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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

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25 September 1978

DOCUMENT 318/78

## Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 247/78) for a decision adopting ~~joint~~ research programmes and programmes for coordinating agricultural research

Rapporteur: Mrs G. DUNWOODY

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By letter of 19 July 1978 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 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 joint research programmes and programmes for coordinating agricultural research.

On 22 August 1978, the President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible and the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection as the committees asked for their opinions.

The Committee on Agriculture appointed Mrs Dunwoody rapporteur on 12 September 1978.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 19 and 20 September 1978.

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Present: Mr Liogier, vice-chairman and acting chairman; Mrs Dunwoody, rapporteur; Mr Andersen, Mr Caillavet (deputizing for Mr Baas), Mr Cifarelli, Mr Corrie, Mr Cunningham, Mr Früh, Mr Halvgaard, Mr Joxe, Mr Klinker, Mr L'Estrange, Mr W. Müller, Mr Ney and Mr Pisoni.

The opinions of the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection are attached.

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The Committee on Agriculture 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 joint research programmes and programmes for coordinating agricultural research

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council<sup>1</sup>,
- having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Doc.247/78 ),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Doc.318/78 ),
- having regard to the report to the Council and the Parliament on the common research programmes and coordinated research programmes for 1975 - 1979 (COM(78) 53 final),
- having regard to the report of the European Parliament on the Commission's price proposals for the 1978 - 1979 marketing year (Doc. 579/77),
- whereas disparities in agricultural incomes between the more-favoured and less-favoured regions are increasing,
- whereas regional development programmes are required to assist the less-favoured regions,
- whereas serious market imbalances exist in a number of agricultural sectors,
- whereas it is essential to ensure a better market balance and reduce imports by measures to encourage production of crops for which the Community is in deficit,
- whereas the present market organization has failed to provide adequate incomes for certain sectors and, in particular the beef sector, and additional measures are required,
- whereas enlargement of the Community will accentuate the problems presently facing the common agricultural policies,

<sup>1</sup> OJ No. C 176, 25.7.1978, p.2

- whereas the Community should ensure the most economic use of pesticides, fertilizers and foodstuffs, and should prevent unnecessary harmful consequences to the environment,
  - whereas the quality and variety of food products should be improved so as to encourage consumption,
1. Believes that the increasing disparity in incomes in the Community, in the agricultural sector, requires effective measures to improve the use of land and water resources in the less-favoured regions of the Community, and to encourage the production of new crops and improved varieties;
  2. Considers that price policy alone is not sufficient to improve agricultural incomes and to achieve a better market balance, so that the production of crops for which the Community is in deficit should be encouraged, the productivity of stock-breeding increased and obstacles to trade caused by animal diseases eliminated;
  3. Considers that the Community's research programmes can make a substantial contribution towards these aims, while avoiding costly and unnecessary duplication of effort;
  4. Welcomes, in consequence, the Commission's proposal;
  5. Considers that the objective of Community agricultural research should not be to increase scientific knowledge for its own sake, nor to develop highly sophisticated methods applicable only by the larger 'industrial' farms, and which, at the same time, may be dangerous to the land and even to the consumer;

But that the objective should be directed to improving the standard of living of the farming community as a whole, notwithstanding differences in regions and production, and particularly those in the less-favoured and peripheral regions;

6. Considers, furthermore, that these improvements in farming methods should be directed to: increasing quality as well as quantity; reducing the need for high input levels of energy, fertilizers, feed and pesticides, and the resulting high levels of investment; and to developing production methods particularly suited to local conditions;
7. Believes, at the same time, that agricultural research programmes should inform the producer of the possible dangers of new techniques to the land and the genetic potential of livestock and plants, as well as the advantages;

8. Regrets that the Council reduced the appropriations proposed by the Commission for the existing programmes;
9. Requests that the Commission report to the European Parliament on an annual basis and opens a dialogue with the European Parliament at the moment of examining possible measures to be included in future programmes;
10. Requests that the Commission includes, in future programmes, research on those problems, such as investment requirements and the identification and prevention of fish diseases, which are hindering the development of fish farming in the Community;
11. Considers it essential that the results of agricultural research programmes should be effectively applied, and that to this end the Commission:
  - (a) should ensure the proper publication and dissemination of results so as to ensure them a wider audience and greater relevance, and
  - (b) strengthen contacts and the flow of information with national agricultural advisory services;
12. Urges that the Commission ensure a proper coordination between the departments of the Commission concerned with research on agriculture, the environment and public health;
13. Points out that, in order to ensure a proper scientific and financial control of research programmes to be carried out in Member States, the creation of the additional posts foreseen in Annex III will be essential;

Emphasizes that, in the absence of a positive decision by the Council, it will be necessary to revise and reduce the programmes presently proposed;

Insists, in the event of such a revision, the European Parliament be consulted by the Council on the drawing-up of new priorities;
14. Requests the Commission to incorporate the following amendments in its proposal, pursuant to Article 149, second paragraph, of the EEC Treaty.

Council Decision adopting joint research  
programmes and programmes for coordinating agricultural  
research

Preamble and recitals unchanged

Articles 1, 2 and 3 unchanged

Article 4

On 1 July 1981 and, after conclusion of the programme, not later than 31 July 1984 the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and the Council on the results of the activities carried out under the programmes covered by this Decision and on the use of the funds allocated for these measures.

Article 4

The Commission shall report annually to the European Parliament and the Council on the results of the activities carried out under the programmes covered by this Decision, on the use of the funds allocated for these measures and, not later than 1 January 1983, on the programmes envisaged for the period 1984 to 1989.

<sup>1</sup> For full text, see OJ No. C 176, 25.7.1978, p.2

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTINTRODUCTION

1. Regulation No. 1728 of June 1974<sup>1</sup> provided for the co-ordination of research in agriculture and for the supporting and supplementing of research in Member States.

In July 1975, common research programmes and programmes for the co-ordination of research in the fields of animal leucoses, livestock effluents, beef production and plant protein production were implemented<sup>2</sup>. These programmes have been the subject of a report to the European Parliament and the Council<sup>3</sup>.

The Commission is now proposing a further five-year programme of specific measures to begin on 1 January 1979, to continue and extend existing research programmes.

2. The report drawn up by the Committee on Agriculture on the Commission's price proposals pointed to a number of serious problems facing the agricultural sector and, in particular, the growing market imbalance, the increasing divergencies in incomes between regions and sectors, the need to improve incomes of particular sectors such as beef production, and the desirability of encouraging crops in which the Community is presently in deficit.

Price policy and the present market mechanisms are unlikely, on their own, to achieve the desired results. Much greater information is required on the most appropriate land use in the most disfavoured regions, of new management techniques and on the possibility of introducing new crops and varieties.

The need for agricultural research

3. The agricultural sector, more than any other sector, has a particular need for research financed by public bodies. In the industrial sector the major companies have the financial resources to carry out basic and applied research, and to ensure that the results are given practical application. This is not the case in the agricultural sector since individual farmers, co-operatives and organizations do not have the required resources.

Research in the agricultural sector is largely carried out, therefore, in governmental and university centres. It is clearly important to avoid costly duplication of effort and even more important to ensure the earliest possible use by farmers of results. This required considerable efforts to promote the publication and dissemination of research work.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No. L 182, 5.7.74, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> Council Decision of 22 July 1975, OJ No. L 199, 30.7.75, p. 37

<sup>3</sup> COM(78) 53 final, 15.2.78

Furthermore, in the Community there is the additional problem that there are considerably variations in the amount of research work carried out in the Member States. In certain Member States public and private research is well-organized, whilst in others it is extremely limited, and hindered by the complexity of administrative structures.

4. The Committee on Agriculture can, therefore, recognize the need for the form of co-ordination proposed by the Commission.

The drawing-up and implementation of research programmes

5. In drawing up of its research programmes, the Commission takes into account:

- the most urgent problems facing the common agricultural policy, which at present can be defined as: the socio-structural problems facing the least developed regions; the market imbalances in certain sectors which implies the need to encourage production of crops for which the Community is in deficit; the need to improve productivity in the beef sector; and the desirability of reducing obstacles to trade resulting from animal diseases;
- experience gained in previous research programmes; and
- consultation with the Standing Committee on agricultural research, whose members are responsible for research in their respective Member States, concerning the aims and trends of agricultural research in the Member States.

6. There are two basic actions of research programmes:

- (a) The co-ordination, at Community level, of certain national research activities so as to ensure the dissemination of results. The work is organized in the form of seminars, work-shops and research exchanges together with the publication of proceedings.
- (b) The implementation of joint projects designed to supplement work undertaken in the Member States in fields of particular importance to the Community. The work is undertaken by means of contracts with scientific organizations in Member States.

7. In adopting the programmes begun in 1975, the Council reduced the appropriations proposed by the Commission from 15,991,500 u.c. to 10,300,000 u.c. over five years. This budgetary restraint means that the original five-year programme was cut to 3½ years. Several parts of the programmes, particularly those dealing with genetics, therefore, only provided interim or preliminary results.

## The new programme

8. The content of the Community research programmes is determined generally by the evolving character of the Community's agricultural policy and the problems it faces. The details of the programmes contained in the present proposal are laid out in Annex I of the proposal. The main elements can be summarized as follows and show that the scope of research has been extended, moving away from the previous emphasis on animal diseases and livestock productivity to include the requirements of the less-developed regions of the Community and an evaluation of the impact of new production and pest control methods on the environment and the consumer (thus including certain of the recommendations made in the previous report of the Committee on Agriculture<sup>1</sup>).

9. One of the main economic and political problems facing the CAP is that of the increasing discrepancies in the incomes between the more-favoured and the less-favoured regions and, in particular, the situation of agriculture in the Mediterranean area. This is likely to be accentuated by the enlargement of the Community. A major part of the proposed research programmes are concerned, therefore, with socio-structural objectives and, in particular, of determining the optimum use of land and water resources in the dis-favoured areas. This will involve, for example: the drawing-up of a soil map of the different regions of the Community; determining areas suitable for particular crops and cataloging existing methods of managing water resources. The search for alternate crops, new varieties and methods to improve the productivity of existing crops would also be involved.

The existing programme of agricultural waste and the effluent of intensive stock-rearing will be continued.

10. The lack of adequate diagnostic methods and health regulations constitute a major barrier to trade in animals and meat. The Commission proposes, therefore, to maintain and to expand its animal pathology programme to include:

- the protection of pigs and cattle against perinatal, intestinal and respiratory complaints;
- the problems caused by some liquid and solid manure as regards the quality of animal and vegetable foodstuffs; and
- bovine leucoses and African swine fever.

11. Price policy and present market mechanisms have failed to ensure adequate incomes to producers in certain sectors such as beef and veal. The Commission proposes, therefore, to maintain its programme, to improve the productivity of Community beef herds. Also included is a programme on the ways of improving plant resistance to diseases and environmental pressures.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 134/75, point 3

12. The Commission has introduced a programme for determining the more rational use of pesticides and the replacement of chemical pesticides by less-damaging methods. This programme will include a survey of present methods of pest control.

13. The Commission has also introduced an agro-food production programme to determine new outlets for surplus products and to improve food quality. The programme will include nutritional surveys to determine consumer patterns and surveys on additives in food. The Commission in this sense will be partly concerned with controlling the results of research in the private food industry sector.

14. The Commission has also included a pilot effort of the co-ordination of tree disease problems, based initially on the elm disease.

15. Finally, in order to open up the possibility of the production of alternative products to those for which the Community is presently in surplus, the Commission proposes a programme for the improved production of vegetable proteins (feed and seed legumes, oil-bearing crops and fodder grasses).

#### European Parliament and drawing-up of programmes

16. Regulation 1728 in Article 11 states that the Commission shall present to the European Parliament and Council, at regular intervals, a report which shall contain:

- information on the national organization of agricultural research;
- an overall picture of developments in agricultural research within the Community;
- a progress report on the measures adopted under this Regulation; and
- a forward study of developments which would be desirable in agricultural research in the Member States and in the coordination of that research at Community level, with reference to the aims of the common agricultural policy.

17. The Commission has presented one such report on 15 June 1978<sup>1</sup>. This report gives a brief summary of the results of existing programmes, a list of activities and publications. The report, therefore, does not cover the full range of questions envisaged by the basic regulation. In particular, no indication is given of topics to be included in future programmes.

18. It is essential to ensure that research efforts are concentrated on practical applied research which meets the problems facing the agricultural policy and the farming population of the Community. To this end, the European Parliament should be able to add its voice in the preliminary discussions on research topics to be supported by the Community. This requires that the European Parliament be informed on a more regular basis of discussions on topics under consideration by the Commission and the Standing Committee.

<sup>1</sup> COM(78) 53 final

19. In the debate during the March 1973 Session of the European Parliament, the Commissioner responsible stated that he agreed in principle that reports should be made on an annual basis. This principle should be put into effect so as to allow a proper dialogue between the Commission and the European Parliament.

20. At present the Committee on Agriculture is drawing up a report on fish farming. This is an activity which is rapidly developing on a commercial basis and will be in a position to provide a valuable source of employment in the peripheral coastal regions of the Community. One major obstacle to its development, however, is lack of research on the detection, identification and prevention of fish diseases. Research on fish diseases should be included, therefore, in future Community research programmes.

#### Presentation

21. In general, the Commission's proposal provides a clear description of the aims and means of application of the research programmes. There are, however, certain topics which are described in terms so vague as to defy a proper understanding of their objective. One can cite, for example, 'the relationship between the individual and his environment'. The Committee on Agriculture requests, therefore, that future proposals describe, with greater precision and in greater detail, the content of research programmes to be supported by the Community. For a limited number of topics it is impossible to make a reasoned judgement on the basis of the Commission's proposal.

#### Application of research

22. It is essential that research supported by the Community should be put at the disposal of the farming and food-processing sectors. The purpose of research is not, or should not be, solely limited to the publication of articles of interest to scientists. Research must be translated either into Community legislation or into advice which is offered to the individual farmer.

23. Certain of the past research programmes have already been given practical effect. For example, research on animal leucoses has made possible improved diagnostic methods which have improved the efficiency of veterinary control. Research has also permitted the introduction of legislation of African and classical swine fever. Encouraging results from the introduction of maize hybrids, rich in protein and suitable for silage, have been achieved.

24. The translation of research into legislation is, however, only one test of the effectiveness of research. Improvements in crop varieties, stock-breeding and land and water management, must be disseminated throughout the farming population. This cannot be achieved by scientific conferences. A very high degree of co-ordination with national agricultural advisory services must be achieved. At the same time the Commission should ensure that the publication

of results is carried out at the popular as well as the scientific level. There is little evidence from the report and the proposal that sufficient work has been done to ensure that the farming population is made aware of the results of research.

#### Co-ordination of research With the Commission

25. Agricultural research is carried out by a number of divisions within the Commission, each looking at it from a different point of view, efficiency of production, economic, environmental and public health. The Committee on Agriculture requests that future reports demonstrate that there is a proper co-ordination, within the Commission itself, of the wide-ranging research programmes financed from Community funds.

#### Staffing requirements of the Commission

26. The division concerned with agricultural research is at present understaffed, with the result that it is unable to control effectively the way in which research is carried out and Community funds are used in Member States. This problem will only increase if programmes are enlarged.

The Commission therefore has requested that a limited number of extra posts be created (given in Annex III of the proposal). In the case that the Council were to grant the appropriations for research and refuse the request for staff, the Commission would be reduced to a letter-box, responsible for rubber-stamping projects and addressing cheques.

The Commission, faced by the choice of directing a fewer number of projects adequately or losing complete control of a more ambitious programme, would be forced into reducing the proposed programmes. Since the Committee on Agriculture believes that the research programmes as proposed are important, it believes that the request for additional posts should be granted.

#### Conclusions

27. Agricultural research can make an important contribution, at relatively little cost, towards the implementation of the most important political and social objective of the CAP, and in particular, reducing regional disparities in income, improving the use of land and water resources in the less-favoured regions of the Community and finding a better production balance between surplus and deficit products by the encouragement of new crops and varieties.

28. Given the nature of farming, much of this work must be carried out in public and semi-public research centres. Community coordination avoids costly duplication and directs research towards the needs of the CAP.

29. The Commission's proposal can be welcomed, therefore, particularly since the emphasis has shifted from animal pathology and livestock breeding technique towards the main social and economic problems facing the CAP, and towards the fundamental problem of evaluating the impact of new techniques of production, pest control and food processing upon the land, the genetic potential of animals and plants and the consumer.

30. Research, however, should not be carried out for research's sake. Results must be given concrete shape in the form of Community legislation or practical information to the farmer. There is no evidence in the Commission's proposal or their report to Parliament that sufficient effort has been made to disseminate results to farmers, to establish working relations with national advisory services or even coordinating research within the Commission. Priority must be given to these vital aspects of research policy.

31. Finally, the Committee on Agriculture emphasizes that no proper scientific or financial control of research programmes carried out in national research centres will be possible with the present level of staff available in the Commission.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the chairman of the committee to Mr KOFOED, chairman of the Committee on Agriculture

Luxembourg, 26 September 1978

Dear Mr Chairman,

Subject: Proposal for a decision adopting joint research programmes and programmes for coordinating agricultural research (Doc. 247/78)

At its meeting of 20 and 21 September 1978 the Committee on Budgets considered the above Commission proposal. It welcomed the principle contained in the proposal that the amounts needed for financing should be entered each year in the general budget of the Communities. It felt it, however, essential to point out to you that Annex II, setting out the breakdown of appropriations for a five-year programme, and Annex III specifying the posts considered essential in order to give effect to the proposal should be regarded as having no more than an indicative value.

The Committee on Budgets feels strongly that this point should be clearly stated in the motion for a resolution which the Committee on Agriculture will submit to Parliament, so as to reflect the view repeatedly expressed by it (the Committee on Budgets) that specifically budgetary matters must not be dealt with in legislative documents other than those directly relating to budgetary law - i.e. the annual budget of the Communities - or otherwise than through the budgetary procedure.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Erwin LANGE

Present: Mr Lange, chairman; Mr Aigner, vice-chairman; Mr Alber, Mr Dalyell, Mr H.-W. Müller, Mr Nielsen (deputizing for Mr Caillavet), Mr Notenboom, Mr Schreiber, Mr Shaw, Mr Spinelli and Mr Wurtz.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND CONSUMER  
PROTECTION

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Letter from the chairman of the committee to the chairman of the Committee  
on Agriculture

Luxembourg, 26 September 1978

Dear Mr Chairman,

At its meeting of 26 September 1978 the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection considered the proposal for a decision adopting joint research programmes and programmes for coordinating agricultural research (Doc. 247/78).

The Commission is proposing to continue for a further five years the agricultural research programme adopted by the Council on 22 July 1975 and due to expire on 31 December 1978, and to extend it to other fields of research. The proposed programme comprises ten measures, three of which - points 3, 4 and 6 of Annex I to the proposal - fall within this committee's jurisdiction, the others being of a purely agricultural nature. Point 3 provides for the continuation of existing research into agricultural waste and the effluent of intensive stock rearing (semi-liquid manure). Point 4 is concerned with questions of animal pathology, such as the impact of spreading semi-liquid manure on the quality of foodstuffs and on animal and human health. Point 6 calls for studies into biological pest control to examine to what extent the existing large-scale use of chemical pesticides could be replaced by integrated methods of control.

At this committee's suggestion, on several occasions in recent years the European Parliament has called on the Commission to take action in the abovementioned fields in the interests of the European consumer. The committee therefore welcomes the proposed research programme and the priorities contained therein.

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(sgd.) Krouwel-Vlam

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Present: Mrs Krouwel-Vlam, chairman; Lord Bethell, vice-chairman;  
Mrs Squarcialupi, Mr Ajello, Mr Edwards, Mr Lamberts, Lord Kennet,  
Mr W. Müller and Mr Noé

