

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 1998



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
Directorate for the Registry, the Assembly, Institutional Affairs, the
Bureau and Planning

Rue Ravenstein 2, B-1000 BRUSSELS

Tel. (32-2) 546 90 11
Fax (32-2) 513 48 93

Telegrams ECOSEUR
Telex 25 983 CESEUR

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Annual Report 1998

Brussels — 1999

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999

ISBN 92-828-6918-0

© European Communities, 1999

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Spain

Contents

Preface	5
<i>Chapter I</i> — Presence and influence of the Economic and Social Committee	7
1. The ESC's consultative role	7
2. Amending the rules of procedure	7
3. Appointment of a new secretary-general	8
4. Renewal of the Committee	8
5. ESC–European Parliament relations	10
6. ESC–Council relations	11
7. ESC–Commission relations	11
8. Relations with the economic and social councils	12
<i>Chapter II</i> — The Committee's work	15
1. Agriculture, rural development and fisheries	15
2. Transport and communications policy	30
3. Employment, social affairs and citizenship	39
4. Economic, financial and monetary questions	53
5. Regional development and spatial planning	55
6. Industrial policy	59
7. External relations	62
8. Energy, nuclear questions and research	70
9. Environmental and consumer affairs	78
10. Communications policy	82
<i>Chapter III</i> — The groups	89
1. Group I — Employers	89
2. Group II — Workers	91
3. Group III — Various interests	93
<i>Chapter IV</i> — Internal aspects of the secretariat	97
1. Staff	97
2. Budget	98
3. Meetings	98
4. Structure of the general secretariat in 1998	99
5. Common organisational structure	100
Annex A — List of opinions and information reports issued during 1998	103
Annex B — List of opinions drawn up by the Committee on its own initiative during 1998	131
Annex C — Graphs	137

Preface

The Economic and Social Committee (ESC) celebrated its 40th anniversary in May 1998. It has changed a lot since it was set up in 1958 by the Treaty of Rome in order to involve the various economic and social interest groups in the European consultative process.

It was on 19 May 1958 that the ESC held its inaugural session in the hall of the Belgian Senate in Brussels. At the time it had 101 members representing six Member States (compared with 222 today). The Commission president, Walter Hallstein, declared in his speech, 'Rest assured that we are ready, without reservation, to collaborate closely and loyally with you, and are aware that we are responding to the will of the peoples of Europe and to a historical need, at a time when our Community leaves the Treaty's realm of theory to become a living human reality'.

Over the years the ESC has proved its worth. It has been granted a right of initiative as well as budgetary and operational autonomy. With the Treaty of Amsterdam, it also becomes the consultative body of the European Parliament. The ESC has issued more than 40 000 opinions in 40 years, and some of them have marked important stages in European integration, such as the preparation of a draft European social charter at the request of the former Commission president, Jacques Delors.

The ESC's contribution towards implementing the legislative process is still growing and the quality of its opinions has been highlighted by the other institutions; the representatives of social and occupational organisations have made their voice heard in every area of the Community's activities. To maximise the impact of its expertise, the ESC has greatly expanded its relations with social and occupational organisations in non-member countries. A long road has been travelled from the adoption of the first opinions to the setting-up, on 18 February 1997, of a joint consultative committee with Hungary to express views on all the economic and social aspects of bilateral relations during the run-up to accession. Several candidate countries from central and eastern Europe have shown their interest in this form of cooperation.

The ESC wants to be the meeting place of civil society so as to make a fundamental contribution towards bringing the European Union closer to its citizens. The economic and social organisations, associations and trade unions represented on the ESC are the pillars of organised civil society in Europe. In this way, the ESC embodies the most basic values of the 'European model', which is founded above all on concerted action between economic, social and socio-professional partners.

European society, profoundly marked by the new role of women, has to measure and assess its progress by the way it responds to the issues raised by women: it has to understand that the feminine issue is not a sectoral phenomenon or a claim, but a change of direction that affects all aspects of real life (the labour market, financial autonomy, health, presence in decision-making circles, etc.) and it is in everyone's interest that the ESC continues to make a relevant and essential contribution to this process.

It is against a background of citizenship conceived as a guarantee of human and social rights that the fight against unemployment and social exclusion has to be fought, especially as far as young people are concerned. The young are hit very hard by unemployment, and it is on their shoulders that the increasingly heavy weight of an ageing society rests. It is essential to prepare the future of our young citizens and extend their horizons, so they are better equipped to join in the building of Europe.

We are all aware of the importance of the Val Duchesse social dialogue in enabling the social partners to state their views on European social policy and help guide it. In a fully democratic society, the whole of civil society must be involved. It is important here that a civil dialogue with the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) be set up to complement the social dialogue, not as a selfish and corporatist defence of special interests, but because such a link between legitimate interests, rights and duties is the very foundation of a universal democracy based on the civic and community awareness of the citizen.

Beatrice Ragoni Machiavelli
President of the ESC

CHAPTER I

Presence and influence of the Economic and Social Committee

1. THE ESC'S CONSULTATIVE ROLE

During the period covered by this annual report, the Economic and Social Committee issued a total of 192 opinions; of these, 162 were the result of referrals from the Commission or the Council and 30 were drawn up on the Committee's own initiative. Two information reports were also published.

Detailed information on this contribution made by the Economic and Social Committee to Community activity will be found in Chapter II.

2. AMENDING THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

A number of major amendments to the Committee's rules of procedure were adopted at the plenary session on 2 July. These concern the number of sections, a reduction in the number of bureau members and new arrangements for establishing observatories.

The changes come in response to the new responsibilities vested in the ESC by the Amsterdam Treaty. They also seek to rationalise the Committee's working methods and to boost its effectiveness.

The number of bureau members has been trimmed from 36 to 24, including the six section and three group presidents who are henceforth to be ex officio bureau members.

The number of sections has been cut from nine to six:

- section for economic and monetary union and economic and social cohesion;
- section for the single market, production and consumption;
- section for transport, energy, infrastructure and the information society;
- section for employment, social affairs and citizenship;
- section for agriculture, rural development and the environment;
- section for external relations.

3. APPOINTMENT OF A NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL

At a meeting on 30 June, the ESC bureau appointed Mr Patrick Venturini as secretary-general. A former member of the private office of Commission president Jacques Delors, his previous post had been as adviser to the director-general for employment and social affairs (DG V) at the European Commission.

4. RENEWAL OF THE COMMITTEE

The inaugural session of the Economic and Social Committee's 11th four-year term of office (1998-2002) was held on 13, 14 and 15 October 1998. The session was opened by the oldest member, Mr Jorge Stecher Navarra. After the new bureau had been installed in office, the chair was taken by the new Committee president, Ms Rangoni Machiavelli. This session also saw the installation-in-office of the Committee as a whole (a list of all current Committee members, classified by group, may be found on the ESC website at www.esc.eu.int). The main decisions were as follows:

ESC president and vice-presidents

Ms Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli, president of the ESC's Group III (various interests) from 1990 to 1998, was elected Committee president for two years by 162 votes to 11, with five abstentions.

Ms Rangoni Machiavelli heads the Italian Council of the German Friedrich Naumann Cultural Foundation and represents the Italian Consumers' Council at European level.

Ms Aina Margareta Regnell, director of the Swedish Employers' Confederation (SAF), and Mr Josly Piette, secretary-general of the Belgian Confederation of Christian Trade Unions, were elected as vice-presidents.

The ESC bureau

The following members were elected to the ESC bureau:

Mr Ataíde Ferreira	Group III — P
Mr Briesch	Group II — F (Group II president)
Mr Burani	Group I — I (ECO president)
Mr Cavaleiro Brandão	Group I — P (Group I president)
Mr Ewert	Group III — L
Mr Frerichs	Group I — D
Mr Gafo Fernández	Group I — E (TEN president)
Mr Giron	Group III — F
Mr Hamro-Drotz	Group I — FIN

Mr Jenkins	Group II — UK (REX president)
Mr Koryfidis	Group II — EL
Mr Noordwal	Group I — NL
Mr Olsson	Group III — S (SOC president)
Mr Pariza Castaños	Group II — E
Mr de Paul de Barchifontaine	Group III — B (NAT president)
Mr Schmitz	Group II — D (INT president)
Mr Scully	Group III — IRL
Ms Sigmund	Group III — A (Group III president)
Mr Svenningsen	Group II — DK
Mr Vogler	Group II — A
Mr Walker	Group I — UK

The group presidents

The following members were elected group presidents:

Employers: Mr Manuel Cavaleiro Brandão, Confederation of Portuguese Industries (re-elected);

Workers: Mr Roger Briesch, French Democratic Confederation of Labour — CFTD (re-elected);

Various interests: Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund, secretary-general of the Austrian Federal Committee of the Liberal Professions.

The section presidents

The following members were elected section presidents:

- section for economic and monetary union and economic and social cohesion (ECO): Mr Umberto Burani, consultant;
- section for the single market, production and consumption (INT): Mr Klaus Schmitz, head of the structural and environmental policy division, management committee of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB);
- Section for transport, energy, infrastructure and the information society (TEN): Mr José Ignacio Gafo Fernández, director of the Centre for the Promotion of Investment in Latin America, Spanish Employers' Confederation;
- section for employment, social affairs and citizenship (SOC): Mr Jan Olsson, head of the European office of 'Kooperativa Institutet';
- section for agriculture, rural development and the environment (NAT): Mr Etienne de Paul de Barchifontaine, secretary-general of the Belgian agricultural alliance;

— section for external relations (REX): Mr Tom Jenkins, head of the European unit of the British TUC.

5. ESC–EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RELATIONS

Throughout 1998, there were continued contacts and exchanges of information on preparatory work between the presidents and chairmen, rapporteurs and the respective secretariats of the ESC sections and the European Parliament committees. A number of ESC members were invited to hearings and meetings organised by these committees.

As in previous years, the ESC Secretariat-General attended meetings of the working party on interinstitutional affairs, set up after the Single European Act entered into force; the working party's brief is to arrange and coordinate the passage of legislation between the different institutions of the Community and, in particular, to work on new legislative planning procedures provided for in the Treaty on European Union.

The ESC Secretariat-General has the same status as the Commission and the Council at the meetings of the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament, which look at issues relating to the planning and organisation of parliamentary plenary sessions.

Mr Umberto Scapagnini, chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy, attended the meeting of the section for energy, nuclear questions and research on 4 February.

On 15 April, Ms Luciana Castellina, chair of the European Parliament's Committee on External Economic Relations, reported on her committee's work to the section for external relations, trade and development policy.

On 17 July, Mr Miguel Arias Cañete, chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Policy, spoke to the section for regional development and town and country planning on structural policy reform.

On 25 March, ESC president Mr Tom Jenkins met Mr Biagio de Giovanni, chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Institutional Affairs.

In May, Mr Jenkins also met Mr Detler Samland, chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Budgets, and Mr John Tomlinson, rapporteur and member of the same committee.

6. ESC–COUNCIL RELATIONS

United Kingdom Presidency (first half of 1998)

— Lord Whitty, minister with special responsibility for UK Presidency issues, set out the United Kingdom Presidency's programme at the ESC plenary session on 28 January.

Lord Whitty also attended the July plenary session where he outlined the achievements and practical results of the UK Presidency.

— Lord Simon of Highbury, UK minister for trade and competitiveness, attended the plenary session on 25 March in connection with the adoption of two opinions on the single market.

— Mr Richard Caborn, UK minister for regional affairs, urban redevelopment and planning and president-in-office of the Council of Regional Policy and Land-use Planning Ministers, attended the January meeting of the section for regional development and town and country planning.

— Mr Gavin Strang, president-in-office of the Council of Transport Ministers, attended the meeting of the section for transport and communications on 11 February.

Austrian Presidency (second half of 1998)

— Mr Johann Farnleitner, Austrian federal minister for economic affairs, set out the Austrian Presidency's programme at the ESC plenary session on 9 September.

— Ms Eleonora Hostach, Austrian federal minister for labour, health and social affairs, attended the plenary session on 3 December and gave an initial assessment of the Austrian Presidency, including the outcome of the previous day's Social Affairs/Ecofin Council.

7. ESC–COMMISSION RELATIONS

— The transport commissioner, Mr Neil Kinnock, attended the plenary session on 26 February in conjunction with the adoption of an opinion on connecting the Union's transport infrastructure to its neighbours.

— Mr Yves-Thibault de Silguy, commissioner responsible for economic, financial and monetary affairs, attended the plenary session on 30 April where he spoke on economic policy in the euro area and the reduction of unemployment.

— Ms Monika Wulf-Mathies, commissioner responsible for regional policy, took part in the plenary session of 10 September in conjunction with the adoption of the opinion on the reform of the Structural Funds.

— Mr Pádraig Flynn, commissioner responsible for social affairs, employment, public health and relations with the Economic and Social Committee, attended the plenary session of 3 December. Mr Flynn also took part in the meeting of the section for protection of the environment, public health and consumer affairs on 7 July, where he spoke on the development of public health policy in the European Union.

8. RELATIONS WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS

The Committee was particularly active in the following areas:

8.1. Relations with the EU economic and social councils

The euro, employment, social policy and wage policy were a central concern for the Committee and the national economic and social councils of the European Union. Several councils played an important role in concluding employment pacts and in discussions on compliance with convergence criteria. The Committee took part in two important conferences on the social dimension of EMU — in particular its impact on collective bargaining — hosted by the Belgian and Austrian councils.

The secretary-generals of the 11 EU councils meet once a year to prepare the annual meeting of presidents and secretary-generals. This year's meetings were hosted by the Italian Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia et del Lavoro (CNEL). The main theme was the progress of the social dialogue and the role of the economic and social councils. The presidents agreed to step up practical cooperation on European political issues, which are being examined by several national councils as well as the European Economic and Social Committee. The secretary-generals were invited to draw up more detailed proposals.

8.2. Enlargement and relations with the economic and social councils and similar institutions in central and eastern Europe

The setting-up of economic and social councils in central and eastern Europe is a new development which the Committee is promoting through its contacts. Countries with this type of council or a similar institution include:

Bulgaria:	tripartite national council
Hungary:	tripartite national arbitration council
Poland:	European integration committee
Romania:	economic and social council
Czech Republic:	council for economic and social consensus
Slovakia:	council for economic and social concertation
Slovenia:	economic and social council

The Committee increased its work in this area and promoted cooperation with the emerging economic and social councils and similar institutions (see Chapter II, point 7). The most important finding of these meetings was that economic and social councils can make a significant contribution to the development of civil society in these countries. The provision of advice to political decision-makers by organisations representing economic, social and societal interests strengthens democracy and promotes the development of an autonomous social dialogue.

In September the Austrian minister for the economy, Mr Farnleiter, asked the Committee to consider the possibility of increasing the participation of representatives from economic and social organisations and institutions in the applicant countries, for example as 'associate members'.

8.3. International meetings of the economic and social councils

Since 1990, the worldwide meetings of the economic and social councils have brought together representatives from a multitude of countries — 35 being represented at the last conference held in Caracas in 1997. These meetings are fairly informal. At the conference in Caracas it was agreed to make these meetings more formal and to establish an international association for economic and social councils and similar institutions. The Committee participated in the work of the follow-up committee which was appointed to draw up the statutes of this association.

On the basis of the December 1997 memorandum of understanding on institutional cooperation between the Mercosur Economic and Social Consultative Forum and the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee and the forum have formed a follow-up committee. This met three times during the year and drafted a cooperation programme. In May 1998 a Committee delegation took part in the plenary of the forum. The vice-president, Mr Regaldo, made a speech during the inaugural session on behalf of the ESC. In July a delegation of the forum attended the ESC plenary and visited the Dutch economic and social council. In December the joint follow-up group met in Rio de Janeiro where an exchange of views took place on the first summit between the EU and South American and Caribbean countries, to be held in June 1999.

At these meetings the two delegations agreed to ask the Mercosur and European institutions to set up a joint consultative committee of representatives from the forum and the ESC under the next EU–Mercosur agreement.

The fourth Euro–Mediterranean summit of economic and social councils was held in Lisbon on 24 and 25 September at the invitation of the Portuguese economic and social council (see Chapter II, point 7).

CHAPTER II

The Committee's work

1. AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES

1.1. Common agricultural policy

1.1.1. *Cap reform*

As was to be expected, in 1998, the Committee's work on the common agricultural policy (CAP) focused on the Commission's proposals in the wake of Agenda 2000, published the previous year. The agricultural chapter of Agenda 2000 was undoubtedly the most important and innovative part of the entire document.

The importance of reviewing the objectives of the common agricultural policy has been a constant theme in the Committee's opinions on the various proposals put forward by the Commission to reform production sectors though the reform of 21 May 1992 is still fairly recent. In its 1997 opinions on stocktaking of the first three years of the CAP reform and the agricultural aspects of the Commission's communication 'Agenda 2000', the Committee had likewise expressed the view that the CAP needed to evolve. At the time, the Committee had acknowledged the need to take up the challenges of EU enlargement towards central and east European countries (CEECs), the start of world trade negotiations at the WTO in the year 2000 and market globalisation and to translate these challenges into new objectives in order to make farms more market oriented. In the Committee's view, agricultural expenditure had to remain high, however, given the need to guarantee the specific character of European agriculture, the environmental sustainability of production and the safety and quality of produce.

In this connection, with regard to the arable crop sector (cereals, oilseeds and protein crops), which has always been strategic for EU agriculture, the Committee reiterated its conviction that the success of the European agricultural model essentially depends on the following principles:

- the maintenance of active common market regimes which protect the interests of the farmers concerned, guarantee balanced markets, stable prices and regular supplies to the internal market (both quantitatively and qualitatively) and consolidate the EU's presence on international markets;

- the maintenance of balance between different types of crop production, which presupposes appropriate support for deficit crops;
- respect for the environment;
- the preservation of producers' incomes.

The Committee thus takes the view that the new common policy in this sector should safeguard the competitiveness of European cereals on an international market that is currently expanding.

Likewise, it should ensure that the common organisation of the market (CMO) fulfils its regulatory role and maintains the instruments which protect producers from the volatility of world prices. The Committee therefore did not share the Commission's view that the cereals' intervention price should be cut by 20 % in order to make cereals more competitive on international markets and to enable the EU to limit payments of export refunds.

For oilseeds, the Committee rejected the Commission's proposal to bring compensatory payments into line with those for cereals. Indeed, in its opinion on the agricultural chapter of Agenda 2000, the Committee had said that it expected a sharp decline in the European area under oilseeds, and hence a considerable decline in the Union's ability to keep itself supplied in vegetable oils and plant protein crops. The Committee felt that such a situation would be unacceptable given that the Union today is only 25 % self-sufficient in plant protein from protein crops and oilseeds. It therefore rejected the Commission's proposal which would automatically mean, despite the same premium, that it would be more advantageous to grow wheat than oilseeds. In the Committee's view, giving priority to the production of plant proteins in the Union would make them more competitive vis-à-vis other arable crops.

The Committee therefore recommended that the Union should only align support for oilseeds on support for cereals after a transitional period. During the forthcoming international negotiations, it could then inform the United States of its intention to seek exemption from the Blair House Agreement and to obtain a guarantee from the Americans that the United States would not challenge the new Community regime, should this lead to an increase in areas under production, which, in any case, will be inevitable when the CEECs join the EU.

The Committee also called for measures for protein crops to be consistent with those for oilseeds, for the current intervention price for durum wheat to be maintained and for full compensation to be given for potato starch if cereal prices fall.

As for the possibility of withdrawing arable crops from production, the Committee approved the proposal of bringing the basic rate for compulsory withdrawal down to zero, but considered the minimum 10 % rate for

voluntary withdrawal to be excessive. In this regard, the Committee recommended that the Commission adopt measures to promote the production of crops for non-food purposes so as to halt the shrinkage in the acreage for such crops (with arable crops being compulsorily withdrawn from production) and to restore security of supplies for industry.

The Commission's proposals on the reform of the CMO in the beef and veal sector focused on a 30 % cut in price support, the replacement of intervention prices with basic prices and of intervention itself with a system of private storage and new rules on premiums. While the Committee fully agreed with the grounds for reform, it believed that the Commission's proposals were too radical.

While, in the light of WTO negotiations and future EU enlargement, a certain reduction in common prices may be inevitable in this sector too, the Committee saw no justification for the proposed terms. The only redeeming feature could be that they at least guarantee resources with which to compensate producers' losses. Abandonment of intervention would mean giving up the existing price system, as private storage is not a full substitute for public intervention. The Committee feels that it is at present impossible to assess realistically the effects of the move from public intervention to private storage in 2002. Possible abolition of intervention should therefore be fully discussed at a later stage, once the effects of a reform can be more accurately assessed. The proposed new system will make the special premium for male bovine animals more complicated on the whole. The divergence between support payable in respect of individual animals, according to whether they are eligible for one or two premiums, or none at all, or for additional or extensification payments, will grow much wider; the system of extensification payments will become more complicated; there could also be tensions and distortions of competition between individual production sectors.

Lastly, the Committee underlined the very important role, in many ways, of cattle in the management of rural and disadvantaged areas. A naturally high proportion of pasture in most cases points to a lack of alternative uses for the land. Reform of the CMO for beef and veal cannot be carried out without taking this important factor into account, as the incomes of cattle farmers, and particularly those in disadvantaged and mountainous areas, are extremely low in many regions of the European Union.

The Committee considered the Commission's proposals on milk (CMO reform) to be even more unacceptable than those envisaged in Agenda 2000. While the Committee endorsed the Commission's proposal for the continued application of the quota scheme, it felt the Commission should provide a clearer picture of what will happen to the scheme after 31 March 2006. The quota system is of great economic significance for milk

producers. Moreover, EU enlargement has implications for future milk policy. The Commission should pay due regard to the quota problems in areas of underproduction highlighted by some Member States so that the stable market conditions in the EU's milk sector can be retained.

In the Committee's view, milk producers from all regions should be compensated in full and on an equal footing for the proposed price cut. Milk producers and the dairy industry in less favoured and upland areas, in particular, will suffer as a result of this price cut, as well as those in other regions which cannot benefit from the silage maize premium. This will lead to job losses in regions where jobs are most sorely needed and where there are few opportunities for other types of economic activity.

Moreover, the Committee believes that reform of the common organisation of the market in milk and milk products must enable the European Union to retain its shares on the relevant Community and international markets. In order to enhance the future prospects for the EU dairy sector, reform of the CMO for milk must secure economic flexibility with regard to the way markets for dairy products are currently organised, in order to make it possible, in particular, to export additional quantities of dairy products, without having recourse to refunds, by offering a cheaper commodity (marginal quantities).

As regards CMO reform for Mediterranean farm produce, the Committee considered the review of olive oil, as proposed by the Commission in the wake of the reactions to its 1997 memo, to be premature and piecemeal. The Committee stressed that the EU leads the way in olive oil production and consumption and that this situation must be defended and maintained. For this reason, it is crucial that the proposed reforms can count on the support of all producer countries. In the Committee's view, the Commission's proposal, despite incorporating some positive aspects compared with the 1997 memo, still fails to understand the sector. Where the Commission sees a problem, the sector sees opportunities for expansion with proper product promotion and more accessible prices as a result of the forecast increase in supply. The all-round advantages (employment, social, economic, environmental, technological leadership, etc.) offered by this sector at the moment should not be lost because of a reductionist approach and unjustifiable urgency, given the lack of a reliable database and the fact that this is a product which is not in structural surplus.

The Committee, however, failed to adopt an opinion on the proposals for reform of the CMO for tobacco. During the plenary session debate, two amendments were made to the section's opinion — one on the retraining of tobacco-growers and the other on the redistribution of quotas. Although these amendments were both adopted, the Committee rejected the entire document as amended. Continuing along the lines of CAP reform as

anticipated by Agenda 2000, the Committee felt it necessary to issue an own-initiative opinion on the role of quality local agricultural products and how best to exploit them and promote their sale.

The Commission estimates that present-day production of quality local products constitutes a mere 10 % of European agricultural production and 20 % of value added. If these figures could be increased, these products could secure a significant market share and provide the key to economic progress in less favoured rural areas. The new agricultural policy reform currently under discussion should bear this in mind.

Although many products have already been granted a designation of origin and geographical indication, in the Committee's view they cannot become competitive without supply consolidation, technological modernisation and suitable marketing techniques. Regional development projects should cater for these aspects. Cooperation between producers within cooperatives and similar organisations could make a major contribution to this.

The major change to the common agricultural policy advocated in Agenda 2000 concerns support for rural development, which thus becomes an integral part of the CAP. Although this part of Agenda 2000 mainly recapitulates the type of aid already available either in the form of measures to back up the 1992 reform, or under the structural policy developed over the past 25 years, it is innovative in that it proposes a greater use of subsidiarity when aid schemes are being drawn up.

Moreover, it envisages direct payment by those bodies working on behalf of the Guarantee Section of the EAGGF and endows agriculture, once and for all, with the role of providing not just food, but also a service to society.

The Committee believes that the Commission's goal of turning sustainable rural development into the 'second pillar' of the common agricultural policy has good prospects of success. Agriculture is a prerequisite for environmental protection and rural development. Successful rural development, however, also hinges on craft industries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), commerce and a large number of professional services. Implementation of the European agricultural model and also the European model for rural areas are therefore matters of concern to everyone involved in political, business and social circles. Pipe dreams would be of no help to agriculture or rural development. The Committee therefore fundamentally welcomed the fact that the new rural development regulation consolidates a number of existing individual measures, provides for the measures to be implemented more flexibly and pays greater heed to subsidiarity angles. These include the promotion of investment in individual agricultural enterprises, aid for young farmers to become established, compensatory payments in respect of areas suffering from natural disadvantages, promotion of vocational training and, above all, the existing

accompanying measures relating to agri-environment issues, early retirement and forestry.

Against the background of continuous pressure for change — which is being exacerbated by the Agenda 2000 proposals, as a whole — the Committee believes that it is both essential and appropriate that the regulation under review be implemented throughout the EU, as proposed. The funds earmarked are, however, totally inadequate. Although the proposed regulation technically complies with the approach advocated at the Cork conference on rural development — namely that all rural areas should qualify for aid — the proposed provisions and level of funding fall short of what is required. The Committee also considers that structural policy instruments should be funded from structural policy resources. It is therefore critical of the proposal that rural development measures and, in particular, measures which are only of indirect benefit to agriculture, should be funded under the Guarantee Section of the EAGGF, i.e. from funds previously earmarked for marketing and price-policy measures and which continue to have an important role to play, even when the reform has been completed.

The Committee expressed grave doubts about the Commission's proposal on the introduction of ceilings on the total amount of payments to be granted to farmers under the support schemes, modulation, by the Member States, of the overall amount of aid in line with the size of the farm labour force and additional provisions. The Committee considers that a regulation along these lines may well create broadly divergent situations among Member States. Further difficulties will arise, even within the same country, when it comes to identifying the minimum labour force according to the various types of holding and their geographical location. There could also be difficulties in assessing the employment variables of other sectors that are agriculture-related or typical of the agri-food sector, such as product marketing and processing. In addition, there could be disparities at Community level between holdings in those States that decide to apply the system and those that decide not to; clearly, this would entail a risk of competition distortion, as well as difficulties for the EU in supervising such a system. In the Committee's view, it is axiomatic that the entire environmental issue merits particular attention and that incentives and disincentives and special requirements can and must be used to encourage farmers to meet environmental protection targets. It is equally clear that any such legislation must also ensure that third countries respect minimum environmental and health standards, if the competitiveness of European agriculture is not to be jeopardised.

Likewise, the Committee has certain reservations with regard to the Commission's proposal to transfer the financing of structural measures from the EAGGF Guidance Section to the Guarantee Section, thus creating

new budget headings in the Guarantee Section and increasing the market expenditure traditionally financed by the Guarantee Section. The Committee points out that the purpose of the EAGGF is to finance measures linked to agricultural production, and that the financing of market policy must remain entirely in Community hands. It notes, however, that the guideline is being retained. This is vital for ensuring the long-term financing of the CAP and for guaranteeing the survival of farms throughout the EU. The Committee also considers that the budgetary margin within the guideline must be preserved, given the importance of the reforms which the CAP is undergoing. However, the Committee stresses the vital need for any market reform to be fully funded by the EAGGF Guarantee Section. As it stated in its opinion on the agricultural aspects of Agenda 2000, the Committee deplores the fact that the Commission only proposes partial compensation for the price cuts envisaged for the various production sectors, and that no measures are proposed for Mediterranean products. The Committee points out that it called for full compensation for the price cuts, and thinks that this increase in expenditure should be reflected in the market policy strand of the financial perspectives for the CAP reform.

As regards the funding of the pre-accession measures, the Committee supports the accession of new Member States to the European Union. It realises that accession must be ushered in gradually by the use of pre-accession measures and, if necessary, transitional periods. Given the importance of agriculture for the economies of the aspirant countries, the Committee thinks that consideration should already be given as to how these countries will participate in the CAP and feels that the establishment of pre-accession CAP measures is a necessary first step. However, the Committee is worried that the pre- and post-accession measures are to be financed from the agricultural guideline for 15 existing Member States.

The Committee is concerned at the low level of expenditure envisaged for rural development measures, despite the important role the latter should play in helping new Member States to adjust their farm structures. The Committee thus considers the sums which the Commission proposes for these structural measures to be inadequate. Irrespective of the level of funding for pre-accession aid and for participation of the new Member States in the CAP, the Committee stresses the importance of making a clear distinction between CAP expenditure for EU-15 and for the new Member States.

This distinction must be retained throughout the transitional period. To this end, the Committee proposes the setting-up of a pre-accession fund. This would be a separate fund financed from the Community budget as a whole.

Turning to post-accession expenditure, the Committee adds that under no circumstances must the Commission take advantage of the inclusion of

expenditure in respect of the new Member States in the agricultural guideline in order to reduce CAP spending on EU-15 and use it for measures to help the new Member States. Any additional expenditure for the latter must be obtained by increasing the agricultural guideline. The Committee stresses that the guideline intended for 15 Member States is not designed to provide CAP funding for 20 Member States or more, and that it must be increased in the light of the GDP of the new members.

1.1.2. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and the CAP

The Committee felt the need to examine the impact that the increasing use of GMOs might have on the reform of the CAP, and to that effect drew up an own-initiative opinion.

It thus defined the possible links between the development of GMOs and each of the six new CAP objectives proposed by the Commission in the agricultural chapter of Agenda 2000:

- improving the competitiveness of European farm produce: increased use of GMOs would appear to help largely achieve this objective where plant crops are concerned. GMOs would help to curtail losses due to pests and diseases (leading to increased yields) and should contribute to lowering production costs, if GMO prices come down (fewer treatments required);
- GMOs would also help improve product quality (richer in valuable compounds, enhanced flavour, better preservation, etc.). Product quality, particularly for European farm and food products, is a decisive factor in their competitiveness. Competitiveness is not, it should be remembered, simply a matter of price;
- safety and quality of agri-food products: if biotechnologies are used sensibly and in full accordance with the precautionary principle, they can make a positive contribution to achieving this objective, since they permit higher quality foodstuffs to be produced. GMO safety and consumer information guarantees must be applied with the utmost rigour;
- integration of environmental goals into the CAP: transgenic crops need fewer plant health treatments and can therefore make a substantial contribution to a healthier interaction between farming and the environment. However, the potential risks of spreading genetically introduced features through the environment must be studied with the greatest care before any authorisation is granted to market GMOs, and biomonitoring must continue after authorisation;
- stabilisation of farm income: in so far as, in the Commission proposal, the proceeds of sale of produce account for a falling share of income

compared with direct support, the impact of more regular yields is lessened. However, the development of GMOs would still have a positive influence on income stabilisation, by reducing crop-related uncertainties;

- source of supplementary income and employment in agriculture: GMOs can contribute to this aim by the improvements they can bring to the ever-growing range of dietary and non-food applications for energy or medical purposes.

1.1.3. Reform of the CMO for bananas

The Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the Commission to bring certain provisions of Regulation (EEC) No 404/93 into line with the Community's international commitments vis-à-vis the WTO and the fourth Lomé Convention and in particular Protocol No 5 on bananas. However, it also expressed the fear that the proposed changes might exacerbate the present employment situation in banana producing regions, which already suffer from high unemployment.

Consequently, the Committee thinks that:

- (a) the Commission should provide for a 20 % increase in the flat-rate reference income for the calculation of the compensatory aid granted to Community producers so that they are compensated for the changes in the import system;
- (b) the Commission should propose establishing a mechanism which continues to encourage operators to market traditional Community and ACP bananas;
- (c) the sustainable production and marketing of bananas produced under fair social conditions and appropriate environmental conditions should be strengthened;
- (d) an effective control system should be established so that only bananas produced under proper social and environmental conditions can be regarded as suitable for consumption.

In view of the expansion of the Community banana market since the CMO was established and the prospect of future EU enlargements, the Committee thinks that provision should be made for an increase in the quantity of Community bananas entitled to compensatory aid, thus enabling these products to benefit from the growth of domestic consumption. Otherwise, the expansion in the Community market will be mopped up entirely by third-country bananas.

The Committee considers that the Commission's proposal to allocate a maximum quantity for the traditional ACP countries could unbalance supplies from these countries and that ways will have to be found to ensure that no traditional ACP supplier is deprived of its traditional quota.

1.1.4. Reform of agri-monetary arrangements

The Committee welcomed the general thrust of the Commission's proposals on the reform of the agri-monetary system required by the introduction of the euro into the common agricultural policy as of 1 January 1999. The reform involves a fundamental simplification of the current arrangements, the rules of which, while commensurate with the tasks required of them, are often seen by farmers, the processing industry and other operators as the most complicated and least transparent aspect of the CAP. The Committee thus shares the Commission's view that the introduction of the euro and the development of the CAP make it possible to discontinue the specific agricultural conversion rates from 1 January 1999 and replace them with the market conversion rate for the euro, including non-participant Member States.

The Committee realises that, as in the past, the main problem will lie in compensating farmers for loss of revenue resulting from the reduction in CAP prices and aid in the wake of a revaluation. This issue, although relevant to the whole EU, mainly concerns the non-participating Member States and is more acute in the case of direct aid, bearing in mind the way the CAP is developing. The Committee would, however, draw the Commission's attention to the fact that the nature and method of financing of this compensatory aid are not such as to remove all discrimination between and within Member States. The Committee therefore urges that, for as long as compensatory aid is provided, it be applied without discrimination and to all parties concerned, including industry.

1.1.5. Agricultural prices 1998/99

The Committee took the view that the Commission's proposals on common agricultural prices for the 1998/99 marketing year failed to take account of the repercussions of price-fixing measures on farmers' income as well as the impact on EU consumers. For most products, the Commission's proposals meant freezing the prices and related measures in comparison with the previous year. However, the Committee believes that the Commission disregarded the documented 3.1 % loss of income in the sector during 1997. This is all the more serious given that committed expenditure is more than ECU 2 500 million below the financial guideline.

The Committee deplored the fact that the Commission made no proposals concerning the non-food outlets for agricultural production, such as, for example, renewable and sustainable sources of energy. The Commission should adopt a courageous policy in favour of such new, non-food outlets, providing stable, direct supplementary aid for the raw materials in question, together with a series of tax and other incentives giving priority to the use of such materials for producing fuel.

1.1.6. The role of middlemen in determining food prices

The share of individual market participants in the final price of goods and the question of trade margins have always been the subject of lively debate. The discussion is often conducted with particular passion in the food sector. For example, in its opinion on the 1997/98 farm price proposals, the Committee had expressly called for the effects on both farmers' incomes and consumer prices to be investigated, which the Committee subsequently did, by drawing up an own-initiative opinion.

In this opinion, the Committee first and foremost realistically notes that an irreversible concentration is taking place in European food retailing and that policy measures are needed to keep the process of concentration in the retail trade within reasonable bounds. In this context, the producers' position vis-à-vis the major retailing organisations must also be further strengthened, for example by helping them to help themselves. Only in this way, the Committee believes, can manifest market failure and socially undesirable developments and abuses be prevented, and can it be ensured that a wide range of retail outlets continue to offer consumers a profusion of products.

The Committee points out that there is a danger, for both local consumers and producers, that increased concentration of purchasing within the leading distributive organisations will diminish the range of fruit and vegetables available and banish regional specialities from shelves. This would give a further impetus to the standardisation of products on the basis of their external appearance and shelf-life, at the expense of their organoleptic qualities. Specialist outlets and weekly markets can be expected to offer regional ranges increasingly alongside their international products, but the sale of regional products should not be restricted to these outlets. It is unacceptable that products should be withheld from the consumer because quantities sufficient for a national programme cannot be assembled or because of 'listing fees'.

The Committee is concerned that there could be a loss of market transparency, particularly in the case of fresh products like fruit and vegetables. This would weaken the position of producers. In this field the Commission has so far undertaken only to collect information needed for the management of the market. The possibility of channelling market information to market participants should also be looked at, for example in the increasingly important area of organic products; attention should be paid here to balanced cost allocation.

In view of the concentration of demand, combining supply via producer organisations is more urgent than ever. The operational funds and programmes should be used to boost the competitiveness of producer organisations and thus of their products.

The Committee points out that margins will in future depend largely on product quality and on the quality programmes operated by producers/traders. Food labelling and the novel food regulation, as well as quality standards for fruit and vegetables, are particularly important here. A universal approach to quality maintenance needs to be developed, particularly within the distribution organisations. Only in this way can it be ensured that 'higher' quality reaches the consumer and is appropriately rewarded.

1.1.7. Agricultural policy — miscellaneous

1. The Committee did not agree with the Commission's proposal to incorporate a new category of 'nutritional supplements for animals' into Community legislation. These are concentrated mixtures of trace metals, vitamins, etc., which are used in supplements with other feeds. The Committee is not completely convinced that the new category is needed at EU level. If it is introduced, the whole system will become even more complicated, when it actually needs to become immediately more transparent.

2. The same fear of too much red tape being introduced into the agricultural sector prompted the Committee's criticism of the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 95/69/EC laying down the conditions and arrangements for approving and registering certain establishments and intermediaries operating in the animal feed sector.

3. The Committee endorsed the Commission's proposal aiming to allocate the three-yearly quota for the 1998/99, 1999/2000 and 2000/01 marketing years between potato starch producing Member States on the basis of the report from the Commission to the Council on the quota system for the production of potato starch, thus amending Regulation (EC) No 1868/94.

4. The Committee likewise endorsed the proposal for a Council directive amending Directives 70/524/EEC concerning additives in feedingstuffs, 95/53/EC fixing the principles governing the organisation of official inspections in the field of animal nutrition and 95/69/EC laying down the conditions and arrangements for approving and registering certain establishments and intermediaries operating in the animal feed sector.

5. The Committee welcomed the proposal to extend the use of the computerised ANIMO system to products of animal origin covered by Directive 89/662/EEC and intended for human consumption; the Committee considered that this exchange of information between competent authorities was consistent with the overriding need to protect public health. Whilst approving the extension of the ANIMO system, the Committee pointed out, however, that this approach did not fully solve the problem of how to improve veterinary controls. It therefore called upon the

Commission to press on with genuine harmonisation of foodstuff control systems in all Member States.

6. As regards the marketing of propagating material of ornamental plants, the Committee approved the proposal to put responsibility for meeting the quality requirements principally with the main players, i.e. those involved in producing, propagating and importing the basic material. The Committee welcomed this approach, as it felt that it offered a sufficient quality guarantee to purchasers of basic material, without, however, generating unnecessary bureaucracy.

7. The Committee welcomed the Commission's initiative to allow Member States to make bottling in the specified region of production compulsory for certain quality wines (psr), provided that the bottling within the region gave the wine special characteristics or was an important factor in preserving the special characteristics acquired and that the overwhelming majority of operators in the sector supported such a step. The proposal will give EU legislative force to certain rules and practices which have traditionally always been followed in all producer Member States, as regards the obligation to bottle certain quality wines psr in the region of origin in order to protect their quality, defining characteristics, reputation and authenticity.

8. The Committee endorsed the proposed Commission amendment to the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directive 64/432/EEC on health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine, which makes the Standing Veterinary Committee (Commission/Committee procedure) responsible for devising implementing rules for the operation of the computer databases.

9. The Committee had reservations about the amendment to current Community legislation on additives to animal feeds, which stipulates that it is for the Council, at the proposal of the Commission, to set the level of fees for registration of additives and for approval of establishments and intermediaries. The Committee believes that in principle both registration of additives and approval of establishments fall within the official powers of the national administrations and that they should therefore bear the relevant costs. The Committee does, however, consider that if the principle of charging a fee for these services is accepted — as confirmed by Directives 70/524/EEC and 95/69/EC — then there is a need to establish methods and instruments to minimise the risk of any distortion of competition arising from fee levels which differ from one Member State to another.

10. The Committee approved the Commission's proposal to amend Council Directive 97/12/EC of 17 March 1997 amending and updating Directive 64/432/EEC on health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine. The objective of the proposal was to allow adequate time for transposing the new rules for monitoring and surveillance of bovine tuberculosis, bovine brucellosis and enzootic bovine leucosis.

11. The Committee welcomed the Commission's proposal to extend, until 31 January 1999, the deadline for expenditure in the first year of application of Regulation (EC) No 1221/97 on measures taken under the national programmes to improve the production and marketing of honey.

12. The Committee felt that the Commission's proposal to lay down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens kept in various systems of rearing would appreciably improve animal welfare but would increase egg prices for consumers and costs for the producers. Having weighed up the pros and cons of the matter, the Committee cannot endorse a radical amendment of the directive until such time as:

- the minimum requirements enshrined in the old directive have actually been implemented in all EU Member States;
- third-country imports are subject to the same production and shelf-life conditions;
- adequate Community aids for conversion have been provided.

13. The Committee strongly supported the Commission proposal aiming to resolve, once and for all, the problem of those milk producers who were temporarily restricted in pursuing their trade upon the introduction of the additional levy scheme in the milk and milk products sector (so-called SLOM producers). While approving the initiative, the Committee insisted that compensation be backdated to 1993, and not 1997 as proposed — the year in which the Council framed the rules which denied these producers redress and compensation.

14. Lastly, the Committee endorsed the following codifications: Council Regulation (EEC) No 3013/89 of 25 September 1989 on the common organisation of the market in sheepmeat and goatmeat; Council Directive 77/93/EEC of 21 December 1976 on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community; Council Regulation (EEC) No 729/70 on the financing of the common agricultural policy.

1.2. Common fisheries policy

1. The Committee welcomed the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled 'The future for the market in fisheries products in the European Union: responsibility, partnership and competitiveness'. It particularly welcomed the Commission's statement that it will submit the document to a broad institutional debate and wide-ranging consultation with the principal players in the fisheries sector.

The common fisheries policy, established by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2142/70 and subsequently amended several times, has many parallels with the common agricultural policy (CAP) — on which it is largely modelled

— and shares certain of its objectives, such as market stabilisation, guarantee of supplies and reasonable prices. It also complies with the same principles: market unity, financial solidarity and Community preference. The main imbalances in the sector spring mostly from overcapacity in relation to available resources, which in turn do not match demand, excessive debt, high levels of exploitation, low productivity and, to some extent, inadequacies in marketing channels. These internal, structural factors, considerable in themselves, are aggravated by external factors such as market globalisation, the lowering of tariff barriers and/or the dismantling of obstacles to trade, competition from other products, and lower transport costs which bring European markets within range of the sector's main competitors.

For EU fisheries to survive on a viable basis, resources must be exploited rationally and integrated measures must be adopted embracing all aspects of the common fisheries policy. The Committee assumes that the Commission will ensure that the measures currently proposed under the CMO are fully consistent with identical measures, already taken or to be adopted, in connection with the other aspects of the common fisheries policy, particularly concerning structures, resources and monitoring. As part of the broad-based approach mentioned above, future adjustments to the CMO in fishery products must be matched by socioeconomic support measures to facilitate their adoption by the sector. In this respect, it is also important for producers' organisations to be present and active in all Member States involved in the fisheries sector.

The Committee also takes the view that the European Union and the Member States must use the instruments available to them more rigorously in order to prevent fishery resources being marketed within the Community with total disregard for the established rules, in unfair competition with our operators.

Lastly, the Committee would point out that as for other products in similar circumstances, matching offer and demand is the decisive factor in determining producer income. Producers must draw the appropriate conclusions, and the CMO intervention mechanisms should be in a position to fulfil this regulatory role, especially since catches are by nature unpredictable. Promotion of fishery products is an aspect which CMO reform must under no circumstances overlook. Producers' organisations should make more frequent use of existing Community incentives to support campaigns promoting fish consumption and publicity campaigns for the consumption of new species. The Committee agrees that optimisation of production and greater transparency in commercial relations depend on the adoption of measures concerning the trade name of species, their origin, production method and degree of freshness.

2. As regards the management of fish stocks in the Mediterranean, a clearly complex and delicate issue of great importance, the Committee, in an own-initiative opinion, pointed out that despite advances in legislation, real and effective harmonisation is far from being achieved in the Mediterranean. This will only be possible by phasing out all current derogations, when not scientifically justified, and applying the same technical measures to all fleets. The aim is to ensure a minimum, non-discriminatory reference framework for all Member States. If the proposal in its current form should prove unacceptable to any country, the relevant aspects of the regulation should be revised so that it is the same for all countries upon which it is binding. In this regard, it is not acceptable for draft regulations to be consolidated which, even if for a transitional and limited period, constitute a serious precedent which could jeopardise efforts to secure a more structured fisheries conservation policy in the Mediterranean. In other words, the Committee believes that progress is possible in terms of stricter legislation, based on a Community framework of minimum requirements which countries, regions or fishing communities can flesh out. However, it will be equitable to Community fishermen, who are in constant competition with each other, only if the framework of minimum mandatory requirements is the same for all.

3. Lastly, the Committee supported the proposal to consolidate Council Regulation (EC) No 3699/93 laying down the criteria and arrangements for Community structural assistance in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the processing and marketing of its products. The Committee also endorsed the proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 850/98 of 30 March 1998 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms.

2. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

2.1. Transport

The Committee's work on transport in 1998 was dominated by three major opinions on:

- the implementation of the Helsinki declaration — establishing concrete machinery for consulting the economic and social interest groups on the definition of a pan-European transport policy (rapporteur: Mr Eulen);
- the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: 'Connecting the Union's transport infrastructure network to its neighbours — towards a cooperative pan-European transport network policy' (rapporteur: Mr Konz);

— the communication from the Commission on public-private partnerships in trans-European transport network projects (rapporteur: Mr Kritz).

The first of these opinions drew up concrete proposals on how to begin making consultations with socioeconomic interest groups a reality and looked at what flexible structures might be needed to ensure the continuity and implementation of this process. These proposals, which were also discussed in a series of briefings and a written survey of representatives from central and eastern Europe, received unanimous support. Responses to the questionnaire expressed a clear vote in favour of using coordinators to organise the involvement of socioeconomic interest groups in corridors and transport areas.

Although the corridor routes were largely fixed, specific decisions still had to be taken on extending their terminal points and on feeder lines. According to the Committee, extensive planning consultations could be held at least once and be convened by the official competent coordinator concerned or the steering committees. They could then be followed up at appropriate intervals as a back-up mechanism for continued developments, particularly where route changes, intermodal 'nodes' and other route branching plans were involved.

Consultations as part of moves to optimise smooth transport operations should be initiated by the appropriate coordinators or by the steering committees of the corridors concerned. The aim should be fundamentally to ensure transparency and support for the work, or it might also be to adopt a joint approach when tackling specific new problems, such as the introduction of a particular new technology.

The Committee felt that the need remained for coordination at pan-European level which ensured transparency and helped coordinate individual activities. It was keen to play an appropriate part in coordination of this kind and stressed the need to increase transparency in the implementation of the Helsinki declaration and the role to be played by the ESC in setting up consultative mechanisms involving all interested parties.

In the second opinion the Committee expressly welcomed the Commission's communication.

It affirmed, however, that more rapid progress would have to be made by the countries of central and eastern Europe in incorporating the *acquis communautaire* in the areas addressed by the Commission, and stressed, in particular, that a pan-European transport policy could only ever be successful if it succeeded in setting in train the necessary structural change with the participation of the social partners and if it succeeded in carrying out this operation against a background of stability.

The Committee made the following comments on specific aspects of the Commission's communication:

- *Pan-European corridors and transport areas*: the requirement for all construction projects to be economically viable and the stipulation of a minimum economic return of 10 % ran counter to the objectives set out in Decision No 1692/96/EC which specified that projects had to make a contribution towards strengthening economic and social cohesion. Steps should be taken to ensure that the members of the public concerned were informed and consulted in respect of the assessment of transport networks.
- *Extending the TEN approach*: the networks to and via non-EU countries, together with the interconnection points between the different modes of transport were of reciprocal interest and should be given priority. The applicant States should enjoy a special position in this respect.

Given the variety of planning processes involved (corridors, areas, transport infrastructure needs assessment (TINA) and TENs), the Committee called for much closer coordination and more generous joint financing of selected infrastructure projects through the provision of EU grants.

- *European approach to transport technology*: interoperability and free, non-discriminatory access to all transport infrastructure had to constitute the top priorities for the guidelines for trans-European transport networks.
- *The intelligent use of transport network — transport research*: the Commission should pay greater attention to the intermodal linking of telematics systems in the action plan attached to the communication.
- *Development of a Europe-wide transport network partnership*: all possible steps should be taken to involve regional authorities, together with the socioeconomic groups concerned, in the partnership, in addition to the relevant national authorities. The Committee therefore once again highlighted the importance of developing consultative machinery to permit dialogue with the social partners, even if it was not crucial that the structures for such dialogue be fixed and regulated. Different forms of consultation, including procedures which were of limited duration or covered specific issues, could also be introduced.

Finally, the Committee took the view that the communication under review represented an initial attempt on the part of the Commission to address the various aspects involved and to consult all interested parties; it awaited future developments with great interest.

In its third major opinion, the Committee welcomed the Commission's communication on the financing of trans-European transport network projects through public-private partnerships (PPPs).

The Committee stated that there were some important prerequisites for successful implementation of PPPs, namely:

- a firm political commitment on the part of the Member States to use a PPP;
- private sector involvement as early as possible in projects, i.e. in the conception, design and planning phases;
- creation of dedicated project companies, responsible for carrying through a project, especially cross-border projects.

The Committee pointed out that the Commission intended to issue, in the near future, specific guidelines providing greater clarity with regard to public procurement procedures to be followed for the award of transport infrastructure contracts. The Committee found it essential that these guidelines deal with the following issues:

- the relationship between the 'public works' and 'utilities' directives when it comes to PPPs;
- ways to improve and facilitate procurement procedures, especially the pre-tendering phase, and the use of the negotiated procedure.

Finally, the Committee thought that large transport infrastructure projects needed balanced financing packages composed of equity, structurally subordinated loans, and bank debt. The Committee was pleased to note that the EIB would be more active in developing structurally subordinated loans and early operational stage loans. It also found it essential that the Commission increased its efforts to help create a mezzanine fund.

Transport-related environmental problems were also at the centre of the Committee's concerns in its opinion on the Commission communication on transport and CO₂ (rapporteur: Mr Colombo), still in the process of being drawn up.

2.1.1. Air transport

2.1.1.1. Cabin crews/civil aviation

(rapporteur: Mr von Schwerin)

The Committee welcomed the Commission's initiative, which was aimed at ensuring a high level of safety in the internal air transport market and constituted a first major step towards the setting-up of a uniform framework for competition.

The Committee felt that the proposal for a directive was preferable to the JAA ⁽¹⁾ procedure (which was the other possible alternative), since the involvement of democratically chosen bodies was important to the creation and acceptance of a single internal market.

The Committee also made the following comments:

- the Commission had to define the term ‘cabin crew’ (Article 1(1)) more tightly so as to cover all persons employed on board in the cabin;
- knowledge of a foreign language would be a sensible and useful prerequisite for admission to initial training;
- it would probably be better if the minimum age of air transport employees who were in positions of authority over cabin staff (Article 4(1) in the proposal) were set at 21, as is the case in other branches of passenger transport.

Finally, the Commission should create a clear set of transitional regulations to guarantee legal certainty for cabin crews who were already appointed and for cabin crews who were not appointed at the time when the directive came into force.

2.1.1.2. Denied-boarding compensation

(rapporteur: Mr Moreland)

The Committee agreed that the existing regulation had to be revised to take account of problems which had arisen since the first version was adopted.

The following points should be taken into account:

- passengers should present themselves for check-in at least 30 minutes before departure or more when told in advance in writing to do so by the airline or its agent;
- the definition of ‘ticket’ should be extended to include tickets sold by tour operators;
- a passenger booked into a lower class should not be denied boarding solely in order to carry a passenger booked into a higher class who would otherwise be denied boarding;

(1) The JAA (Joint Aviation Authorities) have developed technical requirements known as JAR OPS, which were adopted on 28 March 1995 within the framework of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and which could be transposed into Community law in order to harmonise such requirements throughout the Community. The JAR OPS requirements include, *inter alia*, training standards for cabin crews. However, under the JAA procedure, important decisions would be taken exclusively by the national aviation authorities without any direct involvement of any democratically chosen institutions. On some points which are also of relevance to safety, the contents of the ICAO/JAA approach also lag behind the Commission proposal (second version).

- the Commission should propose a procedure for consulting Member States and interested parties before each new increase;
- compensation payments should be reduced in certain well-defined circumstances;
- the passenger should not be required to accept travel vouchers and/or other services offered by the airline as an alternative to cash payments.

Moreover, the Commission should report every three years on the effectiveness of the regulation, on the basis of reports made by Member States, and should carry out a full assessment of the regulation's costs and benefits, in consultation with interested parties, and should undertake a comparative analysis of American and European denied-boarding compensation payment rules.

2.1.2. Sea transport

2.1.2.1. Green Paper/seaports and maritime infrastructure

(rapporteur: Mr Kritz)

The opinion on this important document took account of the results of a study group hearing. In its opinion the Committee endorsed the Green Paper's principal objectives, i.e. to help increase port efficiency, to improve port and maritime infrastructure by integrating ports in the TENs, and to ensure free and fair competition in the port sector. However, it pointed out that:

- competition between ports was achieved not only by what was done by the ports themselves, but also by the development of road, rail and inland waterway connections with the hinterlands. In the view of the Committee, these aspects had often been overlooked;
- it was essential that a Community seaports policy was based on the notion that ports were commercial enterprises, working in a market economy and applying the 'user-pays' principle;
- when a Community policy was to be developed for the port sector, all aspects and views had to be taken into account. Not least the social consequences of the proposed measures had to be considered. In particular, the employment angle had to be borne in mind so that skilled jobs could be safeguarded and new jobs created. The Committee would therefore welcome a joint/sectoral committee for seaports as a forum for an organised dialogue between the social partners;
- as regards market access to port services the Committee fully supported the Commission proposal, but recognised that the principle of free market access could not be applied everywhere, because of the

heterogeneous nature of these services and the diverse nature of ports especially in terms of size and function.

2.1.2.2. Ro-ro ferry operations

(rapporteur: Mr Chagas)

The Committee supported the Commission proposal to aid the safety of passengers travelling to and from Community ports and seafarers serving on those vessels and craft.

The concept of an expanded mandatory survey regime appeared to be a satisfactory way of achieving the objective, given the differing nature of employment between Member States due to diversity of vessel type and location of principal routes. While appreciating the need to be consistent with international law and International Maritime Organisation (IMO) conventions, codes and resolutions, such a regime was desirable.

With regard to the internal market and open markets policy, the Committee thought that the concept of 'host State' was appropriate but necessitated additional requirements, obligations and responsibilities and involved all such vessels and craft, otherwise it would be no different from the 'port State'.

The Committee also considered that additional requirements that were designed to improve safety needed to be both transparent and tangible so as to engender public confidence. Public confidence, in order to be gained and maintained, required a consistent proactive approach throughout the Community.

Finally, the concept of an efficient and effective accident investigative procedure that involved Member States whose ports such vessels and craft sailed to and from, in addition to flag involvement and/or port State, was both desirable and essential as a means of reassuring citizens of those States as to the conduct of investigations.

2.1.2.3. Maritime cabotage/manning conditions

(rapporteur: Mr Chagas)

In its opinion on two proposals in the field of maritime cabotage (a proposal amending a regulation and a proposal for a directive, the Committee felt that the time was not right to push for amendments to Regulation (EEC) No 3577/92 as this would risk upsetting the balance of interests which allowed the regulation to be passed.

In view of this, the Committee suggested one of the following alternatives to the Commission:

- leaving the provisions of Article 3(2) and (3) of Regulation (EEC) No 3577/92 as they stood, with the inclusion of the mixed passenger/cargo services and scheduled cruise services already mentioned; or
- not making any distinctions in manning rules so that Article 3 continued to apply equally to passenger vessels and regularly operating cargo vessels engaged in island cabotage and the applicable rules on manning were those in force in the State where the service was carried out (host State).

The Committee agreed with the Commission's objectives in submitting the draft directive and felt that any such Community provision should take account of and respond to the concerns regarding employment and labour, the economic aspects, and the legal compatibility of the proposal with other legal instruments and its repercussions upon the international context in which the Community shipping industry operated.

2.1.3. Inland waterway transport

The Committee also issued an opinion on a proposal on the capacity of inland waterway fleets (rapporteur-general: Mr Ghigonis) which was designed to promote this mode of transport. The Committee supported the proposal but queried certain exemptions from the future regulation provided for vessels operating exclusively on national waterways not linked to other waterways in the Community and vessels whose dimensions confined them to certain national waterways. The Committee also noted that such exemptions could generate distortions in treatment.

2.1.4. Rail transport

The Committee is currently working on a package of three Commission proposals which are designed to halt the decline in rail transport by creating a rail market that is more in keeping with the needs of the travelling public. The package also seeks to ensure that more efficient use is made of rail infrastructure by guaranteeing fairer non-discriminatory access. The opinion should be adopted in the first half of 1999.

2.1.5. Road transport

The Committee issued opinions on two Commission proposals, one on roadworthiness checks (rapporteur: Mr Kubenz) and the other on restrictions on heavy goods vehicles (rapporteur: Mr Wright). The Committee broadly endorsed both proposals.

Work has also started on the White Paper on infrastructure charges (rapporteur: Mr Kielman) and the Committee opinion on this important issue should be issued during 1999.

2.1.6. Combined transport

A Committee opinion on weights and dimensions/combined transport (rapporteur: Mr Bagliano) endorsed two Commission proposals amending Directives 92/106/EEC (extension of tax rebates and lifting of certain restrictions) and 96/53/EC (authorised weight for the road leg of a combined transport operation restricted to 44 tonnes). It regarded these proposals 'as a tool for facilitating and promoting combined transport via direct measures and a pragmatic methodological approach that establishes a framework within which Member States can and must act, with due regard for the subsidiarity principle'.

2.2. Telecommunications

Now that the European telecommunications market has been liberalised, the EU's work in this field has turned to new more specific areas such as UMTS, on which the Committee has issued an opinion.

2.2.1. UMTS

(rapporteur: Mr Mobbs)

In its opinion the Committee congratulated the Commission on the speed of its actions where the need to capitalise on Europe's success in the GSM was paramount. A clear and stable regulatory framework was needed to enable development to proceed which would advance European mobile and wireless technologies.

The Committee was particularly pleased to read in the explanatory memorandum that the Commission expected that UMTS should lead to the creation of tens of thousands of new jobs in the Community. However, the Committee would like to see evidence to substantiate this welcomed forecast.

There are, however, some unsatisfactory areas related to mobile telephony. The Committee indicated that progress on telephony (fixed or mobile) liberalisation varied from one Member State to another. This could be a problem as there might well be difficulties in implementing to schedule and to the same extent and time the various actions contained in the Commission's proposed decision.

3. EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND CITIZENSHIP

3.1. Employment

The Committee welcomed the decisions by the Amsterdam European Council to consider a high level of employment as a major objective of the European Union, to insert a new employment chapter in the Treaty, and to adopt a resolution on growth and employment, that closely connects economic and social policies and emphasises the complementary nature of EMU, the internal market and employment.

At the invitation of the British Presidency, the Economic and Social Committee organised a conference on employment at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London on 19 and 20 February 1998, as a follow-up to the extraordinary summit on employment in Luxembourg.

The aim of this conference was to give socioeconomic experts and national policy-makers the opportunity to hear the views of Europe's socioeconomic players regarding specific cases of good practice which the Member States have demonstrated, or have attempted to demonstrate. The active participation of representatives of the socio-occupational organisations, national economic and social councils, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Employment and Labour Market Committee and the Commission enabled the conference to make comparisons in this area.

The conference focused on specific examples of good practice in four fields: 'Youth start'; active measures to support employment; developing a spirit of enterprise; flexibility, security and working time agreements.

In bringing together representatives of socioeconomic organisations and political decision-makers to discuss ways of providing support for European-level action to combat unemployment, the conference aimed to help the EU Presidency and Member State governments to pinpoint and compare good practice and to draw up national employment plans for the Cardiff summit.

The Economic and Social Committee shares the UK Presidency's priority of a 'Europe working for the people', of a Europe in work, of a new Europe able and determined to innovate, to promote and to sustain jobs, and have people with skills to fill them.

The Economic and Social Committee, which has rigorously focused on the priority issue of employment, both in its specialised work and as a key theme within its overall activity, can act as a facilitator for developing benchmarking, identifying best practice and the relevance of transferability, and help bridge conceptual differences by drawing on its broad, non-political range of European socioeconomic experience.

The Committee has itself often made clear that it is an illusion that jobs can simply be created 'by decree'. The springboard for jobs is the continued development of a sound, coordinated macroeconomic policy, underpinned by an efficient internal confidence conducive to boosting employment. As the Luxembourg 'Jobs summit' concluded, the aim is to help unleash the potential for dynamism and enterprise to be found in Europe's economy.

Just as jobs cannot simply be decreed from on high, nor will they simply miraculously emerge by putting all our faith in the market. Neither dirigisme nor laissez-faire offers the miracle cure. We all know it is a complex policy mix that is needed for promoting sustainable growth and jobs, involving public-private partnership, flexibility and security, mobilisation of socioeconomic actors at all levels and a sense of solidarity best expressed by the term: the European social model.

3.2. Social policy and economic performance

In an own-initiative opinion, the Committee noted that the best way for Europe to safeguard its competitiveness was not to dismantle the welfare state or prune minimum social standards, but rather to reform it, while preserving its basic values (economic and social cohesion, justice, freedom, tolerance, equal opportunities, and dialogue). At the same time, encouraging entrepreneurship, understood as the dynamic process favouring the pursuit of business activity, and thus making it possible for businesses to discover and capitalise on business opportunities, was a crucial requirement in European society. One very important aspect of fostering entrepreneurial spirit was the need to improve the quality of legislation, by simplifying existing legislative, regulatory and administrative provisions and thus ease the administrative burden facing European businesses, especially SMEs. The Committee also stressed the importance of boosting investment within the EU and asked to be consulted on future work in this area.

The Committee saw education as an integral part of normal life and of employment relationships. Broadly speaking, there should be a policy based on an active and stimulating imparting of skills so as to maintain the employability of those in work and move towards a preventive labour market and social policy.

The Committee wanted the Commission to draw up proposals on how the potential labour pool could be activated so that, possibly, new jobs might be created. Care would have to be taken here to see that the resulting new employment relationships complied with normal practice and were free from discrimination. The wider distribution of productive capacity could lead to a smaller proportion of the population looking to paid work as their only source of income.

The social partners would have a responsibility to modernise the organisation of working arrangements but a prerequisite for this was that enterprises should be motivated to adapt to the changed conditions.

To some extent, the needs of employment providers and job-seekers were poorly matched. For example, some workers were offered only part-time or temporary contracts, when they would have preferred full-time work. Others would have liked to have scaled down to part-time but were unable to do so. Many people were looking for employment, while others reluctantly (or willingly) worked overtime.

One of the usual features of social policies was a positive concern to strengthen measures which were directed to enhancing equal opportunities for groups who, for various reasons, might be unreasonably disadvantaged.

3.3. Labour force sample survey

The ESC underlined that the availability of reliable and detailed information on the characteristics of the labour market, including the characteristics of employment and the nature and extent of the unemployment situation in the various Member States, and on the different regions within individual Member States, is essential to the development of a coherent and coordinated strategy to reduce unemployment levels in the European Union. By the same token, it is obvious that such statistics need to be prepared on a comparable and consistent basis if they are to be of real value.

The Committee therefore welcomed the Commission's proposal as constituting a positive step in this direction.

The ESC felt that the comparability of the statistics would be greatly enhanced if all Member States were to conduct the survey on a continuous basis, as is currently the case in a majority of Member States. The Committee therefore hoped that the transitional phase, during which Member States would be given the option to conduct an annual survey in the spring, would be curtailed as much as possible and that within the reasonably near future there would be a situation in which every Member State conducts a continuous survey. This should not impose an undue burden, either on the administrative departments of the Member States or on the interviewees.

The ESC approved the proposal for the Commission to be assisted by the Statistical Programme Committee, acting within the 'regulatory committee' framework.

3.4. The social and labour market dimension of the information society

The Committee supported the Commission's strategy to facilitate access to the information society.

More specifically, the Committee recommended that all currently planned or future actions should, as the Commission itself envisages, provide 'a real opportunity to promote gender equality', with the active involvement of women in producing information and in communication.

The Committee called on the Commission to consider how to extend universal service to cover more advanced services (such as the Internet), with easy access and at moderate cost, as well as the basic service.

The Committee stressed that ICT should be built into all teaching systems and stages of education.

Special attention should be given to training and refresher courses for teachers, offering them the opportunity to bring the use of the new ICT into their teaching.

The Committee believed that the central and local public authorities, together with schools, could become the driving force behind the information society. Greater use of ICT in the public services would also have a significant effect on the quality of the services themselves, offering new opportunities and services to citizens, including in the sphere of employment.

3.5. Sectors excluded from the working time directive

The ESC endorsed the Commission's pragmatic approach which advocated a differentiated, three-pronged approach:

- (1) extension of the full provisions of Working Time Directive 93/104/EC to all 'non-mobile' workers;
- (2) extension to all 'mobile' workers (including seagoing fishermen) and to those engaged in 'other work at sea' of the provisions of the working time directive on:
 - four weeks' paid annual leave,
 - health assessments for night workers,
 - guarantee of adequate rest,
 - ceiling on the number of hours to be worked annually;
- (3) adoption, for each sector or activity, of specific legislation concerning the working time and rest periods of 'mobile' workers and *mutatis mutandis* those engaged in sea fishing and 'other work at sea'.

The Committee joined the Commission in continuing to hope that it would be possible to proceed on the basis of agreement between the social partners in the transport and sea fishing sectors.

3.6. Part-time work and burden of proof

In keeping with the approach adopted in its previous opinion on the extension to the United Kingdom of the European Works Council and parental leave directives, the Committee welcomed the UK accession to the social provisions of the new Treaty and consequently endorsed the two proposed directives on part-time work and on the burden of proof in sex discrimination cases.

3.7. The costs of poverty and social exclusion in Europe

The Committee endorsed the desire expressed by the European Council in the appendices to the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam to make measures to combat social exclusion one of the goals of EU social policy.

The Committee would welcome the introduction of procedures which would enable us to gain an accurate picture of both poverty and social exclusion.

This necessary improvement in the understanding of the situation should be backed up by an interactive drive to educate all those involved in providing social assistance.

In addition to pursuing measures designed to improve the living conditions of poor people and victims of social exclusion, there is a need, at the same time, to step up work in the field of prevention of poverty.

The role played by the EU institutions is more significant than would at first sight appear to be the case. They are, for example, involved in specific measures to combat poverty and social exclusion and other contributory measures enacted in the fields of employment, housing, education, public health, family life, young people, etc.

The drive to combat poverty and social exclusion justifiably hinges on solidarity.

The challenges posed to all decision-makers and members of the public by the increase in poverty and social exclusion do, however, call for a response based on something more than merely a policy of providing assistance. Such measures represent just one part, which should be of only a temporary nature, of an overall policy aimed at achieving economic and social progress.

All public and private bodies need to combine their efforts, otherwise the gap between rich and poor is very likely to increase. Society in the EU would thus move faster towards a form of dualism which would increase

tensions within individual EU Member States, within the EU itself and in the world at large. Everyone has to be taught to realise that they have an ongoing responsibility for the construction of a fair and harmonious society.

The Committee therefore refused to accept that poverty is an inescapable phenomenon, representing a consequence of, if not to say a precondition for, a future society no longer capable of reconciling its tremendous capacity for scientific and technological progress with a respect for the ethical values which it so ardently espouses. Poor people must not always have to pay the price for economic progress which benefits only a fraction of society.

3.8. The social action programme

The Committee welcomed the Commission document on the new social action programme which places a particular focus on encouraging access to employment, good working conditions and equality of opportunity.

The Committee noted that the Treaty of Amsterdam has established favourable conditions for strengthening social policy and shared the Commission's view that the new social action programme should take account of the new possibilities that will arise once the Treaty is ratified. The Committee took the view that social policy at European level should be aimed at building a consensus on minimum conditions that are compatible with the demands of competitiveness, with a view to safeguarding the European social model, while making the necessary adjustments over time in response to changing circumstances.

While the European social model is rightly considered to be a constant value in society, its true worth in practical terms will be determined essentially by its capacity to respond swiftly to the challenges presented by an era undergoing rapid transformation.

The Committee agreed with the Commission that the new economic environment created by EMU will render a close link between economic and social policy more necessary than ever. Greater attention must also be given to 'dialogue with the public', not least in the area of social policy. The importance of hearing the voice of civil society is now widely recognised.

The Committee supported the Commission's concern for 'striking the right balance between flexibility and security'. The Committee backed the Commission's view that social dialogue has a key role to play in finding that balance, with particular regard to employment strategy.

Likewise, the Committee agreed with the Commission that only a Europe offering job opportunities can sustain the core values of the European social model, and insists that the implementation of the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council in Luxembourg must include a new drive

for dynamic growth and higher employment. Employment requires, as a central objective of social policy: setting up new training programmes; stepping up the integration of people excluded from the labour market and the exchange of best practice in the area of work organisation, with reference to the social opportunities presented by the rapid advance of the information society; promoting entrepreneurship, equal opportunities and the free movement of workers; and, on the financial front, transforming the European Social Fund into an instrument to support national labour market policies.

The Committee strongly emphasised the importance of promoting entrepreneurship, a central pillar in the employment strategy. It was also strongly in favour of the Commission's proposal to 'develop a preventive approach to social exclusion'.

3.9. Freedom of movement

The Committee endorsed the Commission's action plan for the free movement of workers and calls on the Commission rapidly to introduce ad hoc machinery to comply with the comments and conclusions of the High-Level Panel. It is significant that the High-Level Panel discussed the extent to which the basic principle of freedom of movement of persons is implemented. Consequently, the scope and objectives of the Commission's action plan for the free movement of workers might appear too restrictive. The broad thrust of the action plan, nevertheless, is towards a broader recognition of the term 'worker' and a wider application of the basic principle of free movement, as enshrined in the Treaty. The Committee appreciated the Commission's pragmatic attempts to build on and open up existing EU instruments dealing with the free movement of workers.

However, it considered that a parallel effort should be made to bolster this initiative with a deeper commitment to achieving freedom of movement throughout the EU for all European citizens and for third-country nationals legally resident in a Member State. A bridge must be constructed between workers' and citizens' rights, their Community *acquis*, and between social and civil rights. Essentially, the total removal of obstacles to the free movement and residence of Europeans — and not just of workers — is a political, social and economic priority. The Committee therefore called on the Commission to waste no time in adopting the decisions needed to achieve this objective.

As regards the proposed promotion of European pathways for work-linked training and apprenticeship, the Committee recalled that the development of mobility and the success of the Europass scheme hinged on participation in the development and monitoring of the scheme by all the relevant public and private operators involved in work-linked and apprenticeship training.

The Committee also considered that the mobility must concern not only persons in training but also those providing that training. The Committee also recalled its approval of the Commission communication on promoting apprenticeship training in Europe and the need for reference values or minimum criteria with a view to identifying the essential features of a European apprenticeship training model.

The Committee, in addition, welcomed the proposed directive on safeguarding the supplementary pension rights of employed and self-employed persons moving within the European Union as a limited first step towards the objective of complete freedom of movement in the field of supplementary pensions.

The Committee approved extending Social Security Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 to nationals of third countries and the proposal for a European directive amending directives on the general system for the recognition of professional qualifications and supplementing directives concerning the professions of nurse responsible for general care, dental practitioner, veterinary surgeon, midwife, architect, pharmacist and doctor.

3.10. Education — training — youth affairs

The ESC supported the Commission's move to define the scope and content of the new generation of EU action in the fields of education, training and youth. In particular, the relevant ESC opinions pointed out the need for policies on education, training and youth to be geared towards the competitiveness of the European economy, employment and the personal fulfilment of European citizens, while wholeheartedly endorsing the Commission's position on the gradual creation of an open dynamic European educational area.

3.10.1. Towards the learning society

The ESC welcomed the fact that the Commission had presented a communication reviewing and providing information on the White Paper and the measures ensuing from it, something which it has not generally done and for which it deserves particular credit.

At the same time, the ESC:

- felt that not enough time had elapsed since the communication on the White Paper was presented for final conclusions to be drawn;
- but continued to insist on the need to open up the dialogue to ever-broader sections of society — at all times under the Commission's responsibility and with practical measures being taken by groups who have already been made aware of these issues.

The Committee agreed with the Commission's view, expressed in the document, that the main themes and aims of the White Paper were confirmed during the discussion. It agreed with the economic dimensions and effects of the links between education, training and employment, and with the need for equal status for the purely educational, affective, moral, spiritual and cultural dimension of education and training when drawing up syllabuses and programmes.

The Committee again stressed the risks inherent in the transition to a new world where there will be unlimited access to knowledge, unimaginably fast dissemination of information and completely different conditions and means of communication.

3.10.2. Towards a Europe of knowledge

The ESC stressed the importance for the EU's overall perspective of the Commission proposal for the 'gradual construction of a ... European educational area'.

It took the view that the proposal:

- clearly covered an area which is not covered by the national educational systems;
- contributed — still in the context and under the terms of the Treaty — to coordinating the national educational systems, so as to make them more effective and competitive both in the production of knowledge and in the processes by which it is acquired by young people and citizens in general;
- could lead the European citizen, through the system of 'lifelong learning and training', to levels of personal, productive and socio-political activity corresponding to the spirit and expectations of the times and in touch with the basic values which gave rise to European civilisation (a humanist orientation, excluding none and enabling citizens to participate responsibly and practically in social life).

In the ESC's view, the main responsibility for building a Europe of knowledge lies with the EU bodies and particularly the Commission. This observation must not be interpreted as a centralising logic or approach. On the contrary, it should be seen as an additional, continuing central effort to achieve:

- increasing transparency and publicity in decision-making procedures, greater clarity in presenting the reasons for choices and more precise definition of terms and scale;
- increasingly widespread and substantive participation by European citizens and their public representatives in the procedures for planning, drawing up and implementing the relevant programmes;

- closer linkage of the policy choices and specific actions on education, training and youth with the main contemporary problems, and particularly with that of employment;
- simplified management of programmes, with better utilisation of resources to ensure unfettered, more widespread participation of European citizens in those programmes.

3.10.3. Socrates

In its latest opinion on Socrates, the Committee highlighted that the streamlining of procedures and structures introduced in the second phase of the programme should improve its management. The Committee supports this organisational and operational overhaul and trusts that it will serve to boost effectiveness and efficiency in Socrates as a whole. The Committee considers that the Commission and Member States need to introduce mechanisms to allocate and monitor funding so that the greatest possible number of people are able to have access to Socrates, ensuring that assistance is not monopolised by specific individuals or institutions. It now takes the view that the budget allocation earmarked for the second phase provides a certain degree of financial leeway to accommodate projects and assistance which may be requested under Socrates, the Committee's repeated recommendations for an increase in allocations to Socrates and the programmes preceding it having thus been met.

3.10.4. Leonardo da Vinci

The Committee again acknowledged its support for the Leonardo programme whose most important component, i.e. physical mobility measures, takes up around half of the programme's budget. It is very important to continue to implement practical measures at EU level to overcome obstacles to mobility and that the programme should help to identify such obstacles. The Committee considers that the pilot projects and European networks should receive greater priority, as these are the quintessential elements of the Leonardo programme.

3.10.5. Youth for Europe

The Committee also endorsed the new 'Youth for Europe' programme considering it as a major opportunity for a coordinated, common policy on young people in the Member States, particularly in the light of the plan to enhance the integration of youth and education policy. However, the success of this programme will essentially depend on whether the different arrangements for assigning responsibilities in youth and education policy in the various Community countries can be dovetailed to avoid any conflict of remit and negative competition. Bringing together current schemes and

new, innovative action programmes can, particularly via the support measures, strengthen the Community's youth policy as a whole and generate new momentum.

3.11. Exploitation of children

It also considered that the widespread and alarming problem of child mistreatment, exploitation and abuse requires a fundamental repositioning and mobilisation of society. The aim should be to go beyond public condemnation and reaction by decree, or piecemeal policies based on damage limitation. Society needs to tackle the generating factors of child abuse rather than react to their consequences. The Committee urged a comprehensive, preventive and proactive approach, putting children first in our everyday policy-making, social activity and cultural development.

The Committee wholeheartedly endorsed the Commission's Daphne programme and its stance that violence against women and children should be treated as a serious infringement of basic human rights. The Committee pointed out that any discussion of preventive measures must, of necessity, target the perpetrators of the crime, i.e. the abusers. It also welcomed the importance of voluntary organisations being highlighted, as these have extensive experience and expertise in matters concerning violence against women and children. The Committee also endorsed the proposal on the EU-level collation and analysis of publicly available statistics on the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, as well as the proposal calling on the Member States to harness Europol resources for both tracing and recovering missing children, and for possible intervention against the criminal and criminal networks.

3.12. Racism and xenophobia

The Committee welcomed the action plan against racism.

Where incorporating the fight against racism into major Community policies is concerned, the Committee focused in particular on employment, education and training policies, as well as on the information society and the mass media. The Committee considered the operation of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia to be a particularly important element in the fight against racism, and consequently called for its effective implementation to be speeded up. Schools and education constitute for the ESC an area where a fully-fledged anti-racism policy can flourish and have substantial results. The Committee particularly stressed the need to understand the causes which lead to the appearance and development of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, and the need for in-depth research on these phenomena.

3.13. Voluntary organisations

The Committee welcomed the long-awaited Commission communication on promoting the role of voluntary organisations and appreciated the Commission's positive approach to voluntary organisations and foundations, in implementing EU policies in various areas. The Committee believed that voluntary organisations and foundations would benefit from increased cooperation at national level, in order to be able to speak with one voice on common, sector-specific issues.

3.14. Health and safety at the workplace

The Committee approved the proposal for a Council directive amending for the second time the directive on protection of workers from the risk related to exposure to carcinogens at work. In general terms, the Committee felt that the Commission proposal marked a significant advance in worker protection and improves legal arrangements in this regard. The Committee noted that, to date, there was evidence only that the dusts of oak and beechwood are carcinogenic, and, in humans, may in particular cause adenocarcinoma of the nose and the nasal mucous membranes. On the other hand, the Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits to Chemical Agents has stated that, clearly, other wood types are also under suspicion. That being the case, the Economic and Social Committee, while endorsing the proposal, had certain reservations about the fact that the amendment brings only oak and beechwood dust into the scope of the directive. This can only be a first step. The ESC urged, therefore, that protection at the workplace be expanded to include other wood dusts in the near future.

3.15. Public health

The plenary decision of July 1998 to reduce the number of consultative sections from nine to six means that public health matters are now the responsibility of the new section for employment, social affairs and citizenship. During 1998, the Committee was very active drafting opinions on Commission proposals for public health action or for health-related measures such as the health risks of dangerous chemicals, and also acting on its own initiative.

The Committee approved the Commission proposal for the adoption of existing international principles and guidelines on good clinical practice (GCP) in the conduct of clinical trials on medicinal products for human use in the form of an EC directive — which would make these principles and guidelines binding in all Member States, although it stressed that the approximation of provisions should not in practice create further

bureaucratic or administrative obstacles but promote high-quality pharmacological research in the EU.

Furthermore, the Committee thought that forms of cooperation should be encouraged for the purpose of gradually moving towards a single EU procedure for the commencement of clinical trials valid throughout the EU, for which use should be made of the scientific skills and know-how available at the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (EMA). Other comments included the recommendation to set up an EU database on information on clinical trials as part of EudraNet (a telematic network linking the relevant national authorities, the EMA and the Commission) in order to reinforce cooperation, the need to respect the deadlines laid down in the proposed directive, and to obtain greater guarantees regarding the participation of third countries in multi-centre trials.

The Committee welcomed the proposal for a directive relating to the manufacturing and placing on the market of certain substances used in the illicit manufacturing of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances — which seeks to extend the provisions of Directive 92/109/EEC to non-scheduled chemicals — as a step in the right direction towards an overall strategy for the control of synthetic drugs. The opinion, therefore, endorsed the proposed drawing-up of two lists to include other chemicals which, in addition to, or instead of, the precursors specified in Annex I to Directive 92/109/EEC, are known to be improperly used in the manufacture of narcotics and psychotropic substances. The Committee, however, felt that the present wording of the proposed directive should be amended to take better account of the issue of official intervention.

The Committee adopted an own-initiative opinion on resistance to antibiotics as a threat to public health. This document — which is the first initiative on the subject at EU level — looked into the emergence of antibiotic resistance, a problem that constitutes an increasing threat to public health given that infections caused by resistant bacteria contribute to morbidity and mortality resulting in additional healthcare costs.

The opinion focused on consumption patterns of antibiotics by humans and endeavoured to explore ways to tackle the problem of antibiotic resistance. Firstly, it sketched the background of the problem and identified relevant initiatives already undertaken at different levels (national, EU, international) in the following broad areas: elements of good practice in antibiotic usage in humans and animals; the monitoring of antibiotic usage; surveillance of antibiotic resistance; infection control in hospital and non-hospital care; research; education and other measures. Secondly, the Committee made a number of recommendations for future action to fight antibiotic resistance in all of these areas, both at national and — where feasible — EU level, which

should be developed within an all-embracing, integrated policy to be coordinated by a central body.

The Committee welcomed the Commission communication on the development of public health policy in the European Community beyond the year 2000, but considered that the document was too general and actions within the proposed strands were not prioritised. In the view of the Committee, the communication should have contained detailed proposals specifying the way in which the Commission aimed at achieving the actions proposed under each strand, which should take into account new developments in economic and employment policies and of single market issues (e.g. European Court of Justice judgments).

The Committee also considered that the communication did not take full advantage of the provisions of the new Treaty of Amsterdam, and that it should set up a fourth strand of action dealing with the integration of health requirements into other policies and activities or, alternatively, present another practical way to ensure that health aspects are taken into account. Another suggestion concerned the need to carry out a deeper analysis of the enlargement, and of its effects and risks for Community public health policy, for which the Committee urged the Commission to draft an evaluation report on health and enlargement, identifying possible areas for cooperation and technical support for applicant countries.

In its final comments, the Committee called on the Commission to draw up a comprehensive outline for action in the field of public health, to reorganise and strengthen the Commission services acting in this field, and to establish one commissioner specifically in charge of public health at Community level.

The Committee adopted several opinions on Commission proposals regulating chemical substances and preparations which are dangerous to people or the environment.

Regarding the proposal for a directive amending existing legislation on restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (18th amendment to Directive 76/769/EEC), the Committee especially welcomed the steps proposed by the Commission at EU level to protect consumers from exposure to carcinogens, mutagens or substances toxic to reproduction (c/m/r substances). However, it considered that it would be better if the restriction on the sale of these substances would follow automatically after their classification under the requirements of Directive 67/548/EEC on the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances.

The Committee approved the Commission proposal for a directive amending existing legislation relating to fertilisers, as regards the marketing in Austria, Finland and Sweden of fertilisers containing cadmium, agreeing

that Austria, Finland and Sweden should be allowed to retain their limit values for cadmium in fertilisers beyond December 1998, given that cadmium is a highly sensitive issue in these countries. The Committee also endorsed the further studies planned by the Commission to investigate the environmental impact of cadmium in fertilisers and the possible human risks involved and trusted that the Member States will lend sufficient support to the Commission in its work.

The last opinion on dangerous substances of 1998 concerned a proposal for a directive amending Council Directive 67/548/EEC as regards the labelling of certain dangerous substances in Austria and Sweden. The Committee endorsed the proposal which aimed at providing an additional two years (1 January 1999 to 31 December 2000) to complete the review — provided for by the Accession Treaty — of outstanding labelling issues regarding dangerous substances in Austria and Sweden. The Committee also urged the Commission: (i) to pursue the further work which was planned regarding the revision of existing categories of danger and the taking-up of internationally harmonised standards for the classification of dangerous substances needed for a further revision of Directive 67/548/EEC; (ii) to draw relevant conclusions on all other associated initiatives, such as those on dangerous household waste and on the availability of antidotes included in Council Resolution 90/C329/03; and (iii) to do all the above before 31 December 2000.

4. ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND MONETARY QUESTIONS

4.1. Economic situation

The opinions the Committee produces every year on the Annual Economic Report, which serves as a basis for the Commission's recommendations to the Council and the drafting of the broad guidelines of the economic policies of the Member States and of the Community under Article 103 of the Treaty, enable the viewpoints of the economic and social interest groups it represents to be taken into account in the definition of economic policies. In its opinion on the 1998 Annual Economic Report 'Growth and employment in the stability-oriented framework of EMU — Economic policy reflections in view of the forthcoming 1998 broad guidelines', the Committee stressed that employment is still the main challenge facing not only the Member States and the EU, but also the socioeconomic organisations. The goal should be strong and sustained growth in order to generate a sufficient number of jobs to offset productivity gains and new arrivals on the labour market, thereby bringing down the level of unemployment, as rapidly as possible, to levels that can be borne by society. Unemployment continues to have serious social consequences in terms of individual suffering and

hardship; it is therefore unworthy of a highly developed industrial society. Unemployment brings about the destruction of human resources, at enormous cost. It jeopardises the credibility of politics in the eyes of the public, just when there is a need to increase that credibility with a view to future projects, such as the single currency and EU enlargement. The driving forces of growth should shift more quickly towards increased investment and private consumption. The Committee stressed the importance of the broad guidelines as a vital tool for coordinating the economic policies of the Member States and called upon the Community, the Member States and the social partners to reach the consensus in respect of structural policy that they have already achieved for macroeconomic policy, so as to enable the latter policy to fulfil all its job-creating potential.

The Committee's own-initiative opinion 'Europe as an economic entity — a political challenge' was prompted by the Commission reports of the same title that were drawn up following the June 1995 Cannes European Council, but that have failed as yet to generate the necessary response. Convinced that the employment policy guidelines were not sufficient to deal decisively with unemployment, the Committee called for an economic policy to increase demand in the European economy as far as possible without triggering inflation.

4.2. Economic and monetary union

The Committee's opinions on the various aspects of preparing for the third phase of economic and monetary union included several suggestions, which were taken into account during the negotiations between the various institutions responsible for setting up EMU. In addition to technical opinions on the introduction of the euro, in its opinions 'Employment and the euro' and 'Employment policy and the role of socioeconomic organisations in the third phase of economic and monetary union', the Committee discussed the longer-term impact of EMU on growth and employment, which depends on the direction and coordination of European wage, monetary and financial policy. The Committee examined the decisive role that wage policy would take on with the start of monetary union in the individual EU Member States, as well as the responsibilities that would fall to the socioeconomic organisations within monetary union.

4.3. Taxation

In its opinion on the Commission communication on electronic commerce and indirect taxation, the Committee welcomed the view that electronic commerce should be covered by existing taxes and generate no specific new taxes. The Committee felt that businesses and all other socio-

occupational interest groups, particularly consumers and workers, should be brought into the consultation process under way with a view to introducing tax measures for electronic commerce, and that the process should take account of the heavier tax burden on labour, which is making tax systems increasingly unfair.

4.4. Statistics

Lastly, in its opinion on the proposal for a Council decision on the Community statistical programme 1998-2002, the Committee stressed the need to develop comparable Community statistics on unemployment and jobs, as such statistics are vital for Union employment policy and for the employment programmes which Member States draw up in this context. The Committee also called for action to be taken to help business, particularly SMEs, since the requirement to provide statistics is particularly burdensome for them.

5. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING

5.1. Activities of the Structural Funds

The Committee has, as in previous years, continued to monitor the activities of the Structural Funds. On 27 May 1998, it adopted an opinion on the annual report presented by the Commission for 1996. On that occasion, the Committee was particularly pleased with the progress made on strengthening partnership and making up for the previous two years' delays in programme launch and implementation. Nevertheless, the slowness of the launch process for new programmes caused the Committee to reiterate its call for programme procedures to be simplified. The report also gave the Committee an opportunity to air a number of thoughts on the interplay between Structural Fund activities and other Community policies such as research and technological innovation, which, following the environment in 1995, was the horizontal theme.

This topic was further developed in the communication on reinforcing cohesion and competitiveness through research, technological development and innovation, the aim being to specify the means to be used to reinforce competitive capacity and encourage lasting, job-creating growth in less favoured regions through the complementary use of the Structural Funds and the fifth framework programme for RTD and innovation.

In its opinion of 2 December 1998, the Committee welcomed the thrust of that communication, having long espoused the need for these policies to be closely coordinated. It made several recommendations, in the context of

structural cohesion policy and with a view to technological development and innovation in underprivileged regions, to promote combined, simultaneous and straightforward action on structures, infrastructure, training, spatial planning, boosting demand, business services, computer networks, venture capital back-up and protection of intellectual property. All this would enhance technological development in terms of employment and social cohesion.

In tandem with the opinion on the 1996 eighth annual report on the Structural Funds, the Committee adopted an opinion on the new regional programmes for 1997-99 under Objective 2 of the Community's structural policies. The focus was on job creation, an objective to be achieved by improving production structures and raising qualification levels in the labour force.

While underlining the importance of the communication, the Committee stressed the perennial problem of assessing the degree to which the national plans have achieved their net job-creation objectives, since the data supplied by the Member States are not always reliable. The Committee also noted that the communication highlights a few outstanding difficulties which must be resolved with a view to the reform of the Structural Funds. These concern the need to strengthen the partnership, the length of the programming periods, the eligibility criteria, and the priority need to support small firms, in view of their employment potential.

5.2. Territorial employment pacts

The territorial employment pact initiative grew out of the March 1996 communication on Community structural assistance and employment and the confidence pact for employment proposed by the Commission in June of the same year. These form the basis for a real partnership, at local and regional level, bringing together public authorities and all public and private players to implement schemes and measures to boost employment.

Following up its 1997 information report on the territorial employment pacts, which aimed to promote the pacts by providing information on the methodology, as proposed by the European Commission, for framing them and on implementing and operating procedures, the Committee adopted an own-initiative opinion on 9 September 1998, making recommendations to enable the territorial pacts to fulfil their original purpose, particularly on the job front. The opinion made a point of giving pride of place to the partnership. A preliminary examination of the content of the 89 territorial pacts proposed by the Member States led the Committee to make a number of suggestions in two principal areas: (i) improving information on and promotion of territorial pacts, particularly through the exchange of good practice and technology transfers; (ii) strengthening the partnership, in

particular by flanking public sector initiatives with input from private partnerships, the non-profit-making sector (social economy and mixed economy), the social partners, universities and training colleges.

5.3. Reform of the Structural Funds

Both its earlier opinions and those on the 1996 report gave the Committee the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the principles underpinning Structural Fund activities, particularly in respect of partnership, concentration of aid and additionality, and to repeat its call for more straightforward planning procedures.

These opinions, and especially that on the first three-yearly economic and social cohesion report in April 1997, enabled the Committee to make recommendations and proposals with a view to the revision of the Structural Fund regulations for the next planning period of 2000-06. The subsequent Commission proposals, published in March 1998, have obviously been a significant element in the Committee's work since.

As the opinion of 10 September illustrated, the Commission's proposals broadly reflected the concerns of the Committee on several counts, for instance: the concentration of aid, the simplification and streamlining of planning procedures, the verification and strengthening of the principle of additionality, the rationalisation of aid, the follow-up, monitoring and assessment of projects, the participation of the economic and social partners in defining priorities, implementing and following up the projects funded.

However, the Committee insisted that:

- the proposed reforms should not hinder the efforts through the Structural Funds to achieve greater economic and social cohesion, and should not weaken the EU's commitment to specific aspects of regional economic development within the now wider EU Objectives, or to particular types of economic disadvantage;
- the reforms must not reverse the economic progress that has been achieved by those regions which no longer find themselves eligible for assistance once the current regulations expire;
- while striving to achieve greater operational efficiency, a sufficient element of flexibility and adaptability must be retained to enable the Funds to respond to unforeseen economic shocks of a structural nature which have a significant regional impact;
- the activities of the Structural Funds must be part and parcel of an overall employment policy blueprint. This should be applied in the context of continuing support for sustainable economic development in the disadvantaged regions of the EU.

5.4. Spatial planning

The last two years have witnessed major advances in spatial planning, reflected by the adoption on 9 September 1998 of an own-initiative opinion on the European spatial development perspective (ESDP) — first official draft. This draft was drawn up as part of an intergovernmental working group comprising representatives of the Member States and the Commission, and was submitted to an informal meeting of the competent ministers in Noordwijk (Netherlands) in June 1997.

The ESDP, which should be finalised in mid-1999, is a policy paper designed to provide a framework for spatial integration to take account of the various tiers of political and territorial organisation within the EU, pursuing three basic goals: (i) economic and social cohesion; (ii) sustainable development; and (iii) balanced competitiveness of the EU area.

The Committee welcomed the first official draft of the ESDP as a contribution to the framing and implementation of a coherent EU spatial planning strategy. The Committee has repeatedly advocated such a strategy, as an important precondition for sustainable development.

The Committee emphasised the reasons why it is vital that the socioeconomic partners, at all geographical levels, be more closely involved in the framing and implementation of spatial planning decisions, and went on to make several recommendations.

The Committee gave special attention to four issues: (i) the interplay between spatial planning policy and Community policies; certain shortcomings in the draft were highlighted, such as the failure to analyse the impact of employment policies on the EU's spatial cohesion; (ii) the priority need to analyse the spatial perspectives of enlargement, in view of the additional spatial problems which enlargement will entail for both new and existing Member States and at the EU's borders; (iii) the urgent need to establish a European spatial planning observatory network; the Committee also set out its ideas on the role of the network; (iv) the question of partnership in the implementation of the ESDP.

Following on from its January 1997 own-initiative opinion on the role of the EU in urban matters, the Committee adopted an opinion in January 1998 on the Commission communication 'Towards an urban agenda in the European Union' once again highlighting the European dimension of urban development policies inasmuch as they concern principles, factors and conditions which are of strategic importance for the development prospects of the EU and for the quality of life of the European public.

While accepting that the communication represented a real step forward in the approach to urban issues, the Committee drew attention to a number of

priorities for the urban agenda relating to competitiveness and employment, economic and social cohesion and sustainable development, reflecting the perception of cities as a key element in making development policy fully consistent: with policies designed to achieve economic excellence and social equity.

6. INDUSTRIAL POLICY

The industry/single market section was extremely busy in the period under review, covering issues ranging from competition policy, the single market, the information society, intellectual property, SMEs, industrial competitiveness, commerce, the customs union, technical standards and regulations, banking and insurance, financial services, etc.

In 1998, the Committee adopted 45 opinions prepared by the industry/single market section. Seven hearings were organised, in Brussels and various cities throughout the EU, and section members took part in 11 conferences, many of them at European or even international level, in which they expressed the Committee's position on matters covered by the section.

In June, the section welcomed representatives of DG XV, who presented the progress made on completing the single market. The section meeting of October was attended by Mr Crauser, Director-General of DG XXIII, who presented an overview of the DG's work in 1998 and outlined the prospects for the future, stressing the positive contribution of the Committee's opinions to the Commission's work. In September, Mr Mogg, Director-General of DG XV, opened a hearing organised by the Single Market Observatory.

6.1. Information society

The rapid development of the information society gave rise to a large number of opinions during the course of 1998. Some of these were of a general nature, e.g. on the Commission's Green Paper on convergence of the telecommunications, media and information technology sectors. The information society raises specific questions related to the security of communications, posing technological or legal challenges. Such questions were analysed in the Committee opinions on: the electronic interchange of data between administrations (IDA); ensuring security and trust in electronic communication; electronic means of payment; globalisation and the information society, legal protection of services based on conditional access; and electronic signatures. The very important aspects of protection of minors and human dignity in audiovisual and information services and

illegal or harmful material on the Internet were dealt with in detail in two opinions.

6.2. Intellectual property

Closely linked with the development of the information society is the question of adaptation of intellectual property to new technology. In preparing its opinion on the Commission communication on copyright and related rights in the information society, the section organised a hearing involving specialists from about 30 organisations. Opinions were also adopted on protection of inventions by utility model at Community level, particularly useful to SMEs, and on the important subject covered by the Commission's Green Paper on the Community patent.

6.3. Competition policy

A traditionally important field of activity for the section is competition policy. In 1998, the Committee issued opinions both on the application of Articles 92 and 93 of the EC Treaty to certain categories of horizontal State aid, and on detailed rules for the application of Article 93 of the Treaty. A specific case of State aid to shipbuilding was dealt with in a separate opinion. In the field of industrial competitiveness, the Committee produced opinions concerning the specific sectors of the defence, space, aerospace, shipbuilding, textile, and construction industries.

6.4. SMEs

Small and medium-sized enterprises and craft industries always receive maximum attention from the Committee. The Committee organised a fact-finding trip to the United States which formed the basis for an opinion on the European capital markets for SMEs. Another opinion dealt with the question of financial assistance to SMEs, and yet another dealt with promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit.

6.5. Commerce

In the field of commerce, the Committee produced the highly topical opinion on combating late payments in commercial transactions, a problem which the Community is endeavouring to reduce by presenting a specific draft directive to strengthen the legal penalties involved.

6.6. Technical harmonisation

Technical harmonisation has continued to progress, with the aim of creating a truly single market. In 1998 a number of opinions were issued on motor

vehicles, covering aspects such as tyres, interior fittings, fuel tanks, speedometers, polluting emissions and consumer information on fuel economy, etc.

6.7. Customs union

The customs union has also advanced. Following on from the previous year's work, opinions were drawn up on tax- and duty-free arrangements for travellers (Austria and Germany), on the tax treatment of private motor vehicles moved permanently to another Member State, and on counterfeit and pirated goods.

6.8. Financial services

In the area of banking, insurance and financial services, the Committee issued opinions whose technical value has been widely recognised. One opinion dealt with the taking-up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions.

In the insurance sector, in addition to an opinion on the modification of the fourth motor insurance directive, the Committee drew up an opinion on freedom to provide services and the general interest, as a follow-up to similar work carried out in the banking sector. Using the results of an extensive consultation exercise carried out by the Committee among many of those concerned, including two public hearings in Lisbon (opened by a Portuguese Secretary of State) and London (in the context of its Single Market Observatory), a detailed opinion was drawn up on consumers in the insurance market. The Committee's work in this field clearly influenced the modification of legislation on insurance in at least one Member State, and was closely followed by the Commission.

6.9. Single Market Observatory (SMO)

The SMO continued its work of analysing and commenting on the Commission's six-monthly reports on its action plan on the single market and the accompanying single market scoreboard. In addition, the SMO continued its identification of areas where it feels the operation of the single market remains inefficient, organising public hearings in various regions of the EU to enable the Committee to speak authoritatively on practical problems, and presenting possible solutions in its opinions. Hence the opinions on consumers in the insurance market (an opinion already mentioned above); prevention of new national barriers to the single market; the impact on the single market of the introduction of the euro, with hearings in Rome and London; freedom to set up a business, with a hearing in Nice; the creation of an intervention mechanism in the case of barriers to the free

movement of goods — an opinion given on a proposed Commission regulation. Work is still in progress on an opinion on the impact on the single market of enlargement of the Union, with hearings held in Berlin and, early in 1999, in Prague. A major conference on the single market, entitled 'Which single market beyond the euro?', opened by Mr Mogg, Director-General of DG XV, and attended by over 100 participants, rounded off the SMO's work programme for the year. The SMO also maintains part of the Committee's website, enabling an interactive contact with social and economic players.

7. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

On the external relations front, the ESC has continued its efforts to involve economic and social interest groups in shaping relations with third countries, especially with those which have association agreements with the European Union. On the basis of opinions and information reports, and participation in hearings, conferences and other forums, the ESC has played an active role in the debate, expressing its views on a number of priority areas of the EU's external policy with a view to promoting the coherence and consistency of EU policies at large, and establishing a close link between external and internal policies.

One of the greatest challenges at the turn of the century will be the EU's enlargement to embrace the central and east European countries. The Committee has contributed to the debate and to the consolidation of the pre-accession strategy, and has stepped up its work on involving economic and social interest groups in the debate on the broad thrust of the external relations of the European Union and its main partners.

The Committee has witnessed growing interest from among its least developed country (LDC) partners in building up the consultative function in association with the ESC.

7.1. Central and eastern Europe

The Committee continued its work in this area by preparing an own-initiative opinion on reinforcing the pre-accession strategy for the purpose of giving advice and suggesting measures and priorities, as the EU gave the green light to enlargement negotiations and accession partnerships in March 1998.

In its opinion, the Committee endorsed the reinforced pre-accession strategy structure, but stressed the need for solid and realistic accession partnerships, which require constant monitoring and updating, given the fact that the Community *acquis* is constantly changing. Against that backdrop, the ESC invited the Union to apply the reinforced pre-accession strategy across a broad front, including the European economic and social

players in the enlargement process, and encouraging the applicant countries to develop similar arrangements.

The various interest groups in the States concerned should participate in the process in order to build a firm foundation for the arrangements for social dialogue as practised in the EU Member States, while gaining awareness of the content of the partnerships and the conditions that EU membership entails.

The challenges posed by enlargement, the strengthening of socioeconomic organisations and the social dialogue, the consolidation of the pre-accession strategy and integration into the internal market were discussed with representatives of economic and social interest groups from the applicant States of central and eastern Europe at a meeting, co-funded by TAIEX, at the ESC building in Brussels on 23 and 24 September. That meeting confirmed that during this important phase of the opening of negotiations on accession and the strengthening of the pre-accession strategy, the socioeconomic organisations wish to introduce structural improvements in their organisations, to enhance their roles at national level and to strengthen their contacts and cooperation with the ESC on a bilateral and multilateral basis. The ESC undertook to help to reach those goals.

The opinion on Slovakia, in the context of reinforcing the pre-accession strategy, demonstrated the Committee's intention to support the establishment of a State governed by the rule of law in Slovakia and to send a positive signal to Slovak socioeconomic organisations and society, which were seeking to introduce greater democracy into political, economic and social affairs. The opinion was drafted following a meeting with the representatives of Slovak economic and social organisations in Bratislava on 8 and 9 June 1998.

In another own-initiative opinion the ESC analysed the economic situation in the Czech Republic, which was among the first countries with which accession negotiations were to be opened. A meeting with the representatives of economic and social organisations in the Czech Republic was held in Prague on 25 and 26 June 1998.

In its opinion on EU accession strategies for the environment, the Committee supported the individual strategies for applying the Community *acquis* prepared by the European Commission for each of the accession countries. These national pre-accession strategies should make it possible to pinpoint priorities on the basis of the specific situation in each country.

The Community *acquis* on the environment could become a source of wealth and jobs in the applicant countries. The Committee therefore invites the European Commission to conduct a specific study to determine technological opportunities, plant production capacity, know-how and the

level of training for workers and technicians for each applicant country, in order to reach those objectives.

The Committee has also concerned itself with political and social instability in south-east Europe (the former Yugoslavia) and produced an information report analysing initiatives and proposals aimed at rebuilding civil society and guaranteeing peace and security in the region. Bearing in mind the specific features of each country in the region, the document attempted to identify common denominators, difficulties, needs and shared priorities. The aim was to promote collective policies and initiatives, to help to repair the economic and social fabric. That is a precondition for and a factor in restoring peace, security and stability in the area, which in turn are essential conditions for rebuilding the economy and society.

In this respect, the Committee takes the view that the European Union has a historic duty to support initiatives at all levels and to bolster action taken in the field, within each society, to restore peace. The establishment of democracy must remain a constant objective, pursued single-mindedly; and it will only be achieved through dialogue and total society involvement, incorporating the issues of cultural minorities and displaced people.

In its opinion on the third phase of the trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education Tempus III (2000-06), the Committee welcomed the continuation of the programme to 2006. Improving and reinforcing higher education and making it available to citizens are essential for balanced social and sustained economic development.

In its conclusion, the Committee recommended maximum transparency in publicising the information needed to encourage participation in the programme.

In its initial opinions on EU relations with the associated States of central and eastern Europe, the Committee encouraged the establishment of joint consultative committees made up of ESC members and their counterparts in the States concerned.

In July 1996 the EU–Hungary Association Council formally adopted a decision setting up a joint consultative committee (JCC), which held its third meeting in October 1998. The meeting included a presentation on the enlargement negotiations and Hungary's pre-accession strategy by Mr Gottlieb, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, followed by a debate on social dialogue and the adoption of a resolution.

The joint committee, which is made up of six ESC members and the same number of representatives of economic and social interests in Hungary, is scheduled to meet at least once a year and to comment on the economic and social aspects of relations between the European Union and Hungary.

During 1998, several applicant countries expressed an interest in setting up joint consultative committees.

The EU–Bulgaria Association Council took the decision to set up a joint consultative committee in September 1998; meanwhile, the process of establishing joint consultative committees with Poland and Romania is also under way. Romania has also set up an economic and social council.

Ms Nicolai, Secretary of State and president of the Romanian economic and social council, along with her two vice-presidents, visited the ESC on 9, 10 and 11 September 1998.

The Committee also played host to Dr János Fonagy, Political State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, and his delegation, on 22 September 1998.

7.2. European Economic Area

Last February, the Committee invited the bureau of the EEA consultative committee to attend its 10th meeting on recent developments and priority areas within the ESC and the EFTA CSC.

In June, the Committee attended the sixth meeting of the consultative committee of the EEA, in Reykjavik, on enlargement, employment and social policy, the environment and the single market.

At the 12th meeting of the bureau of the EEA consultative committee in December, there was an exchange of views on the draft joint resolutions.

7.3. New independent States

The ESC adopted an own-initiative opinion on the TACIS programme, an EU-financed programme for technical assistance to the new independent States (NIS) and Mongolia. The programme's central challenge is to promote the market economy and democratic development. In its recommendations, the opinion stressed the need to increase project efficiency, improve the management of the programme and cut excessive red tape. TACIS should adopt a more targeted approach in order to improve the performance of the programme and to take into account the discrepancies in the development levels of the countries concerned. Since the representatives of the social partners play a vital role in attaining the stated objectives of the programme, improved social dialogue in these countries is essential. The ESC will play its part here by nurturing a structured dialogue to improve relations with TACIS countries. Despite the large number of projects, dissemination of TACIS information is inadequate and must be improved.

Against that backdrop, a hearing was held in Brussels on 21 January, with representatives of economic and social organisations from the Russian Federation, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

7.4. Euro–Mediterranean partnership

The mandate given to the ESC at the Barcelona conference has presented it with a major challenge, as it must:

- take part each year in the work of the committee preparing the forthcoming summit and help with organisation;
- draw up an information report on a given topic each year, to be adopted by the section for external relations, trade and development policy;
- take part (since the Casablanca summit) in the work of the summit follow-up group; in 1997-98 the group drew its members from the ESC, the Moroccan national committee for youth and the future (CNJA) and the economic and social councils of Spain and France; the group prepared several cooperation projects, which were submitted for approval to the Lisbon summit;
- establish maximum contact with economic and social partners in non-EU Mediterranean countries so as to inform them and make them aware of the Euro–Mediterranean partnership.

To do this the ESC has:

- set up a six-member internal follow-up committee, which met regularly to consider the aftermath of the Casablanca summit and the preparations for the Lisbon summit. It was also involved in finalising cooperation projects and sent its chairman on fact-finding trips to Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Egypt;
- instructed a study group to draw up a report each year for adoption by the section.

7.4.1. The Lisbon summit

At their working sessions, the participants in the fourth Euro–Mediterranean economic and social summit discussed:

- the report on investment in infrastructure and the role of the economic and social interest groups in the construction of the Euro–Mediterranean area, drawn up by the Algerian national economic and social council (CNES), in collaboration with the Italian national economic and labour council (CNEL) and the economic and social councils of Tunisia and Spain; and
- the report on the role of the Euro–Mediterranean economic and social partners in developing and improving national and Euro–Mediterranean

vocational training instruments with a view to establishing a free trade area and the opening-up of economies, drawn up by the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities, with the collaboration of the economic and social council of Greece and representatives of the Turkish economic and social partners.

The representatives of the economic and social councils and other similar institutions unanimously accepted an invitation from the national economic and social council of Turkey to hold the 1999 summit in Turkey.

The preparatory committee for the summit will be drawn from the national economic and social council of Turkey (which, as host organisation, will be responsible for coordination), the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities and the Italian national economic and labour council.

The topics for discussion at the next summit will include:

- 'Environmental protection in the Mediterranean': this report will be drawn up by the Italian national economic and labour council in cooperation with the economic and social council of France, the Moroccan national committee for youth and the future and the Algerian national economic and social council;
- 'The role of women in economic and social life and, in particular, their integration into the labour market': this report will be drawn up by the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities in cooperation with the economic and social councils of Spain, Tunisia and Greece.

7.4.2. Joint consultative committee EU–Turkey

At its fifth meeting in Brussels on 21 January 1998, the consultative committee adopted a report on agricultural products in the customs union between the EU and Turkey.

At its sixth meeting, held in Ankara in June 1998, the committee discussed the social impact of the customs union and a review of the activities of the EU–Turkey joint consultative committee.

7.5. ACP countries

The ESC has been organising annual meetings of the representatives of ACP and EU economic and social interest groups since 1976, under the auspices of the ACP–EC Joint Assembly. The following measures were proposed to the ACP–EC Joint Assembly at its meeting in April 1998:

- Special attention should be given to setting up properly run national liaison committees. Initially for a limited number of countries, this should be done by making appropriate arrangements with the economic and

social partners and national governments, in close liaison with the Commission.

- In between meetings, seminars should be organised on a regional basis. Their aims should be:
 - to assess the setting-up of national dialogue and the obstacles facing it;
 - to assess means of encouraging the development of organised civil society; and
 - to prepare the two-yearly meeting and debate a given topic.
- A meeting should be hosted every two years in Brussels to debate the topic that has been the subject of preparatory meetings at regional level. The theme of the next meeting should be 'Specific arrangements for widening the ACP–EU partnership to include economic and social interest groups in order to guarantee their participation in the framing and implementation of national and regional development policies'.

7.6. Asia

In its opinion on a Europe–Asia cooperation strategy in the field of environment, the Committee stated its strong commitment towards sustainability at all policy levels, and agreed with the proposed shift of environmental priorities towards urban and industry-related problems. The Committee fully agreed with the communication on the significance of the development of environmental management capacity, and suggested that the Member States of the EU could make a vital contribution in this area.

The Committee was pleased to note the emphasis which the communication placed on the role of the private sector in meeting Asia's environmental challenges, and stressed that the position of the SMEs in Asia deserved special attention.

As for China, the Committee hosted a delegation from the Chinese people's political consultative conference (CPPCC) from 19 to 23 January 1998.

7.7. Mercosur and Chile

The Committee drafted an own-initiative opinion on the current socioeconomic situation in Chile and its links with Mercosur and the EU. The opinion examined the trilateral links between the EU, Chile and Mercosur in the light of the forthcoming negotiations on the conclusion of a political and economic association agreement between the EU and each of the partners.

Bearing in mind the present situation in Chile, the ESC expressed its support for the process of consolidating democracy in the country. In its

view, full democratic normalisation in Chile is also a prerequisite for greater social equality. To this end, the Committee highlighted the importance of implementing more ambitious reforms in the social sphere, with special emphasis on labour, education and health.

The ESC welcomed the European Commission's support for development cooperation in Chile, and called for these resources to be maintained and diversified, with a particular focus on the economic and social dimension. The ESC considered it necessary to step up the current levels of economic and business cooperation between the two sides. Similarly, it recommended devising specific projects to support SMEs, including technical assistance to make it easier for Chilean SMEs to take part in the AL-Invest and ECIP programmes and to obtain EIB loans.

The ESC welcomed the recent progress in EU cooperation with Chile and Mercosur. It has also been actively involved in the process of increasing mutual understanding, through a parallel dialogue with the representatives of civil society in Mercosur and Chile.

7.8. WTO and other issues related to international trade

In its opinion on WTO negotiations on financial services, the Committee considered that the agreement signed in the WTO in December 1997 represented a major step towards liberalising financial markets. There is still a great deal of progress to be made since two of the biggest markets on the planet, China and Russia, still do not come under the agreements. The commitments entered into also vary a great deal in quality, depending on the country involved. Negotiations should therefore be pursued to improve on these commitments, to combat, if possible, any regulatory systems limiting competition, and to remove obstacles where necessary.

The Committee published an own-initiative opinion on the Commission proposal on the application of a scheme of generalised tariff preferences — GSP (1999-2001). It endorsed the proposal that sought to reward, in particular, good conduct on the part of developing countries in the fields of labour law, protection of the environment and anti-drug measures. Maintenance of the GSP sends out the right message to developing countries experiencing grave economic crises that in some cases may well totally destabilise their democratic systems.

7.9. Other work

In its opinion on EC instruments for investment support in third countries, the ESC felt that the European Commission needed to make its investment support instruments in third countries part and parcel of an overall strategy that encompassed simultaneously the essential principles of cooperation,

social regulations and environmental standards, and the legitimate interests of Europe, notably in respect of reciprocity, employment and competitiveness. Community procedures must be simplified in order to make the instruments more accessible to all operators and to harmonise them with other Member States.

In addition, the ESC proposed that the strategy be reinforced in the countries of central and eastern Europe and the Mediterranean basin, which should be regarded as preferential areas of cooperation and partnership.

In its opinion on the communication from the Commission entitled 'The information society and development: the role of the European Union', the Committee emphasised the need for specific action on rapid access to the information society, both in the Union and in developing countries. The ESC feels that the Commission should give greater emphasis to the twofold challenge of integrating the developing countries into the information society and promoting participation of European industry in this development.

8. ENERGY, NUCLEAR QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH

The year 1998 saw an increase in the number of requests for opinions, reflecting the increased activity in the abovementioned areas. The consultations in respect of the specific R & D programmes forming part of the fifth framework programme demonstrate this trend.

A total of 12 opinions were adopted, including two own-initiative opinions. This total may be broken down as follows: energy issues — seven opinions; RTD — four opinions; and nuclear questions — one opinion.

8.1. Energy

In the energy sector the number of concrete measures adopted in connection with the completion of the internal energy market was stepped up.

The ongoing calls for more efficient use of energy were reflected in the following opinions: energy for the future: renewable sources of energy (White Paper for a Community strategy and action plan); policies for the rational use of energy (RUE) in the European Union and in countries which are candidates for early membership; energy efficiency in the European Community — towards a strategy for the rational use of energy; and a Community strategy to promote combined heat and power (CHP) and remove the obstacles to the development of CHP.

Because there is no chapter on energy in the Treaties, it is up to the Commission to endeavour to bring about a degree of coherence in the energy section measures and the activities of the various Member States. The ESC made a contribution to this goal in its opinion on the proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual framework programme for actions in the energy sector (1998-2002) and connected measures.

The Committee adopted two opinions which underlined its desire to continue to promote the simplification and updating of EU rules. These opinions concerned the following subjects: the Community procedure for information and consultation on crude-oil supply costs and consumer prices of petroleum products; and the amendment to Directive 68/414/EEC imposing an obligation on Member States of the EEC to maintain minimum stocks of crude-oil and/or petroleum products.

The European Parliament (EP), for its part, has taken measures to facilitate the use of renewable sources of energy (Linkohr report). As the amendments to the Treaties decided upon at Amsterdam have yet to be ratified, it was not possible to consult the Committee on this subject. Once the Treaty of Amsterdam has been ratified, the EP, too, will be able to consult the ESC in similar cases.

— At its March plenary session, the Committee adopted its opinion on the Commission's communication on a Community strategy to promote combined heat and power (CHP).

The Committee generally endorsed the Commission initiative. It did, however, stress the need for coordination between Member States' programmes and wider Community energy policy, on the basis of a specific action plan, with a view to ensuring compatibility.

The Committee supported the Commission's call for the implementation of the directives on the internal markets for electricity and natural gas to be monitored with a view to ensuring their proper application.

The Committee also called for international cooperation to promote the exchange of information and experience between Member States on combined heat and power.

The Committee highlighted the need to reduce air pollution and for measures to be drawn up for internalising costs. Economic considerations should also be taken into account by promoting new high-output CHP plants, funded from EU and national resources.

The Committee also underlined the importance of EU programmes to assist the CEECs and to promote international cooperation (Synergy, ALURE, PHARE, TACIS), in addition to CHP research in the industry and services sectors.

— In April the Committee adopted its opinion on the proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual framework programme for actions in the energy sector (1998-2002) and connected measures.

The Committee has always supported research into renewable sources of energy and has issued opinions on the Altener II and SAVE II programmes.

In its opinion on the abovementioned multiannual framework programme, the Committee welcomed the Commission's concentration on three priorities: security of supply, competitiveness and environmental protection. The Committee also called on the Commission to make further progress with the integration of energy policy measures.

The Committee regretted that the energy framework programme contained no general survey of energy policy measures but covered only programmes having a financial bearing on DG XVII.

The Committee also called for closer cooperation between DGs and for an annual survey of work carried out in the energy field.

— In April the Committee adopted an opinion on the communication from the Commission on energy for the future: renewable sources of energy (White Paper).

The Committee endorsed the take-off campaign for renewable energy sources and the implementation of the proposals set out in the White Paper by 2010. There was, however, a need for a change of attitude in a number of fields. The Committee called once again for close cooperation between the Member States and advocated the inclusion of private sector funding in investment projects.

— At the end of July the Committee adopted an own-initiative opinion on policies for the rational use of energy (RUE) in the European Union and in countries which are candidates for early membership.

The Committee stressed, above all, the need to promote RUE and to analyse the economic and social implications of this process, including job creation and public awareness campaigns.

In the light of the commitments entered into at the Kyoto summit, the Committee called upon energy companies to reduce their own levels of consumption and energy losses. It also encouraged distribution/marketing companies to engage in energy-saving schemes.

The Committee also once again stressed the importance of coordinating measures and incorporating inspection and monitoring mechanisms, in order to avoid the pursuit of different energy policies at national level.

With a view to the future accession of the applicant States, the Committee called for them to be included in the commitments entered into by the existing Member States.

- At the end of July the Committee adopted an opinion on the proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 68/414/EEC imposing an obligation on Member States of the EEC to maintain minimum stocks of crude-oil and/or petroleum products.

The question of the Community's supply of crude-oil and petroleum products has been discussed many times in the past.

The Committee highlighted the need for a new directive since the provisions currently in force were introduced more than a quarter of a century ago.

The Committee approved the new provisions concerning the increase in the derogation granted to oil producing Member States and the provisions regarding changes in the reporting deadline and improvement of the administrative supervision of stocks.

On the subject of the conditions governing the holding of stocks by Member States, the Committee welcomes the measures to ensure a degree of flexibility and to enable potential savings to be made. Decisions on this matter must, however, rest with the Member States.

- The following month the Committee adopted its opinion on the communication from the Commission on energy efficiency in the European Community.

Broadly speaking, the Committee endorsed the Commission's plan to give a fresh impulse to energy saving, particularly in the light of the Kyoto agreement.

The Committee did, however, put forward a number of recommendations concerning the need for follow-up action in respect of the RUE programmes and coordination with the Member States and their respective programmes.

The Committee also took the view that the Commission's communication failed to adequately highlight the need to streamline energy consumption in the transport sector programmes; the Committee proposed that an action line be included in the programmes to that effect.

The Committee also drew attention to the advisability of campaigns to raise the awareness of the public and energy users since the process of liberalising and deregulating the energy sector would have a considerable impact on users.

From a purely formal point of view, the Committee considered that it would be advisable to include in the communication the main features of the MURE model and the results of the Altener and SAVE programmes.

— In July the Committee adopted its opinion on the proposal for a Council decision on crude-oil supply costs and the consumer prices of petroleum products.

The proposed measure had been initiated by the Commission with a view to updating the information and consultation procedures on the prices of crude-oil and petroleum products.

The Committee endorsed the Commission's proposal to repeal Directive 76/491/EEC of 4 May 1976 and to replace it by the proposal for a Council decision under review.

The Committee fully supported the Commission's proposal and agreed that the Oil Bulletin should be given a legal basis in order to improve the transparency of prices for petroleum products and to promote price convergence.

The Committee believes that the Oil Bulletin should be adjusted to bring it into line with current conditions and the current requirements of the oil market.

8.2. Nuclear questions

The Committee carried out very little work in this field following the adoption, in 1997, of its opinion on the outline nuclear programme.

— In April the Committee adopted the only opinion which it issued during the reference period on nuclear issues, namely that on the proposal for a Council decision approving amendments to the statutes of the Joint European Torus (JET), joint undertaking.

The Committee issued an earlier opinion on the JET programme on 25 October 1995 and has also issued opinions on thermonuclear fusion in the context of the RTD framework programmes.

The Committee generally endorsed the proposed amendments which were of an administrative nature.

8.3. Research and technological development

The Committee's work in this sector was concentrated on the fifth RTD framework programme, together with a number of other Commission proposals backing up this programme. In addition, the Committee considered the practical question of the findings of Community research in its opinion on the first innovation action plan.

The Committee's opinion on the specific programmes coming under the fifth RTD framework programme represented one of the Committee's major achievements in 1998, not only in view of the scope of the opinion but also the fact that in issuing its opinion, the Committee was the first EU body to give its views on the Commission's proposals.

— The Committee adopted a particularly important own-initiative opinion on the research sector during the research period, namely that on ways and means of strengthening the networks for the provision of information on and exploitation of applied RTD programmes in Europe.

In all of its previous opinions on this subject, the Committee showed that one of the major weaknesses of Community research was the lack of impact which it had on enterprises and, in particular, on SMEs. (With a view to promoting innovation and the involvement of SMEs, the Committee urged that the third horizontal action of the forthcoming fifth RTD framework programme be given over to that objective.)

In its opinion, which thus follows on from its opinions on the fifth framework programme, the Committee made a number of recommendations to the Commission.

The Committee first of all recommended that existing means be used to implement planned actions and called for the programmes to be better coordinated.

If the fifth RTD framework programme was to be successful, it was, in the Committee's view, vital that all action be geared to meeting the needs of users. The Committee also called for the setting-up of a users' group for Community networks. In order to avoid confusion over the scope of the programme, the Committee also urged the Commission to prepare a vademecum setting out all the national, Community and intergovernmental actions.

With a view to the enlargement of the EU, the Committee also supported extending the strategy to include all the applicant States and establishing partnerships with both countries in the Euro-Mediterranean area and the signatory States to the Lomé Convention.

— In September the Committee adopted its opinion on the fifth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (1998-2002) — specific programmes.

The Commission has already consulted the Committee on a number of occasions in connection with the fifth framework programme. In the reference year, the Committee once again issued an opinion on the working document drawn up by the Commission.

From a general standpoint, the Committee endorsed the document; it did, however, call for greater attention to be paid to a number of aspects such as funding, methods of assessment, SME participation and the Euratom programme.

The Committee urged that the level of EU funding originally proposed by the Council be increased in order to enable the measures to address more effectively problems which were becoming increasingly complex.

The Committee also highlighted the need to introduce technological and industrial assessment systems which were transparent, reliable and open.

The Committee wished to see participation by SMEs in EU research programmes and called for closer links between the academic world and the business world.

The Committee also urged that the Euratom programme be geared more towards nuclear fission and for measures to be taken to ensure the safety of European nuclear plants.

— In April the Committee adopted an opinion on the proposal for a Council decision concerning the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities and for the dissemination of research results.

The Committee took the view that the proposal fell short of what was required and it set out a number of observations on the proposals.

Given the innovative nature of the fifth RTD framework programme, the Committee called for a comparison to be made with the previous programmes, in particular the fourth framework programme, in order to highlight the new rules and philosophy of the fifth framework programme.

The Committee underlined the need for uniform rules for participation in all types of action; the rules had not yet been adequately defined.

The Committee took the view that coherent RTD actions in Europe had to be ensured by coordination with other Community programmes. It was also of the opinion that the Commission had failed to take account of the question of international competitiveness in the proposal under review.

— In May the Committee adopted an opinion on the communication from the Commission on the implementation of the first action plan on innovation in Europe.

The Committee fully recognised how useful it was to publish an annual report on implementation of the action plan on innovation; it did, however, draw attention to the need to give more consideration to the involvement of SMEs in the innovation process in the light of their roles as enterprises

which develop technology, those which exploit new technology and passive enterprises.

The Committee proposed that pilot projects be launched to stimulate a spirit of enterprise.

The Committee also pointed out that the effective functioning of the single market was a *sine qua non* for successful innovation. It recommended that measures to promote innovation be included as one of the key objectives of the Structural Funds.

The Committee strongly advocated the setting-up of an innovation platform to serve as a forum for the exchange of experience between the Member States.

No description of the Committee's work in the fields of energy, research and nuclear questions would be complete without reference to the Committee's external activities, particularly activities carried out in collaboration with the EU institutions.

In this context the Committee was visited, as usual, by leading figures responsible for energy research and nuclear questions in other EU institutions, namely: Mr Pablo Benavides, Director-General of the Commission's DG XVII — Energy; Mr Jorma Routti, Director-General of the Commission's DG XII — Science, Research and Development; and Mr Umberto Scapagnini, chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy.

The Committee was also honoured to receive visits by representatives of the UK and Austrian presidents-in-office of the Council of Ministers responsible for energy and research.

Contacts with the permanent advisers on energy and research matters of the 15 Member States were stepped up within the reference period.

A number of other key events took place during the reference period, such as the hearing in connection with the Committee's opinion on ways and means of strengthening information networks and exploitation of applied RTD programmes in Europe. This hearing was attended by representatives of DGs XII, XIII, XVI, XXII, XXIII, the Joint Research Centre, the Eureka programme and the UK representatives of the Council of Ministers and the Office of Science and Technology in the Department of Trade and Industry. The Committee also held a hearing on policies for the rational use of energy in the EU and in countries which are candidates for early EU membership; this hearing brought together representatives of DGs I/A, III, VII, VIII, XII, XIII and XVII, in addition to representatives of the European Parliament, the Council and socioeconomic organisations.

Finally, mention should be made of the fact that the president of the Committee's section for transport, energy, infrastructure and the information society has been appointed as a member with observer status of the Consultative Committee on Energy, recently established by the Commission.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

9.1. Environmental policy

The Committee's 1998 opinions on Commission proposals in the field of European environmental policy covered various areas, including waste management, air quality and the ozone layer, dangerous substances, noise pollution, the environment/employment relationship, and biotechnology.

9.1.1. Waste management

During the year in question, the Committee turned its attention to various waste issues in Europe. It started by issuing an opinion on a proposal for a directive on discarded vehicles in the EU, which together generate some 8 to 9 million tonnes of (sometimes hazardous) waste per year. The opinion endorsed the main thrust of the Commission proposal, but made a number of comments, including: the need to harness the existing experience of some Member States in this area; the need to cater for the declared recovery and recycling objectives from the vehicle design stage; and possible solutions to the problem of negative market value. The Committee also called on the Commission to draft proposals on PVC, with a more appropriate approach to phasing out the use of heavy metals and hazardous substances. With regard to the Commission proposal amending Directive 94/67/EC on the incineration of hazardous waste — with the aim of introducing uniform limits for all discharges of waste water — the Committee had reservations on whether sufficient research had been performed to ensure that the proposed values were the most appropriate for EU-wide use. Moreover, the Committee felt that clarification was required as to what is considered the point of discharge from the incineration plant. The Committee also had reservations about the Commission's costs and impact assessment. In its opinion on the Commission proposal on shipments to non-OECD countries of certain (non-hazardous) types of waste, the Committee considered it necessary that the customs authorities of a Member State should, before authorising the export of 'green' list waste to a non-OECD country, check that the customs and environmental authorities of the receiving country have given formal consent to the shipment. They should also be satisfied that the applicant Community exporting country has properly checked and proven that the receiving plant

in the country of destination has the facilities to process, recycle and upgrade the exported waste.

9.1.2. Ambient air quality and the ozone layer

The Committee broadly supported the Commission proposal on the first 'daughter directive' (on sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead) of Directive 96/62/EC on ambient air quality in the EU. The Committee endorsed the Commission proposals to base the limit values for the four substances largely on recent WHO recommendations. Moreover, with reference to the cost-benefit analysis which formed the basis of the Commission proposal, the Committee pointed out that the scientific basis of environmental legislation could never be fully watertight, and that, where there is doubt, the environmental principles enshrined in the EC Treaty must be taken as a basis. The Committee also adopted a favourable opinion on the Commission proposal to cut emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) from civilian subsonic jet aircraft in two stages (2000 and 2008) by 16 %. The Committee also adopted an opinion on the Commission proposal — with a view to protecting the ozone layer — to prohibit use and production of methyl bromide by the year 2001, and to ban hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) in all uses. The opinion emphasised the need for Europe to play a leading role in international environmental policy. At the same time, it pointed out the risks in terms of international competition for some sections of European industry and agriculture.

9.1.3. Dangerous substances

The Committee endorsed the Commission proposal to include 16 new substances that are either carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction (c/m/r) in the annex to Directive 76/769/EEC on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances, so that they cannot be sold to consumers. The Committee also felt that it would be better if the restriction on the sale of such substances followed automatically after their classification under the requirements of Directive 67/548/EEC. The Committee also endorsed the Commission proposal that, notwithstanding European legislation, Austria, Finland and Sweden should be allowed to retain their limit values for cadmium in fertilisers from 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2001. The Committee also called on the Commission to speed up its planned studies to investigate the environmental impact of cadmium in fertilisers and the possible human risks involved, so that Community rules restricting cadmium in fertilisers could be drawn up by 31 December 2001.

9.1.4. Noise emission

The Committee opinion on the proposal for a directive on noise emission by equipment used outdoors (e.g. construction and garden machinery) raised a number of objections to the Commission document. It pointed out that the proposal was really no more than a consolidation of existing directives, whilst the Committee opinion on the Green Paper on noise emission had called for a more comprehensive framework directive on noise emission levels by equipment used outdoors. It also emphasised the almost universal market availability of equipment which already operates at a level well below the noise emission limits laid down in the draft directive. Therefore, the directive should enable operators in the market — via *inter alia* fiscal incentives and an eco-label (anti-noise label) — to opt for low-noise equipment, irrespective of whether or not noise emission limits have been set. The Committee also adopted an opinion endorsing the main thrust of a Commission proposal to reduce aircraft noise.

9.1.5. The environment and employment

In a comprehensive opinion on the Commission communication on the link between environmental protection and employment, the Committee welcomed the fact that the Commission was proceeding with a dual environment-employment approach as set out in the Amsterdam Treaty, which closely links the objectives of sustainable development and a high level of employment.

The Committee did, however, make some criticisms of the Commission communication, emphasising that it could not assume an automatic link without embarking decisively on the path of sustainable development. A new global approach — along the lines of the Delors White Paper — was required to make the most of a whole series of instruments, including taxation, and to enforce the 'polluter pays' principle. Legislation was also needed on the concept of responsibility for environmental damage.

9.1.6. Biotechnology

The Committee broadly welcomed the Commission proposal for a review of Directive 90/220/EEC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which also aimed to strengthen controls on GMO products which have already been placed on the market. However, the Committee's opinion was accompanied by a number of important qualifications. The progress of the directive did not seem sufficiently coordinated with the passage of other legislation on the release of GMOs (e.g. the vertical legislation on 'novel' foodstuffs). The ESC was also concerned that the proposal did not properly develop the part

concerning interaction between GMOs and their ecosystems. With reference to ecosystems outside the place of production, the Committee felt that a link should be created with existing legislation on environmental impact assessment (EIA) in the case of GMOs entering the market. The Committee also emphasised that the mechanisms for consultation of the public — where there was still a disparity between the different Member States — should be subject to greater harmonisation.

9.2. Consumer protection and food safety

Over the year, the Committee adopted three opinions in the field of consumer protection and food safety.

It started by looking closely at the Commission proposal for a general framework for Community activities in favour of consumers. In its opinion, the Committee noted *inter alia* that the establishment of such an act would create more certainty about the funds that DG XXIV had at its disposal. Moreover, it might provide adequate procedures for the funding of projects and pave the way for a proper definition of the criteria that consumer organisations have to meet in order to qualify for financial support. However, the Committee regretted the fact that the Commission had failed to take this opportunity to present a proper multiannual programme. Furthermore, the Committee would welcome a re-examination of the proposal on the basis of the relevant new Treaty provisions following from the Amsterdam Treaty, should this opportunity be offered.

In another opinion the Committee welcomed the Commission proposal to amend Community legislation on liability for defective products so that it will in future also apply to primary agricultural products. The Committee expected adoption of the proposal to lead to a higher level of health and consumer protection and to put an end to distortions of competition. The Committee was also of the view that, following the adoption of this proposal, there ought to be an overall examination of the operation of Directive 85/374/EEC by means of a Green Paper.

The ESC broadly supported the Commission communication on food, veterinary and plant health control and inspection. It pointed out, however, that although further simplification of the rules was planned, certain components of the food, veterinary and plant health sector (e.g. microbiology) could be expected to necessitate additional rules and measures. The Committee also highlighted the need for the applicant countries to incorporate EU regulations promptly so that any exemptions applicable during a transitional period would be as short-lived as possible. Finally, the Committee called on the Commission and the Council to do their utmost to

insist on, and secure international acceptance of, the EU's control policy, with a view to responding to the problems generated by liberalisation of trade.

10. COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

10.1. Press and media division

The activities initiated in recent years were continued and expanded, especially as regards relations with the Brussels accredited press, national and specialist press, and television (EBS, Euronews). The focus was on highlighting the consultative work of the Committee and its growing role in the field of external relations and the 'Citizens' Europe' programme.

Closer links with the Commission and European Parliament information offices in the Member States and third countries are still a priority, as these offices are the prime conduits for contacts with the national press, particularly when preparing for Committee delegation and official presidency visits.

1. Press releases on Committee work are disseminated using the facsys system for targeted mail-outs to the press — by country and journalist category (accredited, national, specialised), and also to the Commission information offices, the Commission press room and the various national economic and social councils. The division's press release database holds 2 200 newspaper and other media addresses. In 1998, the press and media division sent out 130 press releases. These can be accessed on the Commission's RAPID database and in a 'public folder' on the ESC's computer network.

2. The publication containing press cuttings featuring the ESC was issued six times in 1998; 750 articles were collated during the year.

3. The press and media division was responsible for the following publications:

— *ESC INFO*: this bulletin on the activities of the ESC and its members is published in all the Community languages. The average print run is 14 000, of which 11 500 are posted to addresses on the division mailing list. The bulletin is also given out to visitor groups and distributed at European public events.

— *The Economic and Social Committee ... what is its role?*: this leaflet, which targets the general public, explains the role and activities of the ESC in simple terms. It is available in 11 languages.

— *40 years of socio-occupational dialogue*: this leaflet was published to celebrate the Committee's 40th birthday. It is available in 11 languages.

- *The ESC — 1998-2000*: this booklet (in preparation) describes the role and activities of the Committee. It will be available in 11 languages.
4. The press and media division offers three main audiovisual services:
 - Video cassette: this 10-minute film gives a thumb-nail sketch of the Committee's activities. It is available in six language versions (ES, DE, EN, FR, IT, PT).
 - Coverage of the plenary session and other events: 'Europe by satellite', produced in partnership with the European Commission's audiovisual department, enables the Committee to provide systematic coverage of ESC plenary sessions, hearings and other events, such as the Euro-Mediterranean summits.
 - In September 1998, an eight-minute programme was co-produced with Euronews on the occasion of the fourth Euro-Mediterranean summit. This programme, produced in six languages (ES, DE, EN, FR, IT, Arabic) will be broadcast on an international scale breaking new ground for the ESC. The stage has been set for continued collaboration with Euronews, with a view to more regular coverage of ESC activities.
 5. The press and media division holds press conferences every time a newsworthy opinion is adopted. It also arranges interviews with the Committee president and rapporteurs, as well as dinners for the Committee president and her home press. The press and media division sets up meetings with the national press on visits by the Committee president and/or delegations.

The press and media division and the conference and public relations department will continue to attend European Council meetings, giving the Committee access to a unique media presence (2 000 journalists per summit).

6. The division takes care of day-to-day contacts with journalists, chiefly those accredited to the European institutions. It responds to numerous requests for information.

10.2. Information and visits department

1. Visitors' groups: the information and visits department welcomed 258 visitors' groups (totalling 6 735 people) to the ESC in 1998, in response to a constant stream of requests to come to the Committee and find out about what it does. A dozen or so officials, sometimes working together with members, addressed the groups. Some of the visits were organised jointly with the Commission, the European Parliament or the Committee of the Regions.

The breakdown of groups by origin was as follows.

<i>EU Member States</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>	<i>Number of visitors</i>
Belgium	2	32
Denmark	13	405
Germany	57	1 327
Greece	1	35
Spain	13	338
France	46	1 328
Italy	14	449
Luxembourg	1	30
Netherlands	5	159
Austria	5	126
Portugal	13	394
Finland	16	297
Sweden	5	78
United Kingdom	24	590
New EU officials	8	251
<i>Total</i>	<i>223</i>	<i>5 839</i>
<i>Non-EU countries and areas</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>	<i>Number of visitors</i>
Bulgaria	4	70
Cyprus	1	12
Iceland	1	40
Latin America	1	30
Latvia	1	20
Lithuania	1	12
Macau	1	11
Norway	1	11
Romania	1	7
Slovenia	1	3
Turkey	1	15
USA	6	200
Other	15	465
<i>Total</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>896</i>
<i>Grand total</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>6 735</i>

2. Publications: in 1998, 11 publications were issued either directly by the department or in cooperation with other departments:

- *The future and the enlargement of the European Union — Volume III* (DE/EN/FR)
- *The single market and the protection of the environment: coherence or conflict* (ES, DE, EN, FR, SV)
- *The euro — how the socio-occupational groups view it* (all languages)
- *Maritime affairs — points of view of the Economic and Social Committee* (EN)
- *Consumers in the insurance market* (DE, EN, FR, PT)
- *The Structural Funds and Agenda 2000* (ES, EN, FR, PT)
- *Resistance to antibiotics as a threat to public health* (EN, FR)
- *European Union — Funding for growth* (DE, EN, FR)
- *Social policy and economic performance* (DE, EN, FR)
- *ESC bulletin* (eight issues)
- *Echosoc* (ESC internal newsletter — No 1)

3. Documentation: the department replies to an average of 50 documentation and information requests every week, i.e. approximately 2 000 requests over the year.

4. Special events: the department published a commemorative postcard to mark the 40th anniversary of the ESC and had a temporary post office set up to issue a special commemorative postmark. The post office served a large number of members and officials over the two-day May plenary session.

5. Two of the department's officials take personal responsibility for running the Association of Former ESC Members. They organised the annual general meeting in March and a fact-finding visit to France in September, in cooperation with the former ESC secretary-general, Mr Louet.

10.3. Conference and public relations department

In 1998, the department continued to develop a proactive communications policy, organising events targeting both the general public and a more specialised audience such as unions and consumer associations.

1. As part of the 'Citizens' Europe' initiative, the ESC hosted a conference in Luxembourg on 19 March, entitled 'Comité économique et social — Grande Région: débats', in collaboration with the economic and social council of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the economic and social committee of the Grande Région and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg Chambre des Métiers. In all, 250 socioeconomic representatives from

Luxembourg, Belgium, France and Germany took part in debates on three aspects of the single market: strengthening the cross-border employment market as a factor of integration; promoting vocational training and language learning to combat youth unemployment; and cutting red tape. For the first time in its 'Citizens' Europe' programme, the Committee took a determinedly cross-border stance by involving several Member States.

The department issued four publications:

- 'Citizens' Europe' — Vienna (*Economy and society in an enlarged Europe*) (DE)
- 'Citizens' Europe' — Helsinki (*Advantages of the single market and Baltic Sea cooperation*) (EN, FR, FI, SV)
- 'Citizens' Europe' — Stirling (*The ESC and Scotland: focus on citizens*) (EN, FR)
- 'Citizens' Europe' — Luxembourg (*Comité économique et social — Grande Région: Debats*) (DE, FR)

2. In collaboration with the Commission and the European Parliament and as part of the Prince European public information programme, four seminars were held on the topic 'The euro, a currency for Europe'. The Florence (January) and London (March) seminars, held with the support of the European Trade Union Academy, targeted trade union training organisers at the CISL — the Confederation of Italian Trade Unions and the TUC. The Madrid conference (February) catered for the regional consumers' associations represented within the Spanish Institute for Consumer Affairs. The purpose of these three seminars was to train people to provide information and shape opinions within their respective organisations. A fourth seminar (200 participants), held on the request of the Mayor of Seville, raised awareness of the socio-occupational sphere, associations, regional government, etc.

These seminars gave the Economic and Social Committee an opportunity to take a stand on the euro and involved the active participation of MEPs and the Commission's 'Groupeuro'.

3. On the interinstitutional communications front, the ESC joined with the interinstitutional task force in planning the 10 May open day. This year, the Committee's involvement was limited to setting up its documentation stand in the Council building.

4. The Committee was represented in the EU pavilion of Expo '98 in Lisbon on an equal footing with the other institutions. Throughout the exhibition, visitors were furnished with full documentation on the ESC. On 18 June, ESC day, the Committee hosted a meeting on the reform of the Structural Funds, in liaison with the Portuguese economic and social council.

5. The ESC also took part in the organisation of a major concert on the 41st anniversary of the Rome Treaties. This event, which will be repeated, was backed by the Union institutions and the government of the Brussels-Capital region.

6. Another important aspect of interinstitutional collaboration is the cooperation programme with the European Commission TAIEX office (technical assistance information exchange). This enables ESC members to take part in a series of seminars for the candidate countries in the context of harmonising national legislation with the current corpus of EU law. The contribution made by ESC members sheds light on the role of the economic and social partners in the European legislative process, while raising the profile of the Committee's work.

7. In November, a seminar on 'New public services in the EU: combining market efficiency and the pursuit of the general interest', was held at the Committee headquarters. Organised on the initiative of the European Parliament in collaboration with the ESC, the meeting was chaired by Ms Billingham, European Parliament rapporteur on the topic, the closing speech was given by Commissioner Van Miert. The ESC was represented on the various panels by three members.

A further seminar, again organised by the ESC and the European Parliament, was held in December on the subject of 'Retirement in Europe: the nature and challenges of the new social model'. This seminar was chaired by Wim J. Van Welzen, MEP. Commissioner Monti also took part. The ESC was represented by three members, one of whom sat on one of the panels.

8. A large number of hits were registered on the ESC website, which provides a broad range of information and Committee documents. The site slots into an interinstitutional context and is designed primarily to facilitate communications with the general public, disseminate information on major Community initiatives and raise the profile of the Committee's opinions. A Single Market Observatory heading will soon be added, further developing the site's interactive capacity.

9. On its 40th anniversary, the Committee adopted a new logo. For the inaugural plenary session in October, it had a new presentation stand.

10. The ESC set up its information and documentation stand at several European events and disseminated information on its role and activities to a significant number of people. These events included:

- 37th congress of the UGT confederation (Madrid)
- 'Citizens' Europe' conference (Luxembourg)
- Interinstitutional open day (Brussels)

- The Congress of Europe (The Hague)
- European Council (Cardiff)
- European social policy forum 1998 (Brussels)
- ESC/TAIEX conference on enlargement and reinforcement of the pre-accession strategy (Brussels)
- COR forum: 'Education and training: the keys to employment' (Brussels)
- ESC hearing: 'What single market for the single currency?' (Brussels)
- *Europese belgische dagen in Bredene* (Belgium approximately 5 000 visitors)
- ESC inaugural session
- Euro–Mediterranean parliamentary forum (European Parliament)
- Employment week (Brussels)
- European Council (Vienna)
- Seminar: 'New public services in the EU' (Brussels)
- Seminar: 'Retirement in Europe: the nature and challenges of the new social model' (Brussels)

CHAPTER III

The groups

1. GROUP I — EMPLOYERS

The year 1998 has been a year of major change for the Economic and Social Committee, both internally and externally, during which the contribution of the employers' group has been decisive. In a series of debates beginning in 1995, the group has assumed the responsibility of doing all in its power to collaborate, if necessary to fight, to achieve long overdue internal changes. The group was instrumental in all the work which culminated in major adaptations to the internal structures, including reductions in the size of the Committee bureau and the number of sections, in updating the rules of procedure to take account of these changes, in guaranteeing greater transparency and efficiency at all levels and in introducing more rigorous management procedures.

Manual Cavaleiro Brandão, the group president, was rapporteur for the revision of the rules of procedure which were adopted at the July plenary session so that all the new structures could be put in place in time for the beginning in October of the four-year mandate, 1998-2002.

At the end of the mandate, 19 Group I members left the Committee. In this context particular mention must be made of John Whitworth, who had served as vice-president of the group since 1990. Mr Whitworth was nominated to the Committee in 1986 as a representative of the International Shipping Federation. He acted as vice-chairman of the transport section and was a member of the Committee bureau; he was an active member of the social affairs section and an interested participant in discussions on agriculture, but it is his unfailingly wise support and advice to successive group presidents that will be most missed.

The oldest member of the outgoing Committee also retired from Group I. Filotas Kazazis was among the first Greek members nominated in 1981 and a representative of the Greek Federation of Industry, more particularly the textile industry. He became a Member of the European Parliament but returned to the ESC where he served as chairman of the industry section and from 1990 to 1992 as ESC vice-president.

At its inaugural meeting on 13 October, 21 new members were welcomed to Group I, bringing the total to 69, 12 women and 57 men. Following recommendations made by the outgoing group, Mr Cavaleiro Brandão was unanimously re-elected group president, and his choice of five vice-presidents was endorsed as follows: Jorge Stecher Navarra (E), Ian Little (UK), Roy Donovan (IRL), Bruno Vever (F) and Renate Hornung-Draus (D).

The group nominated Margareta Regnell (S) as candidate for the vice-presidency of the Committee, who was duly elected in plenary session. Under the new rules of procedure, the other Group I members of the Committee bureau are Manuel Cavaleiro Brandão, Umberto Burani (I), chairman of the section for economic and monetary union and social cohesion, José Ignacio Gafo Fernández (E), chairman of the section for transport, energy, infrastructure and the information society, Göke Frerichs (D), Filip Hamro-Drotz (FIN), Philip Noordwal (NL) and Kenneth Walker (UK).

All those who knew him were deeply shocked to learn of the sudden death on 18 October of Carlos Ferrer Salat, president of the ESC from 1994 to 1996 and former president of UNICE. Mr Ferrer had been a remarkable Committee president whose international knowledge and reputation in many different fields had enabled him to obtain favourable results from the revision of the Treaties. He also set in motion the fundamental internal reforms and controls to improve the efficacy and impact of the Committee's work which finally came into operation in 1998.

The comprehensive contribution made by Group I members to the work of the Committee at all levels is demonstrated by almost 90 opinions on subjects ranging from the technical details of internal fittings of motor vehicles and the protection of laying hens to the complications of electronic commerce and the important political work of the Single Market Observatory in preventing new barriers to trade. All these opinions were drafted by employers' group rapporteurs.

Since the ESC adopted the first ever opinion on economic and monetary union, drafted by a former Group I member, the group has strongly supported EMU and the introduction of the euro. In the course of 1998, employer members participated in numerous conferences in their own countries and at European level, including a number in applicant countries, to inform citizens and business about the implications of this historic step in the evolution of the European Union.

The position of the Single Market Observatory has been confirmed and strengthened under the new internal rules and employers will continue to play a decisive role in carrying out its work programme in order to discover and remove remaining trade barriers.

Contacts with UNICE have remained constant throughout the year. Following the retirement of Zygmunt Tyszkiewicz, secretary-general for the last 12 years, the group invited his successor, Dirk Hudig, to address its extraordinary meeting on 3 September and to consider how to further improve UNICE–Group I relations. The group secretariat sends a monthly newsletter to UNICE, CEEP, Eurochambres and Eurocommerce immediately after each plenary session giving details of all new subjects of consultation or initiative and to enable them to propose experts to assist Group I members on specific topics. The group also maintains ad hoc links with a large number of trade and sectoral associations at European level whose advice enhances the accuracy of many of the more specifically technical opinions.

2. GROUP II — WORKERS

In recent years the Committee has been obliged in the course of its work to contend with major changes and take on new responsibilities in connection with:

- Agenda 2000;
- enlargement;
- the revision of Community policies;
- the application of the new Amsterdam Treaty;

quite apart from its obligations in the field of external and employment policy.

These new responsibilities represent a challenge for the Committee but also give it the chance to reaffirm and increase its credibility and authority. They have also prompted Group II to reflect on the functioning of the Committee.

In this context, Group II has been keen to consider and contribute to the reforms and changes that will have to be made to the ESC's organisation, functioning and working methods in order to make its work more focused and efficient.

The group devoted two extraordinary meetings to this subject, which was discussed at its regular monthly meetings too. Its members also contributed to the work of the advisory group on ESC working methods.

The group's conclusions and proposals were submitted to the extraordinary meeting of the enlarged bureau held in Cardiff in January, where they were warmly welcomed.

The group's proposals focused on:

- the functioning, size and composition of study groups;
- the functioning of sections and observatories (number, number of meetings, rotation of presidencies);

— the structure and role of the Committee bureau;

while also underlining the major role played by the groups.

Group II also reached the following conclusions in the course of the year.

— Ongoing action was needed to back up EU enlargement. The ESC's task would be to propose solutions which were likely to bring about social progress by drawing on its practical experience of dialogue with third-country organisations.

— Own-initiative opinions had to become the hallmark of the ESC and aim to make a unique contribution to European integration.

The relevant amendments to the rules of procedure were adopted in July.

The group held another extraordinary meeting prior to the Committee's renewal in October to take stock of the consequences of implementing the new rules of procedure.

It pointed out that the new composition of the bureau would guarantee one representative per country but that these should on no account be seen as national representatives. It was merely a matter of ensuring that all countries were represented. It was up to the group in this context to discuss how it was to be represented in order to accomplish its task and achieve its objectives.

The reduction in the number of sections and the concomitant extension of their terms of reference were also discussed by the group, which pinpointed the sections in which it was particularly interested.

As part of the Committee's renewal, the group — which will henceforth encompass 80 members — confirmed the appointment of Mr Briesch (CFDT — F) as its president.

The group also nominated Mr Piette (CSC — B) for the post of Committee vice-president and Mr Jenkins (TUC — UK) and Mr Schmitz (DGB — D) as presidents of the external relations and single market sections. The other members of the Committee bureau are Mr Vogler (ÖGB — A), Mr Svenningsen (LO — DK), Mr Pariza (CCOO — E) and Mr Koryfidis (ADEDY — EL).

The group also selected two vice-presidents — Mr Geuenich (DGB — D) and Mr Vinay (CGIL — I).

Geert Stratemans will continue as the group secretary.

During the year, Group II members acted as rapporteur or co-rapporteur for subjects of major importance such as:

- public health and drugs;
- the single market action plan;
- the elimination of certain trade barriers;

- territorial employment pacts;
- urban questions;
- racism;
- the social action programme;
- the free movement of workers;
- working time in excluded sectors;
- apprenticeship and the learning society;
- the European Union and space;
- employment and the euro;
- the role of socio-professional organisations in the third stage of EMU;
- Europe as an economic entity;
- transport and telecommunications networks;
- air transport;
- strengthening of the pre-accession strategy (Czech Republic etc.).

Group II representatives were also prominent in the field of external relations, providing the section president but also playing a major role in:

- the conferences and hearings held with the candidate countries;
- the EURO–MED conference (R. Briesch, president);
- the Mercosur meetings (R. Briesch, president);
- the meetings of the joint consultative committees with Turkey (R. Briesch, co-president, and C. Koryfidis, rapporteur on the consequences of the customs union in the social field) and Hungary (H. Vogler, rapporteur on the social dialogue);
- meetings with the European Economic Area representatives (J. Piette, rapporteur on social policy and employment).

3. GROUP III — VARIOUS INTERESTS

The composition of the Economic and Social Committee reflects the changing face of European society.

The presence of the various interests group, alongside the employers' and workers' groups, ensures that the Committee is able to give full voice to the concerns of the various social, occupational, economic and cultural organisations that make up civil society.

The unique feature which forges Group III's identity is the wide range of categories represented within it: its 72 members are drawn from farmers' organisations, SMEs, the crafts sector, the professions, cooperatives and non-profit-making associations, consumer organisations, environmental

organisations, and associations representing the family, women, persons with disabilities, and the scientific and academic community.

These diverse groupings are bound together by the joint action which continued to characterise the group's activity during 1998, and which was aimed at a clearly defined target: to help fill the democratic deficit of the EU decision-making process. Here, Group III asserts the essential role of the Economic and Social Committee, in the firm conviction that democracy is deepened and strengthened by the active, responsible participation of those who represent the various social, economic, occupational and cultural interests in civil society.

Throughout the year, the group strove to ensure that its position and the interests it represented were taken into account, primarily regarding opinions touching upon the social dialogue.

The various interests group would like to see the present conception of social dialogue modified and made more representative. The economic, productive, occupational and social categories which represent the majority of the EU working population must be involved in the negotiations on decisions which concern them. By the same token, all those bodies which play an economic and social role, not least in the fight against exclusion, must be consulted.

Group III's contribution, however, extended beyond this concern. Several group members served as rapporteurs for opinions of outstanding importance which marked the Committee's work in 1998. These included, amongst others, opinions on the framework for activities in favour of consumers, resistance to antibiotics as a threat to public health, voluntary organisations and foundations in Europe, the action plan for the single market, exploitation of children and sex tourism, and the own-initiative opinion on the costs of poverty and social exclusion in Europe.

Although they come from highly diverse sectors, the common aim of Group III members is to achieve real economic and social democracy in Europe, by means of the participation of organised citizens. The group's work is geared to this end and is reflected in all the Committee's work in which the group is involved, providing rapporteurs for a range of opinions, and in specific initiatives promoted by the group.

The group plans to make good use of Ms Rangoni Machiavelli's presidency of the ESC to develop the concept of civil society and introduce it as widely as possible: this would confirm its fundamental role as a link between relevant bodies and the Community institutions.

In the field of external relations, Group III's views were heard on numerous occasions, most notably through its presidency of the ACP-EU follow-up

group and co-chairing the EU–Turkey and EU–European Economic Area joint consultative committees.

Turning to internal affairs, the group played a key role in carrying out and adopting an overhaul of the Committee's structures and working methods. It contributed to the adoption of new rules of procedure aimed at securing greater efficiency. The establishment of a quaestors' group will express the desire for transparency and better working conditions at the ESC in a practical form.

Lastly, as part of the four-yearly renewal of the Economic and Social Committee, Group III elected a new president, Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund (Austria), to replace Ms Rangoni Machiavelli, who had served for eight years. Mr Nilsson (Sweden) and Mr Mengozzi (Italy) are the group's vice-presidents.

The guiding principles which Ms Sigmund will seek to apply during her presidency are to continue on the path mapped out by her predecessors, especially regarding social dialogue, civil society, the 'Citizens' Europe' initiative and closer links with socio-occupational bodies close to Group III, and to implement a consistent and effective policy of communication.

CHAPTER IV

Internal aspects of the secretariat

1. STAFF

1.1. The secretariat proper

In 1998 the total establishment of the secretariat proper amounted to 135.

These were divided between the various categories as follows:

- 48 category A posts (including one special career bracket);
- 29 category B posts;
- 58 category C posts.

1.2. Common organisational structure

Protocol 16 to the Maastricht Treaty set up a common organisational structure (COS) for the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) and the Committee of the Regions (COR). The Treaty of Amsterdam provides for the abolition of this structure upon ratification, in other words during 1999.

The staff employed within this common structure have come largely from the Economic and Social Committee (about 80 %). There were 516 posts in 1998, divided as follows:

- 18 category A posts;
- 198 category LA posts;
- 53 category B posts;
- 204 category C posts;
- 43 category D posts.

In order to prepare for the abolition of the common organisational structure, the ESC and COR administrations held a series of consultations during 1998, with the main aim of maintaining the optimal conditions for the operation of both bodies outside the present framework of their joint services.

However, as soon as it became apparent that there would be no major increase in manpower in either of the two institutions, consideration switched to the possibility of continuing to pool resources in some areas, at least for the time being. The areas best suited to joint action have been identified, namely translation, typing, ushers, etc. The officials of these future joint services will, of course, fall under separate staff charts for the ESC and COR respectively. Other COS departments, which are by nature less suitable for a common structure, will be incorporated within each of the two institutions. This essentially concerns the support services for the personnel and accounts departments.

Some problems remain with the harmonisation of joint management procedures for staff to be appointed to the future joint services, and these will continue to be discussed during 1999. For its part, the ESC remains predisposed to interinstitutional cooperation and will seek to ensure that the joint activities are carried out successfully with the Committee of the Regions, subject to the provisions of the staff regulations.

2. BUDGET

The following table shows Section VI appropriations under the general budget of the European Union for 1997 and 1998.

	<i>(ECU)</i>	
	1997	1998
Economic and Social Committee	27 865 858	27 491 000
Committee of the Regions	15 595 700	14 061 947
Common organisational structure	53 775 429	58 311 356
Total	97 236 987	99 864 303

3. MEETINGS

There were 9 plenary sessions and 10 bureau meetings in 1998.

Working bodies also met as follows:

— Sections:	61
— Study groups:	317
— Groups I, II and III:	31
— Recognised sub-groups:	137
— Visitors' groups:	243
— Delegations, preparatory meetings:	445

4. STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT IN 1998

President and vice-presidents

President's secretariat

Group secretariats

— Group I

— Group II

— Group III

Secretariat-General

Secretary-General

Secretary-General's secretariat

Directorate for the registry, the assembly, institutional affairs, the bureau and planning

Mail and archives

Specialised department for the assembly/bureau, official publications and the annual report

Specialised department for institutional affairs and relations with (national and regional) economic and social councils

Directorate for personnel

Specialised department for legal questions

Division for recruitment, careers and induction

Missions — reimbursement of expenses, transfers — assignment — attachment of salary

Directorate for communication

Press and media division

Specialised department for information and visits

Specialised department for conferences and public events

Directorate A — Consultative work

Division for the single market, production and consumption

Division for transport, energy, infrastructure, and the information society
Division for agriculture, rural development and the environment

Directorate B — Consultative work

Division for economic and monetary union and economic and social cohesion
Division for employment, social affairs and citizenship
Division for external relations

5. COMMON ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Financial control division

Directorate for the common organisational structure

Security
Library
Planning division

Specialised department for printing and document distribution

Pre-press
Offset/finishing
Photocomposition
Dispatch/distribution
Dispatch
Distribution/documentation

Specialised department for informatics and telecommunications (IT)

Telecommunications/fax/telex
Administrative informatics
LAN operation
Database applications

Specialised department for finance

Cash office
Accounts
Budget

Specialised department for staff support

Privileges and immunities, salaries, pensions, social security of other staff

Sickness fund (officials seconded to the Commission)

Working conditions

Department for competitions, vocational training, in-service training, social activities and communication

Medical-welfare department

Logistics department

Offices

Buildings

— Reservation of meeting rooms/reception/travel/conferences

— Technical maintenance

— Session ushers

General services — switchboard/telex/drivers/ushers

Restaurant/cafeteria/distribution of beverages

Division for linguistic coordination and documentation

Linguistic coordination

General services

— Dispatch

— Documentation

Spanish language division

Danish language division

German language division

Greek language division

English language division

French language division

Italian language division

Dutch language division

Portuguese language division

Finnish language division

Swedish language division

Secretariat of staff representative bodies

ANNEX A

**List of opinions
and information reports
issued during 1998**

351st PLENARY SESSION ON 28 AND 29 JANUARY 1998

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the approximation of provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action relating to the implementation of good clinical practice in the conduct of clinical trials on medicinal products for human use

(ESC 99/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Colombo

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 85/374/EEC of 25 July 1985 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of Member States concerning liability for defective products

(ESC 115/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Hernández Bataller

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90 of 7 May 1990 on the establishment of the European Environment Agency and the European environment observation network

(ESC 100/98)

Rapporteur working without a study group: Mrs Sánchez Miguel

Consumers in the insurance market (Single Market Observatory) (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 116/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Ataíde Ferreira

The European Union and space: fostering applications, markets and industrial competitiveness

(ESC 101/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Sepi

The European aerospace industry: meeting the global challenge

(ESC 102/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Sepi

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Monetary Institute and the Economic and Social Committee on boosting customers' confidence in electronic means of payment in the single market

(ESC 103/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Burani

Towards an urban agenda in the European Union

(ESC 117/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Vinay

Co-rapporteur: Mr Muller

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 3975/87 laying down the procedure for the application of the rules on competition to undertakings in the air transport sector

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the application of Article 85(3) of the Treaty to certain categories of agreements and concerted practices in the sector of air transport between the Community and third countries (ESC 113/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Decaillon

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on trans-European rail freight freeways

(ESC 104/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Kritz

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 2299/89 on a code of conduct for computerised reservation systems (CRSs)

(ESC 105/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Moreland

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the recognition in intra-Community traffic of the distinguishing sign of the Member State in which motor vehicles and their trailers are registered

(ESC 106/98)

Rapporteur working without a study group: Mr García Alonso

Draft Council regulation (EC) on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods by road

(ESC 107/98)

Rapporteur: Mr De Norre

Review of reactions to the White Paper 'Teaching and learning: towards the learning society'

(ESC 114/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Koryfidis

Communication from the Commission on promoting apprenticeship training in Europe

(ESC 110/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Dantin

Communication from the Commission on promoting the role of voluntary organisations and foundations in Europe

(ESC 118/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Olsson

Role of middlemen, from production to consumption, in the setting of food prices (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 108/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Kienle

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on financing of the common agricultural policy (consolidated version)

(ESC 111/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Mengozzi

The information society and development — the role of the European Union (ESC 112/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Lindmark

Proposal for a Council directive (EC, Euratom) amending Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 58/97 concerning structural business statistics

(ESC 109/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Walker

352nd PLENARY SESSION ON 25 AND 26 FEBRUARY 1998

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive relating to special provisions for vehicles used for the carriage of passengers comprising more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat and amending Directive 70/156/EEC

(ESC 281/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Bagliano

Promoting innovation through patents: Green Paper on the Community patent and the patent system in Europe

(ESC 282/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Bernabei

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the legal protection of services based on, or consisting of, conditional access

(ESC 283/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Hernández Bataller

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) establishing new rules on aid to shipbuilding

(ESC 284/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Simpson

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Towards a new shipbuilding policy

(ESC 288/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Simpson

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the application of Articles 92 and 93 of the EC Treaty to certain categories of horizontal State aid
(ESC 295/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Van Dijk

Communication from the Commission on the social and labour market dimension of the information society: People first — the next steps
(ESC 285/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Pellarini

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the organisation of a labour force sample survey in the Community
(ESC 294/98)
Rapporteur-general: Mr Walker

Management of fish stocks in the Mediterranean (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 286/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Muñiz Guardado

Proposal for a Council directive on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community (consolidated version)
(ESC 287/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Ballé

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 93/74/EEC on feedingstuffs intended for particular nutritional purposes and amending Directives 74/63/EEC, 79/373/EEC and 82/471/EEC
(ESC 291/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Gardner

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 95/69/EC laying down the conditions and arrangements for approving and registering certain establishments and intermediaries operating in the animal feed sector
(ESC 292/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Gardner

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 1868/94 establishing a quota system in relation to the production of potato starch
(ESC 296/98)
Rapporteur-general: Mr Lerios

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) laying down the criteria and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the processing and marketing of its products (consolidated version)

(ESC 297/98)

Rapporteur-general: Mr Leif Nielsen

Proposal for a Council directive on end-of-life vehicles

(ESC 289/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Colombo

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee on a Europe–Asia cooperation strategy in the field of environment

(ESC 290/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Koopman

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on public-private partnerships in trans-European transport network projects

(ESC 293/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Kritz

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Connecting the Union's transport infrastructure network to its neighbours — towards a cooperative pan-European transport network policy

(ESC 298/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Konz

353rd PLENARY SESSION ON 25 AND 26 MARCH 1998

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on ensuring security and trust in electronic communication — towards a European framework for digital signatures and encryption

(ESC 443/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Burani

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to insurance against civil liability in respect of the use of motor vehicles and amending Directives 73/239/EEC and 92/49/EEC (fourth motor insurance directive)

(ESC 444/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Pelletier

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive relating to the taking-up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions (codified version) (ESC 445/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Pelletier

Preventing new barriers from arising in the single market (Single Market Observatory) (own-initiative opinion) (ESC 453/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Vever

Action plan for the single market (additional opinion) (ESC 454/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Pasotti

Proposal for a Council decision on measures of financial assistance for innovative and job-creating small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) — the growth and employment initiative (ESC 459/98)

Rapporteur-general: Mr Pezzini

Proposal for a Council directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by vessels on inland waterways (ESC 446/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Giesecke

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 82/714/EEC of 4 October 1982 laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels (ESC 447/98)

Rapporteur working without a study group: Mr Kielman

A Community strategy to promote combined heat and power (CHP) and to dismantle barriers to its development (communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions) (ESC 448/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Bernabei

Proposal for a Council directive on safeguarding the supplementary pension rights of employed and self-employed persons moving within the European Union (ESC 449/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Whitworth

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 as regards its extension to nationals of third countries (ESC 450/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Liverani

Proposal for a Council directive on the extension of Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997, on the framework agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and ETUC, to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Proposal for a Council directive on the extension of Council Directive 97/80/EC of 15 December 1997, on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex, to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

(ESC 457/98)

Rapporteur-general: Miss Maddocks

White Paper on sectors and activities excluded from the working time directive (ESC 460/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Konz

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled 'Towards a Europe of knowledge'

(ESC 455/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Koryfidis

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directive 89/662/EEC concerning veterinary checks in intra-Community trade with a view to completion of the internal market, in order to reinforce checking

(ESC 451/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Colombo

Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of propagating material of ornamental plants

(ESC 452/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Stokkers

Reinforcing the pre-accession strategy (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 456/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Hamro-Drotz

External aspects of economic and monetary union

(ESC 458/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Pelletier

354th PLENARY SESSION ON 29 AND 30 APRIL 1998

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the competitiveness of the construction industry

(ESC 625/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Muller

Proposal for a Council recommendation concerning the protection of minors and human dignity in audiovisual and information services (ESC 626/98)

Rapporteur: Dame Jocelyn Barrow

Proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual Community action plan on promoting safe use of the Internet (ESC 627/98)

Rapporteur: Mrs Drijfhout

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision on a series of guidelines, including the identification of projects of common interest, for trans-European networks for the electronic interchange of data between administrations (IDA) and the proposal for a Council decision adopting a series of actions and measures in order to ensure interoperability of and access to trans-European networks for the electronic interchange of data between administrations (IDA)

(ESC 628/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Bento Gonçalves

Green Paper on the convergence of the telecommunications, media and information technology sectors, and the implications for regulation — towards an information society approach

(ESC 670/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Morgan

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) creating a mechanism whereby the Commission can intervene in order to remove certain obstacles to trade (ESC 643/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Green

Co-rapporteur: Mr Schmitz

Communication from the Commission to the Council, European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Plan of action to increase the competitiveness of the European textile and clothing industry

(ESC 645/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Malosse

Proposal for a Council directive relating to limit values for sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air (ESC 620/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Boisseree

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 94/67/EC on incineration of hazardous waste
(ESC 621/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Gardner
Co-rapporteurs: Mr Ceballo Herrero, Mr Colombo

Proposal for a Council directive on the limitation of the emission of oxides of nitrogen from civil subsonic jet aeroplanes
(ESC 622/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Gafo Fernández
Co-rapporteurs: Mr Tsimokos, Mrs Ström

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 92/109/EEC relating to the manufacturing and placing on the market of certain substances used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances
(ESC 623/98)
Rapporteur working without a study group: Mr Fuchs

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directive 76/116/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to fertilisers, as regards the marketing in Austria, Finland and Sweden of fertilisers containing cadmium
(ESC 624/98)
Rapporteur working without a study group: Mr Strasser

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending, for the 18th time, Directive 76/769/EEC on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations
(ESC 639/98)
Rapporteur-general: Mr Green

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) establishing common rules and procedures to apply to shipments to certain non-OECD countries of certain types of waste
(ESC 640/98)
Rapporteur-general: Mr Gafo Fernández

Proposal for a Council directive on safety requirements and attestation of professional competence for cabin crews in civil aviation
(ESC 629/98)
Rapporteur: Mr von Schwerin

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision amending Decision No 1692/96/EC as regards seaports, inland ports and intermodal terminals as well as Project No 8 in Annex 3

(ESC 630/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Whitworth

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision on the coordinated introduction of mobile and wireless communications (UMTS) in the Community

(ESC 644/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Mobbs

Proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual framework programme for actions in the energy sector (1998-2002) and connected measures

Proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual framework programme for actions in the energy sector (1998-2002)

Proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual framework programme for the promotion of renewable energy sources in the Community — Altener II

Proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual framework programme for encouragement of energy efficiency

Proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual framework programme of technological actions promoting the clean and efficient use of solid fuels

(ESC 631/98)

Rapporteur: Mr von der Decken

Proposal for a Council decision concerning the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities and for dissemination of research results for the implementation of the fifth framework programme of the European Community (1998-2002)

Proposal for a Council decision concerning the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities and for the implementation of the fifth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) (1998-2002)

(ESC 632/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Malosse

Energy sources for the future: renewable sources of energy (White Paper for a Community strategy)

(ESC 633/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Morgan

Proposal for a Council decision approving amendments to the statutes of the Joint European Torus (JET), joint undertaking
(ESC 634/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Beale

Proposal for a Council decision on the promotion of European pathways for work-linked training, including apprenticeship
(ESC 635/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Dantin

Commission proposals on the prices for agricultural products (1998-99)
(ESC 636/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Barato Triguero

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 823/87 laying down special provisions relating to quality wines produced in specified regions
(ESC 637/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Espuny Moyano

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the common organisation of the market in sheepmeat and goatmeat (codified version)
(ESC 638/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Quevedo Rojo

TACIS — technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Mongolia (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 641/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Hamro Drotz

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — growth and employment in the stability-oriented framework of EMU (economic policy reflections in view of the forthcoming 1998 broad guidelines)
(ESC 646/98)
Rapporteur: Mr de Bigault du Granrut

355th PLENARY SESSION ON 27 AND 28 MAY 1998

Freedom to set up a business (Single Market Observatory) (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 789/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Folias

Communication from the Commission — European capital markets for small and medium-sized enterprises: prospects and potential obstacles to progress
(ESC 790/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Pezzini

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 92/23/EEC relating to tyres for motor vehicles and their trailers and to their fitting
(ESC 791/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Bagliano

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive approximating the legal arrangements for the protection of inventions by utility model
(ESC 792/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Ataíde Ferreira

Proposal for a Council directive governing the tax treatment of private motor vehicles moved permanently to another Member State in connection with a transfer of residence or used temporarily in a Member State other than that in which they are registered
(ESC 793/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Kubenz

Communication from the Commission to the Council: Fostering entrepreneurship in Europe: priorities for the future
(ESC 803/98)
Rapporteur-general: Mr Lustenhouwer

Communication from the Commission on environment and employment (building a sustainable Europe)
(ESC 787/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Pellarini

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee on food, veterinary and plant health control and inspection
(ESC 788/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Nielsen
Co-rapporteurs: Mr Colombo, Mr Verhaeghe

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision establishing a general framework for Community activities in favour of consumers
(ESC 804/98)
Rapporteur-general: Mr Koopman

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: The future for the market in fisheries products in the European Union — responsibility, partnership and competitiveness
(ESC 798/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Chagas

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directive 64/432/EEC on health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine

(ESC 799/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Pricolo

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 404/93 on the common organisation of the market in bananas

(ESC 802/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Espuny Moyano

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation No 136/66/EEC on the establishment of a common organisation of the market in oils and fats and on the proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2261/84 laying down general rules on the granting of aid for the production of olive oil and of aid to olive oil producer organisations

(ESC 805/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Quevedo Rojo

Eighth annual report on the Structural Funds 1996 and the communication from the Commission on the new regional programmes 1997-99 under Objective 2 of the Community's structural policies — focusing on job creation

(ESC 794/98 — ESC 795/98)

Rapporteurs: Mr Little, Mr Masucci

Communication from the Commission on the implementation of the first action plan on innovation in Europe

(ESC 796/98)

Rapporteur: Mrs Sirkeinen

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directives 89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC on the general system for the recognition of professional qualifications and supplementing Directives 77/452/EEC, 77/453/EEC, 78/686/EEC, 78/687/EEC, 78/1026/EEC, 78/1027/EEC, 80/154/EEC, 80/155/EEC, 85/384/EEC, 85/432/EEC, 85/433/EEC and 93/16/EEC concerning the professions of nurse responsible for general care, dental practitioner, veterinary surgeon, midwife, architect, pharmacist and doctor

(ESC 797/98)

Rapporteur: Mrs Sigmund

Communication from the Commission on an action plan for the free movement of workers

(ESC 806/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Vinay

Proposal for a Council decision on the Community statistical programme
1998-2002

(ESC 800/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Cal

356th PLENARY SESSION ON 1 AND 2 JULY 1998

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC)
No 3295/94 laying down measures to prohibit the release for free
circulation, export, re-export or entry for a suspense procedure of
counterfeit and pirated goods

(ESC 961/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Giesecke

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European
Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the
Regions: Globalisation and the information society — the need for
strengthened international coordination

(ESC 962/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Burani

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) laying down detailed rules for the
application of Article 93 of the EC Treaty

(ESC 963/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Sepi

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European
Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the
Regions: Implementing European Union strategy on defence-related
industries

(ESC 978/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Mobbs

Proposal for a Council directive on the registration and use within the
Community of certain types of civil subsonic jet aeroplanes which have
been modified and recertificated as meeting the standards of Volume I, Part
II, Chapter 3 of Annex 16 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation,
third edition (July 1993)

(ESC 960/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Gafo Fernández

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Boisseree, Mr Sepi

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC)
No 295/91 establishing common rules for a denied-boarding compensation
system in scheduled air transport

(ESC 964/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Moreland

Ways and means of strengthening the networks for the provision of information on and exploitation of applied RTD programmes in Europe (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 965/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Malosse

Costs of poverty and social exclusion in Europe (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 966/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Burnel

Proposal for a Council directive amending for the second time Directive 90/394/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work
(ESC 977/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Fuchs

Genetically modified organisms in agriculture — impact on the common agricultural policy (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 967/98)
Rapporteur: Mrs Sánchez Miguel

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 1766/92 on the common organisation of the market in cereals and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2731/75 fixing standard qualities for common wheat, rye, barley, maize and durum wheat
Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops
(ESC 971/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Bastian

Promotion of local speciality agricultural products as a development instrument under the new CAP (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 972/98)
Rapporteur: Mrs Santiago

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 70/524/EEC concerning additives in feedingstuffs and Directive 95/69/EC laying down the conditions and the arrangements for approving and registering certain establishments and intermediaries operating in the animal feed sector and amending Directives 70/524/EEC, 74/63/EEC, 79/373/EEC and 82/471/EEC
(ESC 975/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Gardner

Proposal for a Council directive on a common system of taxation applicable to interest and royalty payments made between associated companies of different Member States
(ESC 969/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Pelletier

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC, ECSC, Euratom) amending the financial regulation of 21 December 1977 applicable to the general budget of the European Communities

(ESC 970/98)

Rapporteur working without a study group: Mr Donovan

Europe as an economic entity — a political challenge (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 973/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Nyberg

EC instruments for investment support in third countries (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 974/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Malosse

Exploitation of children and sex tourism (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 976/98)

Rapporteur: Mr Sklavounos

357th PLENARY SESSION OF SEPTEMBER 1998

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directive 90/220/EEC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms

(ESC 1117/98)

Rapporteur: Sergio Colombo

Resistance to antibiotics as a threat to public health (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 1118/98)

Rapporteur: Turid Ström

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the noise emission by equipment used outdoors

(ESC 1119/98)

Rapporteur: Klaus Boisseree

Co-rapporteurs: Daniel de Norre, Markku Matti Lemmetty

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the development of public health policy in the European Community

(ESC 1120/98)

Rapporteur: Markku Matti Lemmetty

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 88/77/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the measures to be taken against the emission of gaseous and particulate pollutants from diesel engines for use in vehicles (ESC 1121/98)

Rapporteur: Edoardo Bagliano

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society

(ESC 1122/98)

Rapporteur: Robert J. Moreland

Impact of the introduction of the euro on the single market (Single Market Observatory) (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 1123/98)

Rapporteur: Umberto Burani

Draft Commission interpretative communication: Freedom to provide services and the general good in the insurance sector (additional opinion)

(SEC(97) 1824 final)

(ESC 1124/98)

Rapporteur: Manuel Ataíde Ferreira

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive combating late payment in commercial transactions

(ESC 1125/98)

Rapporteur: Henri Malosse

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 74/60/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the interior fittings of motor vehicles (interior parts of the passenger compartment other than the interior rear-view mirrors, layout of controls, the roof or opening roof, the backrest and rear part of the seats)

(ESC 1126/98)

Rapporteur: Edoardo Bagliano

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 70/221/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to liquid-fuel tanks and rear underrun protection of motor vehicles and their trailers

(ESC 1127/98)

Rapporteur: Edoardo Bagliano

Action plan for the single market (second additional opinion — SMO)

(ESC 1128/98)

Rapporteur: John Lyons

Territorial employment pacts (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 1129/98)

Rapporteur: Ettore Masucci

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds (98/0090 AVC)

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the European Regional Development Fund (98/0114 SYN)

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the European Social Fund (98/0115 SYN)

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on structural measures in the fisheries sector (98/0116 CNS)

Proposals for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 1164/94 establishing a Cohesion Fund (98/0104 AVC) and amending its Annex II (98/0118 CNS) (COM(1998) 131 final — 98/0090 AVC — 98/0114 SYN — 98/0115 SYN — 98/0116 CNS) (COM(1998) 130 final — 98/0104 AVC)

Rapporteur: Campbell Christie

European spatial development perspective (ESDP) — first official draft (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 1131/98)

Rapporteur: Bernard Boussat

Green Paper from the Commission on seaports and maritime infrastructure (ESC 1132/98)

Rapporteur: Lars Olof Kritz

The implementation of the Helsinki declaration — establishing concrete machinery for consulting the economic and social interest groups on the definition of a pan-European transport policy (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 1133/98)

Rapporteur: Eike Eulen

Proposal for a Council directive on conditions for the operation of regular ro-ro ferry and high-speed passenger craft services in the Community

(ESC 1134/98)

Rapporteur: Eduardo Chagas

Proposal for a Council directive on a transparent system of harmonised rules for restrictions on heavy goods vehicles involved in international transport on designated roads

(ESC 1135/98)

Rapporteur: George Wright

Proposal for a Council directive on the roadside inspection of the roadworthiness condition of commercial vehicles that circulate on the roads of the European Community
(ESC 1136/98)

Rapporteur: Michael Kubenz

Draft Commission directive amending Directive 90/388/EEC in order to ensure that telecommunications networks and cable TV networks owned by a single operator are separate legal entities

(ESC 1137/98)

Rapporteur-general: Alexander-Michael von Schwerin

Proposal for a Council directive on the harmonisation of examination requirements for safety advisers for the transport of dangerous goods by road, rail or inland waterways

(ESC 1138/98)

Rapporteur: Helmut Giesecke

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 2236/95 laying down general rules for the granting of Community financial aid in the field of trans-European networks

(ESC 1139/98)

Rapporteur: Francis J. Whitworth

Fifth framework programme for RTD — Commission working paper on the specific programmes: Starting points for discussion

Proposals for Council decisions concerning the specific programmes implementing the fifth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (1998-2002) (Volumes I and II)

Proposals for Council decisions concerning the specific programmes implementing the fifth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for research and training activities (1998-2002)

(ESC 1140/98)

Rapporteur: Giannino Bernabei

Co-rapporteurs: Giacomina Cassina, Sergio Colombo, Bernardo Hernández Bataller, John Lyons, Henri Malosse, Peter Morgan, Staffan Mats Nilsson

Policies for the rational use of energy (RUE) in the European Union and in countries which are candidates for early membership (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 1141/98)

Rapporteur: Bernardo Hernández Bataller

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 68/414/EEC imposing an obligation on Member States of the EEC to maintain minimum stocks of crude-oil and/or petroleum products

(ESC 1142/98)

Rapporteur: Neville Beale

Communication from the Commission: Energy efficiency in the European Community — towards a strategy for the rational use of energy

(ESC 1143/98)

Rapporteur: Bernardo Hernández Bataller

Draft Council decision regarding a Community procedure for information and consultation on crude-oil supply costs and the consumer prices of petroleum products

(ESC 1144/98)

Rapporteur: Nikolaos Lerios

Communication from the Commission: An action plan against racism

(ESC 1145/98)

Rapporteur: Christoforos Koryfidis

Communication from the Commission concerning the social action programme 1998-2000

(ESC 1146/98)

Rapporteur: Carlo Ernesto Meriano

Co-rapporteur: Ursula Engelen-Kefer

Communication from the Commission on violence against children, young persons and women including a proposal for a Council decision on a medium-term Community action programme on measures providing a Community-wide support to Member States' action relating to violence against children, young persons and women (the Daphne programme 2000-04)

(ESC 1150/98 final — 98/0192 CNS)

Rapporteur: Christina Wahrolin

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the common organisation of the market in beef and veal

(ESC 1151/98)

Rapporteur: Rudolf Strasser

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the common organisation of the market in milk and milk products and proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 3950/92 establishing an additional levy in the milk and milk products sector

(ESC 1152/98)

Rapporteur: Seppo Ilmari Kallio

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) establishing common rules for direct support schemes under the common agricultural policy
(ESC 1153/98)
Rapporteur: Giorgio Liverani

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)
(ESC 1154/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Kienle

Communication from the Commission on the protection of laying hens kept in various systems of rearing: Proposal for a Council directive laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens kept in various systems of rearing
(ESC 1155/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Gardner

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the financing of the common agricultural policy
(ESC 1156/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Bastian

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93 establishing a control system applicable to the common fisheries policy
(ESC 1157/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Chagas

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 1221/97 laying down general rules for the application of measures to improve the production and marketing of honey
(ESC 1158/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Gottero

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) establishing agrimonetary arrangements for the euro and the proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on transitional measures to be applied under the common agricultural policy with a view to the introduction of the euro
(ESC 1159/98)
Rapporteur-general: Mr Espuny Moyano

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 97/12/EC of 17 March 1997 amending and updating Directive 64/432/EEC on health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine
(ESC 1160/98)
Rapporteur: Cornelius Scully

Relations between the European Union and certain countries in south-east Europe (information report)
(ESC 1025/98)
Rapporteur: Giorgios Sklavounos

Slovakia in the context of reinforcement of the pre-accession strategy (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 1161/98)
Rapporteur: Henri Malosse

The Czech Republic within the framework of enlargement and the strengthening of the pre-accession strategy (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 1162/98)
Rapporteur: Ettore Masucci

Socioeconomic situation in Chile and its relations with Mercosur and the EU (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 1163/98)
Rapporteur: Giacomo Regaldo

Role of the Euro–Mediterranean economic and social partners in developing and improving national and Euro–Mediterranean vocational training instruments with a view to the establishment of a free trade area and the opening up of economies (information report)
(ESC 519/98 final)
Rapporteur: Victor Forgas i Cabrera

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) establishing an instrument for structural policies for pre-accession (ISPA)
(ESC 1165/98)
Rapporteur-general: Kenneth Walker

Proposal for a Council decision concerning the conclusion on behalf of the European Community, as regards matters within its competence, of the results of the World Trade Organisation negotiations on financial services
(ESC 1166/98)
Rapporteur-general: Robert Pelletier

Employment and the euro (own-initiative opinion)
(ESC 1167/98)
Rapporteur: Michael Geuenich

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee: Electronic commerce and indirect taxation
(ESC 1168/98)
Rapporteur: Vasco Cal

Follow-up: Social policy and economic performance (additional own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 1169/98)

Rapporteurs: José Isaiás Rodríguez García Caro, Ursula Konitzer, John Simpson

Transatlantic economic partnership (additional own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 859/98 final)

Rapporteur-general: Mrs Davison

358th PLENARY SESSION OF 13, 14 AND 15 OCTOBER 1998

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 92/79/EEC on the approximation of taxes on cigarettes, Directive 92/80/EEC on the approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco other than cigarettes and Directive 95/59/EC on taxes other than turnover taxes which affect the consumption of manufactured tobacco

(ESC 1306/98)

Rapporteur-general: Philip H. Noordwal

Commission communication on the second phase of the Community action programme in the field of education (Socrates)

(ESC 1307/98)

Rapporteur-general: José Isaiás Rodríguez García Caro

Proposal for a Council decision establishing the second phase of the Community vocational training action programme (Leonardo da Vinci)

(ESC 1308/98)

Rapporteur-general: Vasco Cal

Commission communication on the Community action programme for youth

(ESC 1309/98)

Rapporteur-general: Bernd Rupp

Proposal for a Council directive amending Council Directive 94/4/EC of 14 February 1994 and extending the temporary derogation applicable to Germany and Austria

(ESC 1310/98)

Rapporteur-general: Giannino Bernabei

Proposal for a Council directive amending Council Directive 92/106/EEC on the establishment of common rules for certain types of combined transport of goods between Member States

Proposal for a Council directive amending Council Directive 96/53/EC laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic

(ESC 1311/98)

Rapporteur-general: Edoardo Bagliano

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) providing for an offer of compensation to certain producers of milk and milk products temporarily restricted in carrying out their trade

(ESC 1312/98)

Rapporteur-general: Stefan Mats Wilhelm Nilsson

359th PLENARY SESSION OF 2 AND 3 DECEMBER 1998

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on speedometers for two or three-wheel motor vehicles and amending Council Directive 92/61/EEC

(ESC 1435/98)

Rapporteur: Paulo Barros Vale

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on a common framework for electronic signatures

(ESC 1444/98)

Rapporteur: Umberto Burani

Proposal for a Council directive relating to the availability of consumer information on fuel economy in respect of the marketing of new passenger cars

(ESC 1448/98)

Rapporteur-general: Bernardo Hernández Bataller

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3577/92 of 7 December 1992 applying the principle of freedom to provide services to maritime transport (maritime cabotage)

Proposal for a Council directive on manning conditions for regular passenger and ferry services operating between Member States

(ESC 1436/98)

Rapporteur: Eduardo Chagas

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on a Community fleet capacity policy to promote inland waterway transport

(ESC 1449/98)

Rapporteur-general: Hubert Ghigonis

Proposal for a Council decision establishing a scheme to monitor the average specific emissions of carbon dioxide from new passenger cars (ESC 1437/98)

Rapporteur: José Ignacio Gafo Fernández

Co-rapporteurs: Seppo Ilmari Kallio, María Candelas Sánchez Miguel

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directives 70/524/EEC concerning additives in feedingstuffs, 95/53/EC fixing the principles governing the organisation of official inspections in the field of animal nutrition and 95/69/EC laying down the conditions and arrangements for approving and registering certain establishments and intermediaries operating in the animal feed sector (ESC 1438/98)

Rapporteur working without a study group: Cornelius Scully

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 850/98 of 30 March 1998 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms (ESC 1439/98)

Rapporteur working without a study group: Jesús Muñoz Guardado

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on substances that deplete the ozone layer

(ESC 1445/98)

Rapporteur: Sergio Colombo

Co-rapporteurs: Klaus Boisseree, Kenneth J. Gardner

Communication from the Commission: Reinforcing cohesion and competitiveness through research, technological development and innovation

(ESC 1440/98)

Rapporteur: Giannino Bernabei

Employment policy and the role of socioeconomic organisations in the third phase of economic and monetary union (own-initiative opinion)

(ESC 1446/98)

Rapporteur: Thierry Dock

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the candidate countries in central and eastern Europe on accession strategies for the environment: Meeting the challenge of enlargement with the candidate countries in central and eastern Europe (ESC 1441/98)

Rapporteur: José Ignacio Gafo Fernández

Proposal for a Council decision adopting the third phase of the trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education — Tempus III (2000-06) (ESC 1442/98)

Rapporteur working without a study group: José Ignacio Rodríguez García Caro

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) applying a multiannual scheme of generalised tariff preferences for the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2001

(ESC 1443/98)

Rapporteur: Helmut Giesecke

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 67/548/EEC as regards the labelling of certain dangerous substances in Austria and Sweden

(ESC 1447/98)

Rapporteur-general: Klaus Stöllnberger

ANNEX B

**List of opinions
drawn up by the Committee
on its own initiative during 1998**

Consumers in the insurance market (Single Market Observatory) (ESC 116/98) Rapporteur: Mr Ataíde Ferreira	January 1998
Role of middlemen, from production to consumption, in the setting of food prices (ESC 108/98) Rapporteur: Mr Kienle	January 1998
Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the organisation of a labour force sample survey in the Community (ESC 294/98) Rapporteur-general: Mr Walker	February 1998
Management of fish stocks in the Mediterranean (ESC 286/98) Rapporteur: Mr Muñiz Guardado	February 1998
Preventing new barriers from arising in the single market (Single Market Observatory) (ESC 453/98) Rapporteur: Mr Vever	March 1998
Reinforcing the pre-accession strategy (ESC 456/98) Rapporteur: Mr Hamro-Drotz	March 1998
TACIS — technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Mongolia (ESC 641/98) Rapporteur: Mr Hamro Drotz	April 1998
Freedom to set up a business (Single Market Observatory) (ESC 789/98) Rapporteur: Mr Folias	May 1998
Ways and means of strengthening the networks for the provision of information on and exploitation of applied RTD programmes in Europe (ESC 965/98) Rapporteur: Mr Malosse	July 1998
Costs of poverty and social exclusion in Europe (ESC 966/98) Rapporteur: Mr Burnel	July 1998

Genetically modified organisms in agriculture — impact on the common agricultural policy (ESC 967/98) Rapporteur: Mrs Sánchez Miguel	July 1998
Promotion of local speciality agricultural products as a development instrument under the new CAP (ESC 972/98) Rapporteur: Mrs Santiago	July 1998
Europe as an economic entity — a political challenge (ESC 973/98) Rapporteur: Mr Nyberg	July 1998
EC instruments for investment support in third countries (ESC 974/98) Rapporteur: Mr Malosse	July 1998
Exploitation of children and sex tourism (ESC 976/98) Rapporteur: Mr Sklavounos	July 1998
Resistance to antibiotics as a threat to public health (ESC 1118/98) Rapporteur: Mrs Ström	September 1998
Impact of the introduction of the euro on the single market (Single Market Observatory) (ESC 1123/98) Rapporteur: Mr Burani	September 1998
Draft Commission interpretative communication: Freedom to provide services and the general good in the insurance sector (ESC 1124/98) Rapporteur: Mr Ataíde Ferreira	September 1998
Territorial employment pacts (ESC 1129/98) Rapporteur: Mr Masucci	September 1998
European spatial development perspective (ESDP) — first official draft (ESC 1131/98) Rapporteur: Mr Bouszat	September 1998

The implementation of the Helsinki declaration — establishing concrete machinery for consulting the economic and social interest groups on the definition of a pan-European transport policy (ESC 1133/98) Rapporteur: Mr Eulen	September 1998
Policies for the rational use of energy (RUE) in the European Union and in countries which are candidates for early membership (ESC 1141/98) Rapporteur: Mr Hernández Bataller	September 1998
Slovakia in the context of reinforcement of the pre-accession strategy (ESC 1161/98) Rapporteur: Mr Malosse	September 1998
The Czech Republic within the framework of enlargement and the strengthening of the pre-accession strategy (ESC 1162/98) Rapporteur: Mr Masucci	September 1998
Socioeconomic situation in Chile and its relations with Mercosur and the EU (ESC 1163/98) Rapporteur: Mr Regaldo	September 1998
Employment and the euro (ESC 1167/98) Rapporteur: Mr Geuenich	September 1998
Follow-up: Social policy and economic performance (ESC 1169/98) Rapporteurs: Mr Rodríguez García-Caro, Mrs Konitzer, Mr Simpson	September 1998
Transatlantic economic partnership (ESC 859/98 final) Rapporteur-general: Mrs Davison	September 1998
Employment policy and the role of socioeconomic organisations in the third phase of economic and monetary union (ESC 1446/98) Rapporteur: Mr Dock	December 1998

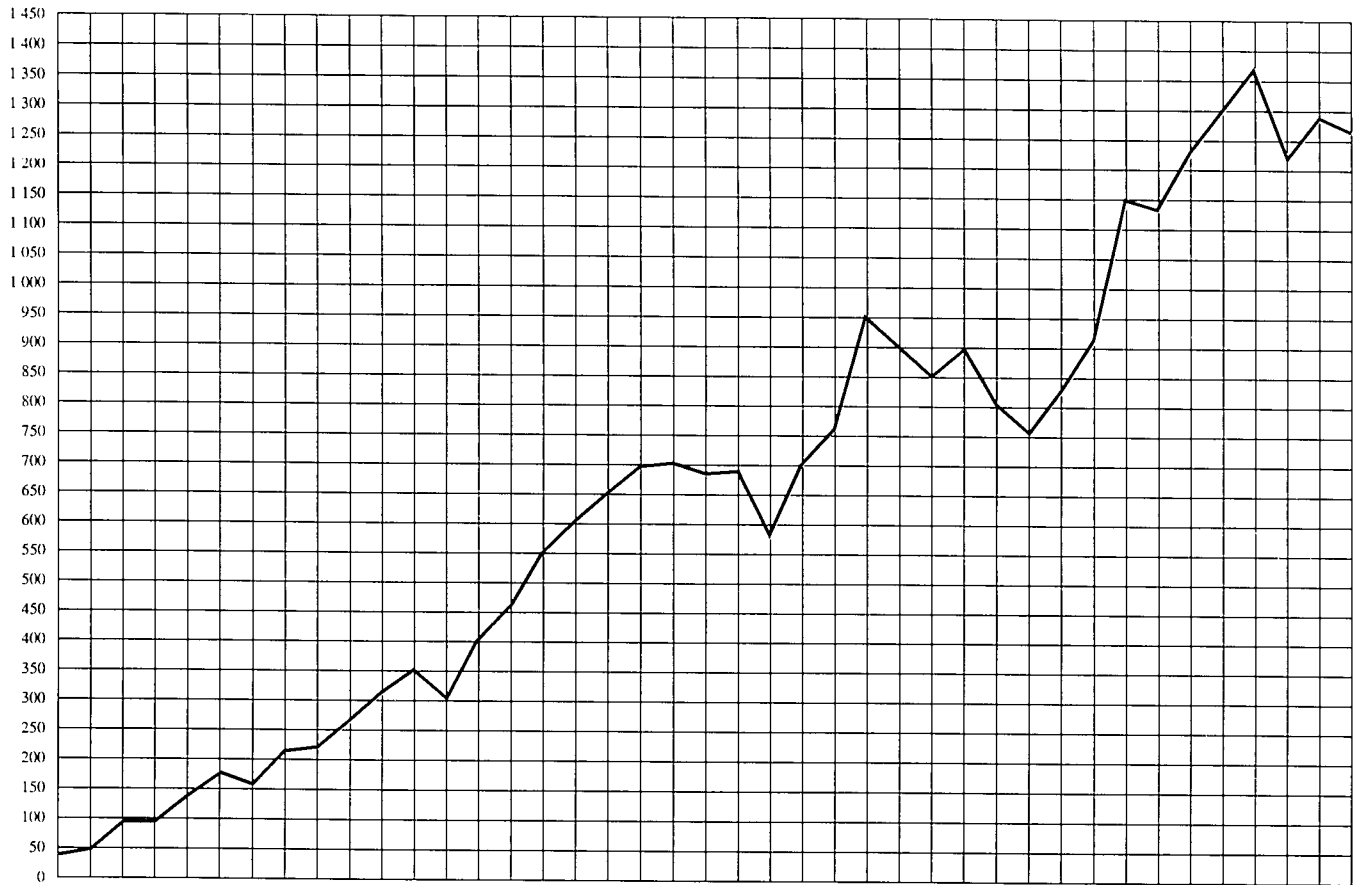
Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) applying a
multiannual scheme of generalised tariff
preferences for the period 1 January 1999 to 31
December 2001
(ESC 1443/98)
Rapporteur: Mr Giesecke

December 1998

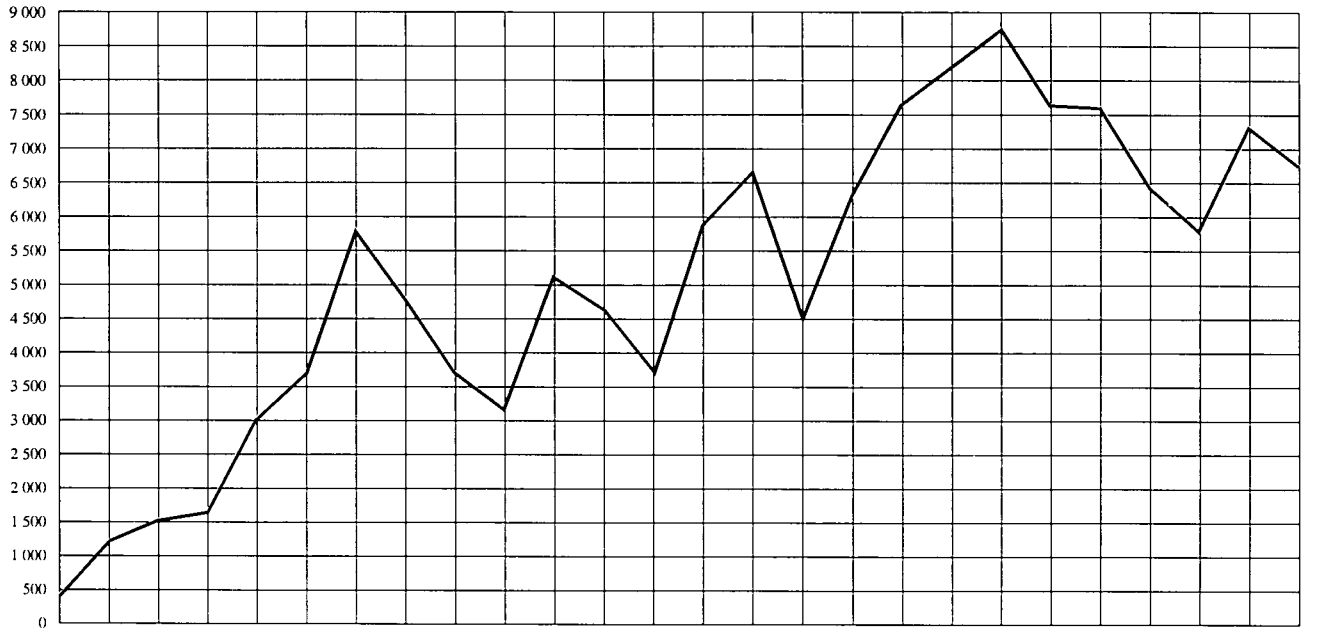
ANNEX C

Graphs

Meetings



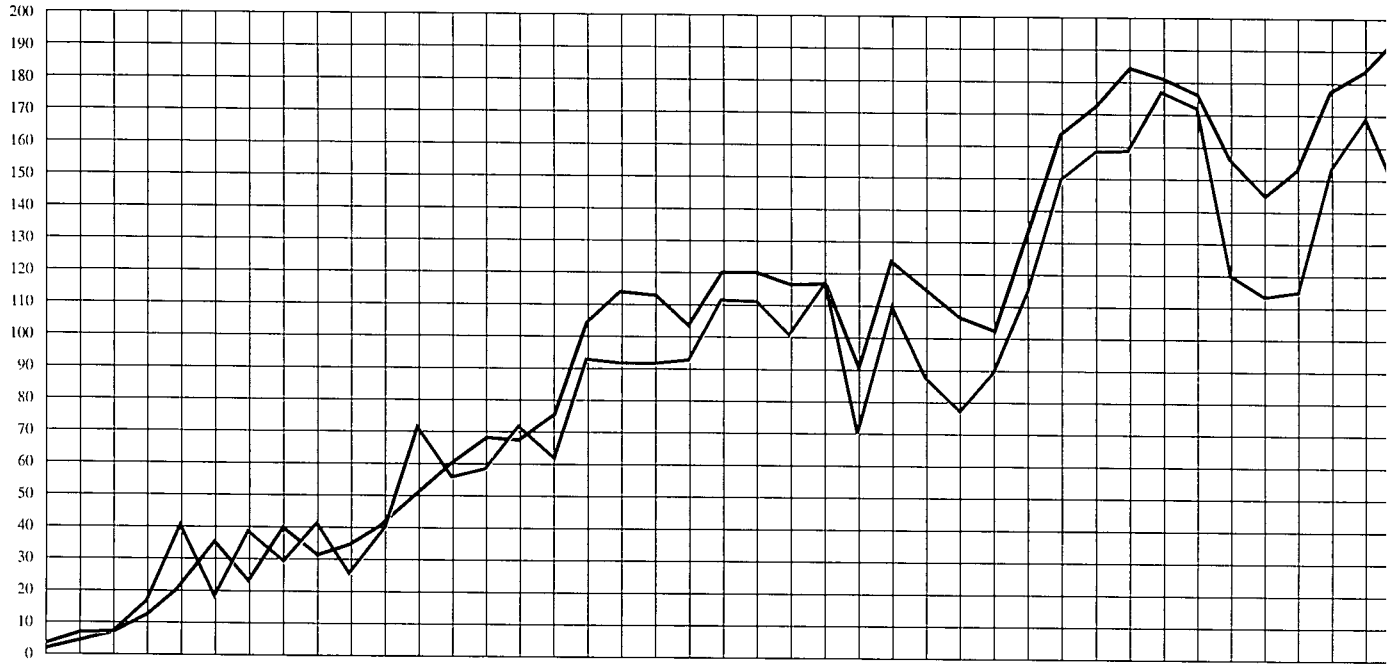
Changes in the number of visitors since 1973



Year: 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998

Number of visitors: 400 1.200 1.500 1.700 3.000 3.750 5.673 4.894 3.757 3.216 5.110 4.665 3.695 5.831 6.654 4.577 6.277 7.646 8.272 8.731 7.589 7.578 6.399 5.767 7.288 6.735

A — Texts produced (options and information reports)
 B — Referrals



Year: 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

A: 1 5 7 14 22 37 25 40 32 35 41 51 60 68 68 76 105 113 111 104 121 121 117 116 91 123 117 107 104 131 165 171 185 180 174 156 146 158 175 182

B: 2 7 7 18 41 17 39 29 42 25 43 73 55 59 74 63 94 93 93 95 112 111 106 117 72 109 88 77 90 115 150 158 159 178 171 120 113 115 154 169

European Communities — Economic and Social Committee

Annual Report 1998

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

1999 — 141 pp. — 14.8 x 21 cm

ISBN 92-828-6918-0

Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: EUR 18

This annual report covers the Economic and Social Committee's work in 1998. It looks in particular at the Committee's influence within the Community's decision-making process, the Committee's image in the media and the role played by the groups represented on the Economic and Social Committee. The report concludes with a number of lists and graphs.

BELGIQUE/BELGIÉ

Jean De Lannoy
Avenue du Roi 202/Koningslaan 202
B-1300 Bruxelles/Bruisssel
Tel. (32-2) 538 43 08
Fax (32-2) 538 06 41
E-mail: jean.de.lannoy@imboord.be
URL: <http://www.jean-de-lannoy.be>

La librairie européenne/

De Europese Boekhandel
Rue de la Loi 244/Weistraat 244
B-1040 Bruxelles/Bruisssel
Tel. (32-2) 295 26 69
Fax (32-2) 735 08 60
E-mail: mail@eurobook.be
URL: <http://www.eurobook.be>

Monteur belge/Belgisch Staatsblad

Rue de Louvain 40-42/Louvainsewag 40-42
B-1000 Bruxelles/Bruisssel
Tel. (32-2) 552 22 11
Fax (32-2) 511 01 84

DANMARK

J. H. Schultz Information A/S
Herslevdalg 10-12
DK-2620 Albertslund
Tel. (45) 43 63 23 00
Fax (45) 43 63 19 69
E-mail: schultz@schultz.dk
URL: <http://www.schultz.dk>

DEUTSCHLAND

Bundesanzeiger Verlag GmbH
Vormedienabteilung
Amsterdamer Straße 192
D-50735 Köln
Tel. (49-221) 97 66 80
Fax (49-221) 97 66 82 78
E-Mail: vertneb@bundesanzeiger.de
URL: <http://www.bundesanzeiger.de>

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ/GREECE

G. C. Eleftheroudakis SA
International Bookstore
Piraeus Street 17
GR-10564 Athina
Tel. (30-1) 331 41 800/12/3/4/5
Fax (30-1) 323 98 21
E-mail: eleebooks@net.gr

ESPAÑA

Boletín Oficial del Estado
Tratfaigar, 27
E-28071 Madrid
Tel. (34) 915 38 21 11 (Libros),
913 84 17 15 (Suscrip.)
Fax (34) 915 38 21 21 (Libros),
913 84 17 14 (Suscrip.)
E-mail: clientes@com.boe.es
URL: <http://www.boe.es>

Mundi Prensa Libros, SA

Castelló, 37
E-28001 Madrid
Tel. (34) 914 36 37 00
Fax (34) 915 75 39 98
E-mail: libreria@mundiprensa.es
URL: <http://www.mundiprensa.es>

FRANCE

Journal officiel
Service des publications des CE
26, rue Desaix
F-75727 Paris Cedex 15
Tel. (33) 140 58 77 31
Fax (33) 140 58 77 00
URL: <http://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr>

IRELAND

Government Supplies Agency
Publications Section
4-5 Harcourt Road
Dublin 2
Tel. (353-1) 661 31 11
Fax (353-1) 475 27 60

ITALIA

Licosa SpA
Via Duca di Calabria, 1/1
Casella postale 52
I-50126 Firenze
Tel. (39) 055 64 83 1
Fax (39) 055 64 12 57
E-mail: licosa@fbcc.it
URL: <http://www.fbcc.it/licosa>

LUXEMBOURG

Messagerie du livre SARL
5, rue Raiffaesen
L-2414 Luxembourg
Tel. (352) 40 10 29
Fax (352) 49 06 61
E-mail: mail@mdl.lu
URL: <http://www.mdl.lu>

NETDERLAND

SDU Servicecentrum Uitgevers
Christoffel Plantijnstraat 2
Postbus 20014
2500 EA Den Haag
Tel. (31-70) 378 98 80
Fax (31-70) 378 97 83
E-mail: sdu@sdu.nl
URL: <http://www.sdu.nl>

ÖSTERREICH

Manz'sche Verlags- und
Universitätsbuchhandlung GmbH
Kohlmarkt 15
A-1014 Wien
Tel. (43-1) 53 16 11 00
Fax (43-1) 53 16 11 67
E-Mail: bestellen@manz.co.at
URL: <http://www.manz.at/index.htm>

PORTUGAL

Distribuidora de Livros Bertrand Ld.ª
Grupo Bertrand, SA
Rua das Terras dos Vales, 4-A
Apartado 60037
P-2700 Amadora
Tel. (351-1) 495 90 50
Fax (351-1) 492 05 55

Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, EP

Rua Marquês Sá da Bandeira, 16-A
P-1050 Lisboa Codex
Tel. (351-1) 353 03 99
Fax (351-1) 353 02 94
E-mail: tel.vcm@mail.telepac.pt
URL: <http://www.ircm.pt>

SUOMI/FINLAND

Akatemiinen Kirjakauppa/
Akademiens Bokhandeln
Keskuskatu 1/Centraigatan 1
PUPB 128
FIN-00101 Helsinki/Helsingfors
Puhelin (358-9) 121 44 18
F.fax (358-9) 121 44 35
Sähköposti: akatibus@akatemiinen.com
URL: <http://www.akatemiinen.com>

SVERIGE

BTJ AB
Traktorvägen 11
S-221 82 Lund
Tel. (46-46) 18 00 00
Fax (46-46) 30 79 47
E-post: btjpub@btj.se
URL: <http://www.btj.se>

UNITED KINGDOM

The Stationery Office Ltd
International Sales Agency
51 Nine Elms Lane
London SW9 5DR
Tel. (44-171) 873 90 90
Fax (44-171) 873 84 63
E-mail: ipa.enquiries@theso.co.uk
URL: <http://www.the-stationery-office.co.uk>

ISLAND

Bokabud Larusur Blöndal
Skólavörðung, 2
IS-101 Reykjavik
Tel. (354) 551 56 50
Fax (354) 552 56 60

NORGE

Swets Norge AS
Ostjorpen 18
Boks 6512 Etterstad
N-0606 Oslo
Tel. (47-23) 97 45 00
Fax (47-22) 97 45 45

SCHWEIZ/SUISSE/SVIZZERA

Euro Info Center Schweiz
c/o OSEC
Stämpelbachstraße 85
PF 492
CH-8035 Zürich
Tel. (41-1) 365 53 15
Fax (41-1) 365 54 11
E-mail: osec@osec.ch
URL: <http://www.osec.ch/en>

BALGARIA

Europress Euromedia Ltd
59, blvd Vitosa
BG-1000 Sofia
Tel. (359-2) 980 37 66
Fax (359-2) 980 42 30
E-mail: Milena@mbx.com.bg

ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA

ÚSIS
NIS-projekt
Havélkova 22
CZ-130 00 Praha 3
Tel. (420-2) 24 23 14 86
Fax (420-2) 24 23 11 14
E-mail: nikosp@oc.nis.cz
URL: <http://nis.cz>

CYPRUS

Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry
PO Box 1455
CY-1509 Nicosia
Tel. (357-2) 66 95 00
Fax (357-2) 66 10 44
E-mail: demetrp@cci.org.cy

EESTI

Eesti Kaubandus-Tööstuskoda (Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
Toom-Kooli 17
EE-0001 Tallinn
Tel. (372) 646 02 44
Fax (372) 646 02 45
E-mail: info@koda.ee
URL: <http://www.koda.ee>

HRVATSKA

Mediatrade Ltd
Pavla Hatza 1
HR-10000 Zagreb
Tel. (385-1) 481 94 11
Fax (385-1) 481 94 11
URL: <http://www.mediatrade.hr>

MAGYARORSZAG

Euro Info Service
Európa Ház
Margitsziget
P.O. Box 475
H-1396 Budapest 62
Tel. (36-1) 350 80 25
Fax (36-1) 350 90 32
E-mail: euroinfo@mail.mataw.hu
URL: <http://www.euroinfo.hu/index.htm>

MALTA

Miller Distributors Ltd
Malta International Airport
PO Box 25
Luqa LOA 05
Tel. (356) 66 44 88
Fax (356) 67 67 99
E-mail: g.wirth@usa.net

POLSKA

Arse Polone
Krakowskie Przedmieście 7
Sk. pocztowa 1001
PL-00-950 Warszawa
Tel. (48-22) 826 12 01
Fax (48-22) 826 62 40
E-mail: ars_pol@evey.hsn.com.pl

ROMANIA

Euromedia
Str. G-ral Berthelot Nr 41
RO-70749 Bucuresti
Tel. (40-1) 315 44 03
Fax (40-1) 314 22 86

ROSSIYA

CEEC
60-Ietnya Okhnyabrya Av. 9
117312 Moscow
Tel. (7-095) 135 52 27
Fax (7-095) 135 52 27

SLOVAKIA

Centrum VTI SR
Nám. Slobody, 19
SK-81223 Bratislava
Tel. (421-7) 54 41 83 64
Fax (421-7) 54 41 83 64
E-mail: europ@tbb1.slt.stuba.sk
URL: <http://www.slt.stuba.sk>

SLOVENIJA

Gospodarski Vestnik
Dunajská cesta 5
SI-1000 Ljubljana
Tel. (386) 613 69 16 40
Fax (386) 613 69 16 45
E-mail: europ@gvestnik.si
URL: <http://www.gvestnik.si>

TÜRKIYE

Dunya Infotel AS
100, Yil Mahallesi 34440
TR-80050 Baglular-Istanbul
Tel. (90-212) 629 46 89
Fax (90-212) 629 46 27
E-mail: infotel@dunya-gazete.com.tr

AUSTRALIA

Hunter Publications
PO Box 404
3067 Abbotsford, Victoria
Tel. (61-3) 94 17 53 61
Fax (61-3) 94 19 71 54
E-mail: jpdawes@ozemail.com.au

CANADA

Les éditions La Liberté Inc.
3020, chemin Sainte-Foy
G1X 3V1 Sainte-Foy, Québec
Tel. (1-418) 658 37 65
Fax (1-800) 567 54 49
E-mail: liberte@mediom.qc.ca

Renouf Publishing Co. Ltd

5369 Chemin Canotek Road Unit 1
K1J 9J3 Ottawa, Ontario
Tel. (1-613) 745 26 55
Fax (1-613) 745 76 60
E-mail: order.dept@renoufbooks.com
URL: <http://www.renoufbooks.com>

EGYPT

The Middle East Observer
41, Shenf Street
Cairo
Tel. (20-2) 392 69 19
Fax (20-2) 393 97 32
E-mail: maloufa@meobserver.com.eg
URL: <http://www.meobserver.com.eg>

INDIA

EBIC India
3rd Floor, Y. B. Chavan Centre
Gen. J. Bhosale Marg,
400 021 Mumbai
Tel. (91-22) 282 60 64
Fax (91-22) 285 64 64
E-mail: ebic@yashabn1.vsnl.net.in
URL: <http://www.ebicindia.com>

ISRAEL

ROY International
41, Mishmar Hayarden Street
PO Box 13056
6113C Tel Aviv
Tel. (972-3) 649 94 69
Fax (972-3) 648 60 39
E-mail: roy@netvision.net.il
URL: <http://www.roy.co.il>

Sub-agent for the Palestinian Authority:

Index Information Services
PO Box 19502
Jerusalem
Tel. (972-2) 627 16 34
Fax (972-2) 627 12 19

JAPAN

PSI-Japan
Asahi Sanbancho Plaza #206
2-1 Sanbancho, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100
Tel. (81-3) 32 34 69 21
Fax (81-3) 32 34 69 21
E-mail: books@psi-japan.co.jp
URL: <http://www.psi-japan.co.jp>

MALAYSIA

EBIC Malaysia
Level 7, Wisma Hong Leong
18 Jalan Perak
50450 Kuala Lumpur
Tel. (60-3) 262 62 98
Fax (60-3) 262 61 98
E-mail: ebic-kl@mol.net.my

MÉXICO

Mundi Prensa Mexico, SA de CV
Río Penasco No 141
Colonia Cuauhtémoc
MX-06500 Mexico, DF
Tel. (52-5) 533 56 58
Fax (52-5) 514 67 29
E-mail: 101545.2361@compuserve.com

PHILIPPINES

EBIC Philippines
19th Floor, PS Bank Tower
Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Tindalo St.
Makati City
Metro Manila
Tel. (63-2) 759 66 80
Fax (63-2) 759 66 90
E-mail: ebicpp@psbank.com.ph
URL: <http://www.ebicp.com>

SRI LANKA

EBIC Sri Lanka
Trans Asia Hotel
115 Sir Chittampalam
A. Gardiner Mawatha
Colombo 2
Tel. (94-1) 074 71 50 78
Fax (94-1) 44 87 79
E-mail: ebicsl@imn.com

THAILAND

EBIC Thailand
29 Varissa Building, 8th Floor
Soi Ch diom
Ploenchit
10030 Bangkok
Tel. (66-2) 655 06 27
Fax (66-2) 655 06 28
E-mail: ebicthk@cbctk.th.com
URL: <http://www.ebicthk.com>

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Berman Associates
4611 F Assembly Drive
Lanham MD20706
Tel. (1-800) 274 44 47 (toll free telephone)
Fax (1-800) 865 34 50 (toll free fax)
E-mail: query@berman.com
URL: <http://www.berman.com>

ANDERE LANDER/OTHER COUNTRIES/

AUTRES PAYS
Bitte wenden Sie sich an ein Büro Ihrer Wahl/Please contact the sales office of your choice/ Veuillez vous adresser au bureau de vente de votre choix
Office for Official Publications of the European Communities
2, rue Mercier
L-2985 Luxembourg
Tel. (352) 29 29 42 55
Fax (352) 29 29 42 58
E-mail: info@officepubs.cer.be
URL: <http://eur-op.eu.int>

Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: EUR 18

OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

L-2985 Luxembourg



ISBN 92-828-6918-0



9 789282 869185