

II

(Preparatory Acts)

COMMISSION

Proposal for a Council Decision adopting the second phase of the programme on cooperation between universities and enterprises regarding training in the field of technology (Comett II)

*COM(88) 429 final**(Submitted by the Commission on 26 July 1988)**(88/C 239/04)*

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 128 thereof,

Having regard to Council Decision 63/266/EEC of 2 April 1963 laying down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy⁽¹⁾, and in particular the second, sixth, seventh, ninth and tenth principles thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Whereas in its Decision 86/365/EEC of 24 July 1986⁽²⁾ the Council adopted a programme on cooperation between universities and enterprises regarding training in the field of technology for a period of four years commencing on 1 January 1986;

Whereas Article 6 of the above Decision provides that the Commission will submit by 31 October 1988 to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee a report on experience in implementing the Comett programme, together with a proposal regarding the arrangements for continuing it, if appropriate; and that the Council shall take a decision on this proposal by 31 October 1989, after consulting the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee;

Whereas the European Council which met in December 1986 emphasized the importance of Community actions for employment and of having as their objective to encourage better training of young people and adults;

Whereas the Council, in its resolution of 2 December 1986 concerning a strategic programme for growth and employment, underlined the priority of initial and continuing education⁽³⁾; and confirmed this commitment in its Decision 87/569/EEC of 1 December 1987 adopting the action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for 'adult and professional' life⁽⁴⁾;

Whereas the Council has already adopted, in extending the framework programme of research and development⁽⁵⁾, measures aimed at reinforcing technological and industrial cooperation at Community level, in particular by its Decisions 88/479/EEC⁽⁶⁾, 88/108/EEC⁽⁷⁾, 88/419/EEC⁽⁸⁾ concerning Esprit, Brite/Euram, Science, and by its Decision 88/417/EEC⁽⁹⁾ concerning Delta, which is directed specifically at learning technologies; whereas this technological and industrial cooperation in the field of research and development must be supported by parallel efforts in the field of vocational training;

Whereas the Council, in its Decision 87/307/EEC of 13 June 1987 on the Strategic Community Programme for Innovation and Transfer of Technology (Sprint)⁽¹⁰⁾, adopted certain activities concerning the transfer of know-how in the fields of innovation management and transfer of technology;

Whereas the European Parliament adopted on 24 May 1983 a resolution on the competitiveness of Community industry⁽¹¹⁾, in which it asks for increased efforts to be made in favour of vocational training and the training of the leaders of enterprises; whereas this resolution

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 340, 31. 12. 1986, p. 2.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 346, 10. 12. 1987, p. 31.

⁽³⁾ OJ No L 302, 24. 10. 1987, p. 23.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ No L 118, 6. 5. 1988, p. 32.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ No L 59, 4. 3. 1988, p. 23.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ No L 206, 30. 7. 1988, p. 34.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ No L 206, 30. 7. 1988, p. 20.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ No L 153, 13. 6. 1987.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ No C 135, 24. 5. 1983, p. 27.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No 63, 20. 4. 1963, p. 1338/63.

⁽²⁾ OJ No L 222, 8. 8. 1986, p. 17.

complements the resolution on the continuing training of workers in enterprises and various other resolutions concerning in particular higher education and the development of university cooperation in the European Community⁽¹⁾, open universities in the European Community, the framework programme for technological research and development⁽²⁾, and regional development, education and training⁽³⁾;

Whereas the exploitation of technological developments throughout industry will depend on the adaptability of the qualifications and the enterprise of the workforce; whereas, in this context, there is a more urgent need than ever to reinforce, at Community level, the appropriate initiatives and actions in progress which aim to draw the full potential from human resources and investments in training as a complement to an overall Community strategy in the field of industrial, research, development and innovation policies; and whereas in this context vocational training is an indispensable instrument for the completion of the internal market in 1992;

Whereas cooperation between university and enterprise in the field of training already developed within the first Comett programme must be strengthened within Member States, particularly at local and regional level, and be assisted by Community measures; whereas, in this context, it is important to support training actions having a Community dimension and to ensure balanced development throughout the Community, and therefore in order to do so it is appropriate to involve, as far as possible, existing bodies in the Member States;

Whereas in this respect Comett is contributing to the strengthening of the scientific and technological base of European industry and its international competitiveness as well as also to the reduction of the disparities between various regions and in the gap between the more and the less developed regions in terms of Articles 130F and 130A of the Treaty;

Whereas it is necessary, in extension to the Council resolution of 3 November 1987 concerning a strategic programme in favour of small and medium-sized enterprises⁽⁴⁾, to engage such enterprises in the implementation of Comett as well as in the diffusion of the results of the programme;

Whereas the Council has taken its Decision 87/327/EEC of 15 June 1987⁽⁵⁾ adopting the European Community action programme for the mobility of university students (Erasmus);

Whereas it is necessary to proceed with a periodic evaluation of the programme;

Whereas in the implementation of the programme the Commission should be assisted by a committee;

After consultation with the Comett committee established by Decision 86/365/EEC referred to above, and having regard to the opinions expressed by the Industrial Research and Development Advisory Committee (Irdac), of the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training, the Union of Confederations of Industry and Employers in Europe (Unice), the European Trades Union Confederation (ETUC), as well as the Liaison Committee of Rectors Conferences of the Member States of the European Community,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. A second phase of the Comett programme for cooperation between universities and enterprises regarding training in the field of technology, hereinafter referred to as 'Comett II', is hereby adopted for a period of five years commencing on 1 January 1990.

2. The detailed arrangements for Comett II are contained in the Annex.

Article 2

For the purposes of Comett II:

- the term 'university' is used in its general sense to indicate all types of post-secondary education and training establishments which offer, where appropriate within the framework of advanced training, qualifications or diplomas of that level, whatever such establishments may be called in the Member States,
- the term 'enterprise' is used to indicate all types of economic activity, including both large and small and medium-sized enterprises, whatever their legal status and the manner of applying new technologies. By extension, the term 'enterprise' may indicate also professional associations, economic development agencies (notably chambers of commerce and industry and their equivalents) as well as organisations representing employers or employees.

Article 3

The objectives of Comett II are as follows:

- to improve the supply of training at local, regional and national level with the assistance of the authorities concerned, thus contributing to the balanced economic and social development of the Community,
- to give a European dimension to cooperation between universities and enterprises in initial and continuing training relating to technologies and their

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 104, 16. 4. 1984, p. 48.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 7, 12. 1. 1987, p. 19.

⁽³⁾ OJ No C 99, 13. 4. 1987, p. 15.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ No C 287, 14. 11. 1986, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ No L 166, 25. 6. 1987, p. 20.

applications and transfer, supporting in this respect the contribution of higher education institutions to the completion of the internal market,

- to foster the joint development of training programmes and the exchange of experience, and also the optimum use of training resources at Community level,
- to develop the level of training in response to technological change and social changes by identifying the resulting priorities in existing training arrangements, in particular in favour of small and medium-sized enterprises, which call for supplementary action both within Member States and at Community level, and by promoting equal opportunities for men and women.

Article 4

1. The Community will contribute to the execution of Comett II to the extent of the resources voted for this programme in the budget of the European Communities, in conformity with the financial perspectives decided jointly by the three institutions and with the development foreseen in those perspectives.

2. The funds estimated as necessary for the implementation of Comett II amount to 250 million ECU. This amount is intended to finance the various support and measures set out in the Annex, including support for evaluation, animation, and diffusion actions necessary for the execution of the programme.

Article 5

1. The Commission shall implement the Comett II programme in accordance with the provisions of the Annex.

2. In the performance of that task the Commission shall be assisted by a committee of a consultative nature, consisting of two representatives from each Member State, of whom at least one shall be from the industry sector, and chaired by a Commission representative. The members of the Committee shall be responsible for liaison between Comett II and similar initiatives implemented in the Member States. The representative of the Commission shall submit to the committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft, within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote. The opinion shall be recorded in the minutes; in addition, each Member State shall have the right to ask to have its position recorded in the minutes. The Commission shall take the utmost account of the opinion delivered by the Committee. It shall inform the Committee of the manner in which its opinion has been taken into account.

The Commission may also consult the committee on any other matter concerning the implementation of Comett II.

3. Two representatives of the social partners, appointed by the Commission on the basis of proposals by the organizations representing the social partners at Community level, will participate in the work of the Committee in the capacity of observers.

4. An annual report regarding the implementation of Comett II shall be submitted by the Commission after consulting the Comett committee to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee.

5. The Commission shall ensure that Comett II is consistent with other Community research and development actions already programmed — in particular the Delta programme — as well as those implemented on the one hand in the field of innovation and technology transfer — notably the Sprint programme — and on the other hand in the field of education and training, in particular the Erasmus programme for the mobility of university students, the Eurotecnet programme for vocational training in information technologies, and those actions in favour of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Article 6

1. The Commission shall submit by 30 June 1992 an evaluation report to the Council, as well as the European Parliament and Economic and Social Committee, on the implementation of Comett II. This report shall, if appropriate, be accompanied with suggestions for possible changes in the execution of Comett II which might prove necessary in the light of developments in the implementation of the Programme.

2. The Commission will by 30 June 1995 submit to the Council, the European Parliament, and the Economic and Social Committee a final report on the experience and results of Comett II having regard to the objectives set and defined in Article 3 of this Decision.

3. With a view to the preparation of the reports referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, the Commission will invite the Member States to present a contribution which describes the current state of development in university-enterprise cooperation in the field of training for technology and its applications as well as the measures taken with a view to ensuring the full development of this cooperation both at national and Community level.

Article 7

This decision shall take effect on 1 January 1990.

ANNEX

1. The Comett programme comprises a range of transnational actions to strengthen and encourage cooperation between universities and enterprises within the European framework in regard to advanced training in response to technological change and social changes.

These measures are directed at trainees, including new graduates, persons in active employment, including the social partners and the training officers concerned.

2. Within the framework of the Comett programme the projects which are to receive Community assistance will be chosen on the basis of, in particular, their stimulative and exemplary character, and their contribution to the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 3 of the Decision.

The selection of projects will take account of the development of the framework programme for technology research and development (R&D), independently of the participation of the enterprises concerned in it. Particular emphasis will be put on the training needs of small and medium-sized enterprises.

3. The following measures will be implemented in the course of Comett II:

A. European Network

- (a) The development and extension of the existing European network of university-enterprise training partnerships (UETPs), regional or sectoral, having as its objective transnational cooperation, particularly in the following fields:
 - identification of training needs in technology,
 - training for innovation transfer and for the consequences of the establishment of the Europe of technology — particularly for the small and medium-sized enterprises in the context of the completion of the internal market,
 - shared development and exploitation of joint projects in the field of technology training within the other strands of the Comett II programme,
 - reinforcement of inter-regional cooperation and transfer in the field of technology training.
- (b) The Community will contribute to the implementation and management of the UETP network by taking into account other Community initiatives for supporting local and regional development as well as small and medium-sized enterprises.
- (c) The Community will grant financial support for activities with a European dimension as well as for the functioning of the UETPs within the network. This flat-rate contribution shall not normally exceed 50 % of the expenditure eligible. This support will be reduced progressively, with a ceiling per UETP of 70 000 ECU, 60 000 ECU and 50 000 ECU respectively for the first three years. In certain exceptional and duly justified cases, in particular with the aim of contributing to a more balanced development of the programme within the Community, the Community contribution may exceed the 50 % ceiling of eligible expenditure.

B. Transnational Exchanges

- (a) Specific financial assistance to promote, for the benefit of all Member States, transnational exchange through the allocation of grants:
 - (i) for students, including new graduates, carrying out a training period in enterprises located in another Member State, either for short to medium periods (three months to one year) or for longer periods linked to carrying out industrial projects; an important assessment criterion in the selection of projects submitted shall be the capacity of the sending university to recognize this training period in the enterprise as an integral part of the university course;

- (ii) for personnel seconded from universities and enterprises to an enterprise or university respectively in another Member State with a view to participating in training activities and enriching their knowledge and professional practices.
- (b) The Community's financial contribution will be limited to the direct and indirect mobility costs of recipients of grants, the costs of preparing, supervising and organizing the activities implemented and, where necessary, the costs of language courses for beneficiaries. The contribution will take the form of a flatrate payment.

C. Joint Advanced training and multimedia distance training projects

- (a) Support for advanced training courses with a European dimension designed for the rapid dissemination in universities and enterprises of research and development results in the field of new technologies and their applications, as well as for the promotion, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, of innovation transfer.
- (b) Support for work on devising, developing and testing at European level innovative joint advanced training projects, particularly those of an interdisciplinary character, initiated in common by different enterprises in liaison with the universities concerned in at least two Member States in fields relating to the new technologies and their applications in the context of the completion of the internal market and the reinforcement of economic and social cohesion.
- (c) Support for multilateral arrangements for initial and advanced training initiated jointly by different enterprises in association with the universities concerned aimed at establishing open systems for distance education utilizing the new information technologies and/or resulting in transferable training products.
- (d) For the actions referred to in (a), (b), and (c) above, priority will be given to projects oriented towards the training of trainers and to projects favouring the participation of SMEs in the actions planned. Special attention will be paid to projects associating in their execution university and industry partners from the peripheral regions of the Community. In exceptional cases and for a limited duration, the Commission may support projects in those regions' preparatory actions for the development of transnational projects.
- (e) The Community's financial contribution will be limited to 50 % of the total expenditure on the initiatives described in (a), (b), and (c) above.

D. Complementary measures

- a) These measures have as their aim:
 - (i) support for preparatory actions, notably in the form of visits or meetings, having as their objective the planning of projects within the different strands of the programme or the extension of existing projects to other partners;
 - (ii) a structured exchange of information and experience, notably through supporting the Comett information centres created within the Community with a view to promoting the centres' Community exchange actions and diffusion and animation activities within the programme, as well as through the development of a databank and electronic mail facilities between projects;
 - (iii) analysis and monitoring of developments in qualifications and training needs given the new technologies and their applications;
 - (iv) better mutual comprehension of the obstacles hindering the development of university-enterprise cooperation in training with a view to strengthening this cooperation, including the training of personnel engaged in this cooperation;
 - (v) the continuing evaluation of Comett II as it is implemented as well as the technical and logistical support for the execution of the programme.
- (b) The financial contribution by the Commission for the complementary measures may be up to 100 % of the actual expenditure committed for these initiatives.

By way of indication and subject to possible modifications necessitated by the progressive implementation of Comett II, 40 % of the funds allocated to the programme by the budgetary authority will be allotted to joint advanced training and multimedia distance training projects. An equivalent percentage will be allocated to transnational exchanges, with the remainder being allotted to the european network of UETPs and the complementary measures.

By way of indication, the amount estimated as being necessary for Comett II in Article 4 (2) of the Decision should permit 14 000 students and trainees to carry out a transnational traineeship as well as the granting of 1 000 fellowships to the personnel of universities and enterprises.
