

Council Decision of 20 December 2000 on a multiannual programme
for enterprise and entrepreneurship, and in particular for small and
medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (2001-2005) (2000/819/EC)

COUNCIL DECISION

of 20 December 2000

on a multiannual programme for enterprise and entrepreneurship, and in
particular for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (2001-2005)

(2000/819/EC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 157(3) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament⁽²⁾,

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee⁽³⁾,

Having regard to the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions⁽⁴⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) The importance of enterprise and entrepreneurship for the achievement of Community objectives and the difficulties faced by enterprises and entrepreneurs have been the subject of a number of communications, Decisions and reports, and most recently of the Commission Communication of 26 April 2000 on 'enterprise policy in the knowledge-driven economy'. These have identified major areas for action at Community level.
- (2) Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make a significant contribution in terms of competitiveness, research, innovation, skills and employment and face particular problems.
- (3) Action is required to help overcome these difficulties. A series of Programmes, particularly the Third Multiannual Programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union (1997-2000), adopted by Council Decision 97/15/EC⁽⁵⁾, which expires on 31 December 2000, have provided a framework for such action.
- (4) On 29 June 1999, the Commission reported in its Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the external evaluation of the said programme.
- (5) It is necessary to adopt a further programme for the period beginning 1 January 2001 and to ensure that enterprise policy is endowed with sufficient resources to attain its objectives.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Council Decision of 20 December 2000 on a multiannual programme for enterprise and entrepreneurship, and in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (2001-2005) (2000/819/EC), Introductory Text. (See end of Document for details)

- (6) On 9 November 1999, the Council approved a report on the integration of sustainable development in the enterprise policy of the European Union. Account should be taken of sustainable development when defining and implementing the measures to be adopted under this programme.
- (7) On 20 June 2000, the Santa Maria da Feira European Council approved the European Charter for Small Enterprises and requested its full implementation in particular as part of the proposals for the Multiannual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. Measures by the Union to promote SMEs should take account of the objectives set out in the Charter.
- (8) Similar actions have been launched in the framework of the OECD, and in particular with the Charter on policies concerning SMEs adopted by the OECD Ministers for Industry in Bologna on 15 June 2000.
- (9) On 7 November 2000, the Council emphasised the need to improve significantly the financing of innovative companies and to redirect financial instruments towards support for new business start-ups, high-tech firms and micro-enterprises.
- (10) The measures necessary for the implementation of this Decision should be adopted in accordance with Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission⁽⁶⁾.
- (11) This Decision constitutes the legal basis for specific complementary measures which are not part of other Community policies and which cannot be better carried out at Member State level.
- (12) The Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) concluded with the EFTA/EEA countries and the additional protocols to the Association Agreements concluded with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe provide for participation of those countries in Community programmes. Provision should also be made for participation by Cyprus, Malta and Turkey in the framework of the Association Agreements concluded with those countries. Participation by other countries could be considered when agreements and procedures so allow.
- (13) A financial reference, within the meaning of point 34 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure⁽⁷⁾, is included in this Decision for the whole duration of the programme, although this will not affect the powers of the budget authority as defined by the Treaty,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

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- (1) [OJ C 311, 31.10.2000, p. 180.](#)
- (2) Opinion delivered on 26 October 2000 (not yet published in the Official Journal).
- (3) Opinion delivered on 29 November 2000 (not yet published in the Official Journal).
- (4) Opinion delivered on 21 September 2000 (not yet published in the Official Journal).
- (5) [OJ L 6, 10.1.1997, p. 25.](#)
- (6) [OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.](#)
- (7) [OJ L 172, 18.6.1999, p. 1.](#)

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