



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 28.8.2006
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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT**

pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 251 (2) of the EC Treaty

concerning the

**common position of the Council on the adoption of a Decision of the European
Parliament and of the Council establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong
learning**

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1. BACKGROUND

Date of transmission of the proposal to the EP and the Council (document COM(2004)474 final):	14 July 2004
Date of the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee:	10 February 2005
Date of the opinion of the Committee of the Regions:	23 February 2005
Date of the opinion of the European Parliament, first reading:	25 October 2005
Date of the revised proposal of the Commission (document COM(2006)236 final):	24 May 2006
Date of political agreement in Council:	27 June 2006
Date of adoption of the common position:	24 July 2006

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

- 2.1. Based on Articles 149 and 150 of the Treaty, the proposal was to establish a new integrated Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, to replace the existing Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, eLearning, and related programmes, which expire at the end of 2006.
- 2.2. The Lifelong Learning Programme will comprise four specific programmes: Comenius, for general education activities concerning schools up to and including upper secondary level; Erasmus, for education and advanced training activities at higher education level; Leonardo da Vinci, for all other aspects of vocational education and training; and Grundtvig for adult education. In addition, the proposal incorporates a “transversal” programme incorporating four key activities, to cover the policy issues outlined above, and to make specific provision for language learning and ICT-related activity where these fall outside the specific programmes; and for a more substantial dissemination activity; and a Jean Monnet programme to support action related to European integration and European institutions and associations in education and training.

- 2.3. The proposal addresses important needs concerning the modernisation and adaptation of Member State education and training systems, particularly in the context of the strategic Lisbon goals, and brings European added value directly to individual citizens participating in its mobility and other cooperation actions.

3. COMMENTS ON THE COMMON POSITION

- 3.1 The Council adopted the common position on 24 July 2006 by unanimity. The Commission can endorse the text, as it can be considered an appropriate compromise which is very largely based on the revised Commission proposal.

- 3.2 In relation to the revised Commission proposal, two changes of substance have been made in the common position, with the prior agreement of the Parliament:

a) reverting to the Commission's original proposal for the administration of multilateral projects in the Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig sub-programmes;

b) adding the International Centre for European Training (CIFE) in Nice to the list of institutions designated to be able to receive operating grants without the need for a call for proposals.

The first change simply restores the text from the Commission's original proposal, so requires no comment. As regards the second change, the Commission stated in the Parliament's plenary debate on 24 October that it would not oppose an agreement reached between the Parliament and the Council on the institutions to be designated under Article 37 of this Decision. The inclusion of CIFE is therefore accepted by the Commission.

- 3.3 The Commission notes that the equivalent of the financial envelope of EUR 6,200 million in 2004 prices referred to in the common position (Article 14) is EUR 6,970 million in current prices.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Commission considers that the common position adopted by the Council on 24 July 2006 by unanimity is appropriate. It notes that the Chairman of the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament has indicated in a letter to the Council Presidency that if the common position was adopted as such he would recommend to the Committee to approve the common position in second reading. The Commission can therefore support the common position which reflects the agreement reached between the three institutions.