

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

BULLETIN



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216th PLENARY SESSION

The European Communities' Economic and Social Committee held its 216th Plenary Session at its headquarters in Brussels on 28 and 29 March 1984. Its Chairman, Mr François Ceyrac, presided.

Adoption of Opinions

1. THIRD EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND REVIEW

“Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) No. 724/75 establishing a European Regional Development Fund”

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Commission has recently sent the Council a new version of its 1981 proposal for amending the ERDF Regulation (COM(83) 649). The 1981 proposal (O.J. C 336 of 23.12.81, p. 65) was not adopted because of widely differing views on national quotas and the proportion of Fund resources to be allocated to the quota and non-quota sections respectively. The new proposal retains those aspects of the former proposal on which the Council has reached agreement and puts forward new solutions for the points not yet settled. The new clauses are based on the guidelines set out in the report “Ways of increasing the effectiveness of the Community’s structural Funds” (COM(83) 501 fin., p. 77), which the Commission drew up at the request of the Stuttgart European Council.

The principal innovations are the abolition of the distinction between the quota and non-quota sections of the ERDF, the replacement of national quotas by indicative ranges for each Member State’s share of total ERDF assistance and the establishment of more effective links between Community-financed programmes and the objectives of Community policies; checks are also to be tightened up and the effectiveness of measures is also to be assessed. Abuses are to be penalized. Penalties may include withdrawal of grants.

The Commission proposes two categories of programme: Community programmes and national programmes of Community interest.

Community programmes are to directly serve Community objectives and Community policies. They are to be undertaken on the Commission's initiative and the Council is to adopt the guidelines for the programmes and lay down the criteria for selecting the regions concerned. The programmes are to be drawn up by the Commission in close collaboration with the competent authorities in the Member States. All Community regions may qualify, provided that they meet the criteria, even if they are not covered by national regional aid schemes.

National programmes of Community interest are defined as those undertaken on the initiative of the Member States. They are to be prepared in consultation with the authorities concerned. The Commission will decide whether a programme is eligible for assistance. National programmes are to be restricted to the regions and areas covered by national regional aid schemes. To be considered in the Community interest, programmes must help to achieve Community objectives. They will be assessed according to various criteria: improvement of productivity, creation or maintenance of productive employment, diversification of economic structures, rapid provision of the requisite infrastructure facilities, promotion of indigenous development potential and integrated use of more than one Community financial instrument.

The transition to programme financing will allow greater selectivity and concentration of objectives in terms of Community priorities and policies, the development needs of the regions and the need to lay greater stress on the promotion of productive investment, particularly in small and medium-sized businesses.

This greater selectivity of objectives will be accompanied by a significant increase in the Fund's rate of contribution, which in some cases may amount to as much as 65%.

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

In an Opinion, adopted by 60 votes to 8, with 4 abstentions, the Economic and Social Committee supported the Commission amendments to the European Regional Development Fund. It welcomed them as a notable step forward, giving good ground to hope that the Fund would be able to play a more dynamic role in reducing the regional

⁽¹⁾ Doc. CES 342/84

imbalances between rich and poor areas. The Committee broadly supported the Commission proposal, subject to the following reservations and changes:

- the proposed extension of the Fund's role must not jeopardize the basic goal of ironing out regional imbalances; this must involve a greater drive to help the traditionally disadvantaged regions;
- the extension of the Fund's tasks would require additional funds on top of those going to the traditional areas whose socio-economic conditions still lag unacceptably behind those of the better-off regions;
- the Opinion reiterated the Committee's earlier reservations about reimbursement practices. The Committee supported programme rather than project financing. It hoped that programmes would make overall additionality easier. It suggested that these programmes should include investment projects, including projects to help small firms, which would not previously have qualified for State aid.

The Committee reiterated the need to ensure that the potential beneficiaries and coordinating bodies were provided with adequate information about the new measures.

It stressed the need for local and regional authorities and the socio-economic organizations involved to play a part in Fund activity and in the drawing-up of the programmes. To this end it proposed that appropriate aid be given to encourage the establishment of regional development bodies.

The Committee called for specification of the financing rate and the proportion of overall resources to be granted to both types of programme. It also felt that the types of programmes and their goals should be defined more precisely, and that general and specific intervention criteria should be set. These were listed in the Opinion.

The Committee requested that the regulation should expressly provide for consultation of the ESC on the framework programmes.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Regional Development under the chairmanship of Mr Milne (United Kingdom - Workers). The Rapporteur was Mr Regaldo (Italy - Employers).

2. COMMUNITY RELATIONS WITH EFTA (own-initiative Opinion)

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

Shortly before the first joint meeting of the Ministers of the European Economic Community and of the European Free Trade Association on 9 April, the Economic and Social Committee has called for greater cooperation between the two groups.

In its own-initiative Opinion, adopted by 69 votes in favour, 4 against and 11 abstentions, the Committee considered that the easing of frontier formalities and the acceptance of common standards are priorities in trade relations.

Until this is done, the single European market cannot exercise its full potential in providing employment and in improving the competitiveness of both the EEC and EFTA in relation to the world's other great economic units.

The Committee therefore calls for increased cooperation between the Community and EFTA countries, on a pragmatic basis and taking into account the institutional differences between the two groups of countries. In this connection the Committee wishes to encourage regular exchanges of views on ways and means:

- to remove all non-tariff barriers in trade between the partners in the European free trade system;
- to simplify rules of origin and border controls; and
- to harmonize or apply common standards and technical regulations.

In the same spirit, the Community and the EFTA countries should work together and concert their approach in GATT and OECD in order to promote further liberalization of world trade, especially on the following issues:

- tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in industrial goods;
- subsidies distorting the conditions of international competition; and
- obstacles to trade in services.

A concertation of policies on innovation, the development of new technologies and structural adjustment to take advantage of the whole West European market would be particularly valuable.

⁽¹⁾ Doc. CES 338/84

In accordance with an agreement reached on 12 March between the ESC and the EFTA Consultative Committee — which like the ESC represents economic and social interest groups — the latter will also launch a similar appeal to EFTA ministers.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for External Relations under the chairmanship of Mr Zinkin (United Kingdom-Employers) who was also the Rapporteur.

3. SPECIALISED INFORMATION

“Proposal for a Council Decision adopting a Community programme for the development of the specialised information market in Europe”

Gist of the Commission’s proposal

Between 1975 and 1983 the Commission launched three successive three-year Community action plans which resulted, inter alia, in

- the construction of the Community-wide telecommunications network, Euronet, which was used in 1982 by some 2,500 organizations throughout the EEC for a total period of 60,000 hours;
- the launching of a network of information services, DIANE, which provides access to some 500 data bases in all the Member States;
- the active encouragement of some 50 information-related projects carried out by information technology firms in the Community.

The present five-year programme covering a total sum of 40 million ECUs is not only regarded as a direct follow-up to these earlier plans but is also intended to re-orient and extend these plans in the light of the current situation.

It will back up the Community’s ESPRIT, INSIS and CADDIA programmes and have two main objectives:

- to improve the information environment and the market conditions — with a view to promoting the use of products and services of Community origin. This implies the abolition of linguistic, technical and commercial obstacles and greater transparency with regard to supply and demand;
- to increase the supply and raise the quality of European information products and services in sectors of Community interest, especially by giving support to innovation. The new programme will also devote particular attention to the distribution of specialized infor-

mation in the most underprivileged regions of the Community where gaps in supply and demand are apparent at the moment.

The programme will take the form of projects for which the Commission will conclude contracts with experts, institutions, enterprises or other relevant bodies. These contracts will cover the groundwork as well as the execution and consolidation of projects and the procedures used for the award of the contracts will include calls for tenders and proposals.

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

In an Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Economic and Social Committee welcomes the new five-year programme for the development of the specialised information market in Europe. The programme, covering a total sum of 40 MECU, is designed not only as a direct prolongation of earlier measures but also to re-orient and broaden these measures to bring them into line with the current situation.

The objectives are to be achieved by improving the information environment and the market conditions, with a view to promoting the use of products and services of Community origin, and by increasing the supply and raising the quality of EC information products and services in the sectors of importance to the Community by providing support for innovation.

In its Opinion the Committee recognizes the importance of the information sector, not least for creating new jobs. It accordingly fully endorses the promotion of this sector by Community measures, particularly with a view to obviating the threat of dependence on the non-EC information market. It stresses that access to the "information market" must be made as user-friendly as possible. If specialized information is to be made accessible to all users, a public data network must at all events be set up in all Member States so that all users have equal access to the information market. The Commission should issue a Recommendation to induce those countries which do not yet have such a network to develop one in the near future.

The Committee stresses the need to include national information services and structures in the programme, and is of the view that the Community should concentrate on tasks which can be tackled more efficiently at Community level and which involve the use of a large market.

(¹) Doc. CES 343/84

Finally, the Committee notes that the programme concentrates almost exclusively on the extension and promotion of the information market, and thereby in some cases totally ignores the effects on the individual and on society of the growing information market, or considers these effects from a purely economic angle. The Committee feels it is difficult to make a definitive assessment of the programme, as the present draft gives little indication of sectoral priorities, decisions on these being dependent on an evaluative market sector analysis.

The Rapporteur-General for this Opinion was Mr Nierhaus (Germany-Workers).

4. TRANS-FRONTIER RADIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

“Communication from the Commission to the Council concerning the Community’s role as regards safety of nuclear installations and the protection of public health and on the draft Council Resolution on trans-frontier radiological problems”

Gist of the Commission’s communication and draft Resolution

This document deals with the safety aspects of various types of nuclear reactors and with the procedures and techniques which would be necessary in the event of an accident — especially an accident occurring on a site which, because of its proximity to a frontier, would affect the safety of people in an adjoining country.

The Communication which precedes the Draft Council Resolution gives in résumé form an account of what the Community has done so far in the field of Research and Development; the technical and regulatory aspects of the safety of nuclear installations; health and protection of workers and the general public from ionizing radiation. Reference is made to many of the Community’s Research Action Programmes and their sub-programmes, on which the Committee has already issued Opinions.

The Commission concludes its Communication by saying that with the development of the nuclear industry, a number of radiological problems have arisen with trans-frontier implications. It urges that these be examined at Community level and goes on to propose plans for trans-frontier intervention in the case of an accident in a nuclear power plant situated near the border of another Member State.

In fact the Commission has already set in motion studies dealing with this problem and with the overall radiological impact of the dis-

charge of radioactive effluents in watercourses and marine waters. A report is expected in 1984.

The Commission is now requesting the Council to support these initiatives by adopting a Draft Resolution.

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee welcomed the Commission communication and approved the draft Resolution on trans-frontier radiological problems. Whilst pointing out that the rules governing the construction and operation of nuclear installations were entirely the responsibility of Member State Governments, the Committee considered that the Commission should be concerned with cross-frontier problems.

On the Communication, as far as R & D and health protection were concerned, the Committee referred to its previous Opinions, which had approved the Commission's initiatives in these areas. On health protection the Committee emphasized the leading role to be played by the Commission in laying down "basic standards".

In the area of technical and regulatory aspects, the Committee believed that the Commission's intention to carry out a global evaluation of the safety of representative types of reactor was a task requiring a high degree of co-operation, given the economic, political, and technical factors involved.

On the Draft Resolution, the Committee supported the Commission proposal to gather information on bilateral contacts. It also believed that the Commission should encourage Member States to conclude bilateral or trilateral agreements covering cross-frontier emergencies.

The Committee felt that it was not a good idea to appoint an additional group of experts to consider the radiological impact of radioactive effluents. The "Article 37" committee of experts could examine this matter as part of its current activities.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Energy and Nuclear Questions under the chairmanship of Mr Romoli (Italy - Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Bordes-Pages (France - Workers).

(1) Doc. CES 339/84

5. NEW COMMUNITY INSTRUMENT

“Proposal for a Council Decision implementing Decision 83/200/EEC empowering the Commission to contract loans under the new Community instrument for the purpose of promoting investment within the Community”

Gist of the Commission proposal

On 19 April the Council authorized the Commission to make available 3,000 million ECU under the New Community Instrument for the purpose of funding investment. On 13 June 1983 an initial tranche of borrowings amounting to 1,500 million ECU was made available. The applications that the Commission has declared eligible for NCI financing currently account for approximately 1,000 million ECU, i.e. two-thirds of the initial tranche.

In order to ensure continuity of funding under the New Community Instrument and bearing in mind the time required for the approval of a new tranche, the Commission is proposing a second and final tranche for a total of 1,400 million ECU. In view of the proposal to devote 100 million ECU to financing innovation by SMEs, this tranche would exhaust NCI funds.

The fields of application of the new tranche are determined by the guidelines laid down in the Council Decision of 19 April 1983. The following order of priority is suggested:

- first, investment in industry and other productive sectors (investment projects of SMEs in industry and directly allied services, large industrial firms applying advanced technology and cooperation between several firms in different Member States);
- the energy sector (energy conservation, investment in oil replacement projects);
- infrastructure projects.

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

In its Opinion, adopted by an overwhelming majority with 6 votes against, the Committee approved the proposal for a decision authorizing a further tranche of borrowings of ECU 1,400 m within the framework of NCI III.

⁽¹⁾ Doc. CES 341/84

It welcomed the guidelines and priorities proposed by the Commission, particularly the priority for investment projects — mainly of smaller firms — in industry and directly allied services. Investments in smaller firms in the craft and trading and tourism sectors should also be included in the list of eligible investments.

The Committee also approved the Commission proposal to promote investment projects that contributed directly to the creation of jobs and investment projects designed to employ or re-employ workers who had been temporarily laid off, (and in some cases the longer-term unemployed) in sectors or undertakings suffering from structural difficulties.

The Committee felt that special attention should be paid to those regions which were hardest hit by such difficulties.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Economic and Financial Questions under the chairmanship of Mr Marvier (France - Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Drago (Italy - Workers).

6. CAP REFORM — MILK

Gist of the Commission document

“Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) No. 804/68 on the common organization of the market in milk and milk products”

The market in milk products in the Community is suffering from structural surpluses as a result of an imbalance between supply and demand despite the many measures in force to secure disposal of these products both within and outside the Community.

To correct this imbalance a uniform co-responsibility levy was introduced covering all milk delivered to dairies and certain dairy products sold direct from the farm.

In order to secure gradually a better balance between production and market requirements and to reduce the high cost to the Community of the present situation the Commission proposes:

- to introduce a supplementary levy payable by all purchasers of milk or other milk products purchased in excess of an annual reference quantity corresponding to a guarantee threshold;
- to lay down rules under EC law to ensure that purchasers pass this charge on to producers, in proportion to the quantities delivered by them;

- to introduce a special levy, additional to the co-responsibility levy, on milk from farms delivering more than 60,000 kg of milk per year and producing more than 15,000 kg of milk per year per hectare of fodder area utilized;
- to use the income from the two levies for financing expenditure in the milk sector.

In order to help restore balance on the market the Commission proposes to suspend acceptance by the intervention agencies of skimmed-milk powder at the intervention price during a period in the first marketing year between 1 March and 31 March; during the period of suspension it should, however, be possible, if the market situation requires, to organize intervention purchasing by means of tendering procedures.

“Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) laying down general rules applying to the milk sector levy specified in Article 5c of Regulation (EEC) No. 804/68”

Article 5c of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 804/68 introduced a levy payable by every purchaser of milk or other milk products on the quantities purchased in excess of an annual reference quantity fixed on the basis already adopted for determining the guarantee threshold referred to in Article 5b of Regulation (EEC) No. 804/68 for the year 1983. Article 2 of Regulation (EEC) No. 1205/83 fixed the guarantee threshold at the level of the quantity of milk supplied to undertakings treating or processing milk in the calendar year 1981, increased by 1%. The levy due on the excess quantities must be set at an amount that would fully cover the cost of disposing of these quantities. This cost is at present estimated at 75% of the target price.

In view of the absolute necessity of curbing the increase in milk production and the imperative need for rigorous control, the Commission considers that there should be no exemption from the levy and that cream and milk should be counted as butter for the purposes of the levy.

Furthermore, measures should be taken to ensure that the purchaser by whom the levy is payable passes on the amounts he has to pay only to those producers whose deliveries exceed those made during the reference period used to fix the purchaser's reference quantity.

The fixing of reference quantities should allow market balance to be restored gradually without hindering changes in production and processing structures. The Commission makes provision for the changes that have occurred in the structure of the dairy industry.

“Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) laying down general rules applying to the milk sector levy specified in Article 5d of Regulation (EEC) No. 804/68”

Article 5d of Regulation (EEC) No. 804/68 introduced a special levy payable by all producers of milk who deliver more than 60,000 kg of milk per year and produce more than 15,000 kg of milk per year per hectare of fodder area.

The Commission considers that the special levy, by reducing the price paid to the producer, should have an effect on the additional income producers gain from intensive farming. A rate of 4% of the target price, together with the normal levy, should be sufficient to have the necessary dissuasive effect.

In order to secure uniform implementation of the measures laid down the Commission considers it is necessary to define the term “fodder area” as “areas used to grow fodder crops, areas of temporary pasture and areas of permanent pasture”.

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

In an Opinion, adopted by 79 votes to 24 with 3 abstentions, the Committee accepted the Commission’s view that action must be taken to restore some measure of balance between supply and demand, and it further accepted the Commission’s objective of a reduction in production to 97.2m tons.

The Committee considered, however, that some easing of the situation was possible through a variety of minor measures. Thus:

- more co-responsibility levy money could be spent on the promotion and development of products like yoghurt and cheese and flavoured milk, whose markets were expanding;
- a satisfactory policy could be found for New Zealand butter;
- the cost of intervention for skimmed milk powder could be reduced by imposing tighter quality standards and including a tracer element in order to prevent fraud;
- consumer subsidies on butter could be retained.

The Committee did not believe that the suspension of intervention for skimmed milk powder from October to March would save enough money to make up for the disruption it would cause in the market.

⁽¹⁾ Doc. CES 336/84

The Committee recognized that, for any large reduction of the imbalance between supply and demand, something more drastic was required. In the long run, this could only be a tightly administered system of quotas, or a reduction in price sufficient to bring the market back into balance.

The Committee noted that on 12 March last, the Council of Agriculture Ministers had favoured quota arrangements which were likely to reduce prices slightly by raising the co-responsibility levy. The Committee was ready to support this arrangement for the period in question.

The Committee believed, however, that, in order to give the dairy farmer the security he needed, long-term objectives had to be agreed for milk production and the method of achieving them needed to be laid down.

The Rapporteur-General for this Opinion was Mr Zinkin (United Kingdom - Employers).

7. BOVINE AND PORCINE SPERM

“Proposal for a Council Directive on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade and imports from third countries of semen of domestic animals of the bovine and porcine species”

Gist of the Commission proposal

When semen is traded a somewhat lesser risk of spreading animal disease is involved. Nevertheless risks do exist in respect of, for example, foot-and-mouth disease, swine fever (both classical and African), blue tongue, brucellosis and tuberculosis. Member States currently apply national rules when semen is traded and these vary considerably. In the context of animal trading rules and to promote a degree of uniformity in the Community in respect of animal disease, it is therefore considered necessary to continue the Community policy of harmonization of Member States' national rules.

The basic element of the Commission proposal is that the Member State in which semen is collected should be under obligation to see that the semen has been collected and processed at approved and supervised semen collection centres and has been obtained from animals whose health status is such as to preclude any risk of spread of animal disease. Further the semen should: have been collected, processed, stored and transported in accordance with rules which preserve its health status

and be accompanied during transport to the country of destination by an animal health certificate.

The proposal also contains certain waivers in respect of foot-and-mouth disease, and provides that specific safeguards in respect of African swine fever and blue tongue may be taken through the procedure of the Standing Veterinary Committee.

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

In an Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee welcomed the proposal and was in general agreement with the Commission, especially since many of the conditions were already common practice in Member States and the proposals closely followed the general lines of earlier animal health and third country directives.

The Rapporteur-General for this Opinion was Mr Storie-Pugh (United Kingdom - Various Interests).

8. ENVIRONMENT — RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

“Proposal for a Council Decision on the adoption of a work programme for the first phase of the implementation of an information system on the state of the environment and the natural resources in the Community (1984-1987)”

Gist of the Commission proposal

Methodological information system

The Council agreed in 1974 that in order to pursue an effective environmental policy it is essential to have adequate information on the environment and to be able to monitor developments regularly.

Consequently, the Commission undertook an “ecological mapping” programme, the results of which have now been published; with a proposal that a methodological approach be adopted (as distinct from re-acting on an ad hoc basis to specific needs) to progressively establish a Community-wide information system on the environment.

This is the objective of the present referral which covers the first phase of such an information system.

During this first phase, work will concentrate on the following matters:

⁽¹⁾ Doc. CES 337/84

- application of the information system on a Community scale where the relevant data is already available, with priority given to the collection of data on biotopes (i.e. areas with uniform environmental conditions);
- application of the information system to two specific problems:
 - protection of the Mediterranean,
 - acid rain;
- preparation of the subsequent phases of the project with particular attention to the use of computer techniques.

An expenditure of 5.8 mio. ECU during the period 1984-87 is envisaged.

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

In an Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee welcomed the Commission proposal and expressly supported the Commission in its intention to create "a basis for directing the Community's environmental policy and giving that policy a more explicitly protective capability".

But the Committee also thought that, in addition to setting up the information system, the Commission had to press forward with its existing and planned environmental protection measures.

The Committee considered that care should be taken to ensure that data on the state of the environment were gathered and evaluated in accordance with uniform rules in the different Member States. The Council should give the Commission proper coordinating powers. Pollution had to be recorded over a large area, so as to avoid freak results.

The information system should extend over a long period. A check should be carried out on whether the planned financial resources for the work programme were sufficient. There had to be clear arrangements between the Commission and the Member States for the financing of data collection, processing and transmission so as to avoid duplication of work and settle the question of costs.

The Committee also thought that:

- the information system should be filled out with specific agricultural data;

⁽¹⁾ Doc. CES 340/84

- the methodology for determining the dry deposition of acids and acid-forming substances should be improved;
- a sufficiently dense network of monitoring stations should be set up in forests and in agricultural areas; and
- the information system should include data on pollution damage to buildings.

At a later stage, the information system should be extended to cover the seas surrounding the Community. In addition, it should be compatible with other information systems, such as those dealing with conurbations and the residential environment.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, under the chairmanship of Mrs Heuser (Germany - Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Schnieders (Germany - Employers).

9. FUEL RATIONING IN A CRISIS

“Proposal for a Council Directive on fuel rationing for commercial transport between the Member States”

Gist of the Commission's proposal

Road transport is wholly dependent on oil and petroleum products. Any fuel supply difficulties would restrict road transport operations and consequently bring about serious economic disruption. The Community should therefore be in a position to counteract, or at least reduce, the harmful consequences of such problems, which could very well occur under the present circumstances.

For these reasons the Commission has submitted the present draft Directive. The aim of the Directive is to guarantee, in the event of difficulties in the supply of oil and petroleum products in at least one Member State, that non-domestic carriers performing transport operations by road between Member States shall have access to fuel supplies under the same conditions as those applying to domestic carriers. For the purposes of this Directive “transport by road between Member States” means the carriage of goods by road by commercial vehicles and the carriage of passengers by road by buses and coaches with at least 10 seats, including the driver's seat.

The Commission signifies in its proposal three degrees of intensity in a fuel supply crisis, namely:

- limited fuel shortage, where the respect by the Member States of the principle of equality of treatment between resident transporters and others is enough to face traffic needs;

- fuel rationing phase, in which each Member State must strive, after Community consultation, to provide adequate quantities of fuel for total intra-Community transport, upon the basis of the control of fuel distribution;
- a third phase, in which it would no longer be possible for one or several Member States, obliged to make severe restrictions to their traffic, to guarantee a fuel supply to total intra-Community traffic. In this case, it would be necessary to resort to an EEC consultation and decision-making procedure, in order to coordinate the inevitable reductions in traffic relations between Member States.

For this latter case of serious crisis, the Commission recommends that the Member States apply rationing, based upon selectiveness, in the granting of bonds; but this selectiveness must be based upon objective criteria and must respect the principle of equal treatment between resident and non-resident transporters.

The other forms of transport (i.e. apart from road transport) are not covered by the draft Directive. In this context the Commission draws attention to the fact that road transport is wholly dependent on oil and petroleum products and the fact that no products are currently available which can take the place of the above-mentioned products for road transport in such a way as to give satisfactory and economically viable results. Another point to be noted is that the carriage of goods and the transport of passengers by road in the Community accounts for more than 84.5% of the Community's total energy consumption for transport purposes (excluding maritime transport). As a result a shortage of fuel would hit road transport harder than other forms of transport.

The draft Directive is based on both Art. 75 (establishment of common rules for transport) and Art. 103 (introduction of Directives in the field of economic policy, which also covers supply difficulties with regard to particular products) of the EC Treaty.

Art. 75 provides for mandatory consultation of the Economic and Social Committee.

Gist of the Opinion⁽¹⁾

In a unanimous Opinion, the Committee approved the Commission's proposal on the whole. However, it did have the following remarks to make:

⁽¹⁾ Doc. CES 335/84

The Committee realised that it would go beyond the scope of the Opinion to enter into a detailed discussion of general aspects of the common transport policy, such as the priority to be given in a crisis to forms of transport which used less energy. It assumed, however, that these aspects would not be overlooked when priorities and quotas were fixed.

The Committee felt that some provision needed to be made for giving priority to supplies for the movement of passengers and goods.

In the serious phase of a fuel crisis, a coupon system would generally apply in accordance with plans drawn up by the individual Member States.

Finally, the Committee stressed that the Member States should agree on the advance allocation of fuel, the period of validity of the coupons and the period for submitting applications.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Transport and Communications under the chairmanship of Mrs Weber (Germany - Workers). The Rapporteur was Mr Law (United Kingdom - Employers).

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Relations with the other institutions and international organizations

- Mr Ceyrac, accompanied by Mr Margot and Mr Louet, paid an official visit to the Netherlands on 13 and 14 March 1984. He met the Finance Minister, Mr Ruding, the Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr van Aardenne, the Social Affairs Minister, Mr de Koning, and the Secretary of State for European Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, Mr Van Eekelen.

He also had a talk with a delegation of consumers' organizations, led by Mr Hilkens.

During the visit, a lunch followed by a meeting was organized at the Social and Economic Council.

- The Vice-Chairman, Mr Margot, and the Secretary-General, Mr Louet, went to Portugal on 20 March 1984 to attend the inaugural meeting of the Standing Council for Social Consultations.
- At a special meeting on 21 March 1984 chaired by Mrs Strobel, Group III organized an information seminar on the European Parliament.

The following personalities addressed the seminar: Mrs Simone Veil, Chairman of the European Parliament's Legal Committee, Mr Bruno Friedrich, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Mrs F. Baduel Glorioso, Member of the European Parliament, and Mr G. Van Haeverbeke, Press Adviser with the European Parliament's Information Office in Brussels. Mr Ceyrac also spoke.

On 22 March, a joint meeting of the European Parliament's Regional Policy Committee and the Economic and Social Committee's Section for Regional Development was held at ESC headquarters. Mr Ceyrac and Mr Louet attended the opening of this meeting.

- On 22 March, Mr Ceyrac and Mr Louet went to the Belgian Central Council for the Economy for a hearing on European integration.
- On 22 March, Mr Ceyrac spoke at the opening meeting of the European Congress organized by the European Movement. Mr Pfeiffer and the Secretary-General were also present.



Visit to the Dutch Social and Economic Council at the Hague. From left to right: Mr van Eijkelenburg, Chairman of the Dutch Christian Employers (NCW), Mr Ceyrac, Chairman of the ESC, and Mr Wim Kok, President of the Dutch National Trades Union Federation (FNV) and Vice-President of the Dutch Social and Economic Council.

NEW CONSULTATIONS

During March 1984, the Council requested the Committee to deliver Opinions on the following subjects:

“Draft Council Resolution Concerning Action to Combat Unemployment amongst Women” (COM(84) 74 final)

“Report of the Commission to the Council concerning the Floricultural Sector (Roses and Carnations), accompanied by the Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) Laying Down Further Provisions in Relation to Regulation (EEC) No. 234/68 in Respect of Certain Floricultural Products” (COM(83) 798 final).

PROVISIONAL FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

MAY 1984 PLENARY SESSION

Opinions upon consultation

- 12th VAT Directive
- Parental leave
- Female unemployment
- Acid rain (additional Opinion)
- Nitrogen dioxide
- Oil spills at sea
- Extraction solvents
- Emergency health card
- Oil spills in the Caribbean
- Cocoa
- Swine fever
- Floriculture
- Emulsifying agents
- Equal pay for men and women
- Duty-free fuel allowance
- European Regional Development Fund 8th Annual Report
- Noise level of vehicles on rails
- Pre-packaging
- Temporary admission of means of transport
- VAT waiver for Ireland
- R & D competition report (additional Opinion)
- EEC-Spain combined transport agreement

Own-initiative Opinions

- Migrant workers

- Waste management
- Producers/consumers dialogue

SUBSEQUENT PLENARY SESSIONS

Opinions upon consultation

- Economic situation mid-1984
- Social developments in 1983
- Technological change and social adjustments
- Fire risks in hotels
- Competition — patents (additional Opinion)
- Strengthening railway companies' finances
- Access to the occupation of bargee
- Local job-creation schemes
- Annual economic report
- Limitation of air pollution
- Consumer protection: price of non-food products
- Consumer protection: food price labels
- Food sampling methods
- Enlargement (additional Opinion)
- Mediterranean Integrated Programmes (additional Opinion)

Own-initiative Opinions

- Social security
- Community research priorities
- Industrial medicine
- Yugoslavia

Information Reports

- Development of mountain areas
- Integrated operation in Wales
- National regional development aids
- Community fisheries policy
- EEC-Mediterranean relations.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Resignations

Mr Loughrey (Ireland) and Mr Wagenmans (Netherlands) have resigned as members of the Economic and Social Committee.

PUBLICATIONS OBTAINABLE FROM THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Periodical

- Bulletin (monthly publication)

General Documentation

- The Economic and Social Committee (leaflet) (January 1980)
- The Economic and Social Committee (December 1982) (A descriptive brochure) 16 p.
- The Other European Assembly (May 1983) (ESC 83-007)
- Twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations (September 1983) (ESC-83-012)

Opinions and Studies

- Inaugural Conference — "1983: the European Year of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (Proceedings) (December 1983) (ESC 83-016)
- Relations between the European Community and the United States (July 1983) (\pm 82 p.) (ESC 83-014)
- The Economic and Social Situation in the Community (2 Opinions) (July 1983) (ESC-83-013)
- Youth Employment (Opinion) (June 1983) (ESC-83-011)
- Transport policy in the 1980s (Opinion) (March 1983) 99 p. (ESC 83-003)
- Inaugural Conference — 1983: The European Year of SME (February 1983) 27 p. (ESC 83-002)
- Guidelines for Mediterranean Agriculture (4 Opinions) (September 1982) 64 p. (ESC 82-010)
- The Economic and Social Situation of the Community (2 Opinions) (July 1982) 57 p. (ESC 82-008)
- The Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (Opinion) (June 1982) 70 p. (ESC 82-007)
- Aims and Priorities of a Common Research and Development Policy (Study) (January 1982) 59 p. (ESC 82-001)
- Agricultural Aspects of Spain's Entry into the E.C. (Opinion) (February 1982) 107 p. (ESC 81-017)
- The EEC's External Relations — Stocktaking and Consistency of Action (Study) (January 1982) 139 p.
- Genetic Engineering (Colloquy) (October 1981) 120 p. (ESC 81-014)
- Economic Pointers for 1982 (Opinion) (August 1981) 32 P. (ESC 81-010)
- Problems of the Handicapped (Opinion) (September 1981) \pm 46 p. (ESC 81-013)
- Present situation in the Community's Building Sector (Opinion) (September 1981) \pm 24 p. (ESC 81-011)
- Community Competition Policy (Opinion) (ESC-81-008)
- Development Policy and Working Conditions (September 1980) (Opinion) 61 p. (ESC 80-012)
- The Organisation and Management of Community R&D (February 1980) (Study) 168 p. (ESC 80-001)
- Agricultural Structures Policy (November 1979) (Opinion) 90 p. (ESC 79-003)
- Enlargement of the European Community Greece-Spain-Portugal (September 1979) (Study) 75 p. (ESC 79-002)
- The Community's Relations with Spain (June 1979) (Study) 112 p. (ESC 79-001)
- Community Shipping Policy Flaws of Convenience (April 1979) (Opinion) 170 p.
- Youth Unemployment — Education and Training (November 1978) (5 Opinions) 97 p.
- The Stage reached in aligning labour legislation in the European Community (June 1978) (Documentation) 60 p.
- Employment in Agriculture (June 1978) (Study) 135 p.
- Monetary Disorder (June 1978) (Opinion) 98 p.
- Industrial Change and Employment (November 1977) (Opinion) 98 p.
- EEC's Transport Problems with East European Countries (December 1977) (Opinion) 164 p.

- Research and Development (November 1976) (Study) 35 p.
- Systems of education and vocational training (August 1976) (Study) 114 p.
- Regional Policy (March 1976) (Opinion) 11 p.
- European Union (July 1975) (Opinion) 33 p.
- The Situation of Small and Medium-sized Undertakings in the European Community (March 1975) (Study) 69 p.



Obtainable from GOWER Publishing Co. Ltd., 1 Westmead, Farnborough, Hants GU 147RU:

- Community Advisory Committee for the Representation of Socio-Economic Interests (£ 8.50)
- European Interest Groups and their relationship to the Economic and Social Committee (£ 25)

Obtainable from EDITIONS DELTA, 92-94 Square Plasky, 1040 Brussels:

- Action by the European Community through its financial instruments (Brussels 1979) (425 BF)
- The Economic and Social Interest Groups of Greece (350 BF)
- The Right of Initiative of the ESC (400 BF)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
Press, Information and Publications Division

Rue Ravenstein 2
1000 Brussels

Tel 512 39 20
513 95 95

Telegrams ECOSEUR
Telex 25 983 CESEUR

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