



# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

SEC (89) 1192 final - SYN 182

Brussels, 20 July 1989

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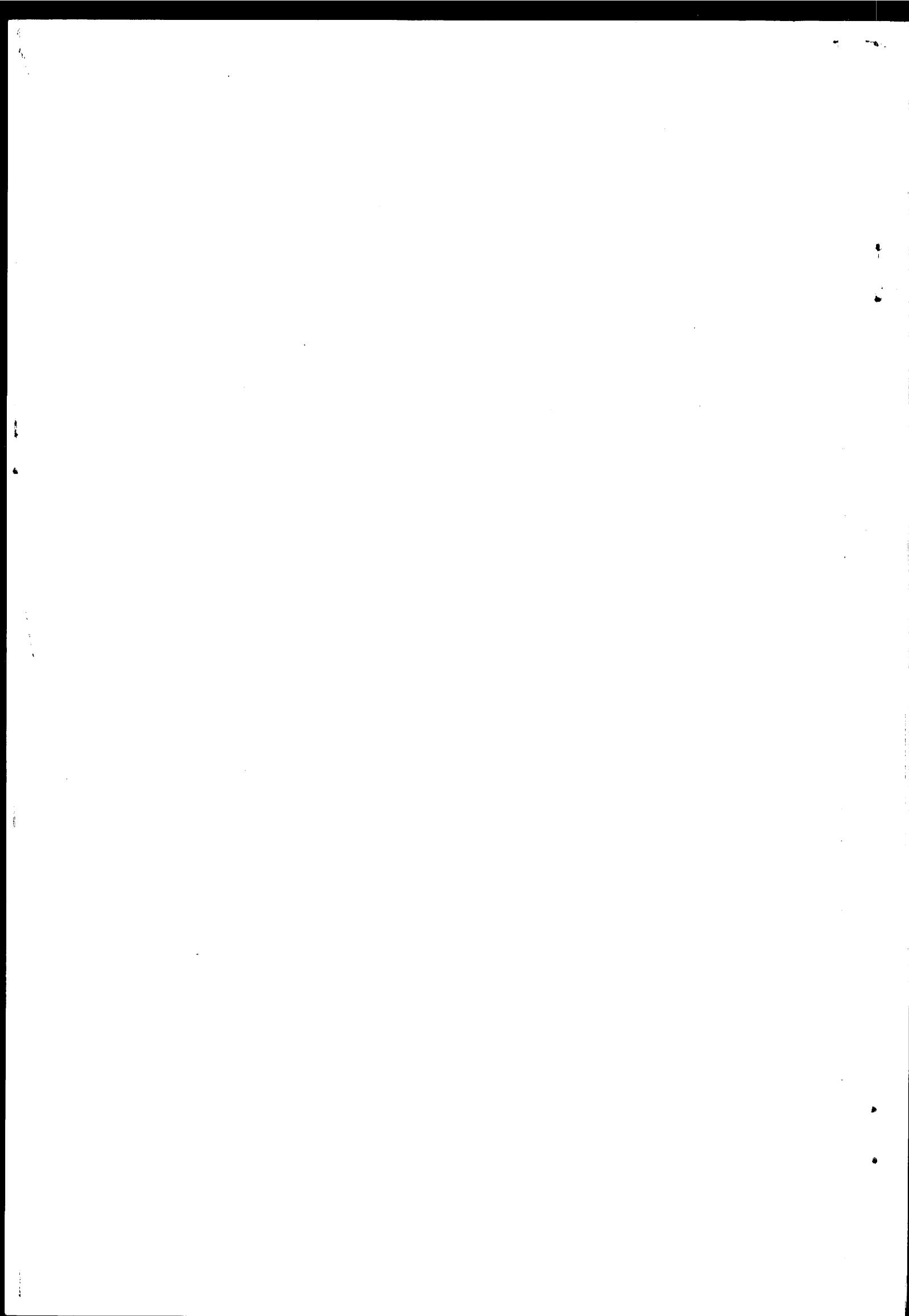
## COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENT

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

### BRIDGE

Biotechnology Research for Innovation, Development  
and Growth in Europe (1990-1993)

COM(88) 806 final, as modified by COM(89) 251 final - SYN 182



## 1. BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND CONTENT

In January 1989, the Commission submitted a proposal for a Council Decision to adopt a specific research and technological development programme in the field of biotechnology (1990-1994) - BRIDGE (Biotechnology Research for Innovation, Development and Growth in Europe).

The European Parliament on 23/24 May 1989, in delivering its opinion on BRIDGE at first reading, approved the Commission's proposal subject to a number of amendments of which the following were accepted by the Commission in their substances although not necessarily in their wording:

- reduction of the duration of the programme and indications on the foreseen allocation of funds (articles 1,2, technical annex);
- conditions regulating the participation of European non-Member states (article 7);
- obligation to all participating laboratories, in the case of work involving the deliberate release in the environment of genetically modified organisms, to adhere to existing safety regulations and guidelines or, in countries where such regulations and guidelines have not been developed, to consult the competent authorities (technical annex);
- emphasis on transnationality and multidisciplinary as criteria for the selection of research proposals (technical annex);
- implementation of actions concerning the wider implications - e.g. for consumers, society, environment and development - of biotechnology R&D (technical annex).

Accordingly on 1 June 1989, the Commission transmitted to the Council its modified proposal.

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. Deviations, outlined below, are such that the Commission is able to agree to the Common Position for the following reasons :

### Technical annex

#### Action I : implementation

Parliament, in order to promote transnational and multidisciplinary collaborations, proposed that the participation of at least three laboratories located in three different Member States be considered, in the majority of cases, as an important criterium of selection. Council did not take up this proposal but indicated that the research projects should normally be carried out by participants from more than one Member State, irrespective of participants from third countries. These two attitudes are very similar but the Common Position, while establishing a useful distinction between Member States and third countries, leaves more room for flexibility.

## Technical annex (and article 2)

### Staff costs and indicative internal allocation of funds

There are variations in the indicative breakdown of funds proposed by Parliament and by the Common Position. Council proposes to increase the training element in the programme and to compensate this increase by a relatively small reduction of staff expenditure (28 posts instead of 30) and of COST activities. The Commission can accept this small modification because training in biotechnology forms an essential prerequisite to safe and reliable laboratory practice, to innovative research and to cohesion in the Community and because the corresponding reductions in staff expenditure and in COST activities can be relatively easily absorbed.

### 3. OTHER CHANGES INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL

Recitals : the Common Position replaces recital 3 by a new recital which sets out in more details the objectives of the programme. Council also inserted between recital 5 and recital 6 a new recital underlining the necessity to attribute particular attention to the ethical and social matters which may be associated to the programme. The Commission agrees to these additions.

Articles : the questions dealing with the modification of Article 2 by Council are discussed in section 2 above. Council has introduced a new article after article 6 which outlines the tasks of the Committee of an advisory nature who 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 organisations the possibility to negotiate participation in the programme. The limitation is in line with other recently adopted specific programmes and is therefore acceptable to the Commission.

Technical annex : the content of Action I is modified at the second indent of paragraph 3.3 (Biotechnology of animal cells) to restrict to cell cultures the study of gene expression and regulation. The change, which excludes transgenetic research with animals, is compatible with the initial intention of the Commission to limit research in this area to cells cultured in vitro.

#### Implementation of Action I

Part of the new text prepared by Council has been discussed in section 2 above. Other changes proposed by the Common Position concern the description of possible participants in the research projects, the importance of industrial participation (particularly SMEs) and the dissemination of the programme results in conformity with Community rules and taking into account contractual arrangements. The Commission can accept these additions.

#### Programme objectives and evaluation criteria

In paragraph 5.3, the Common Position suggests that representatives from disciplines other than Biotechnology be invited, where appropriate, to participate in the training courses, summer schools and workshops organised in the framework of the programme. The Commission agrees to this proposal which concerns the wider implication of biotechnology R&D.