

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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DOCUMENT 406/78

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and
Consumer Protection

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the
Council (Doc. 295/78) for a Decision adopting a second research- and
development programme of the European Economic Community in the sector of
medical and public health research consisting of five multiannual concerted
projects

Rapporteur: Mr C. NEY

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By letter of 4 September 1978 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision adopting a second R & D programme of the European Economic Community in the sector of MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH consisting of five multiannual concerted projects.

On 11 September 1978 the President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion.

On 25 September 1978 the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection appointed Mr NEY rapporteur.

It considered the proposal at its meetings of 26 September and 19 October 1978 and unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement.

Present: Mrs Krouwel-Vlam, chairman; Mr Jahn, vice-chairman; Mr Ney, rapporteur; Mr Adams, Mr Andersen, Mr Brown, Mr Granet, Mr Lamberts, Mrs Squarcialupi and Lord St. Oswald.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets is attached to this report.

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A

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection 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 second research and development programme of the European Economic Community in the sector of medical and public health research consisting of five multiannual concerted projects

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹,
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 235 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 295/78),
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 November 1977 on a first research programme in the field of medicine and public health²,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 406/78) ,
1. Warmly welcomes the submission of this second research and development programme in the medical sector as a further incentive towards the international coordination of costly national efforts to treat physical handicaps and the diseases of modern civilization;
 2. Is in general agreement with the detailed description of the five multiannual programmes to be coordinated, for each of which a special concerted action Committee should be established;
 3. Approves the prominence given in this research programme to the treatment and prevention of cardio-vascular diseases, in line with the European Parliament's recent request;
 4. Would appreciate the provision in the near future of statistics, even though they may not be entirely comparable, on the three projects in the first and the five in the second programme so that it may assess the need for specific Community measures;

¹ OJ C 213, 7.9.1978, p.3

² OJ C 299, 12.12.1977, p.47

5. Regrets, however, that it has been unable to obtain access to the opinions of the Committee on Medical Research on these joint research projects;
6. Considers that it should receive regular reports on the implementation of all these projects and in particular that it should be consulted in good time on a possible review of some of the projects;
7. Hopes that at an early date the Commission will also be able to turn its attention to the treatment of eye diseases, lumbar complaints, talipes equinus and periodontology;
8. Calls on the Commission, when it is submitting and reviewing multiannual programmes in the public health and other sectors, to ensure that Parliament is enabled to consider their financial implications during the annual debates on the general budget;
9. Approves this proposal subject to the above observations.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. INTRODUCTION

1. On 13 February 1978 the Council approved an initial programme of medical research. This was a modest programme, confined to coordinated action in the area of registration of congenital abnormalities, cellular ageing and decreased functional capacity of organs and extracorporeal oxygenation.

2. The discussions which culminated in these Council decisions made it abundantly clear that the choice of only three coordinated actions left a great many other, equally important areas of research to be dealt with. The submission of this second research programme goes a long way towards meeting the expectations raised on the previous occasion. The new programme covers five multiannual concerted projects relating to research into attempted suicide, tendency to thrombosis, impaired hearing, perinatal monitoring and quantitative electrocardiography.

3. As is usual in the case of concerted projects it is again proposed in this instance that a management committee should be set up for each project under the chairmanship of the European Commission.

The contribution from the Community budget towards the cost of coordination is estimated at 2.7 m EUA and 4 members of staff for the duration of the programme. This amount will be used for the coordination of national medical research costing 37 million EUA.

4. Finally, a clause is included authorizing the Community to conclude agreements with other States participating in European cooperation in the area of technical and scientific research.

II. SPECIAL REMARKS

5. Your committee warmly welcomes the submission of this second research programme, especially as it meets a request recently made on the occasion of an oral question with debate on the effective combatting of cardio-vascular diseases; that question was dealt with at the June part-session.

6. During the debate Mr Vredeling stated that measures against these 'diseases of modern civilization' were already being considered in the Committee on Medical Research in the context of CREST activities, and that a number of European specialists had given their approval for a research project of this kind.

7. Project 3 deals with the detection of thrombo-embolic processes and project 5 with coronary cardiac diseases which are one of the principal causes of morbidity and mortality in the Western industrialized countries accounting as they do for about twice as many deaths as cancer and leukaemia.

8. The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection urges the Commission not to be content with measures for the early detection of these diseases but to work equally actively towards the coordination of preventive programmes based on information and scientific knowledge of specific dietary and living habits.

9. As to the other research projects, the committee is equally convinced of the need for the coordination of research work as a step towards the lessening of human suffering. In particular, a great deal remains to be done in the area of perinatal monitoring.

10. Your committee also wishes to point out that, except in the case of the first project, proposals should be put forward for more extensive programmes in due course before the completion of the four other projects. It therefore wishes to be informed of the progress and results of the research projects under the first and second programmes including concrete data and sufficient statistical material to better evaluate the desirability of adjusting or continuing the research work.

11. Finally, it should be pointed out that the committee partly disagrees with the opinion of the Committee on Budgets. In particular, it cannot agree that provisions of the kind set out in Article 3 of the Commission proposal should no longer be included in specific Council decisions. It supports the principle that the financial implications should be assessed in the context of the annual budget debates, but since provision has already been made in the 1979 draft budget for an increase in financial and staff resources, the provisions contained in Article 3 can be allowed to stand. Where no such advance provision is set down in the budget it is also clear that no subsequent increases in staff and financial resources should be made.

III: CONCLUSION

12. Subject to the observations set out above and its disagreement on one point with the opinion of the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection delivers a favourable opinion.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the chairman to Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM, chairman of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection

Luxembourg, 29 September 1978

Dear Mrs Krouwel-Vlam,

At its meeting of 20/21 September 1978 the Committee on Budgets adopted an opinion on this proposal. Its opinion is favourable provided that the committee responsible proposes to Parliament the deletion of Article 3 of the proposal, which indicates the amount of the Community's financial contribution and the number of staff needed.

The Committee on Budgets feels that such provisions should not appear in the text of a Council decision but should be adopted by the budgetary authority - the Council and Parliament - during the annual procedure for adopting the Communities' budget. The deletion of Article 3 is essential, since it could prevent Parliament from exercising its budgetary powers.

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(sgd.) Erwin LANGE

Present: Mr LANGE, chairman; Mr AIGNER, vice-chairman; Mr ALBER, Lord BESSBOROUGH, Mr DALYELL, Mr H.W. MÜLLER, Mr NIELSEN (deputizing for Mr CAILLAVET), Mr NOTENBOOM, Mr SCHREIBER, Mr SHAW, Mr SPINELLI and Mr WÜRTZ

