



Plenary sitting

A9-0102/2021

30.3.2021

REPORT

on the proposal for a Council decision amending Decision 2008/376/EC on the adoption of the Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel and on the multiannual technical guidelines for this programme (COM(2020)0320 – C9-0214/2020 – 2020/0141(NLE))

Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Rapporteur: Cristian-Silviu Buşoi

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

Amendments to a draft act

Amendments by Parliament set out in two columns

Deletions are indicated in ***bold italics*** in the left-hand column. Replacements are indicated in ***bold italics*** in both columns. New text is indicated in ***bold italics*** in the right-hand column.

The first and second lines of the header of each amendment identify the relevant part of the draft act under consideration. If an amendment pertains to an existing act that the draft act is seeking to amend, the amendment heading includes a third line identifying the existing act and a fourth line identifying the provision in that act that Parliament wishes to amend.

Amendments by Parliament in the form of a consolidated text

New text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. Deletions are indicated using either the **■** symbol or ~~strikeout~~. Replacements are indicated by highlighting the new text in ***bold italics*** and by deleting or striking out the text that has been replaced.

By way of exception, purely technical changes made by the drafting departments in preparing the final text are not highlighted.

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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

on the proposal for a Council decision amending Decision 2008/376/EC on the adoption of the Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel and on the multiannual technical guidelines for this programme (COM(2020)0320 – C9-0214/2020 – 2020/0141(NLE))

(Consultation)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2020)0320),
 - having regard to the second paragraph of Article 2 of Protocol No 37, annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the financial consequences of the expiry of the ECSC Treaty and on the Research Fund for Coal and Steel, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament (C9-0214/2020),
 - having regard to Rule 82 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (A9-0102/2021),
1. Approves the Commission proposal as amended;
 2. Calls on the Commission to alter its proposal accordingly, in accordance with Article 293(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 106a of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community;
 3. Calls on the Council to notify Parliament if it intends to depart from the text approved by Parliament;
 4. Asks the Council to consult Parliament again if it intends to substantially amend the Commission proposal;
 5. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and the Commission.

Amendment 1

Proposal for a decision

Recital 1

Text proposed by the Commission

(1) On 5 October 2016, the Union ratified the Paris Agreement²⁸. This

Amendment

(1) On 5 October 2016, the Union ratified the Paris Agreement, ***adopted***

international agreement invites parties who have ratified it to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change **limiting** global temperature **rise** to well below 2 degrees.

²⁸ Multilateral Treaty, Chapter XXVII Environment, 7.d Paris Agreement. Entered into force on 4 November 2016.

under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which entered into force on 4 November 2016²⁸. This international agreement invites parties who have ratified it to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change holding the increase in the global temperature to well below 2 degrees and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels^{1a}.

²⁸ Multilateral Treaty, Chapter XXVII Environment, 7.d Paris Agreement. Entered into force on 4 November 2016.

^{1a} ***Article 2.1.a of the Paris Agreement.***

Amendment 2

Proposal for a decision

Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission

(6) It is necessary therefore to align the RFCS Research Programme objectives with international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, ***as well as*** with the scientific, technological and political objectives of the Union on climate neutrality by 2050.

Amendment

(6) It is necessary therefore to align the RFCS Research Programme objectives with international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, with the ***best available scientific evidence, in particular the findings reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well as the*** technological and political objectives of the Union on climate neutrality by 2050.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a decision

Recital 6 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(6a) The Research Programme should pay particular attention to research on raw materials deriving from coal wastes given their high potential for developing

highly advanced products in strategic value chains, such as battery anodes or carbon fibres, and in the chemistry industry.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 1

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 2 – subparagraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

The Research Programme shall provide support for collaborative research in the coal and steel sectors. The Research Programme shall also provide support for clean steel breakthrough technologies leading to near zero-carbon steel making projects *and* research projects for managing the just transition of formerly operating coal mines or coal mines in the process of closure and related infrastructure in line with the Just Transition Mechanism and in compliance with Article 4(2) of Council Decision 2003/76/EC. The Research Programme shall be consistent with the political, scientific, and technological objectives of the Union, and shall complement the activities carried out in the Member States and within the existing *EU* research programmes, in particular the framework programme for research, *technological development and demonstration activities* (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Research Framework Programme’);

Amendment

The Research Programme shall provide support *to all relevant stakeholders, including to small and medium-sized enterprises*, for collaborative research in the coal and steel sectors. The Research Programme shall also provide support for clean steel breakthrough technologies leading to near zero-carbon steel making projects *as well as* research projects, *including large industrial research projects*, for managing the just transition of formerly operating coal mines or coal mines in the process of closure and related infrastructure in line with the Just Transition Mechanism and in compliance with Article 4(2) of Council Decision 2003/76/EC. The Research Programme shall be consistent with the political, *social, economic, climate, environmental*, scientific, and technological objectives of the Union, and shall complement the activities carried out in the Member States and within the existing *Union* research programmes, in particular *Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation* (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Research Framework Programme’). *The Research Programme shall in particular be consistent with the Paris Agreement.*

Amendment 5

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 1

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 2 – subparagraph 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

The Research Programme shall support research activities, including demonstration projects, bringing technologies closer to the market aimed at the objectives defined for coal in Section 3 and for steel in Section 4.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 2

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 4 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

1. Research projects shall support the transition towards a climate-neutral Union economy by 2050, with the objective to support the phasing out of fossil fuels, to develop alternative activities on former mine sites and avoid or restore environmental damage of coal mines in the process of closure, formerly operating coal mines and their surroundings. Projects shall in particular focus on:

1. Research projects shall ***contribute to the achievement of the Union 2030 climate targets and support industry in the process of*** the transition towards a climate-neutral Union economy by 2050, with the objective to support the phasing out of fossil fuels, to develop alternative activities on former mine ***or coal power plant*** sites and avoid or restore environmental damage of coal mines in the process of closure, formerly operating coal mines and their surroundings. ***Without prejudice to Article 191 TFEU***, projects shall in particular focus on:

Amendment 7

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 2

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(a) development and testing of carbon

(a) development and testing of carbon

dioxide capture, use and storage technologies;

dioxide capture, use and storage technologies *related to coal use, including carbon recycling in fuels and materials, with a view to promoting the circular economy*;

Amendment 8

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 2

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point b

Text proposed by the Commission

(b) *use of geothermal energy on former coal sites*;

Amendment

(b) *development of clean energy in former coal sites, paying particular attention to energy efficiency and security of supply, including the exploitation of geothermal resources, energy storage, e-fuels, and hydrogen from renewable sources*;

Amendment 9

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 2

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point b a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(b a) *conversion of coal heating and cooling infrastructure, such as district heating and cooling networks and industrial processes, to renewable heating and cooling alternatives such as geothermal energy*;

Amendment 10

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 2

Decision 2008/376/EC
Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

(c) non-energetic uses and the production of raw materials from mining wastes and residues from formerly operating coal mines or ***those in the closure*** process, duly assessing that their climate, environmental and health impact is minimised and lower than alternative solutions;

Amendment

(c) non-energetic uses and ***on*** the production of raw materials from mining wastes and residues ***derived*** from formerly operating coal mines or ***from mines in*** process ***of closure***, duly assessing that their climate, environmental and health impact is minimised and lower than alternative solutions ***in line with the circular economy approach***;

Amendment 11

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 2

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 4 – paragraph 1 – point e

Text proposed by the Commission

(e) promoting the development of efficient re-skilling and up-skilling programmes for labour affected ***by a coal phase out***. This includes research on training and re-skilling of labour force employed or previously employed in the coal sector.

Amendment

(e) ***assessing the impact on employment in local communities and regions affected by the phasing out of coal and*** promoting the development of ***a regional concept for economic development, job creation and*** efficient re-skilling and up-skilling programmes for labour affected ***in those regions***. This includes research on training and re-skilling of labour force employed or previously employed in the coal sector ***in support of coal regions in transition***.

Amendment 12

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 3

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 5 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Research projects shall focus on diseases related to mining activities with the aim of improving the health of people living in coal regions in transition. Research projects shall also ensure protective measures during the closure of mines and in formerly operating mines.’;

Amendment

Research projects shall focus on diseases related to mining activities, ***with a special emphasis on air pollution induced diseases***, with the aim of improving the health of people living in coal regions in transition. Research projects shall also ensure protective measures during the closure of mines and in formerly operating mines.’;

Amendment 13

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 4

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 6 – title

Text proposed by the Commission

Minimising the environmental impacts of ***coal mines*** in transition

Amendment

Preventing and minimising the environmental impacts of ***the coal sector*** in transition

Amendment 14

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 4

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 6 – paragraph 2 – introductory part

Text proposed by the Commission

2. Preference shall be given to projects that envisage one or more of the following:

Amendment

2. Preference shall be given to projects ***based on innovative technologies or the innovative connection of technologies*** that envisage one or more of the following:

Amendment 15

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 4

Decision 2008/376/EC
Article 6 – paragraph 2 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

(c) managing and re-using mining waste, fly ash and desulphurisation products from coal mines in the process of closure and formerly operating coal mines, accompanied, where relevant, by other forms of waste;

Amendment

(c) managing and re-using mining waste, fly ash and desulphurisation products from coal mines **and coal power plants** in the process of closure and formerly operating coal mines **and coal power plants**, accompanied, where relevant, by other forms of waste;

Amendment 16

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 4

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 6 – paragraph 2 – point f

Text proposed by the Commission

(f) restoring the environment of former installations or installations that are in the process of closure **that used coal**, and their surroundings, notably water, land, soils and biodiversity;

Amendment

(f) restoring the environment of former **coal-related** installations or **coal-related** installations that are in the process of closure, and their surroundings, notably water, land, soils and biodiversity;

Amendment 17

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 4

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 6 – paragraph 2 – point g a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(ga) developing a regional concept for diversification of economic activities for local development and the creation of green and quality jobs with an adapted transformation of the employment structure and skills adjustment.

Amendment 18

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 6

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 8 – paragraph 1 – introductory part

Text proposed by the Commission

Research and technological development (RTD) shall aim to develop, demonstrate and improve near zero-carbon steel production processes with a view to raising product quality and increasing productivity. Substantially reducing emissions, energy consumption, the carbon footprint and other environmental impacts as well as conserving resources, shall form an integral part of the activities sought. Research projects shall address one or more of the following areas:

Amendment

Research and technological development (RTD) shall aim to develop, demonstrate and improve near zero-carbon steel production processes with a view to raising product quality and increasing productivity, ***in close synergy with companies operating in the sector.*** Substantially reducing emissions, energy consumption, the carbon footprint and other environmental impacts, ***through objectively verifiable tools, parameters and data,*** as well as conserving resources, shall form an integral part of the activities sought. Research projects shall address one or more of the following areas:

Amendment 19

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 6

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 8 – paragraph 1 – point g

Text proposed by the Commission

(g) innovative technologies and solutions for the iron- and steel making processes ***promoting cross-sector*** activities, demonstration projects integrating zero-carbon energy production or contributing to a clean hydrogen economy.';

Amendment

(g) innovative technologies and solutions for the iron- and steel making processes ***facilitating cross-sectoral*** activities, ***synergies, industrial clustering and symbiosis, to enable increased circularity*** demonstration projects integrating zero-carbon energy production or contributing to a clean hydrogen economy.';

Amendment 20

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 7

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 9 – paragraph 1 – point b

Text proposed by the Commission

(b) improvement of steel properties such as mechanical and physical properties, suitability for further processing, suitability for various applications and various working conditions;

Amendment

(b) improvement of steel properties such as mechanical and physical properties, suitability for further processing, suitability for various applications and various working conditions, ***with special attention to recycled steel***;

Amendment 21

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 7

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 9 – paragraph 1 – point c

Text proposed by the Commission

(c) prolonging service life, in particular by improving the resistance of steels, steel structures to heat and corrosion, mechanical and thermal fatigue and/or other deteriorating effects;

Amendment

(c) prolonging service life, ***enabling design for circularity, including modularity, and material efficiency***, in particular by improving the resistance of steels, steel structures to heat and corrosion, mechanical and thermal fatigue and/or other deteriorating effects;

Amendment 22

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 7

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 9 – paragraph 1 – point g

Text proposed by the Commission

(g) high-performance steels for applications like mobility, including sustainability, eco-design methods, retrofitting, lightweight design and/or safety ***solutions***.;

Amendment

(g) high-performance steels for applications like mobility, including sustainability, eco-design methods, retrofitting, lightweight design and/or safety ***solution, such as high-strength***

steels;

Amendment 23

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 8

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 10 – paragraph 1 – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

(a) techniques for recycling obsolete steel and by-product from various sources and improvement of the quality of steel scrap;

Amendment

(a) techniques for recycling ***and upcycling of*** obsolete steel and by-product from various sources and improvement of the quality of steel scrap, ***with special attention to avoiding downgrading of steel quality due to contamination with other metals, such as copper;***

Amendment 24

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 8

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 10 – paragraph 1 – point b

Text proposed by the Commission

(b) treatment of waste and recovery of valuable secondary raw materials, including slags, inside and outside the steel plant;

Amendment

(b) treatment of waste and recovery of valuable secondary raw materials, including slags, inside and outside the steel plant, ***as well as re-use of secondary raw materials, residues and by-products from other industries, such as biomass, for steel making and alloying;***

Amendment 25

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 8

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 10 – paragraph 1 – point d

Text proposed by the Commission

(d) design of steel grades and

Amendment

(d) design of steel grades and

assembled structures to facilitate the easy recovery *of steel for recycling or re-use*;

assembled structures to facilitate *improved scrap handling and disassembly at end-of-life, to enable* the easy recovery, *re-use and recycling of steel and other materials*;

Amendment 26

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – point 9

Decision 2008/376/EC

Article 10a – point b a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(ba) improving workforce management with predictive models for workforce demand and reallocation.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Commission proposal

The Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS) supports research and innovation projects in the areas of coal and steel. Every year around €40 million are made available to universities, research centres and private companies to fund projects. The purpose of this proposal is to amend the Council Decision 2008/376/EC in order to align it ‘with the scientific, technological and political objectives of the Community’ according to Article 2 of Council Decision 2008/376/EC itself.

This Commission’s proposal aims at bringing the RFCS Research Programme in line with the Paris Agreement, the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan, the New Circular Economy Action Plan and the New Industrial Strategy for Europe.

The proposal has in particular the following objectives:

- Updating the coal research objectives in line with the Commission’s climate, energy and environmental targets. It also aims at achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 and the ‘do no harm principle’ enshrined in the European Green Deal;
- Supporting a fair and just transition for coal regions in line with the principles of the Just Transition Mechanism;
- Revising the steel research objectives in order to prioritise near zero carbon steelmaking technologies, applications and use;
- Providing for the possibility of implementing a part of the RFCS Research Programme through co-programmed European Partnerships;
- Replacing a special regime for experts under the research framework programme by the general rules on remunerated external experts laid down in the Financial Regulation.

Position of the Rapporteur

The Rapporteur, who is not dealing with this report in his personal capacity but as the Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, emphasises the importance of the Fund to support the steel and coal sectors in their transition. The Fund should help to ensure that no region concerned by this transition is left behind and that the steel sector remains competitive.

At this stage, the Rapporteur would like to point out the following remarks, which the Committee, and at a later stage the Parliament, could take into consideration when debating and deciding on this proposal:

- It is good that the RFCS revision encourages greater use of private and public investment in research, innovation and new technologies with the aim to develop solutions for a more competitive and sustainable industry;
- Research projects would have to contribute to sustainable decarbonisation of the steel industry, helping to position the EU as a leading provider of low-carbon products, services and advanced technologies in steelmaking;
- The Research Programme should pay careful attention to economic, environmental and social objectives. This is to ensure sufficient support not only for commercial but also to public sectors in regions undergoing transition;

- The RFCS revision should encourage greater use of technologies aimed at promoting the circular economy;
- It is important to assess the impact on the employment in regions affected by a coal phase out and at the same time to promote opportunities for future economic development and creation of jobs in those regions.

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Title	Amending Decision 2008/376/EC on the adoption of the Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel and on the multiannual technical guidelines for this programme			
References	COM(2020)0320 – C9-0214/2020 – 2020/0141(NLE)			
Date of consultation / request for consent	27.7.2020			
Committee responsible Date announced in plenary	ITRE 14.9.2020			
Committees asked for opinions Date announced in plenary	BUDG 14.9.2020	EMPL 14.9.2020	ENVI 14.9.2020	REGI 14.9.2020
Not delivering opinions Date of decision	BUDG 3.9.2020	EMPL 21.9.2020	ENVI 10.9.2020	REGI 7.9.2020
Rapporteurs Date appointed	Cristian-Silviu Buşoi 10.9.2020			
Discussed in committee	14.1.2021			
Date adopted	18.3.2021			
Result of final vote	+ : 60 - : 14 0 : 1			
Members present for the final vote	Nicola Beer, François-Xavier Bellamy, Hildegard Bentele, Tom Berendsen, Vasile Blaga, Michael Bloss, Manuel Bompard, Paolo Borchia, Markus Buchheit, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Jerzy Buzek, Carlo Calenda, Andrea Caroppo, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Ignazio Corrao, Ciarán Cuffe, Josianne Cutajar, Nicola Danti, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Martina Dlabajová, Christian Ehler, Valter Flego, Niels Fuglsang, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Claudia Gamon, Jens Geier, Nicolás González Casares, Bart Groothuis, Christophe Grudler, Henrike Hahn, Robert Hajšel, Ivo Hristov, Ivars Ijabs, Romana Jerković, Eva Kaili, Seán Kelly, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Andrius Kubilius, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Thierry Mariani, Eva Maydell, Joëlle Mélin, Dan Nica, Angelika Niebler, Ville Niinistö, Aldo Patriciello, Mauri Pekkarinen, Mikuláš Peksa, Tsvetelina Penkova, Clara Ponsatí Obiols, Sira Rego, Robert Roos, Maria Spyraiki, Jessica Stegrud, Beata Szydło, Riho Terras, Grzegorz Tobiszowski, Patrizia Toia, Evžen Tošenovský, Marie Toussaint, Isabella Tovaglieri, Henna Virkkunen, Pernille Weiss, Carlos Zorrinho			
Substitutes present for the final vote	Matteo Adinolfi, Andrus Ansip, Damien Carême, Jakop G. Dalunde, Cyrus Engerer, Cornelia Ernst, Elena Lizzi, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Sven Schulze, Nils Torvalds			
Date tabled	30.3.2021			

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

60	+
PPE	François-Xavier Bellamy, Hildegard Bentele, Tom Berendsen, Vasile Blaga, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Jerzy Buzek, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Christian Ehler, Seán Kelly, Andrius Kubilius, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Eva Maydell, Angelika Niebler, Aldo Patriciello, Sven Schulze, Maria Spyraiki, Riho Terras, Henna Virkkunen, Pernille Weiss
S&D	Carlo Calenda, Josianne Cutajar, Cyrus Engerer, Niels Fuglsang, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Jens Geier, Nicolás González Casares, Robert Hajšel, Ivo Hristov, Romana Jerković, Eva Kaili, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Dan Nica, Tsvetelina Penkova, Patrizia Toia, Carlos Zorrinho
Renew	Andrus Ansip, Nicola Beer, Nicola Danti, Martina Dlabajová, Valter Flego, Claudia Gamon, Bart Groothuis, Christophe Grudler, Ivars Ijabs, Mauri Pekkarinen, Nils Torvalds
ID	Matteo Adinolfi, Paolo Borchia, Elena Lizzi, Thierry Mariani, Joëlle Mélin, Isabella Tovaglieri
ECR	Izabela-Helena Kloc, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Jessica Stegud, Beata Szydło, Grzegorz Tobiszowski, Evžen Tošenovský
NI	Andrea Caroppo

14	-
ID	Markus Buchheit
Verts/ALE	Michael Bloss, Damien Carême, Ignazio Corrao, Ciarán Cuffé, Jakop G. Dalunde, Henrike Hahn, Ville Niinistö, Mikuláš Peksa, Marie Toussaint
The Left	Manuel Bompard, Cornelia Ernst, Sira Rego
NI	Clara Ponsatí Obiols

1	0
ECR	Robert Roos

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention