

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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DOCUMENT 1-744/81/ANNEX

OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

on the proposal from the Commission of the
European Communities to the Council
(Doc. 1-411/81) concerning a multiannual
research and development programme in the
sector of raw materials (1982 - 1985)

Draftsman: Mrs C. SCRIVENER

On 23 September 1981, the Committee on Budgets appointed Mrs SCRIVENER draftsman.

At its meeting of 1 December 1981, the committee considered the draft opinion and adopted it unanimously.

Present: Mr LANGE, chairman; Mrs SCRIVENER, draftsman; Mr ADONNINO, Mr ARNDT, Mr BAILLOT, Mr BALFOUR, Mr BARBI, Mr DANKERT, Mr FICH, Mr GEORGIADIS, Mrs HOFF, Mr JACKSON, Mr KELLETT-BOWMAN, Mr KLEPSCH (deputizing for Mr Konrad SCHÖN), Mr NEWTON DUNN, Mr NORD, Mr PFENNIG, Mrs PRUVOT (deputizing for Mr ROSSI), Mr SIMONNET

I. Summary of the Commission's proposal

1. This Commission proposal puts forward measures designed to ensure steady and dependable supplies of essential raw materials for the European Community. They include increasing self-supply potential, in order to reduce the level of dependence on imports and improve the trade balance, making greater use of secondary raw materials (recycling), developing renewable raw materials (such as wood), effecting raw material savings and replacing scarce raw materials with others.

2. In recent years, a number of Community programmes on primary and secondary raw materials have been initiated with a view to attaining these objectives; according to the Commission they have already 'promised or yielded valuable results'¹.

3. The aim of this latest proposal from the Commission to the Council is to establish a single sectoral research and development programme on raw materials by regrouping research programmes into sectors of foremost priority.

4. The Commission estimates that practical results for use by Community industry should become available in the short, medium and long term (in approximately five to twenty years' time).

5. The programmes, their financial implications and the period required before they produce practical results are briefly summarized below:

P R I M A R Y R A W M A T E R I A L S

	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u> (m ECU)	<u>Staff</u>
<u>Subprogramme</u>			
- I (short and long term)	Metals and mineral substances (formerly primary raw materials)	30	8
- II (short term)	Uranium exploration and extraction ^x	(2.4) p.m.	3
- III	Ceramics	5	-
- IV (medium and long term)	Wood	15	3

^xcurrent programme (1981-82)

¹See page 4 of the Commission's proposal (COM(81) 281 final)

SECONDARY RAW MATERIALS

(Contd)

	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u> (m ECU)	<u>Staff</u>
<u>Subprogramme</u>			
- V (short term)	Recycling of urban and industrial waste ^{xx}	(9) p.m.	5
- VI (short term)	Recycling of non-ferrous metals	11	2
<u>SUBSTITUTION</u>			
- VII (medium term)	Substitution	10	2
	TOTAL	<u>71</u>	<u>23</u>

^{xx} current programme (1979-1983)II. The programmes seen in the context of budget priorities(a) Earlier programmes and Parliament's opinions

6. The proposed subprogrammes I, II and V are still in progress, and subprogramme I will shortly be completed. The European Parliament welcomed each of these programmes, although in some cases it deplored the fact that the appropriations for the programmes were inadequate and repeatedly urged that these appropriations should not be laid down definitively; they should be no more than indicative and be fixed only when the budget was being adopted for the year in question. The Commission has taken account of Parliament's wishes in this proposal. Criticism must still be levelled, however, at the estimated overall expenditure of 71 m ECU and the staff complement totalling 23 posts.

7. To begin with, the Commission should publish an easily intelligible survey of the results and achievements of the earlier programmes so that the budgetary authority may assess whether it is reasonable and/or economic to allocate further appropriations to this sector. In its proposal the Commission is silent on this point.

8. A total of 71 m ECU, of which more than 7 m ECU is to cover staff and materials, must be regarded even by thrifty budget administrators as a minimum for such a plethora of subprogrammes, and the Commission should be urged to scrutinize closely these amounts in the annual budgetary procedure and/or carry out further grouping of programmes, i.e. by deleting one or more subprogrammes.

9. In the context of the efforts being made to restructure the budget of the European Communities in line with the Council Mandate of 30 May 1980, the Commission's proposed programme may be regarded as suitable for attaining certain priorities, such as an increase in non-compulsory expenditure, ways of improving the competitive position of European industry and reducing dependence on imported raw materials. In this connection, too, we should welcome the Commission's efforts to integrate the current special programmes into major programmes.

(b) The new programmes

10. Subprogrammes III, IV, VI and VII are new programmes proposed by the Commission, although subprogramme III (Ceramics) was the subject of an earlier Commission proposal (see COM(79) 273 final) which has now lapsed but which Parliament supported. At that time, however, the Committee on Budgets was not totally in favour of the proposal and informed the committee responsible, the Committee on Energy and Research, of its reservations (dispersal of scarce resources over too small individual programmes, requests for new staff posts). Now, too, the Committee on Budgets finds it quite illogical to integrate the Ceramics subprogramme in a general raw materials programme. The committee responsible, the Committee on Energy and Research, should therefore once again examine the usefulness of this subprogramme within the overall programme.

11. The expert committee responsible must assess the other new subprogrammes (wood, recycling of non-ferrous metals and substitution) in respect of which the appropriations are fairly evenly allocated. They account for about half of the appropriations requested for the entire programme and require 7 posts, of which 5 are new and 2 may be transferred from a completed programme (paper and board recycling). In this connection, the Committee on Budgets calls once more on the Commission to assign existing staff to new programmes of this kind.

III. CONCLUSIONS

12. The Committee on Budgets

- supports the Commission's efforts to set general guidelines for its wide-ranging research and development programmes and to group research programmes coherently in integrated programmes of the same duration;
- refers in this connection to the need to consider these proposals from the point of view of restructuring the budget of the European Communities and to make a careful selection of priorities in all areas of the Community;

- calls on the Commission to report regularly on the results achieved with programmes which have been completed or are to be extended, to enable an objective assessment to be made of whether the appropriations have been utilized economically;
- emphasizes that it is important for the budgetary powers of the European Parliament that the estimates set out in Article 2 of the proposal for a decision of the appropriations and staff required should be of an indicative nature;
- insists - should the Council intend to depart unilaterally from Article 2(1) of the draft decision - on the need for conciliation as provided for in the Joint Declaration of 4 March 1975;
- requests the committee responsible, the Committee on Energy and Research, to take account of these views in the final opinion it submits to Parliament.

