3.1. the improved utilization of the entire crop by the development, through trial systems, of systems for harvesting the whole crop, its preservation and fractionation into constituents appropriate for subsequent applications; such trial system(s) to be of adequate scale to provide a basis for economic appraisals, and the significant participation of industrial and agricultural interests. Priority will be given to projects using advanced biotechnology;

4. Topics of research are, inter alia:

(i) the Community's internal market programme and issues of microeconomic analysis, including industrial organization and the economics of regulatory policies (e.g. standards);

(ii) European integration economics, including issues of intra-European regional North-South relations;

(iii) the determinants of economic growth in Western Europe, including dynamic factors, such as advanced technology and innovation, and constraints, such as environmental concerns;

(iv) systematic issues in the monetary areas and macroeconomic and fiscal policy co-ordination;

(v) problems of trade policy and the role of Western Europe in the international division of labour;

(vi) employment, health and social policy issues, which have quite different characteristics in Western Europe, compared to the United States or Japan, and

(vii) methodological and modelling problems relevant to the abovementioned subjects or otherwise of fundamental interest, the setting up of statistical concepts and adequate technical, social and economic indicators, as well as more precise economic models.

2. The programme shall be implemented by support for the following actions:

   - scholarships, research grants, grants for multinational networks or research projects, and

   - subsidies for high-level training courses, organized in collaboration with the scientific communities concerned, and facilitating the realization of surveys and studies as well as access to data banks.

3. Consideration shall be given to applications for financial support made by individuals or institutions which satisfy each of the following criteria:

   (a) scientific excellence;

   (b) the multinational European aspects (transnational co-operation or activity outside the country of origin);

   (c) the European interest of the substance of the research, either in terms of its general scientific value or its applied analytical content.

   Where scientific and technical quality is comparable, particular attention will be given to projects likely to reduce scientific and technical development disparities between Member States and thereby to contribute to economic and social cohesion within the European Community.

Stimulation of economic science - SPES

This programme, which will have a 6 MECU budget - and a staff of 2 - supplements, as regards economic science, the Community effort to stimulate the use of human R&D resources in the exact and natural sciences undertaken under the second SCIENCE programme.

The Commission will be responsible for implementing the programme. In so doing, it will be authorized to negotiate agreements with international organizations, with COST countries or with other European countries having concluded framework agreements on scientific and technical co-operation.

The objectives and contents of the programme may be summarized as follows:

1. The programme consists of a range of activities which have as their aim the establishment of a network of co-operation and interchange between economists of the highest professional quality at Community level.

   The purpose of these activities is to:

   - stimulate the mobility of Community economists and co-operation on joint research projects or networks by researchers of the Community member countries;

   - improve training by encouraging doctoral students and researchers of the Community member countries to continue with their work in Community universities or research centres other than those of their country of origin;

   - encourage young economists to return to the Community if they have been working for some time in centres of excellence of non-Community countries, and

   - favour or support the exchange of knowledge and information between researchers in economic science of Community member countries.

3.2. studies and development projects for the integrated use of new technologies which shall focus on the joint exploitation of progress in biological knowledge and techniques in conjunction with new-technology-based agricultural systems.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the projects shall be through cost-shared research and development actions and co-ordination activities. Training/mobility grants shall be included to facilitate the assembly of relevant skills at appropriate locations for the work of the projects, and to promote effective diffusion of the knowledge resulting from them. The programme shall also include the organization of meetings, consultation of experts, studies on related topics, and diffusion of information on the progress and results of the projects to all appropriate groups.

Each proposal shall include an environmental impact statement, indicating the possible effects of the project on man, fauna, flora, soils, water, air and on the interactions between these different factors. This statement must also include an undertaking to respect existing national safety regulations.

The contracts entered into by the Commission shall regulate the rights and obligations of each party, including the methods of disseminating, protecting and exploiting research results.

Bruxelles, le 17 novembre 1988

NOTE BIO(88) 361 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

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CONSEIL RECHERCHE (C. Liebana)

Les Ministres de la recherche se réuniront le jeudi 17 novembre à Bruxelles sous la présidence de M. Peponis, ministre grec de l'Industrie, de la Recherche et de la Technologie. La Commission sera représentée par le vice-président Narjes. Les travaux débuteront à 12h30. Auparavant, les ministres auront visité l'exposition Esprit au Palais des Congrès.

Le Conseil tachera d'adopter une position commune sur trois dossiers :

- plan de soutien communautaire pour faciliter l'accès aux grandes intallations scientifiques

  Ce programme prévu pour 4 ans et doté de 30 MECU a pour but de permettre à des chercheurs de profiter d'équipements auxquels ils n'ont normalement pas accès, d'accroître les possibilités de formation des chercheurs et de développer l'utilisation de ces installations. Ce programme pourrait être adopté comme point A.

- Programme ECLAIR (recherche et développement technologique dans le domaine agro-industriel basé sur les biotechnologies)

  Prévu pour 5 ans et doté de 80 MECU, ce programme vise à mettre au point des produits agricoles alternatifs qui correspondent à des besoins industriels et ouvrent de nouveaux débouchés, créer des produits biodégradables ou des engrais spécifiques absorbés par les plantes avec un minimum de perte mais aussi utiliser de nouvelles technologies adaptées à l'exploitation agricole.

- Programme SPES (plan de stimulation pour la science économique)

  Le but de ce programme est d'étendre au domaine de la science économique les efforts entrepris en vue d'intensifier la mobilité et la coopération des chercheurs en Europe. Sa durée sera de 4 ans avec une dotation de 6 MECU.

Les programme ECLAIR et SPES pourraient être approuvés si on parvenait à lever une réserve concernant la participation des pays tiers.

La présidence grecque soulevera le problème de la cohésion dans les secteurs de la recherche et de la technologie qui, selon elle, devrait permettre aux régions défavorisées de la Communauté de participer à l'évolution technologique.

En dernier lieu, M. Narjes présentera au Conseil la communication de la Commission sur la Communauté et l'Espace.

Amitiés,

C. D. Ehlermann.

Bruxelles, le 17 novembre 1988

NOTE BIO(88) 361 (SUITE 1) AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

Conseil recherche (C. LIEBANA)

Le Conseil des ministres de la recherche de la Communauté vient d'adopter en première lecture trois nouveaux programmes spécifiques de recherche et a eu des débats sur la politique de cohésion dans les secteurs de la recherche et de la technologie et sur la Communauté et l'espace.

Les programmes spécifiques de recherche adoptés par le Conseil sont un plan communautaire de soutien aux grandes installations scientifiques d'intérêt européen; un premier programme pluriannuel (1988-1993) de recherche et développement technologique dans le domaine agro-industriel, basé sur les biotechnologies (ECLAIR); et un plan européen de stimulation de coopération et d'échanges de chercheurs en science économique (1989-1992) (SPES). (Pour des détails sur ces trois programmes voir notre note IP(88) 713).

Le débat sur la cohésion à été introduit sur la base d'une note de la présidence grecque qui met l'accent sur la nécessité dans ce domaine de la science et de la technologie de réduire l'écart entre les régions développées et les moins développées de la Communauté. Les différentes délégations, tout en exprimant sa sympathie et son accord sur la note grecque, n'ont pas voulu suivre la présidence quand celle-ci a proposé que le Conseil demande à la Commission de faire le point sur les efforts qui ont été faits et qui devraient être faits à l'avenir sur la cohésion dans ce domaine et lui présente un rapport dans les trois ou quatre mois qui viennent. Cependant, le Vice-Président Narjes, au nom de la Commission, a précisé que, lors du prochain rapport que la Commission fera sur l'état d'avancement du programme-cadre de recherche et développement tecnologique, le sujet de la cohésion sera aussi adressé.

En ce qui concerne l'espace, le Vice-Président Narjes a présenté la communication adoptée par la Commission en juillet (voir notre note P-96). Les délégations qui sont intervenues ensuite ont toutes défendu la complémentarité de l'action qui pourrait entreprendre la Communauté dans ce domaine, et qui est reconnue comme nécessaire, avec les travaux de l'ESA auxquels il ne faudrait pas toucher. Au nom de la Commission, le Vice-Président Narjes a affirmé que cela allait de soit et que la communication de la Commission avait été longuement consultée avec des représentants de l'Agence Espaciale Européenne (ESA). En conclusion, le COREPER a été chargé de poursuivre l'examen détaillé de la communication de la Commission.

Au cours du déjeuner qui a précédé la session du Conseil, les ministres et le Vice-Président Narjes ont débatu du programme aéronautique présenté par la Commission. Malgré le pacte de silence des différentes délégations, on a su que la délégation britannique continue à être très réticente à une action communautaire dans ce domaine et la délégation irlandaise à des réserves sur les aspects qui touchent à la recherche militaire. Les autres délégations, cependant, ne semblent pas opposer des réserves majeures aux propositions de la Commission, qui continueront à être étudiées par le COREPER.

Amitiés

C.D., EHLERMANN