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Working Documents

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DOCUMENT 424/74

Report

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drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the
Council (Doc. 287/74) for a decision/establishing a programme of technological
research in the textile sector

Rapporteur : Mr J.-P. GLESENER

By letter of 1 October 1974 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 establishing a programme of technological research in the textile sector.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Public Health and the Environment for their opinions.

On 19 November 1974 the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology appointed Mr J. Glesener rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meetings of 28 November 1974 and 17 December 1974.

On 17 December 1974 the committee adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement unanimously.

Present: Mr Springorum, chairman; Mr Glesener, rapporteur; Lord Bessborough, Mr Covelli, Mr Flämig, Mr Giraud, Mr Hansen (deputizing for Mr Van der Hek), Mr Hougardy, Mr Jahn (deputizing for Mr Memmel), Mr Kater, Mr Leenhardt, Mr Noè, Mr Normanton, Mr Pintat and Mr Vanderwiele.

The opinions of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Public Health and the Environment are attached.

A

The Committee on Energy, Research and Technology 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 establishing a programme of technological research in the textile sector

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council;¹
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 235 of the EEC Treaty (Doc 287/74);
 - having regard to the report by the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology and the opinions of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Public Health and the Environment (Doc. 424/74);
1. Notes that, as it has urged in the past, research projects of a non-nuclear character are in this case based on Article 235 of the EEC Treaty and that these projects are thus given a legal basis;
 2. Approves the Commission's proposal although it gives insufficient information on the financial implications, which has made a proper assessment difficult;
 3. Regrets once again the short notice given by the Council for consideration of this proposal;
 4. Requests the Council and the Commission, each acting within its own terms of reference, to submit future proposals on this and other matters in accordance with a timetable which allows Parliament to give them proper unhurried consideration, as otherwise the whole purpose of consultation will be defeated;
 5. Points out to the Council and Commission that, if they fail to act on this request, they alone will bear responsibility for the consequences if Parliament is unable to meet the deadlines proposed by the Council and Commission;

¹ OJ No. C 133 of 29 October 1974, p. 7

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. General

1. The European Parliament has always emphasized the need for Community research. It has taken the view that, depending on the circumstances, the appropriate methods were direct research by the Community, research on contract for the Community or the coordination of national research projects by the Community.

2. In the case under examination the research projects are based on preliminary studies requested from private firms, to be carried out with financial support from the Community by means of contracts and coordinated by the Commission.

The Committee on Energy, Research and Technology has always stressed that industrial research should be integrated in Community research and that use should be made of existing research structures for Community projects.

This principle has been followed in this case, so it does not need mentioning again and the examination can be limited to the details affecting policy.

3. The document to be examined consists of an introduction and motivation, a statement of the objectives of the three proposed research projects, the proposal for a Council decision and two annexes.

The first annex contains details of the three research programmes and the second annex is a brief formal letter from the Commission to the President of the Council.

II. Introduction and Motivation

4. At the very beginning it is stated that the technical and technological lead of the Community's textile industry must be maintained, because the Community market is being opened increasingly to imports of textiles from third countries. This means that the competitiveness of the Community industry must be stepped up by improvements in quality, which is in accordance with the objectives of the Treaty and with economic common sense.

5. In this specific case, scientific and technological means must be used to attain an economic objective. No objection can be raised to this principle either.

order to improve the yield and quality of the products, especially in medium and small companies, because these companies generally lack the required research facilities. The Committee on Budgets, asked for its opinion, accepts this explanation.

10. In regard to this the Commission pointed out to the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology that increased production of man-made fibres developed with Community aid will not only help to meet competition from imports from third countries, which was the objective first given. It will also create new export opportunities for the Community's small and medium companies. These are unable to benefit from the research carried out by the bigger firms, because these keep the new processes to themselves. The research performed under contract at the Community's initiative and with its support should redress the balance.

11. The second item of the programme 'Treatment of textiles in organic solvents' is intended to reduce both the volume of effluent water and the consumption of energy.

As regards the improvement in environmental conditions, our committee referred to the outcome of the examination by the Committee on Public Health and the Environment which had been asked for its opinion. This committee confirmed the validity of the Commission's arguments. We can therefore endorse this part of the programme from the point of view of environment policy. In its opinion the Committee on Public Health and the Environment makes special mention of the fact that this research project is in accordance with the declaration by the Council of 22 November 1973 on the programme of action on the environment¹.

12. Our committee can endorse this all the more readily as the Commission has provided us with further details of how a favourable outcome from the research project proposed here can produce a reduction in energy consumption. In its capacity as a Committee on Energy it acted as its own consultant.

Textiles treated with new kinds of organic solvents are said to produce a faster reaction in and more rapid decomposition of the detergents used to clean them. This means that not only less detergent but also less hot water is required. This in turn implies a saving in the amount of energy needed to heat the water and operate the washing-machines.

The committee hopes the results of the research will confirm these predictions.

¹OJ No. C 112 of 20.12.1973, page 19

the Council decision of 14 January 1974 concerning the joint policy on science and technology¹, which is also based on Article 235. The use of this same article as a basis for the present Council decision is therefore logical. Reference to the final communiqué of the Paris Summit Conference in regard to science and technology policy and to Article 2 of the EEC Treaty is in accordance with the usual procedure followed by the Commission in regard to research and documentation.

18. The following comments can be made on the individual articles of the Council decision:

In Article 1 a period of 3 years is proposed, beginning as early as 1 December 1974. Parliament was consulted on 1 October 1974; the document in the six official languages arrived in the second half of October. A complete explanation must be given as to why the Council wishes once again to rush through a proposal for a decision in which the budgetary powers of the Parliament are involved. However welcome the proposed measures may appear, Parliament must always be left sufficient time in the future to deliver its opinion in such cases. Otherwise it could happen that for procedural reasons Parliament would even veto measures which were in themselves desirable.

19. Article 2 deals purely with budgetary matters and states that the corresponding appropriation of 250,000 u.a. shall be included in the Community budget. As mentioned in paragraph 16 above, the Committee on Budgets finds the information given inadequate. The Committee on Energy, Research and Technology asks the Commission to take account in future of the criticisms made by the Committee on Budgets. Otherwise there is a danger that other equally desirable measures will fail because of an unsatisfactory budgetary basis.

20. Article 3 states that the programme shall be carried out by means of contracts. The Committee is in favour of using existing structures and expressly welcomes the cooperation with the private sector, which has been the case in the past and is to be continued in the future.

21. Article 4 states that the general treatment for research programmes for the dissemination of information shall apply in respect of patentable or non-patentable inventions. This committee has already established on a previous occasion that this procedure should apply as a matter of principle (report by Mr Helveg Petersen on the decision of the Council adopting provisions for the dissemination of information relating to

¹OJ No. C7 of 29.1.1974, page 2.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

Letter of 4 December 1974 from the vice-chairman to the chairman of the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology, Mr Gerd SPRINGORUM

Dear Mr Springorum,

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, consulted for an opinion for your committee on Document 287/74, examined this proposal for a decision adopting a programme of technological research in the textile sector.

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs regards this programme as a useful contribution to improving the economic situation of this industrial sector and considers that no further comment is called for at this moment. I am therefore pleased to inform you that the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs supports this initiative of the Commission.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams
Vice-Chairman

Present:

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams; Mr Adams (deputizing for Mr van der Hek), Mr Artzinger, Mr Berthoin (deputizing for Mr Hougardy), Mr Boano (deputizing for Mr Mitterdorfer), Mr Bousch, Mr Burgbacher, Mr Carpentier, Mr Delmotte, Mr Flämig, Mr Leonardi, Mr Noè (deputizing for Mr Bersani), Mr Normanton, Mr Nørgaard, Mr Scholten, Mr Thornley (deputizing for Mr Cifarelli) and Mr Walkhoff (deputizing for Mr Lange).

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Draftsman : Mr COINTAT

On 21 October 1974 the Committee on Public Health and the Environment appointed Mr Cointat draftsman of the opinion.

At its meeting of 26 November 1974, the committee examined the draft opinion and adopted it unanimously.

Present: Mr Jakobsen, acting chairman; Mr Cointat, rapporteur;
Mr Albertsen, Mr Brégégère, Mrs Fenner, Mr Martens, Mr W. Müller, Mr Noè,
Mr Premoli and Mr Rivierez.

B. Fire-proofing of textile fibres by radiation grafting

7. Similarly, your Commission welcomes the programme on the fire-proofing of textile fibres by radiation grafting, principally aimed at protecting the consumer.

However, it is not at present possible to see whether this aim will be achieved, until the results of the proposed research become known.

8. However, it is possible to state now that the cleaning of substances treated by this process will not cause additional water pollution.