

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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DOCUMENT 1-978/82

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Energy and Research
on the proposal from the Commission of the European
Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-932/82 - COM(82) 737
final)

for a decision on a preparatory phase
for a Community research and development programme
in the field of information technologies

Rapporteur: Mr Protogene VERONESI

PE 81.996/fin.

By letter of 19 November 1982, the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion, pursuant to Article 235 of the EEC Treaty, on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities for a decision on a preparatory phase for a Community research and development programme in the field of information technologies (COM(82) 737 final).

The proposal was referred to the Committee on Energy and Research as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Economic and Monetary affairs for their opinions.

At its meeting of 2 December 1982 the committee decided to apply the procedure without debate provided for in Rule 34 of the Rules of Procedure and appointed Mr VERONESI rapporteur.

As no objections were raised, the Committee on Energy and Research unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution.

The following took part in the vote: Mrs WALZ, Chairman; Mr GALLAGHER, Mr SELIGMAN and Mr IPPOLITO, Vice-Chairmen; Mr VERONESI, Rapporteur; Mr ADAM, Mr CALVEZ (deputizing for Mr GALLAND), Mr FUCHS, Mr GRIFFITHS (deputizing for Mr ROGALLA), Mr HERMAN (deputizing for Mrs PHLIX), Mr LALOR (deputizing for Mr FLANAGAN), Mr LINKOHR, Mr MARKOPOULOS, Mr NORMANTON, Mr PETERS (deputizing for Mr SCHMID), Mr PETERSON, Mr PINTAT, Mr PÖTTERING (deputizing for Mr MÜLLER-HERMANN), Mr PROTOPAPADAKIS, Mr PURVIS, Mr ROGERS (deputizing for Mr PATTISON), Mr SÄLZER, Mr SASSANO, Mrs THEOBALD-PAOLI, Mr TRAVAGLINI (deputizing for Mr PEDINI) and Mrs VIEHOFF (deputizing for Mrs LIZIN).

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The Committee on Energy and Research hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

closing the procedure for consultation of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision on a preparatory phase for a Community research and development programme in the field of information technologies

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the various resolutions of Council and Parliament between 1972 and 1981 on the importance of the development of advanced technology,
- having regard to the proposal from the Commission to the Council (COM(82) 737 final)¹,
- having been consulted by the Council (Doc. 1-932/82),
- having regard to the conclusions of the European Council of 28 and 29 June 1982,
- having regard to the resolution of the Council of Research Ministers of 30 June 1982,
- having regard to the report by the Committee on Energy and Research (Doc. 1-978/82),
- whereas
 - (a) simultaneously with the present economic crisis, Europe is experiencing a period of decline in the competitiveness of its industries,
 - (b) information technologies play a major role in determining economic development, as they help to increase productivity and competitiveness and, at the same time, constitute a sector which is itself expanding,
 - (c) if the European information technology industry is not to succumb to the massive pressure from its counterparts in the US and Japan, where public aid is granted on a large scale, it needs similar incentives to enable it to develop,
 - (d) with rapid developments in information processing systems, there is a need for continuous support for back-up research,
 - (e) the high levels of investment needed to carry out studies and research mean that international cooperation will be necessary

¹OJ No. C 314, p.44, 30.11.1982

1. Approves the programmes proposed by the Commission in principle, but hopes that the collaboration apparently envisaged for private companies will also be extended to the programmes run by the Member States;
2. Regards the choice of areas for action as interesting but requests the Commission to define more precisely the specific objectives to be achieved, placing them in order of priority according to its assessment of their respective potential for the future of European industries;
3. Agrees that there is a need to implement pilot projects;
4. Insists that all the emphasis should be placed on pre-competitive developments rather than catching up with the Americans and Japanese in already highly competitive sectors;
5. Urges that the procedures for implementing the various phases of the programmes be streamlined as much as possible;
6. Calls for a realistic rather than simply cosmetic assessment of what level of funding will be necessary to meet the real requirements of the programmes;
7. Recommends rigorous management and scientific monitoring of the implementation of the research projects, a process which should be open to scrutiny and subject to supervision by the Committee on Energy and Research of the European Parliament;
8. Considers that these programmes, like their predecessors, will be doomed to failure unless they are accompanied by measures designed to improve the organization of the European market with a view to its simplification and expansion;
9. Urges concentration on establishing Community standards timeously so that they become world standards, thus giving Community industry competitive advantages for the long term, but such standards should not inhibit innovation and new concepts in this fast-moving area;
10. Insists that the Commission ride hard on the Community's PTTs and communications organizations to ensure an efficient, user-responsive, reasonably priced and innovative network system, as an essential condition for the success of ESPRIT;
11. Hopes that the ESPRIT programme will concentrate above all on providing the necessary environment for motivating and encouraging the development of ideas, inventions and techniques whether from individuals, universities, small or large companies;

12. Considers that the adoption of the new programme provides an opportunity for an exhaustive critical appraisal of previous experience in order to make all current and future activities more effective and relevant;
13. Recommends that an overall view be taken of the development of information technology so that its wider use and further growth do not cause unemployment and social tensions but, on the contrary, help to prevent them;
14. Considers that giving young people training in information technology will increase the pool of highly qualified technicians, an essential prerequisite for the success of the ESPRIT programme, and recommends that sufficient funds should be earmarked for this purpose.

