

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr BARBAGLI, Mr LIGIOS, Mr NARDUCCI,
Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO CERRETTI, Mr BERSANI, Mr COSTANZO,
Mr COLLESELLI, Mr GIUMMARRA, Mr GHERGO

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on basic technological research in the automobile
industry

The European Parliament

- having regard to the resolution on the situation in the European automobile industry adopted by the European Parliament on 13/1/81, the report of its committee and the minutes of the proceedings of the relevant parliamentary debate;
- having regard in particular to the following paragraphs from the aforementioned resolution:
 - para. (6) In order to speed up the adoption of the most appropriate common measures, requests the Commission to conduct, as rapidly as possible, a survey of the effects of Community regulations on energy saving, safety and pollution;
 - para.(19) Expresses concern at the fact that Community research and development activity may not be up to the level of that of the leading third country competitors and considers that the Community should assist such activity by playing a direct part in 'non-competitive' research as well as in basic research in this sector;
 - para.(20) Calls for encouragement and support to improve production with a view to increasing productivity;
 - para.(21) Lays particular stress on energy saving, the use of energy sources other than hydrocarbons and the search for alternative materials;
 - para.(22) Points out that the requisite technological innovations must also be directed towards increasing the safety of consumers and workers and towards improving both working and living conditions;
 - para.(23) Calls for thorough studies of the precise costs involved and of the combination of priorities that may prove to be necessary;
 - para.(24) Urgently calls for an end to be put to the fragmentation of the Community industries by encouraging fuller co-operation through joint programmes covering research and experimentation;

- having regard to the Community document 'L'avenir de l'industrie automobile dans la communauté' of 31.11.76 which at that early stage called for co-operation in basic research, having due consideration for the rules of competition;
- having regard to EEC document 'The situation in the European automobile industry' published by D.G. III in 1978 which made a further appeal for a Community research programme in the automobile industry;
- having regard to the Community document on the car industry of 11.6.81, 'Structure et perspective de l'industrie automobile européenne';
- having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee of 1.7.81. on 'The Automobile industry' (Doc. IND/153; CES 769/81);
- having regard to the fact that at present the EEC is promoting several different R & D programmes in sectors which have a potential or direct effect on the automobile industry, (e.g. energy saving, materials, the environment, etc.);
- having regard to the fact that the Community's involvement in basic research in the automobile industry must be increased and rationalized by co-ordinating the considerable untapped resources of industry as well as those of universities and public research institutes;
- having regard to the fact that the economic crisis at present affecting the automobile industry calls for urgent and immediate measures but that this does not dispense with the need for ensuring the long term survival of the European automobile industry in the 'post crisis' years, by taking appropriate steps in specific areas outside the strictly economic sphere.

Support for basic technological research in the automobile industry

- (1) Considers that the Community should give active support to basic research in the automobile sector with a particular view to fostering co-operation between the automobile industries of the Member States;

The general role of and urgent need for basic technological research in the automobile industry

- (2) Considers that this support must be given without further delay for the precise reason that basic technological research can, on a medium and long-term basis, lead to a general improvement of the manufacturing process and the goods produced, help the European automobile industry to solve its present economic difficulties and, beyond that, secure its survival against foreign competition in the 1990's;

Co-operation between industry and universities

- (3) Bearing in mind that basic technological research in Europe is carried out both by individual industries and consortia as well as in universities and public research institutes, it is hoped that as soon as the preliminary programmes have been drawn up, the Community will marshal and promote co-operation between all available resources in order to identify and solve eventual problems;

Cases outside the Community

- (4) Requests that more attention be paid to the increasingly aggressive competition that is being mounted, even in the domain of basic technological research by countries outside the Community, such as the United States of America and Japan;

Objectives and areas of priority

- (5) Requests that the support for basic technological research should begin with a statement of the major objectives and priorities (such as the conservation of resources, lower production costs, maintaining safety and quality standards both for the products themselves and in the matter of working conditions and the environment) and then go on to spell out the main areas of interest; there is a strong case for examining the feasibility of transferring technological resources from other key industries (implying subsequent adjustment and research into possible applications); these key industries, such as the aircraft and aviation sector, nuclear energy and informatics, have a vital role to play in helping the automobile industry to cope with the major new problems posed by recent demands for energy saving, lighter components, better quality, reliability, safety and respect for the environment;

Aspects relating to the protection of industrial property

- (6) Requests that as a first priority, consideration should be given to the question of the industrial ownership of research findings which have practical applications with the aim of drafting regulations which, while being suitably flexible, still ensure that the findings of the research are safeguarded for the benefit of Community industries and that the use of this valuable information as a bargaining counter in industrial and trade negotiations with industries outside the Community is properly controlled;

Operational aspects of the Community's support

- (7) Requests that financial support be immediately accorded for basic technological research in the automobile industry by drawing up a coherent programme and allocating an independent budget as in the case of indirect action; further requests that as a parallel measure, a review of that part of the R and D programmes at present being financed by the EEC (in the sectors of energy conservation, raw materials, steel, the environment, informatics, urban planning etc.) which has been or could be earmarked for the automobile industry so that it can be re-assessed, streamlined and expanded until such time as the objective of integration has been achieved;

Antitrust aspects

- (8) Recommends that the procedure for granting Community approval be simplified so that in the case of projects involving international co-operation in basic technological research, this can, if possible, be given a matter of course since co-operation can bring technical and economic benefits of a general nature and has no adverse effect on free industrial competition;
- (9) Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.