



Programme Management comments to the Five Year Assessment Report
related to the Specific programme INCO

These comments have been prepared by officials of DG RTD and represent their personal views on the conclusions of the 5-year assessment. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the views of the Commission or DG RTD.

The following comments from the Programme Management have integrated the most recent developments, notably in the context of the European Research Area. As regards the overall 5-Year Assessment of the Framework programme, the Commission has expressed its position in the document COM (2000)659, 19 October 2000.

The Programme Management of the INCO programme would like to express its particular thanks to the Panel for the excellent Five Year Assessment report it has delivered, examining in depth and in fine detail, in spite of its complexity and extent, the various dimensions of the programme, from its political and strategical objectives and results, to more management focused aspects.

Thus, very useful ways have been opened for the next steps of international cooperation under FP5 and in the context of the European Research Area and of FP6.

General comments:

Note has been taken of the positive statements of the Panel on the implementation of the programme and on the high level of integration, consistency and coherence reached.

It has also been taken note with interest of the main overall conclusions of the report for the future, and in particular on the recommendation to keep in the international research programme its "dual functions" (coordination as well as specific research) and to orientate its research themes towards regional and global problems. This orientation is in line with the spirit of the European Research Area.

In this perspective, the Programme Management recognise with the Panel that there is still room to develop the complementarity and the coordination with the Member States' policies, in particular taking in account what had been initiated with the INCOPOL study (cf p. 9).

Concerning the evolution of the status of the Commission in COST and the organisation of the Secretariat of this research scheme which is also part of the ERA, (p.48), it needs careful reflection. As concerns EUREKA, the Commission attaches importance to the

statement of the Panel referring to a "strong need for clearly re(defining) EUREKA 's objectives and priority activities".

Support is also given to the idea that "joint initiatives and interfaces" between INCO and the activities of other DG's should be intensified. Such synergies with all the other services from the Commission are currently reinforced and in particular with those in charge of external relations for the Mediterranean, Africa, Asia and Latin America. (cf p.12).

More specific comments:

As a clarification concerning Candidates countries, these countries have been treated on a equal footing with member states in a participatory context, since even before the first call for proposals (see for example the conference "New partners, new opportunities", the adaptation of the evaluation manuel, the Essen conference...).

Concerning NIS, support is given to the view that "weak participation of some strategically important countries" and in particular from "non-european NIS" (p11) should be corrected. It is the reason why broad regional initiatives are being studied in order to increase the cooperation in particular with NIS. A specific call for the Balkans will be published in year 2001.

Special efforts have also been undertaken to increase the coordination between the different programme/activities (INCO-Copernicus, INTAS, ISTC, STCU) and to avoid dispersion of activities.

The success of these various initiatives pre-supposes a good national support to the local organisations of these countries.

The Programme Management recognises that the implementation of the numerous cooperation agreements with Industrialised countries and Emerging economies would greatly benefit from enhanced and actively targeted dissemination of information internally and externally on the opportunities offered, to accelerate and increase their impact (p. 48). Indeed, steps in this direction are being taken with CORDIS.

In any case, measures will be taken in 2001 to start the evaluation of these agreements.

Concerning INCO-DC, the recommendation (p.33) that "an evaluation of research carried out to date should be initiated" and "to identify the mature research projects results" will be addressed by assessing the achievements reached at the different steps of the life of the projects, through the launching of an impact study undertaken by a high level Panel.

Note has been taken of the proposal (p.32) to include agriculture as a research area of INCO-MED; however, this area is already part of the sub-programme INCO-DEV, where the mediterranean partners can participate.

The recommendation (p.49) "to stimulate the participation of Industry in the future INCO-DC" corresponds to one of the preoccupations of the Programme Management which, at the occasion of projects progress assessment, encourages the coordinators to establish contacts with Industry.

As concerns the recommendation (p33) that "accompanying measures should also be used for exploratory activities towards the preparation of project proposals ", support is given to this approach if it aims at the identification of subjects for projects proposal and not at the preparation of one single project.

