

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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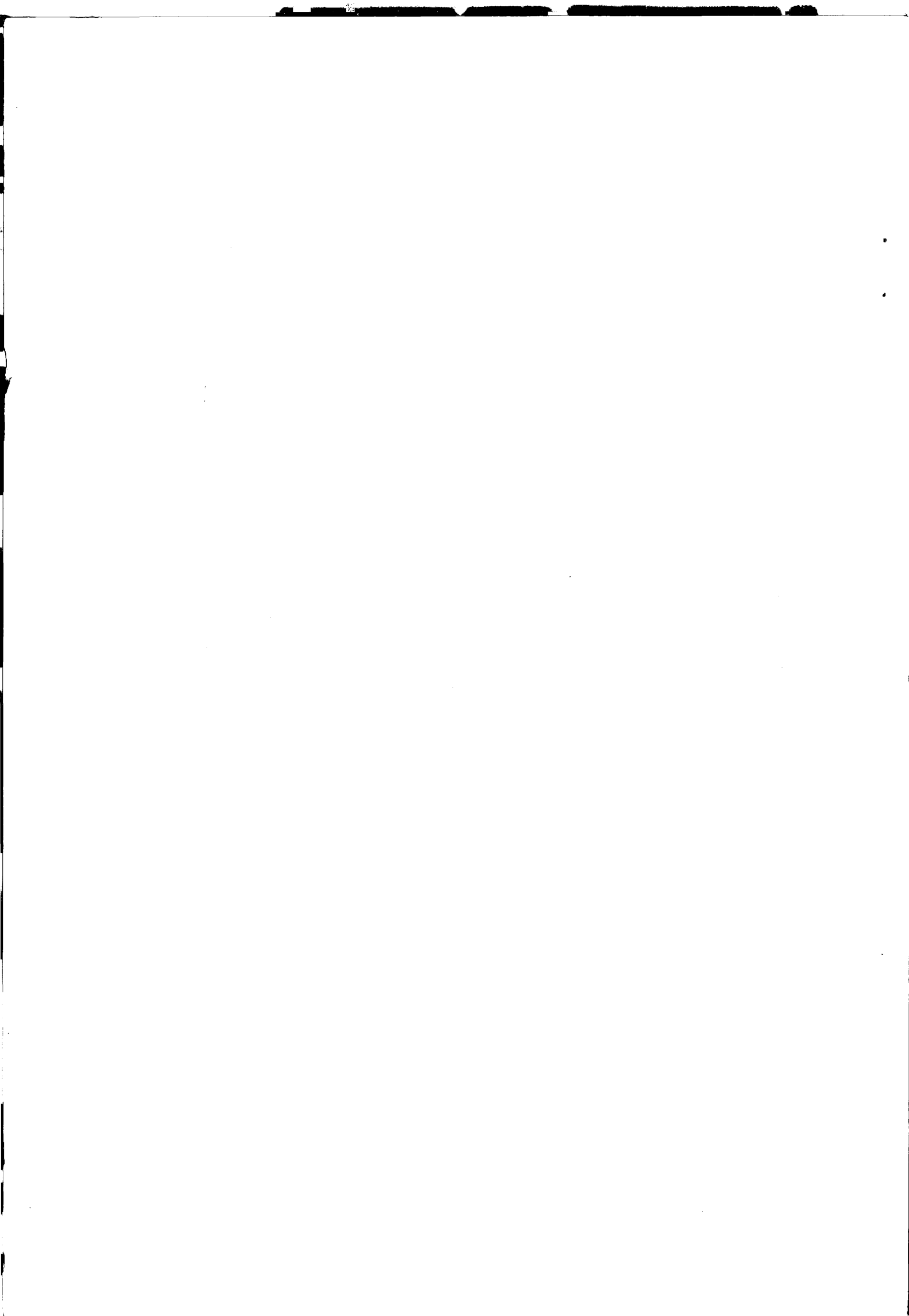
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OPINION OF THE COMMISSION

pursuant to Article 189b(2)(d) of the EC Treaty,

on the amendments proposed by the European Parliament on 9 February 1994
to the Council's common position of 14 January 1994 concerning adoption of a decision
on the fourth framework programme of European Community activities in the field of
research, technological development and demonstration

(1994-1998)



On 17 June 1993 the Commission submitted its proposal for a decision on the 4th framework programme of European Community activities in the field of research, technological development and demonstration (1994-1998) (COM(93) 276). Following the entry into force of the Treaty on European Union, the European Parliament adopted its opinion at first reading on 18 November 1993. On 14 January 1994, the Council then adopted its common position, which was acknowledged by the European Parliament on 19 January 1994. The Commission expressed its views on the Council's common position in its communication to Parliament of 14 January 1994 (SEC(94) 20). On 9 February 1994 Parliament delivered its opinion at second reading. It adopted ten amendments to the Council's common position.

The Commission would like to express its satisfaction at the special efforts of the European Parliament, which resulted in delivery of its opinion at second reading less than a month after being informed of the Council's common position. Once again it is evident that all the institutions recognize the urgent need for a decision on the 4th framework programme so that continuity of the Community's RTD activities beyond 31 December 1994 can be guaranteed.

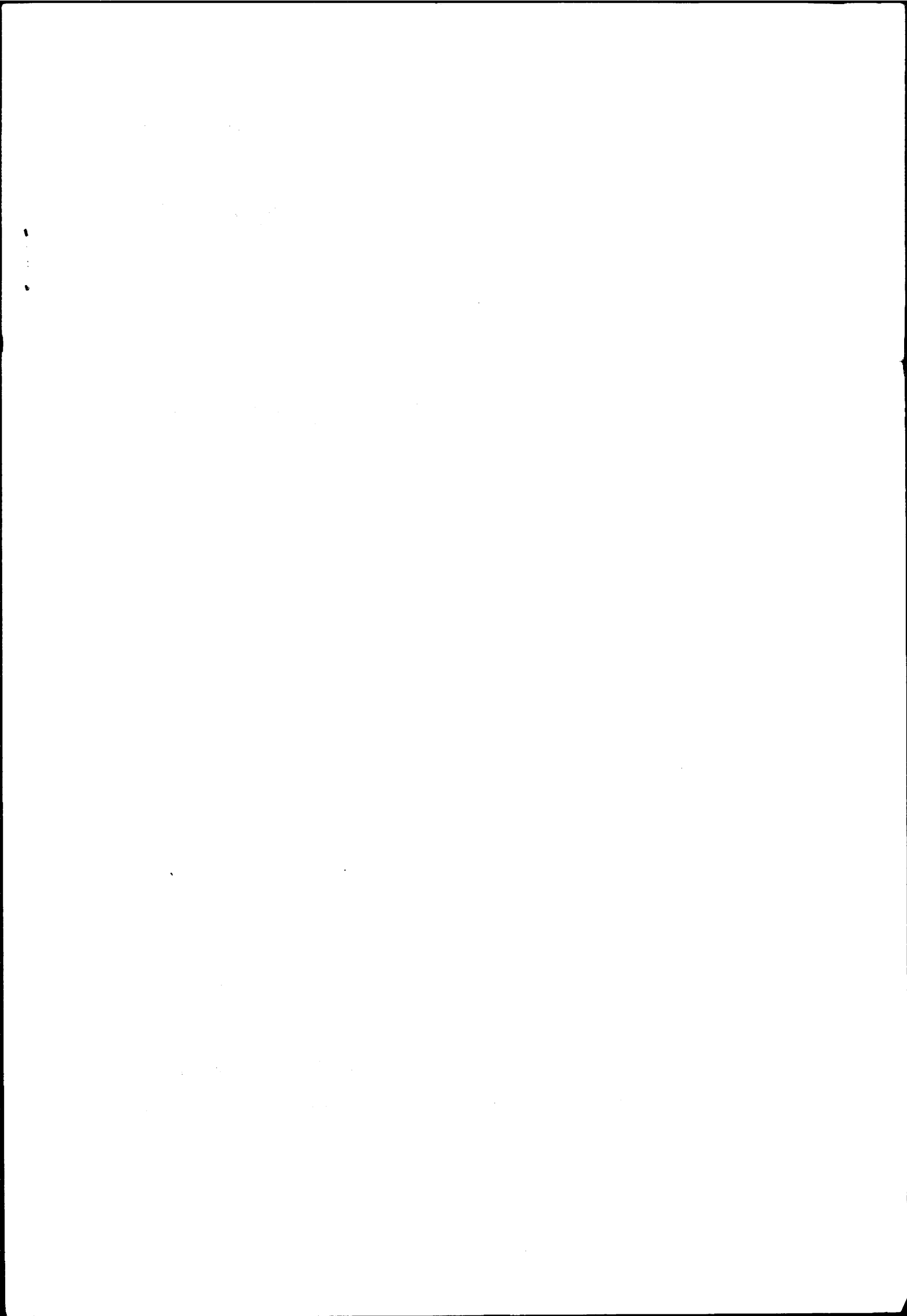
The Commission also notes with interest that Parliament opted at second reading for a reduced number of amendments. Parliament's attitude was made possible by the closeness of the positions already generated by the joint decision-making procedure. The fact that most of the amendments made by Parliament at first reading were incorporated into the Council's common position should be emphasized here. It is now quite clear that the common position can form the basis of a definitive agreement on the framework programme.

The Commission believes that Parliament's amendments at second reading can generate constructive debate in the Council. These amendments are concerned solely with essential questions over which there are still differences of opinion with the Council, though these are limited in scope and are not insurmountable. The amendments concerning in particular the increase in the overall budget and its distribution, particularly in favour of activities 2 and 3, the division of the overall budget into two periods and the role of the JRC are coherent in substance with the arguments put forward in the Commission's communication to Parliament on the Council's common position.

The Commission's view is that the ECU 400 million increase in overall funding is not incompatible with the position of the European Council of 10 and 11 December 1993, which indicated 12 billion as a minimum. The Commission maintains that appropriations should be distributed uniformly throughout the period of the framework programme. Division of the overall amount into two periods - which is opposed by Parliament - would at all

events not have a binding effect from the legal point of view. Finally, the Commission is in favour of an increase in the operational budget of the JRC's specific programme, the effect of which would be to restore the proportion of JRC activities subject to a competitive approach to a realistic level.

By way of conclusion, the Commission would reiterate its wish to contribute towards drawing up a satisfactory overall agreement between the three institutions. It believes that such an agreement could be reached on the basis of the Council's common position reviewed in the light of the amendments made at second reading by the European Parliament.



4
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DOCUMENTS

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