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information management

Sixth report on the activities of the Committee for Information and Documentation on Science and Technology (CIDST) of the European Communities

(1984-85)



Report

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(1984-85)**



Directorate-General
Information Market and Innovation

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SIXTH REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES
OF THE COMMITTEE FOR INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CIDST) OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (1)

1984 - 1985

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee for Information and Documentation on Science and Technology (CIDST), set up by decision of the Council of Ministers of 24 June 1971 (2) continued to advise the Commission on matters connected with scientific and technical information and documentation with a view to promoting, after a network (Euronet) had been set up, the development of a European specialized information market. The Committee held its 50th meeting on 20 and 21 November 1985.
- 1.2 Since 1974 three 3-year Plans of action have been carried out to achieve this aim. The third plan, which was supposed to finish in December 1983, was in fact extended until the adoption by the Council on 27 November 1984 of the five-year programme for the development of the specialized information market in Europe (1984-1988). (3).
- 1.3 At its meeting of 12 March 1984 CIDST elected a new Bureau for one year. This term of office was extended on 12 March 1985 for a further two years, corresponding to the remaining term of office (until 12 March 1987) of the CIDST member

The members of the new Bureau are as follows:

- Mr RENAUD (NL), re-elected as chairman;
- Mrs GRANGÉ (B), Mr DONTN (BRD) and Mr RONAI (F), elected as vice-chairmen.

A list of CIDST members at the end of 1985 is attached to this report.

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- (1) The previous reports were published as Nos EUR 5177, EUR 5597, EUR 6158, EUR 7658 and EUR 9335 (In Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian and the latter also in Greek) and are obtainable from the sales offices listed at the end of this report.
- (2) OJ C 122 of 10 December 1971.
- (3) For details of the preparation of this programme see Chapter 4 of the previous report (Doc. EUR 9335).

- 1.4 In order to rationalize its work and to meet the needs of the new five-year programme, CIDST disbanded, on 1 May 1985, all its sectoral working groups (Information on Agriculture, Biomedicine and Health Care, Environment and Energy) and horizontal groups (Economic and Technical Aspects, Multilingual Aspects) and set up a single, permanent working group, the Project Advisory Group (PAG), which can set up "Task Forces" to help it with the work of carrying out the work plans adopted in various priority areas.
- 1.5 Spanish and Portuguese observers were present for the first time at the 50th meeting, in anticipation of becoming full members on 1 January 1986.
- 1.6 This report deals with the work of the seven meetings which were held in 1984 and 1985. Whereas the work in 1984 was devoted mainly to the completion of activities which had begun as part of the third Action plan, the work in 1985 was highlighted by the new five-year programme for the development of the specialized information market in Europe. During the period under review CIDST formulated 37 opinions, five of which of a general nature and 32 on projects (4).

2. Information market policy

As part of the preparatory work in drawing up the five-year programme the Commission informed CIDST of its view that the establishment of a common information market should be a specific aim of the Community. This desire was also clearly confirmed at the Summit meeting held in Brussels on 29 and 30 March 1985.

CIDST has accordingly been kept regularly informed on the progress of work and of the Communication submitted by the Commission on 11 December 1985 to the Council concerning the programme of future activities.

The main thrust of the proposals is:

- to create internal market conditions which will enable competitive supply of advanced information services in the Community;
- to strengthen the Community's position in the growing world information market, from the point of view of suppliers and users alike;
- to ensure that the potential economic, social and regional impacts are fully taken into account in information market initiatives.

(4) These Opinions concerned:

- cooperation with Norway;
- creation of a worldwide network of scientific and technical information;
- 1984-1985 work plan of the five-year programme;
- financing of the initial phase of the Apollo project;
- cooperation agreements with institutions in third countries.

To achieve these aims, the Commission intends to adopt five lines of action from 1986:

- strengthening of the competitiveness and marketing capabilities of European information services;
- reducing the uncertainty of the market;
- removing barriers to information flows;
- stimulating demand;
- stimulating convergence of policies affecting the information market.

3. International and inter-institutional cooperation

- 3.1 In Luxembourg on 4 June 1985 the CIDST Bureau once again met representatives of NORDINFO (Nordic Council for Scientific Information and Research Libraries). First contacts had been established in January 1981. At this informal exchange of views the CIDST and Commission representatives informed their NORDINFO counterparts of the work to be carried out in the framework of the five-year programme for specialized information. The representatives of NORDINFO gave information on recent developments in Scandinavian countries. Furthermore they expressed their particular desire for cooperation concerning the DOCDEL programme.
- 3.2 The committee was regularly informed of the work of OECD/ICCP (5) and especially of the declaration on "Transborder data flows", adopted by the OECD Council in April 1985, as well as of its resolution of 24 October 1985, setting up a group of experts in information technologies and communications of the OECD.
- 3.3 CIDST contributed to the work of the UN Intergovernmental Committee concerning draft resolution for the creation of a worldwide network of scientific and technical information. This was the subject of an opinion (see footnote 4) made by the committee in November 1984 and which subsequently served as a basis for the Community position presented at the Intergovernmental Committee meeting in New York in May 1985.
- 3.4 The committee was regularly informed of the results of meetings of the Council "legal informatics" group, which were attended by the CIDST Chairman and Secretary, who reported there on the implementation of the 3rd Action plan and the Five-year programme, as well as on projects connected with legal information.
- 3.5 The committee was also informed of the work of the Committee of experts on legal data processing of the Council of Europe, in which the Secretary of CIDST participated, especially the symposiums held in September 1984 in Lisbon and in May 1985 in Luxembourg.

(5) OECD/ICCP: Committee for Information, Computer and Communications Policy of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

I. Review of objectives

The 3rd Plan of action was adopted by the Council on 27 July 1981 (6) at the proposal of the Commission and after the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee had delivered their opinions.

The four main objectives of the plan were:

- to consolidate and enhance Euronet and to extend and improve DIANE services;
- to contribute to the creation of further high-quality information services in Europe to meet a wide variety of needs and to stimulate both public and commercial activities in this field;
- to support users and intermediaries and develop the information market in the Member States;
- to encourage the application of new technologies and processes to information services.

1. Influence of the general budget situation on the execution of the 3rd Plan of action

In view of a particularly tight budget situation in 1984, and pending the Council decision on the Five-year programme, it was necessary to allocate the remaining funds of the 3rd Action plan to projects which had already been recommended by CIDST and for which contracts had already been signed.

Reserve appropriations were unfrozen at the end of 1984 and this allowed funds to be made available for this year.

The funds made available for the 3rd Action plan (15 million ECU), part of which was transferred to the 1984 budget, were thus used fully.

2. Development of Euronet DIANE and transfer to national networks

2.1 There were further and increased efforts to encourage the use of the network and to train users.

As to the hours of use of Euronet DIANE, the sharp upward trend (30-50%) in the usage rate of the service has continued. The service now offers more than 500 European and non-European databases and data banks available via 50 hosts.

In accordance with the committee's user support strategy, approval was given to a number of projects which would make aware a larger group of potential users of the network's possibilities.

(6) OJ L 220 of 6 August 1981.

To improve and extend the network and to promote its use and the export of information to non-Community countries, the working group "economic and technical aspects of Euronet" proposed numerous projects which CIDST recommended to the Commission for implementation and financing under the 3rd Action plan.

- 2.2 The activities of the "Launch Team" ceased in May 1984. To replace it, the committee recommended financing a new group of experts, called "Information market development group" (IMDG), which would provide technical, commercial and training support to users of the network.

These experts are also required to collect and publish information about available services, while at the same time providing a basic service to users by a data base offered via ECHO. Every two months they edit an information bulletin "Information Market" (formerly called "Euronet DIANE News") and about 30 000 copies are sent out. These experts are also asked to help in drawing up certain projects and report regularly on their work.

- 2.3 At the end of 1984, as planned, the Commission gave up its responsibility for Euronet and it was handed over to the national telecommunications authorities (PTTs) who operate the network service under the same economic and technical conditions.

Preparations for the transfer of Euronet to the national data transmission networks delayed the negotiations for the connection of Austria and Norway to the DIANE network. A service contract with Norway was signed on 19 December 1984, thus bringing all the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland into the network. The link-up with Greece was completed at the end of 1985.

At its 50th meeting the committee gave a favourable opinion on the new formula for cooperation agreements with institutions in "third countries" (including Austria and Yugoslavia).

- 2.4 CIDST was regularly informed of progress in the establishment, initiated by the Commission, of an Inter-institutional Integrated Services Information System (INSIS); the progress of the ESPRIT programme (European Strategic Programme for Research and Development in Information Technologies); the RACE programme (Research in Advanced Communication Technologies in Europe); and the BRITE programme (Basic Research in Industrial Technologies in Europe).

3. Electronic publishing and document delivery (DOCDEL)

Contracts totalling 3.6 million ECU were signed with 30 different organizations in the Member States for the ten DOCDEL experiments which were selected after call for proposals (7). The experiments were presented to the general public at the joint CEC-ICSU/AB seminar which was held in June 1984. Follow-up was provided by means of the DOCEVA 2 (assessment), DOCMON (monitoring) and DOCMATCH (technical study) projects.

(7) OJ C 288 of 5 November 1982.

The committee gave its recommendation to two experts' contracts with the aim of preparing for further improvements in document delivery and information transmission via satellite (Apollo project).

4. Accelerated development of high-quality services in Europe; Calls for proposals (1982-1983) (8)
- 4.1 In this field, too, budgetary constraints made it impossible to speed up the work of concluding contracts for the projects which had been selected. At the end of 1984 and the beginning of 1985, however, it was possible to provide co-financing for a series of selected projects. By the end of the operation, in June 1985, a total of 4.5 million ECU had been made available for the launching of 30 projects with a co-finance of 25 to 35% by the Community.
- 4.2 At its November 1984 meeting CIDST examined the new criteria for future calls for proposals to provide greater incentive to the information industry. This was in accordance with the priorities laid down in the 1984-1985 work plan. The criteria were adopted at a special meeting on 17 December 1984, and the related call for proposals was published on 30 July 1985 (9). It concerns the application of new information technologies in two fields: information for industry and research and information on biotechnology. After the closing date, on 30 November 1985, 153 proposals were received and later on examined (10).

II. Continuation and conclusion of working groups' activities under the 3rd Action plan

At its meeting on 22 and 23 November 1984 CIDST recommended that the working groups, prior to being disbanded on 1 May 1985, terminate their work in hand and prepare evaluation reports of their work under the 3rd Action plan. The committee also urged the Commission to speed up negotiations for the transfer of remaining activities to other interested services of the Commission (11).

1. Activities of the Agricultural Working Group (AWG)

The working group "Information on Agriculture" under the chairmanship of Mr D'AMBROSIO (I) assisted by Mr REILLY (IRL) held three meetings during the period under review and placed the main emphasis on three areas:

(8) OJ C 167 of 7 July 1982; OJ C 60 of 4 March 1983.

(9) OJ C 190 of 30 July 1985.

(10) of which 11 in biotechnology, 120 in information for industry and research, and 43 for pure application of new information technologies, so 22 covering more than one subject.

(11) It is pertinent to point out that the negotiations between DG XIII (Information Market and Innovation) and DG VI (Agriculture) which CIDST had recommended led to a Commission decision on 27 September 1985 transferring control of the activities of the Agricultural Working Group to DG VI.

1.1 Consolidation and improvement of ongoing projects
Permanent inventory of agricultural research projects in the EEC (AGREP)

AGREP is based on Council Regulation No 1728/74 on the coordination of agricultural research. The Project Advisory Board, which assists the Commission in the control of AGREP, reports to the Standing Committee for Agricultural Research (SCAR) in Brussels. AGREP was implemented in 1976 and is updated yearly. It is available in printed and machine-readable form, the latter being accessible on-line through Euronet DIANE. AGREP contains title citations of about 21 000 agricultural research projects.

EUR-AGRIS (European Community contribution to AGRIS)

Since 1975 EEC Member States have provided a joint input to the International Information System for Agricultural Science and Technology (AGRIS), which is sponsored by FAO (Rome), and started operation in 1975. Apart from the provision of the joint EEC input to AGRIS, EUR-AGRIS tries to meet specific needs of European users while respecting compatibility with the overall system. Several actions have been taken to this end; in 1980, for example, AGRIS was made available on-line through Euronet DIANE. For budgetary reasons the joint input was stopped on 1 December 1984. However, Project A30 for the automation of EUR-AGRIS and AGREP input has since 1 June 1985 allowed each national focal point, including Portugal, to transmit directly their inputs to FAO in Rome and to Datacentralen in Copenhagen.

Use of VIDEOTEX for the dissemination of information and telematic services in the agricultural sector

Following feasibility studies, three contracts were signed: with Ireland on 24 December 1984, Italy on 25 May 1985 and Greece on 11 December 1985. These pilot projects will contribute to a reduction of regional discrepancies, reinforce the infrastructure and ease access to information.

1.2 Projects stemming from the call for proposals launched in March 1983

Three projects were selected:

- AGRANEWS (European Information Service on Agriculture);
- FARMSTAT (International Agronomic Data Base);
- AGRIMECH (Data Bank on Agricultural Machinery).

The Commission finances approximately 30% of the initial cost of these projects.

1.3 Prepared projects

Pilot training courses for information intermediaries in agriculture (A29-1): this project began at the end of 1985 after some preparatory delay.

Pilot review articles on agricultural hot topics (A29-2): after a long preparatory phase it will be possible to start this project in 1986.

2. Activities of the working group "Information on Biomedicine and Health Care" (BWG)

The main task of this working group, chaired since 1982 by Mr BECKERS (B), was the study on the collection and processing of biomedical and health care information for the purpose of producing information systems for use by doctors, scientists and hospitals. Furthermore, the task force "Information on Biotechnology", whose mandate was approved by CIDST at the June 1982 meeting, has been working under the aegis of BWG. This team, which has since become a PAG task force, is chaired by Mrs FRONTALI (I).

2.1 During the period under review four BWG meetings were held and the following projects were studied, continued or implemented:

. Collaboration among drug data banks and linking of these banks with Euronet (BM 1-2 et BM 12)

In spite of the work carried out under earlier action plans and the efforts of an ad hoc group, a revision of the initial project and negotiations with the ten drug data banks involved failed to produce the expected results. CIDST thus decided at its meeting on 17 December 1984 to abandon the project.

. Minimum basic data set (MBDS) (BM 3)

Following the workshop held in 1981, which drew up a series of recommendations in this field, a Joint Working Group (JWG)-Health Information and Informatics was set up in collaboration with other Directorates-General under the aegis of the Medical Research Committee (MRC).

Three projects have been proposed:

- a "clearing house" for the hospital minimum basic data set (JWG 1)
- Feasibility study on a transnational information system in health care linking up a large number of data bases (JWG 2A)
- Utilization of the MBDS in obstetrics (JWG 3B).

Only the last project has been implemented so far.

. Permanent inventory of research in biomedicine (MEDREP) (BM 4)

After a feasibility study the pilot phase of this project began in July 1983. The project is modelled on similar inventories in the areas of Agriculture (AGREP) and Environment (ENREP). The pilot phase was completed on time with the publication of the inventory in December 1985. Work is under way to make it available on-line via the ECHO host. DG XII has been asked if it can provide future funding for the continuation of the project.

. EBRI project ("European Biomedical Engineering Research Industry") (BM 4-2)

This project, initially prepared by DG XII, has been incorporated in the previous project. A contract for an initial period of one year was signed in May 1984 and it was subsequently extended until December 1985. It is also planned to make these data available on-line via ECHO.

. Inventory of existing information on Biomedicine and Health (BM 7)

The aim of this project is the production of an inventory of biomedical and health care information systems within the Community. The survey encompasses information systems covering different levels (scientific, technical, commercial etc) and of various kinds (bibliographical data bases, abstracting services, factual data banks).

. European Journal of Medical Effectiveness (BM 9)

This two-monthly pilot periodical was launched in 1983 with Community funding for two years, after which it had to be commercially viable on its own. Unfortunately, this aim could not be achieved and the journal ceased publication after issue N° 6/84. However, articles submitted by the editorial committee will still be published in other medical journals.

. Biomedical use of videotex (BM 11)

A seminar on the use of videotex (proposed by the working group before it was disbanded) to facilitate the use of biomedical information will be organized in 1986.

2.2 . Information for the elderly and the handicapped ((BM 8/1-3)

The following projects are currently in progress:

- HANDYVOC: the aim of this project is to create a multilingual classification and thesaurus of the technical aids available to elderly or disabled persons
- HANDYWHO: the aim of this project is to create a European inventory of professional and other groups involved with technical aids for disabled persons.
- BM 8/1-3: the aim of these projects was to establish the system design of two modules (HANDY AIDS and HANDYWHO) intended to form an information system on technical aids available to the approximately 22 million disabled people in the Community, in the general context of the HANDYNET programme for which DG (Employment, Social affairs and Education) is now responsible.

2.3 . Biotechnology

The six following projects had been worked out by the task force and were subsequently recommended by CIDST:

- BIOTECH 1: the aim of this project is to set up a European data bank on nucleic acid sequences, and the project will be carried out in cooperation with several centres on the basis of work done by the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), Heidelberg.
- BIOTECH 2: European Biotechnology Information and Referral Centre based on the Science Reference Library (SRL) in the United Kingdom.

The aim of this project is to set up a biotechnological information centre which will be a focal point at Community level of information, guidance and network management services. The idea is that the centre will have recourse to subject specialists to provide information and to exploit the multidisciplinary resources of libraries in Western Europe on behalf of industry, universities and research, and to constitute a centre of cooperation which has contacts with specialized centres and collections.

- BIOTECH 3: preliminary assessment of the feasibility and resource requirements of a computerized EEC information system for micro-organism culture collections.
- BIOTECH 4: information study carried out by the enzyme engineering and computer science departments of the Technological University of Compiègne. The project involves a systematic study of user needs (academic, industrial, medical and other) for information on enzymes and related systems (e.g. immobilized enzyme systems).
- BIOTECH 5: MIRDAB is a factual data bank containing pertinent information on germinative plasmas of scientific and biotechnological importance. It aims at paying special attention to organisms not covered by collections at the international level, such as plant and animal cells, regrouped with organisms which are particularly significant because of their current and future role in biotechnology production.
- BIOTECH 6: study of feasibility of and need for an European data bank concerning animal toxicological tests in order to reduce the number of animal toxicological experiments performed throughout the Community.

With the exception of BIOTECH 5, which was terminated by the workshop, held from 15 to 17 November 1983, all these projects are to be continued under the five-year programme (see Part B III, 2).

3. Activities of the Environmental Information Group (ENIG)

This group was set up in 1973 to consider information on environmental protection. During the period under review four meetings were held under the chairmanship of Mr CURRAN (IRL). The group continued existing projects and initiated a programme of new projects.

3.1 Continuation of existing projects

- . ENLEX: Inventory of Environmental Legislation in the Member States of the Community. The information stored on magnetic tape is available via ECHO since end 1985. It is presented in a form compatible with CELEX (12).

Also, in response to the Council Decision of 8 December 1975 and as part of aid to existing projects, ENIG monitored the development of the following three projects:

- . ENREP: comprehensive inventory of environmental research projects (+ 25 000 projects),
- . ENDOC: inventory of sources of environmental information and documentation,
- . ENEX: inventory of environmental expertise.

All these projects, which are financed by DG XI (Environment, Consumer protection and Nuclear Safety) and monitored by the group, are available on-line via ECHO.

(12) Interinstitutionnel computerized documentation system for Community law.

Mention should be made of three other projects which are being actively pursued:

- . MDS: the Multilingual Descriptor System provides for the direct translation of specialized environmental terms in seven Community languages,
- . ENGUIDE: guide to bibliographical data bases,
- . ECDIN: data base on toxic chemical substances operated by JCR Ispra.

3.2 Development of new projects

- . ENLOCFAC: survey and evaluation of local environmental observation systems and data, carried out in 1985 in collaboration with DG XI (Corinne project),
- . ENLIT: data bank on environmental literature (temporarily suspended),
- . MEI: dissemination of environmental information (not started).

Among other proposals made by DG XI and which were assessed, two were adopted:

- . EWADAT: data base on the management of waste (feasibility study). DG XI must now decide whether to go ahead with this project on the basis of the results of the study.
- . TOXWASTE: data base on toxic and dangerous wastes in the Community (this project is to be confirmed as a pilot project under the EWADAT programme).

4. Activities of the working group "Information on Energy" (ENER)

The working group on "Information on Energy", which met for the first time in March 1983 as a task force, became subsequently a permanent working group following recommendation of CIDST at its meeting in June 1984.

The group met six times under the chairmanship of Mrs BRENIERE (F). The projects which it considered may be divided into three groups.

4.1 Projects under way

- . ENER 1: the aim of this project is to provide better information on energy consumption in households using the same reference year (1985) and a common methodology. After detailed preparatory talks five countries (F.R. Germany, France, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands) agreed to take part, and the project was finally recommended by CIDST at its meeting in November 1984.

. Inventory of data bases on Energy (DEDB)

This inventory was drawn up with the help of the national delegates and covers some 130 data bases, both public and private, which contain a significant percentage of energy references which are available on electronic support within the Community. The working group agreed to a second version with the following improvements:

- harmonized vocabulary,
- uniform presentation,
- more detailed indexes,
- translation into the Community languages,
- regular updating.

4.2 Project financed under the call for proposals

The call for proposals in 1982 led to the financing of the European Coal Data Bank project. The project was carried out jointly by four organizations in three Member States and comprises a factual base containing information on the basic properties of and also more detailed information on coal, on the properties of liquid coal and on the physical properties of carbon compounds.

4.3 Projects under discussion

The working group has begun discussions on a number of projects:

- . numerical data base "Energy Data" which will contain a number of data at present dispersed,
- . energy saving and videotex, which will make available through videotex a data base concerning demonstration projects, energy savings achieved etc,
- . multilingual thesauri in the field of energy, to be created in collaboration with CETIL (13),
- . "simultaneous access", to obtain data in the same field contained in different data bases.

When the group was disbanded, the Commission was asked to follow up all these projects.

5. Multilingual activities

During the period under review the Multilingual Aspects Group (MULTI) held four joint meetings with CETIL under the chairmanship of Mr SAGER (UK).

5.1 In line with the programme of work laid down in January 1981, the following activities were carried out:

- preparation of the HANDYVOC multilingual thesaurus of the technical aids available to elderly or disabled persons; the printed and machine-readable versions are still to be finalized;

(13) CETIL: Committee of Experts for the Transfer of Information between European Languages.

- preparation of a contract for the maintenance und updating of thesauri using ASTUTE software;
- publication at the end of 1984 of the EUROVOC thesaurus of terminology used in the European institutions (the EUDISED thesaurus produced in collaboration with the Council of Europe was published in the same year).

5.2 CIDST and the working group were also kept informed of progress on the following projects under the Commission's action plans for the transfer of information between languages:

- improvement of EURODICAUTOM (terminological data bank);
- SYSTRAN (machine translation system);
- EUROTERM (study of terminological data bases);
- updating of an inventory of approximately 500 existing thesauri.

5.3 Linguistic problems committee (CMC)

The Committee for the Management and Coordination of Linguistic Problems, which replaced the ACPM for EUROTRA, held its first meeting on 29 January 1985 under the chairmanship of Mr CZERMAK (D). Mr RENAUD (NL) and Mr ROTHWELL (UK), also members of this committee, liaise with CIDST which was kept regularly informed of the progress made by the EUROTRA project.

In spite of budgetary problems, work on the EUROTRA programme continued as planned. The preparatory phase was successfully concluded at the end of 1984 and the second phase of the programme began officially on 1 January 1985.

- B - FIVE-YEAR PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE SPECIALIZED INFORMATION MARKET IN EUROPE

In response to a Commission proposal which was the result of lengthy preparatory work, and after consulting CIDST, CREST, the Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament and its various committees, the Council adopted on 27 November 1984 (14) - after a delay of 11 months - a five-year programme (1984-1988) for the development of the specialized information market in Europe. A preliminary budget of 25 million ECU was allocated, of which 10 million ECU were earmarked for the first two years (1984-1985).

In 1984 CIDST discussed ways of rationalizing its work and structures with a view to coping better with the management of this programme and the work plans in the priority areas, which were chosen following a demand by CREST (see B III).

I. Aims of the programme

The aims of the programme are outlined in Annex I of the Council Decision of 27 November 1984. There are two main aims:

- a) to improve the use of information products and services of European origin in order to ensure, as far as possible, their economic viability; this is to be achieved by taking appropriate action to remedy existing obstacles, thus resulting in increased user-friendliness and more transparency for information supply and demand;
- b) to create or develop specialized information products and services of European origin which are innovative and unique, and which offer added value with a view to improving the competitiveness of European suppliers on the European and the world markets, as well as their responsiveness to the needs of a wide range of users, thus creating greater European independence.

The programme emphasizes four basic aspects:

- user-friendliness of information products and services with special consideration for the professional end-user of information; special attention should also be given to the information needs of small- and medium-sized enterprises;
- economic viability of information products and services by encouraging, in particular, innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives with the aim of avoiding, as far as possible, long-term subsidies;

(14) OJ L 314 of 4 December 1984.

- competitiveness of information products and services of European origin and strengthening of position vis-à-vis external competitors; development of a balanced interdependence between Europe and its overseas partners;
- introduction of advanced information techniques to take account of market penetration by new media, i.e. expand information products and services and provide users with a better product.

II. Implementation of the programme

The experience gained in carrying out three successive three-year action plans (1975-1983) and the discussions which preceded the new five-year programme indicated the need for a stricter and more specific methodology. The following approach was therefore adopted with regard to management and advisory procedures.

Management rationalization

In order to achieve the aims of the programme more successfully, a certain number of criteria were drawn up with regard to the selection, definition and implementation of projects.

Provision was also made to evaluate the results of projects in the various fields of action.

Six priority areas were defined when the programme was discussed by CREST; a new priority area was added as a result of the Council Resolution of 27 September 1985 on collaboration between libraries in the field of data processing (15).

Two-year work plans were drawn up for 1984-1985 and 1986-1987; work plans for the priority areas were subsequently drawn up as part of these two-year plans.

a) PAG

The Project Advisory Group (PAG), consisting of members of CIDST delegations, was formed to prepare the committee's opinions on projects.

The committee gave the group the authority to recommend projects covered by the overall budget in priority fields determined in agreement with the Commission.

(15) OJ C 271 of 23 October 1985.

PAG's mandate includes consideration of the economic, technical and multilingual aspects and in particular the user-related aspects of each project, as well as supervision and assessment of results.

At its meeting in March 1985 CIDST appointed the PAG chairman, Mr LEAMY (UK), and three vice-chairmen, Mr BALLARIN (I), Mr ALEVISOS (GR) and Mr WESTPHAL-ERIKSEN (DK).

b) Task forces (ad hoc groups)

To help it in its work, PAG may set up Task forces of limited duration in various priority areas.

The Task forces work on and establish projects as part of their work plans approved by PAG. They thus contribute to the expertise which is required to formulate and monitor projects.

Each Task force has a chairman or vice-chairman appointed by PAG, to which progress reports must be submitted.

III. Activities in priority areas

The six priority areas which were selected satisfy the following criteria:

- they match existing Community policies or R&D programmes;
- they refer to areas in which Europe is threatened by a growing dependence on non-European sources and suppliers of information services;
- they contribute to the development of R&D in the information field;
- they can help to improve the competitiveness of European industry in general.

1. Patent information

- 1.1 Information on patents is a major component of scientific and technical information. At present, patent information systems are developing in the direction of electronic storage and delivery of complete texts and images.

In view of international competition with regard to the supervision of the dissemination of patent information, an effort at Community level is needed to draw up a common approach on the part of national and international organizations with responsibility for the supply of patent information to the users.

Furthermore the arrangements of the three-partite agreement between the Community, USA and Japan have to be taken into account.

Special emphasis is placed on coordination with related Community policies and activities such as the dissemination of the results of research.

- 1.2 After two preparatory meetings the task force "Information on patents" held its first full meeting under the chairmanship of Mrs SAVIGNON (F) on 3 and 4 October 1985. The TF then proposed a number of pilot experiments in the framework of a work plan subsequently approved by PAG.

Inventory and conference on training and awareness (PAT-TRAIN env.)

The purpose of this project is to prepare an inventory of current activities and available material and to collect samples of the material if it can be obtained on reasonable terms. The results of the work will serve as a basis for a conference or seminar on training and awareness with regard to patent information; the task of the conference will be to prepare recommendations to be submitted to the Commission for future activities.

In particular, the preparatory work will also have to include a study of the way in which the Japanese authorities encourage young people to take an interest in invention and innovation.

There is also a plan for a videocassette which will provide beginners with a reasonably priced introduction to the basic principles of patents.

Extended index of IPC keywords (PAT-IPC)

Work is under way to prepare a list of keywords in English, similar to the list prepared by the German Patent Office. In this context a survey of the titles of all patent applications filed in Europe is planned. All these titles (approximately 150 000) are available in machine-usable form in the three official languages - English, French and German - of the European Patent Office. If the survey is successfully completed, it will first of all reveal which words patent applicants and examiners consider appropriate for the various IPC categories, but it could also result in a trilingual technical dictionary which would be very useful for the Commission in its work on machine translation.

Data base on patent information and documentation services (PAT-DATABA 2)

The purpose of this project is to update the inventories which DG XIII prepared in 1981 and published in the form of manuals in English, French and German. The aim is also to make the information in certain circumstances available on-line in all the Member States.

The inventories are to be extended to commercial on-line patent information services throughout the world, since these are covered only partially by the manuals.

Application of the portfolio-imaging technique to display strategic patent positions (PAT-PORTFO)

The portfolio-imaging technique is a graphical method which allows a 'portrait' to be made - in the form of a two-dimensional picture of objects, facts or economic variables - to show the competitive position of these objects, facts or variables, so that useful information can be obtained for the purpose of strategic decision-making.

The purpose of the PAT-PORTFO project is to carry out a pilot project in order to change the portfolio imaging technique into a patent representation technique which can be used by industry as a decision-making aid for the formulation of patent strategies.

- 1.3 Alongside its initial work plan the TF PAT, in consultation with patent offices including EPO and agencies specialized in this field recommended the preparation of a separate action plan.

2. Biotechnology information network

- 2.1 Biotechnology is a priority R&D sector in Europe, and a Community programme has been launched. The development of this research and its further industrial applications can be maintained in an effective manner by a suitable information network which will incorporate elements such as an inventory and information exchange systems between European research laboratories, terminological data banks on biotechnology, data on the location of culture collections, patents, standards, European bulletin, etc.

Earlier initiatives taken by the TF biotechnology of BWG will be expanded and developed, and there will be increased coordination with the Community biotechnology programme.

This is why CIDST's Analytical task force (see part C) and PAG have recommended a clear and distinct separation of the activities of DG XII (Research) and DG XIII.

The importance of this sector was emphasized when it was included in a new call for proposals published in the Official Journal of 30 July 1985.

- 2.2 A number of projects drawn up by the task force on biotechnology will be continued as part of the work plan approved by PAG:

∴ Nucleotide sequence data bank and developments (e.g. of software and software exchange) (sequel to BIOTECH 1: BIOTECH 1/2)

See Part A-II-2 for a description of the project.

European biotechnology information project (EBIP) (sequel to BIOTECH 2: BIOTECH 2/2)

A pilot information and referral service established at the Science Reference Library in London was co-financed by the Commission for one year from 1 July 1984. The first six months gave promising results. It was felt that considerable further progress could be made towards improving access to biotechnology information throughout Europe by extending aid for another year. This was recommended by TFBI, PAG and CIDST.

European data bank on animal experiments (BIOTECH 6)

This data bank (now being compiled) considers toxicological, regulatory and safety aspects. For the description of this project see part A, II, 2 of this report.

European manual of the hybridoma data bank (BIOTECH 7)

This project got under way at the end of 1985 and will bring together the information which is available in different forms and at different locations on cloned cell lines (particularly hybridomas, the "immortal" hybrid cells used to produce monoclonal antibodies) and their immuno-reactive products (i.e., the antibody molecules themselves).

3. Materials Data Banks

- 3.1 There are many collections of high-quality data on materials in Europe, and these are becoming increasingly important and valuable for research and development and for industrial concept and design. Often, however, the data are produced and collected in a fairly haphazard manner. Support for the coordination and harmonization of data bank activities would help the development of the overall and competitive information services which are needed to meet the challenge of similar efforts outside Europe.

It seems appropriate for the Community's initiatives in this field to rest on the ad hoc activities of the Commission (JRC, CRB, RBT) (16).

- 3.2 After some preparatory work PAG set up a task force and approved a work plan in June 1985. The TF MAT, chaired by Mr BEHRENS (D), held its first meeting on 3/4 October 1985.

The main emphasis during the first year was on a demonstration programme consisting of the following projects:

- MAT-DEMO: the demonstration programme itself;
- MAT-DEMO A: study of specifications for the establishment of standards as part of the demonstration programme;
- MAT-DEMO B: the aim of this project is to draw up a guidance system for users.

A project has been launched for a directory of sources of materials data (MDB1). Other activities under the work plan are still being drawn up.

(16) JRC: Joint Research Center
CRB: Common Research Bureau
RBT: Research in Basic Technologies.

4. Electronic publishing and image banks

- 4.1 During the 1970s most work in the information field concentrated on bibliographic information services, which do not fulfil the users' needs for primary documents. Present efforts in this field give priority to innovative full-text information services based on new technologies. Special emphasis is given to electronic publishing and supply of primary documents. In addition to the DOCDEL programme, which was launched by the Commission in 1983 and which has been continued under the Five-year programme, special attention should also be given to the development of image data banks. Activities will be coordinated with the relevant Community programmes (ESPRIT, INSIS, etc).
- 4.2 A task force on electronic publishing and image banks has been set up which, chaired by Mr RISCHETTE (L), pursues the work started by the DOCDEL advice group. It has prepared a work plan which includes a Call for Proposals for the application of digital optical storage media, to new information services, the co-financing of the APOLLO project (information transmission by satellite) and a series of other projects in the area of electronic bulletins and inter-personal electronic publishing networks.

The first three to be carried out are:

- . EPCALL 1: Call for Proposals for the application of digital optical storage media (see part A, I, 4.2 of this report),
- . DOCTRANSFER: the purpose of this project is to exchange and make use of the results of the DOCDEL programme,
- . DOCMANUSC: European electronic manuscript project.
Recent studies have shown that most of the scientific and technical reviews will in the future be prepared electronically with the help of microprocessors and with textprocessors. Starting from this fact, and in order to develop standards in this sector, the project DOCMANUSC will promote pilot projects for the creation of electronic manuscripts.

Furthermore, a feasibility study (DOCMATCH 1) is carried out to explore the technical and financial problems raised by the creation of standardized techniques which will allow liaison between the bibliographical data bases and the integral text bases.

If the results of the feasibility study are promising, a project will be worked out in 1986 in order to conceive and to implement compatible algorithms.

4.3 Image Data Banks

The EPTF and the Analytical Task force are both convinced that in this new and heterogenous field Europe has a unique occasion to become the leader in the world market for information products and services, which will be innovators and easy to use. To start with, a study (DOCMIX) is proposed, which will study the state of the art, the potential economic profitableness of image data banks, problems of management, e.g. research methods, and the goals and opportunity of a Community intervention.

5. Information for industry and research

- 5.1 A major objective should be the supply of more relevant information to professional users.

Community action in this field should follow two main approaches:

- to develop the content of information services to include information on products, services, innovations and new business opportunities with the assistance of the information industry;
- to encourage the application of suitable information technologies (e.g. CD-ROM, videotex, electronic mail, computerized catalogues).

These efforts are directed particularly at small and medium-sized enterprises, which are in constant need of identifying their partners, making use of new technologies and seeking sub-contractors.

All activities should be coordinated with related Community programmes, especially the plan for the transnational development of the supporting infrastructure for innovation and technology transfer.

- 5.2 A task force "Information for Industry and Research", chaired by Mr SCHULTE-HILLEN (D), was set up in June 1985 to achieve these objectives and drew up a work plan approved by PAG which, amongst other projects, includes the following short-term projects or studies:

- . information service on the use of compact disks for publishing (IND/CD-ROM),
- . study of technologies for the conversion of printed material into value-added electronic information services (IND/conversion),
- . INDUSER project: aiming at organizing about 100 one-day workshops for managers of SME's, to make them better assess their information needs.

6. Reduction of regional differences

- 6.1 There is a tendency for the gaps between Member States with regard to the development of specialized information to widen with the increasing use of new information technologies. The necessary know-how and resources are lacking in certain geographic areas where there is a major need for information exchange. There must be adequate and effective support to improve the supply and use of information products and services. Community initiatives may be appropriate in number of fields, e.g. training, awareness, assistance to users or the application of new information technologies such as videotex.

- 6.2 An initial programme for the application of videotex in the dissemination of agricultural information was launched in 1984 with pilot projects in Ireland, Italy and Greece (total Community contribution: 1.7 million ECU).

With regard to the use of videotex by SME's a possible co-financing with DG XVI (Regional Policy) has been recommended.

- 6.3 Given the restricted regional characteristics of these actions, PAG did not consider it necessary to set up a Task force for this priority area.

1. 1986/87 Work plan

1.1 At its meeting in December 1984 the Committee set up an analytical task force to draw up this plan, so as to be able to continue the work carried out under the 1984/85 plan (see Parts B II and III of this report). This TF was asked to study progress made in the six priority fields and to suggest answers to the following questions:

- Should work be continued in the existing priority fields?
- Is there a need for new priorities and which ones?
- Should additional funding be requested for the five-year plan?

1.2 After three meetings held in the spring of 1985, the analytical TF replied to these questions in the form of a report to CIDST with the findings that:

- the existing priorities should be retained and accelerated as far as possible;
- new priorities could be considered subject to the availability of funding and manpower;
- estimates based on the work plans in each of the current priority fields, and on actions in new priority fields, would require the Commission to submit to the Council a proposal for a significant increase in the budget for the Five-year programme.

1.3 In the case of prospective priority fields, the following proposals were made:

- Community aid for inter-library cooperation as part of a European information market using new technologies (for details see chapter C, item 2.3).

- Stimulating the development of information systems using knowledge-based systems

To this end, it was proposed that besides others the results of the seminar on artificial intelligence be incorporated in the creation of expert systems as a new component in the information industry - the first step being the creation of a "query answering system".

- Activities to heighten public awareness and interest in information

These actions should be based principally on the IMDG (see chapter A, item 2.2) and on the sensibility and publicity activities included in most of the work plans for the various priority fields.

In addition, a proposal was made to study the possibility of setting up "information shops" in the Member States. This would be a pilot project with the aim of providing easier direct access to stored information and encouraging the widest possible use of it.

- the development of third-generation information services, which has been recognised as a priority task by the Commission itself. The general aim of this proposal is to provide target users such as information services that bring together all the available information (in such fields as commerce, law, etc) needed by the relevant professional groups.

1.4 These and other proposals were discussed during an informal meeting over the weekend of 4 to 6 October 1985 at Pont d'Oye (Belgium), in order to prepare the CIDST recommendations for the 1986/87 work plan.

2. Thrust of future work

2.1 At its 50th meeting on 20 and 21 November 1985, CIDST and the Commission thought that the time was not yet ripe for asking the Council to increase the current budget of 25 million ECU, since it was felt that progress to date made it preferable to concentrate on work in the six existing priority fields.

With respect to inter-library cooperation, CIDST recommended the inclusion of this new priority field and the financing of certain studies, which would be needed if a plan of action were to be drawn up for this field, from the budget for the five-year programme (up to a maximum of 1 million ECU).

Furthermore, an ad hoc group was set up at the same meeting to investigate possible actions in the industrial sector, with particular reference to SMEs in peripheral regions of the Community.

2.2 Because the budget is inadequate to finance other priority fields at the present time, the Committee did not approve the three other priority fields proposed by the analytical TF. It did, however, recognize that preparatory work, to permit their subsequent inclusion, should be carried out by the Commission.

2.3 Preparatory actions in the field of libraries

On 27 September 1985 the Council approved a resolution requesting that the Commission undertakes rapid action at European level in the library sector. In particular, this resolution recommended:

- . an extension of existing cooperation,
- . a thorough study of possible applications in this sector of new information technologies, amongst others the linking of computerized catalogues.

Moreover, the Council invited the Commission to submit an annual report on these activities and the progress made.

2.3.1 At its third meeting, the PAG approved in principle two preparatory studies:

. Examination of possible options of a programme (Lib 1)

This concerned proposing options helpful both in drawing up a programme and in defining specific actions.

. Studies of the state of the art and of the impact of new information technologies in the library sector (Lib 2)

This involved making an inventory and evaluating the degree to which new information technologies are employed in European libraries. A further aim of these studies is to examine various possible uses in day-to-day administration, circulation, cataloguing and inter-library loans.

. and, finally, the formation of a team of experts ("Lib EX") to:

- help define and supervise the studies,
- help in compiling and evaluating data on various aspects of Community libraries,
- form an interface between the professional librarians and the Commission wherever this would seem to be useful.

3. Conclusions:

At present, the following targets have been set for work in 1986 and 1987:

1. Consolidation and strengthening of work within the existing priority fields.
2. Examination and preparation of new priority action in the field of libraries.
3. Drawing up, provided the preparatory work has made this possible, of separate plans of action in whichever fields this may prove necessary on the basis of the planned activities (such proposals have already been made in the case of patent information, electronic publishing and libraries).

The next two years will see the APOLLO programme starting up and the first significant results being obtained from the DOCDEL programme, as well as the implementation of jointly financed projects under the Call for proposals (selection being in March 1986).

Further progress under the Five-year programme will include the development of demonstration projects in the field of materials databanks and the definition on what action is necessary in the image bank sector.

All these future activities will of course be made in close conjunction with developments in the field of the European information market.

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Luxembourg, 21 novembre 1985

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This report covers the activities of CIDST during the years 1984 and 1985. Whereas the work in 1984 was mainly devoted to the completion of activities which had begun as part of the Third Action Plan, the work in 1985 was highlighted by the new Five Year Programme (1984-88) for the development of the specialized information market in Europe adopted by the Council on 27 November 1984.

The report is in four sections: introduction, continuation and conclusion of the Third Action Plan with the activities of the various working groups; setting up of the Five Year Programme for the development of the specialized market information in Europe and scope of the task forces in priority areas; future prospects.

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