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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Energy and Research

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (doc. 248/78) for a decision adopting a research and development programme for the European Economic Community in the field of reference materials and methods (Community Bureau of Reference – BCR) and applied metrology (non-nuclear indirect action) (1979 – 1982)

Rapporteur: Mr Pierre C.A. KRIEG

By letter of 19 July 1978 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 235 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision adopting a research and development programme for the European Economic Community in the field of reference materials and methods (Community Bureau of Reference - BCR) and applied metrology (non-nuclear indirect action) (1979-1982).

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Energy and Research as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion.

On 18 September 1978 the Committee on Energy and Research appointed Mr Krieg rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 23 November 1978.

At the same meeting the committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement.

Present: Mrs Walz, Chairman; Mr Flämig, vice-chairman; Mr Veronesi, vice-chairman; Mr Krieg, rapporteur; Mr Fioret; Mr Fitch; Mr Holst; Mr H.W. Müller; Mr Noè and Mr Osborn.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets is attached.

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The Committee on Energy and Research hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision adopting a research and development programme for the European Economic Community in the field of reference materials and methods (Community Bureau of Reference - BCR) and applied metrology (non-nuclear indirect action) (1979-1982)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹,
 - having been consulted by the Council (Doc. 248/78),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Energy and Research and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 477/78),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions in the field of reference materials and methods and, in particular,
 - its resolution of 16 December 1971 on a programme of research and education for the European Atomic Energy Community and a research programme for the European Economic Community in the field of standards and reference substances and in the field of the protection of the environment²,
 - its resolution of 11 December 1972 on proposals for three decisions and other documents concerning the new multiannual research and education programme of the Communities³,
 - its resolution of 14 November 1975 on a multiannual research and development programme of the EEC for reference materials and methods (BCR) (1976-1978) - indirect action⁴,
1. Recognizes the relevance of the research and development programme in the field of reference materials and methods to the needs of industry;

¹ OJ No. C176 of 25.7.1978, page 5

² OJ No. C2 of 11.1.1972, page 24

³ OJ No. C138 of 31.12.1972 page 9

⁴ OJ No. C280 of 8.12.1975, page 62

2. Reiterates the view that indirect action is suitable for programmes of this nature;
3. Welcomes the proposal to establish a service to publicise and commercialise Community reference materials;
4. Insists on the European Parliament being consulted should this programme be revised;
5. Approves the Commission's proposal subject to the adoption by the Commission of the following amendments pursuant to Article 149, second paragraph, of the EEC Treaty.

Decision adopting a research and development
programme for the European Economic Community
in the field of reference materials and methods
(Community Bureau of Reference - BCR) and
applied metrology (non-nuclear indirect action)
(1979-1982)

Preamble unchanged

Article 1 unchanged

Article 2

The upper limit for commitments for
expenditure and the maximum number of
staff necessary for the implementation
of the programme are estimated at
11.3 million European units of account
and 14 staff respectively, the European
unit of account being defined in the
Financial Regulations in force.

Article 2

The upper limit of expenditure
commitments necessary for the
implementation of this programme is
estimated to be 11.3 million European
units of account as defined in Article
10 of the Financial Regulation of
21 December 1977, and the staff is
estimated at 14. These figures are of
an indicative nature only.

Article 3 unchanged

Article 4

During the third year the programme
shall be reviewed and possibly
revised in accordance with the
appropriate procedure and after
consultation with the Advisory
Committee on Programme Management.

Article 4

Before the end of the second year
the programme shall be reviewed
and possibly revised in accordance
with the appropriate procedure and
after consultation with the Advisory
Committee on Programme Management
and the European Parliament.

Article 5 unchanged

Annex unchanged

¹For full text see OJ No. C176 of 25.7.1978, page 5.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. INTRODUCTION

1. Uniform measurement is one of the prerequisites for the removal of technical barriers to international trade and thus for the achievement of a common market. Yet it is impossible to measure and define materials uniformly unless reference materials are available, against which measuring instruments can be calibrated and on the basis of which they can be tested periodically. In order to coordinate and where necessary initiate research and development leading to the manufacture and distribution of certified reference materials in the Member States of the Communities, a Community Bureau of Reference (BCR) was established in 1973. It forms part of the Commission's service and deals with the management and coordination of research and development programmes in the field of reference materials and methods.

2. Reference materials and methods have been the subject of a series of resolutions of the European Parliament, notably:

- its resolution of 16 December 1971 on a programme of research and education for the European Atomic Energy Community and a research programme for the European Economic Community in the field of standards and reference substances and in the field of the protection of the environment¹;
- its resolution of 11 December 1972 on proposals for three decisions and other documents concerning the new multiannual research and education programme of the Communities²;
- its resolution of 14 November 1975 on a multiannual research and development programme of the EEC for reference materials and methods (BCR) (1976-1978) - indirect action³.

Both the Committee on Energy and Research and the European Parliament gave favourable opinions in the case of these previous proposals from the Commission.

¹ Rapporteur Mrs Orth, Doc. 194/71, OJ C2 of 11.1.1972, page 24

² Rapporteur Mr Gerlach, Doc. 240/72, OJ C138 of 31.12.1972 page 9

³ Report of Mr Osborn, Doc. 363/75, OJ C280 of 8.12.75, page 62.

II. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT PROPOSAL

3. The present proposal, which should start in 1979 and run for four years, can be broken down into three distinct projects, namely:

(i) Reference materials and methods (BCR)

This part of the programme would be a continuation of the work already underway, which it is hoped to extend to other fields. The BCR develops reference materials of recognised quality, of interest to the Community. The preparation of a reference material involves collaboration between specialised public and private laboratories in the Member States. Projects are drawn up when the need arises, following discussions with experts and members of the Advisory Committee. When a project has been defined in broad outline with the help of experts and potential participants, it is submitted to the Advisory Committee on Programme Management for an Opinion.

4. The Advisory Committee on Programme Management (ACPM) is composed of representatives of the Technical and Research Ministries of the Member States, practising scientists and representatives of industry.

5. If the opinion of the ACPM is favourable, the participants decide on the precise details of the programme including method of preparation of the material, stability tests, methods of analysis, organisation of the programme and procedure for processing the results.

These are the bases on which the Commission concludes contracts with each of the participants in the measurement or analytical programmes. When this work is complete it is evaluated so as to ascertain whether the results warrant certification of the property or properties of the material. A draft report is submitted to the Committee of Experts and, where appropriate, to the Certification Group as well as to the ACPM. The decision to certify a reference material is taken by the Commission on the advice of the ACPM.

6. Certified reference materials are then offered for sale accompanied by a certificate and a copy of the report summarising the results and conclusions of the work that led up to certification.

7. Up to now the BCR has certified 26 reference materials while 86 are in preparation and a further 57 are planned.

8. The Commission points out in the introduction to its proposal that the duration of a project for the preparation of a reference material, from its inception to the certification of the product, is from 3 to 4 years. Many laboratories may participate in a project and several different contracts are concluded for each material in preparation. The Commission claims that this leads to a great deal of coordination work which must be carried out

by the BCR staff responsible for the management of the programme.

9. Research on reference materials and methods does not include any standardisation work.

10. The new programme, like its predecessor, is to be carried out in close collaboration with laboratories of the Member States and with the Joint Research Centre where appropriate.

11. The new programme should deal with the production and certification of reference materials and the development of associated reference methods, selected on the basis of one or more of the following criteria:

- helping the implementation of one of the Community's sectoral policies
- being of value in industry or for commercial transactions
- facilitating the implementation of regulations and directives for the removal of technical barriers to trade
- helping to improve living conditions (public health, environmental protection and consumer protection).

12. Under the new multiannual programme the BCR intends to carry out work in the following areas:

- Ferrous metals
- Non-ferrous metals
- Non-metallic materials
- Inorganic materials and products
- Organic materials and products
- Foodstuffs
- Biomedical analyses
- Physical and technical properties of materials.

In most of these fields work is already in progress, though foodstuffs will constitute an entirely new area for the BCR.

(ii) Distribution and management of reference materials

13. Reference materials certified by the Community are offered for sale by the Commission. This service, which the Commission now proposes to place on a properly established basis, would involve the storage of reference materials and the development of an efficient system for the acceptance of orders, the preparation of invoices, the dispatching of reference materials and the drawing up of inventories. In addition catalogues, advertisements and annual reports on activities would be edited and disseminated.

14. In the future it is possible that the income derived from the sale of reference materials could compensate, at least in part, for the costs of management and storage of these materials.

(iii) Applied metrology

15. This is a new project. Up to now the Community has carried out no work in the field of applied metrology except for nuclear measurements.

The applied metrology programme aims at encouraging collaboration between laboratories in the Member States with a view to

- ensuring the equivalence and comparability of secondary standards and transfer standards
- Improving the accuracy of measurements
- Developing metrology in areas of importance to the Community where projects would be costly.

16. The applied metrology programme could be broken down into four parts:

- Intercomparison of secondary and transfer standards for derived units of measurement
- Improvement of measurement techniques and their accuracy
- Development of new measurement techniques

(Development costs in these new fields of metrology may be very high so cost-sharing by means of efficient collaboration could be advantageous)

- Exchange of personnel - under this project specialists could increase their expertise in other Community countries. They would continue to receive their salary from their own employer and could receive an allowance from the Community to cover expatriation costs.

(iv) Budgetary implications and staff requirements

17. The Commission has requested an increase in both budgetary allocations and staff for the 1979-1982 multiannual programme. The estimated cost of the programme over the four years would be 13.3m EUA, of which 11.3m EUA would come from Community funds, the remainder being provided by national administrations and other organisations at national level.

18. The Commission has requested the following staff for this multiannual programme:

8 staff in Category A, broken down as follows:

- 5 for the BCR, reference materials and methods
- 1 for distribution and management of reference materials and,
- 2 for applied metrology.

2 staff in Category B.

4 staff in Category C.

The Commission proposes that during its third year of operation, the programme is to be reviewed and possibly revised after consulting the Advisory Committee on Programme Management.

III. COMMENTS ON THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL

19. The European Parliament has given its approval to earlier proposals in the field of reference materials and methods. Contacts with industry showed that the work of the BCR was highly appreciated and the Advisory Committee on Programme Management ensured adequate cooperation.

20. In two respects the present proposal differs from its predecessors:

- (i) Applied metrology did not form a part of any of the earlier programmes;
- (ii) Both the staff estimates and programme costs have increased considerably.

21. The Commission has written into the draft Council decision an Article 2 which is, in its present form, not acceptable to the European Parliament. The European Parliament maintains that appropriations for programmes must be decided in the context of the General Budget of the European Communities, with the Council and the European Parliament acting as the budgetary authority. With regard to Article 2, the purely indicative nature of the estimates of expenditure commitments and staff must be stressed accordingly. The Committee on Energy and Research is therefore proposing an amendment to Article 2 of the draft Council Decision.

22. The Commission has indicated that national administrations and other organisations at national level are to provide some 2m EUA towards the cost of this programme. This will take the form of shared costs of contracts which are to be carried out by these national organisations.

23. The Commission has proposed that during its third year of operation, this programme be reviewed and possibly revised. In Article 4 of the Commission's proposal reference is made to consultation with the ACPM, but no information is given concerning the procedure to be followed in the event of a revision of the programme. It is important that the European Parliament be consulted should the programme be revised, and an amendment to this effect is accordingly being proposed to Article 4 of the draft Council Decision. In addition, the Committee on Energy and Research would prefer the review to take place before the end of the programme's second year, so that the programme, if revised, would still have two years of operation.

24. The increased expenditure and staff estimates to a great extent result from the proposal to expand the work of the Community Bureau of Reference. Your rapporteur accepts the utility of such an expansion, while reserving his judgement with regard to the staff to be assigned to the applied metrology project. The Committee on Energy and Research believes that the commercialisation of reference materials is to be encouraged. The principle of such work covering at least a part of the costs involved is endorsed wholeheartedly, and the modest increase in staff requested for this action appears to be justified. Unless the availability of BCR reference materials were adequately publicised, the utility of the Bureau would be diminished.

IV CONCLUSION

25. In conclusion, the Committee on Energy and Research approves the Commission's proposal with regard to the amplified programme for the Community Bureau of Reference and the management and distribution of Community Reference Materials, as well as the applied metrology project. Final approval of the present proposal is, however, subject to the acceptance by the Commission of the proposal amendments to Articles 2 and 4 of the draft Council Decision pursuant to the second paragraph of Article 149 of the EEC Treaty.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the chairman of the committee to Mrs Hanna WALZ, chairman of the Committee on Energy and Research

6 October 1978

Subject: Proposal for a Council decision adopting a research and development programme for the European Economic Community in the field of reference materials and methods (Community Bureau of Reference - BCR) and applied metrology (non-nuclear indirect action) (1979-1982) (COM(78) 309 final)

Dear Mrs Walz,

At its meeting of 2/3 October 1978 the Committee on Budgets considered the abovementioned proposal for a decision¹.

The committee cannot accept Article 2 of the Commission proposal which fixes the upper limit for commitments for expenditure and the number of staff necessary for the implementation of the programme. The committee considers it essential that this article be deleted.

The figures set out in the article cannot be the subject of a Council decision. They must rather be decided upon by the budgetary authority - Council and Parliament - in the course of the annual budgetary procedure to establish the budget of the European Communities.

For this reason the Committee on Budgets has delivered an unfavourable opinion and has asked the Commission to withdraw its proposal.

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(sgd) Erwin Lange
Chairman

¹ Present: Mr Lange, chairman; Mr Bangemann, vice-chairman; Lord Bessborough, Lord Bruce of Donington, Mrs Dahlerup, Mr Schreiber, Mr Scott-Hopkins, Mr Shaw and Mr Spinelli.