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BULLETIN

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252nd plenary session

The 252nd plenary session of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities was held at the Committee building, Brussels, on 27 and 28 January under the Chairmanship of the Committee Chairman, Mr Fons Margot.

The session was attended by Mr Jacques Delors, President of the Commission, who submitted the Commission programme for 1988, and by Lord Plumb, President of the European Parliament.

ESC appeal to the European Council

In a Resolution adopted on 28 January by 85 votes to 27, with 14 abstentions, the Committee urged the Heads of State or Government to take heed of the wishes of the Community's economic and social interest groups, and not to jeopardize, through another delay, the 1992 deadline so vital to the future of 320 million Europeans.

Text of the Resolution

Following the failure of the Copenhagen Summit, the Economic and Social Committee of the Community urgently calls upon the Heads of State or Government to take the requisite decisions at the special Summit to be held in Brussels on 11 and 12 February 1988.

At a time when the Community's achievements are threatened by, among other things, an economic environment in which:

- (i) the possibility of a recession cannot be ruled out;
- (ii) unemployment is liable to rises; and
- (iii) monetary upheavals are disrupting trade and economic and financial stability;

it is no longer enough to present Europe as the solution for the future. Practical steps must be taken to enable Europe to propose, negotiate, exercise influence, take decisions and command respect now.

The target of a Community-wide market by 1992, for which the Economic and Social Committee reaffirms its support, will lose all credi-

bility if the Member States persist in clashing in the defence of short-term interests instead of facing up to the real issues.

The representatives of Europe's social and economic interests consider the overall strategy proposed by the Commission to be the minimum coherent package needed to attain the goals of the Single Act and combat unemployment effectively. The Committee agrees that the difficulties to be overcome are great, but considers that its opinions on the relevant Commission proposals provide a serious political basis.

It is essential, with due regard for budgetary discipline to:

- (i) ensure the funding of the Community and its policies through deployment of new resources;
- (ii) reform the CAP in the interests of both farmers and consumers in order to provide for the future of a strategic and highly productive sector, as well as a characteristically European rural environment and way of life;
- (iii) give the structural Funds adequate resources and adapt their role to ensure balanced development of all the regions and strengthen the economic and social cohesion of the Community;
- (iv) develop a genuine social policy guaranteeing workers' basic rights.

The Economic and Social Committee makes an urgent appeal to the Heads of State or Government to take account of the wishes expressed by all the social and economic interests and not to jeopardize, through another delay, the 1992 deadline so vital to the future of 320 million Europeans.

Summary of the speech given by Mr Delors on the 1988 Commission programme

Mr Delors felt that 1988 was a key year for the Community, and for its future. The completion of the internal market was a revolutionary concept which was worth carrying through, as the goal which the Community had set itself. After the failure of the Copenhagen Summit, the progress of the Community could afford no further setbacks. Europe had to take charge of its own growth, and rely on its own efforts. There was little hope of it being able to rely on the US economy or Japan, or the South-East Asian nations who were interested only in themselves. The oil-producing countries were currently in decline and most developing countries were in debt.

If the Community did not aim for greater growth, it would move towards decline and an increase in unemployment. That was the key



At the plenary session, from left to right: Mr Jacques Moreau, Secretary General, Mr Margot, President of the ESC, and Mr Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission.

aspect of the world economic situation over the next two years; the general public and the national governments had to accept that and reflect on it.

Mr Delors went on to recapitulate the Commission's programme for 1988, and the issues which would be discussed at the Brussels Summit in February: the implementation of the Single Act, revision of the common agricultural policy to bring it more closely into line with the world situation, the development of other common policies, and the financing of the Community. The Commission programme would include the creation of a common financial area by liberalizing capital. That would also mean strengthening the European Monetary System and making wider use of the ECU. Greater priority would in future be given to social matters. The Commission was taking steps to help young people enter the world of work, to re-integrate the long-term unemployed, to lay more stress on social dialogue, and to draw up a social charter. The idea of the 'European company' should also be revived, and would include workers' rights.

Extracts from the debate

Mr Alberto Masprone (Italy — Chairman of the Employers' Group) stated that the members of his Group accorded absolute priority to the completion on schedule of a single internal market, with total freedom of movement of people, capital, goods and services. There were State aids which hindered competition, and restrictions, closed public markets and protectionism which made the Community vulnerable. Mr Masprone called for an end to protectionism: businessmen wanted a single market of 320 million consumers so that they could stand up to their non-European competitors. They knew only too well the cost of these problems, as they paid for them every day. For that reason, on behalf of the Employers' Group, he called for economic convergence, a stronger EMS, wider use of the ECU, harmonization of legislation including transport law and a European company statute. He urged pursuit of effective social dialogue. Businessmen acted boldly; they hoped to see the same boldness in the Heads of State or Government at the forthcoming Brussels Summit.

Mr François Staedelin (France — Chairman of the Workers' Group) said that as early as 1985 the workers had supported the Commission's White Paper even though the document did not deal with social aspects. He went on to say that the views currently held by the workers on this subject were well known and added: 'I presented their views before the Committee back in February 1987. We do not wish the 'social dialogue' to remain a hollow slogan and we do not wish to see it confined to macroeconomic situations. Workers have

been hoping for a long time to be able to move on to social dialogue at sector level; the Commission should encourage this dialogue at this level. A social charter can only be implemented after ratification by the Member States and would remain voluntary. What is needed are Community rules which Member States would be obliged to implement. The next stage would be the drawing-up of a European Convention on collective bargaining. If we are thinking in terms of a European society then we must also think in terms of workers' rights in respect of information, consultation and negotiations.' Mr Staedelin concluded by pointing out that the Community still had 16 million unemployed and that the common growth strategy had been completely neglected by governments.

Mr Roger Burnel (France — Chairman of the Various Interests' Group) said that political will was needed to unite Europe and this would only be forthcoming if there was support from social and economic operators. 'The European venture is something one experiences in ordinary life, so we should strive to ensure that ordinary citizens can understand what it is all about. We support the European-wide "economic area" but realize that this cannot be divorced from the "social area" which is concerned not merely with enterprise but also with the poor and the handicapped, who have to be integrated into society.' Mr Burnel then outlined the attitude of consumers, making it clear that they were not anti-enterprise. He went on to present the views of the representatives of SMEs, who wished to know how far the study on the underground economy had advanced. The Various Interests' Group was convinced that a reform of the CAP was needed but did not see why farmers should be made the scapegoats. Fair international trading in agricultural products was not feasible at the present time, so a sound and honourable compromise was needed. Mr Burnel concluded by underlining the importance of the mutual recognition of diplomas and the need for an ambitious family policy. 'Europeans must recognize that they are no longer in competition with each other but that it is now merely a question of emulation.'

Excerpts from the speech given by Lord Plumb

'You as members of the Economic and Social Committee have a tremendously important task, a complementary task to that which the European Parliament undertakes. Representing distinct groups, your input to Community decision-making is an important conditioning factor in those decisions.

Your role gives the Community more prestige. It ensures, in effect, more balance and wise counsel. You are the professionals: from the

shop floor to the boardroom and from the High Street to the Bourse...

Relations between our two institutions have always been characterized by a sense of creative partnership. I refer particularly to the charter of our relationship, laid down for our part in our resolution of 9 July 1981. Your opinions have in the main been well received, particularly since, as would be natural, we tend to agree on most of the important questions before us.

On the question of hearings with rapporteurs relating to the terms of reference of Economic and Social Committee Sections and European Parliamentary Committees, there is perhaps more that needs to be done, and I would here encourage the strengthening of these links.

We also look forward to more invitations to participate in your special events and conferences. Certainly I would be particularly glad to exchange views on an informal basis more often with you, Mr Chairman.

These extra contacts are needed all the more in view of the Single Act, and especially its cooperation procedure. I would particularly recommend to you the suggestion that you should bring your opinion to the knowledge of our Committee rapporteurs before our first reading in Parliament, and ideally during the Committee stage itself. That way we can move forward together, and the weight of our views before the Council of Ministers would be stronger as a result.

Mr Chairman, your institution and mine are in the vanguard of creating a useful and efficient Europe, not just for governments, but for people. We are, together, closing the democratic deficit which exists between the democratic responsibilities discharged at national level and those discharged at the European level. We must keep going forward together with this sense of reclaiming, on behalf of our citizens, those areas of European decision-making which have got lost in the corridors of bureaucratic power.'

The members of the Economic and Social Committee who had the floor stressed the need for greater collaboration between the two institutions in order to complete the internal market by 1992.

ADOPTION OF OPINIONS

1. OWN RESOURCES

'Own resources decision'
[COM(87) 420 final]

Gist of the Commission document

This new draft Council Decision follows on from issues discussed in the Commission's Communication 'Making a success of the Single Act' [COM(87) 100] and its 'Report to the Council and the European Parliament on the financing of the Community budget' [COM(87) 101].

The Commission proposes three major changes to the existing arrangements, i.e.:

- (i) setting a ceiling on the Community's own resources to be expressed as a percentage of Community GNP;
- (ii) modifying the structure of the Community's own resources (linking these more closely to Member States' relative prosperity);
- (iii) greater flexibility in the Community's own resources system in order to prevent the structural erosion of certain components.

1a. BUDGETARY DISCIPLINE

'Commission Communication on budgetary discipline'
[COM(87) 430 final]

Gist of the Commission document

The description of the medium-term financial perspective in COM(87) 100 and COM(87) 101 provides an overview of the budgetary discipline measures proposed by the Commission. It indicates how this budgetary discipline should be applied up to 1992 by determining the growth path for the various categories of expenditure during the reference period.

The present Communication discusses the following aspects:

- (i) the general principles of budgetary discipline;
- (ii) budgetary discipline in respect of agriculture;
- (iii) budgetary discipline in respect of non-compulsory expenditure;
- (iv) the Interinstitutional Agreement.

The Commission proposes that the resources available to the Community in 1992 should be subject to an overall ceiling of 1.4% of its GNP. This should enable the Community to operate the common policies — notably those provided for by the recent reform of the Treaty following the entry into force of the Single Act — put it into a sounder position and give it budgetary security for a sufficiently lengthy period.

In return for this new margin of resources, the Community must impose tighter budgetary discipline. Observance of budgetary discipline will be guaranteed by a smooth growth path for the Community budget in terms of GNP, as set out in the multiannual financial perspective.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

The Opinion on own resources was adopted by a large majority (2 votes against). The Opinion on budgetary discipline was adopted by a large majority (3 votes against).

The Economic and Social Committee greatly regrets that the Member States were not able to sink their differences at the Copenhagen Summit. The failure to tackle the budget problem threatens to put further pressure on the Community's already strained finances. The ESC can only stress that it is absolutely vital that a solution along the lines of the Commission's proposals be achieved at the extraordinary session in Brussels in February 1988. This is why the Committee, in its opinion of 27 January 1988 on the Community's own resources (Rapporteur: Mr Pardon — Belgium — Employers), supports the Commission in proposing an own resources ceiling of 1.4% of Community GNP. This should permit it to carry out common policies, in particular those resulting from the entry into force of the Single Act, to restore order to the present situation and to provide the Community with a sufficiently long period of budgetary security. For the ESC, the setting of a new ceiling on resources must go hand in hand with tighter budgetary discipline. The ESC states that the aim of budgetary discipline is to restore balance to Community spending. The implementation of agricultural stabilizers is crucial for the success of budgetary discipline. Agricultural spending must not rise more rapidly than GNP. Furthermore, the increase in financial resources allocated to the structural Funds, EAGGF in particular, should benefit the less-developed regions where agricultural structures are more precarious. Overall, this attempt to restore budgetary order

¹ CES 78/88 and CES 79/88

should enable the Community to manage its increased resources over the next five years in such a way as to help reinforce the economic and social cohesion of the Community.

These two Opinions were drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Economic, Financial and Monetary Questions, chaired by Mr Goris (the Netherlands — Various Interests). The rapporteur was Mr Pardon (Belgium — Employers).

2. AGRICULTURAL STABILIZERS (continued)

'The implementation of agricultural stabilizers and the proposals concerning the following sectors: sugar, milk, sheepmeat and goatmeat, other products'

[COM(87) 452/2 final, Volumes I and II, A, B, C and D]

Gist of the Commission proposals

In its Communication entitled 'Review of action taken to control the agricultural markets and outlook for the common agricultural policy'[COM(87) 410], the Commission described in detail the content and effects of the stabilizers already introduced, in respect of various products, to control both agricultural production and expenditure.

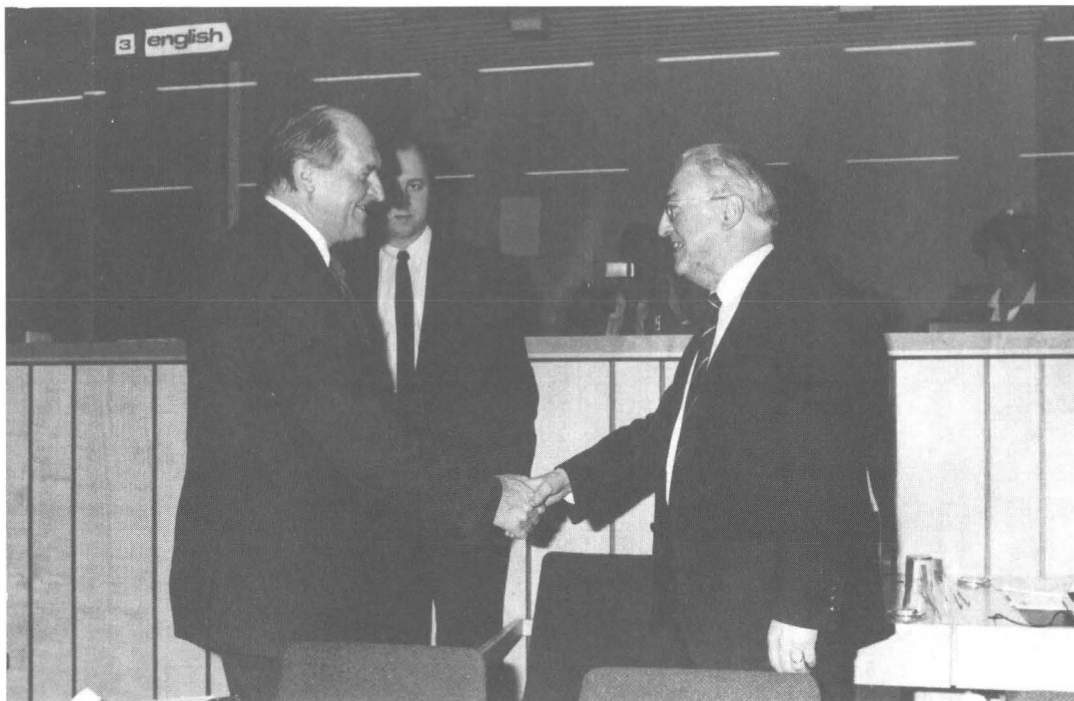
Although for certain product groups, the existing stabilizers have exerted a real constraint and have been definitely effective in controlling expenditure, for other product groups the effect has been only limited, mainly because of the complexity of the decision-making process that has to be gone through before implementation.

In order to attain the desired objectives, therefore, it is necessary to tailor the existing measures, in order to make them more effective and to extend their application to all products.

The present proposals are in line with this commitment and include the necessary legal instruments.

As regards the stabilization mechanism, some proposals have already been tabled in the Council. They concern oilseeds and wine.

In respect of the first product group, rapeseed, sunflower and soya, the Commission is asking the Council to take a definite decision on its proposal to phase out the cut-off mechanism. If this mechanism were maintained, the desired stabilization of expenditure would be remote.



On his arrival at the Economic and Social Committee to address the plenary session, Lord Plumb, President of the European Parliament (left), is greeted by Mr Margot, ESC President.

Again in respect of oilseeds, the Commission recalls its proposal for the introduction of a stabilization mechanism for the prices of vegetable oils.

For wine, the Commission requests in particular a decision on its proposal relating to the limitation of replanting rights. The outlook for the 1987/88 harvest has given this matter increased importance.

For three other product groups — sugar, milk and sheepmeat/goatmeat —the Commission is presenting the reports and proposals which the Council has requested.

For sugar and milk, the Commission is proposing the retention of the present arrangements, but with the stabilization mechanisms tightened up. Thus, for sugar, the levies should, in future, allow this sector to finance itself, on an annual basis, under the Commission's management powers. For milk, since the existing arrangements (quotas) have enabled production and the use of intervention to be brought under effective control, the Commission is proposing that the quota system be extended beyond 1989 and that the temporary suspension be consolidated.

For sheepmeat and goatmeat, a product group for which there has so far been no stabilizer, the Commission is proposing the immediate introduction of maximum guaranteed quantities with direct effect on the aid or premium amounts where there are overruns. It is also proposing, firstly, the introduction in 1988 of a single premium which would gradually replace the present systems by 1992, and secondly, the opening of negotiations with non-member countries on import arrangements (voluntary restraint).

For the other product groups covered by the common agricultural policy the Commission proposes the following:

For cereals, expenditure on which has soared in recent years, the Commission is proposing that the stabilization mechanisms already introduced be supplemented, first by certain adjustments to the intervention system and second by the introduction of a maximum guaranteed quantity of 155 million tonnes, overruns of which would activate a reduction in the buying-in prices, an increase in the co-responsibility levy and a shortening of the intervention period.

Protein crops (peas and field beans), the cost of which has risen sharply, have so far not been covered by a stabilization mechanism of any kind. It is therefore proposed that a maximum guaranteed quantity (3.3 million tonnes) be introduced. The basic price would be reduced in proportion to any overrun.

For table wine, the surpluses of which have been steadily growing each marketing year, the Commission is proposing that the Council sets a new floor price for compulsory distillation, to be gradually reached by 1990/91. It has also announced its intention to discontinue certain measures relating to short-term fluctuations (relocation aids, special price guarantees for long-term contract holders), which are no longer justified now that the surpluses are structural. It is proposing that the Council take a decision before 1990 on the measures the Commission will be submitting, in good time, in relation to enrichment.

Effective stabilizers are already operative for fruit and vegetables. The Commission is proposing that their scope be extended to products for which such mechanisms do not exist.

For tobacco, a product for which the stabilization mechanism set up is not operated in practice, the Commission is proposing the introduction of maximum guaranteed quantities by groups, within a maximum overall threshold (350 000 tonnes); overruns of these maximum guaranteed quantities would automatically entail a proportionate reduction in prices and premiums.

The Commission is not, at this stage, proposing further action concerning the beef sector. The situation for this market at present depends heavily on action taken as regards milk. However, the Commission will be submitting before the end of 1988 practical proposals for the beef sector, notably in the light of experience gained with the new intervention system introduced this year.

At this stage the Commission does not feel it appropriate to give details of the financial consequences of the proposed stabilizers. Any figures would be hypothetical and it is only when the measures are applied that the savings, which will depend on the market situation at the time, can be calculated.

The Commission wishes to stress that these proposals form an indivisible whole and that any selective approach — particularly between the various products — must be ruled out. It has taken great care to ensure that no transfers of expenditure can occur, which means that action must be taken in respect of all the product groups.

It would also stress that the proposals fit into an overall context of various other provisions designed to attain the same ends. Their adoption and application are essential to the success of the present exercise:

- (i) more stringent market management and tighter budgetary control, to be achieved by means of the proposed amendments to the

Financial Regulation; in this connection, the Commission would draw the Council's attention to its Communication COM(87) 430 on budgetary discipline;

- (ii) socio-structural reforms, i.e. those already under way (the March 1987 package), those proposed by the Commission in April (income aids and early retirement) and those which are currently being drawn up (the reform of the structural Funds (including EAGGF Guidance), land use and the future of the countryside as a whole);
- (iii) bringing factors which are external to the CAP under control, and, in particular, achieving stability on world markets, a point which will be dealt with in a forthcoming Communication from the Commission to the Council on the talks within GATT. Action by the Community in that forum will be made that much more credible as the Community will be able to point to its efforts to rationalize the common agricultural policy.

The Commission also wishes to draw the Council's attention to the general question of the powers which must be conferred upon it if it is to achieve the stabilization targets; the Commission is not asking for a free hand but that, subject to conditions laid down by the Council in advance, it should be given wider-ranging powers to intervene than at present.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In November 1987 the Economic and Social Committee (the EEC's consultative assembly, with 189 members representing employers, workers and various interests) endorsed the adoption of effective and appropriate measures for curbing surplus production and agricultural spending. The Opinion adopted by 70 votes to 24 with 18 abstentions only considers the proposals for certain products.

With regard to cereals, the Committee feels that the proposed production ceiling of 155 million tonnes is unrealistic and ought to be increased. Furthermore, it only takes account of domestic consumption. In any case, the maximum quantity arrangements (stabilizers) should not be applied before 1989. Incentives for set-aside, extensification and the search for alternative forms of production could be attractive solutions. However the Committee stresses that these measures should not be applied to disadvantaged regions, so as to avoid still more serious imbalances. The cereals sector cannot be seen in isolation from the adjustment measures for oilseeds (rape, sunflower

¹ CES 83/88.

seeds, soya) and high protein crops (animal feed). Finding sales outlets for these products is hardly going to be a problem in view of the Community's low level of self-sufficiency. As for oil seed, the Committee would like to see increases in the maximum quantities and opposes deep price cuts in a deficit sector.

As regards sugarbeet, the Committee opposes the introduction of supplementary retrospective charges. The Community's producers should receive the same treatment as ACP exporting countries, but without causing difficulties for the developing countries.

The Committee suggests that olive oil producers be paid a subsidy for each olive tree so as to protect the incomes of poor families without causing surpluses.

In the fruit and vegetables sector, EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) expenditure has fallen as a result of a cautious intervention prices policy. Intervention thresholds should be introduced for certain products to prevent excessive intervention and all the existing instruments should be applied coherently.

With regard to milk products, the quota system is an effective way of limiting production and it should be retained for at least an extra five years. The system of premiums for sheep and goatmeat has also proved its worth, but the limit on the number of animals eligible for the premium should be raised beyond the 500 mark.

The tobacco sector is of decisive importance for socio-economic equilibrium in the less-developed regions of the Community. Account should therefore be taken of this sector and the limit on production should be raised, particularly in the case of products for which there is strong demand.

Finally, the Committee favours a reduction in the amount of unmarketable table wine by improving quality, reducing the areas under vine and introducing socio-structural measures.

The Committee would like to see measures to encourage greater consumption of wine, including clear and forthright responses to adverse publicity which is increasingly being used against a product which is a healthy and useful part of a balanced diet.

During the debate some members, mainly British and Danish representatives of consumer interests, argued without success for a lower level of intervention in the oilseed and sugarbeet sectors and for a lower maximum quantity for cereals.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture, chaired by Mr Laur (France — Various Interests). The rapporteur was Mr Schnieders (Germany — Employers).

3. LATERAL PROTECTION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

'Proposal for a Council Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the spray-suppression devices of certain categories of motor vehicles and their trailers'

and the

'Proposal for a Council Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the lateral protection (side-guards) of certain motor vehicles and their trailers'

[COM(87) 132 final]

Gist of the Commission document

Contents of the proposed Directive on anti-spray devices

Trucks and their trailers which proceed with a certain speed on a wet road create clouds of splash and spray, which fly out to the rear and to the sides, coming from all the wheels on the vehicle. This is a nuisance and dangerous for those behind these vehicles, but also for on-coming traffic and those overtaking, who can be left completely without sight for some time.

The proposed Directive requires installation of devices which *either* contain the clouds of fine droplets after which the water will run down to the ground in streams (category I), *or* form a 'closed' box around the wheels to obtain the result (category II).

The draft provides for a system of approval by the authorities after testing, as usual in Community directives.

In Annex II, a test is provided to determine the effectiveness of materials used.

Contents of the proposed Directive on lateral protection for goods vehicles

In certain accidents, 'unprotected road-users', i.e. pedestrians, cyclists, moped-riders and motorcyclists are caught under the wheels of big and heavy goods vehicles.

The proposed Directive requires that, as far as practicable, sides of goods vehicles are built or equipped with continuous surfaces or rails etc., so that the above risk is minimized.

Legislation to this effect has existed for some time in some countries. The proposed Directive is fully based on this legislation, in consultation with the Motor Vehicles Working Group.

Buses are not included in the scope of the proposed Directive because their normal bodywork would fulfil its requirements.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted with a large majority, 8 votes against and 9 abstentions, the Committee welcomes all Commission action designed to further reduce the number and severity of accidents and to improve the safety of all road users.

The amount of spray generated by heavy commercial vehicles driving at relatively high speeds on wet roads is largely determined by road surface design and specifications, the Committee said.

For the sake of efficiency, the Committee opposed compulsory systematic fitting of all vehicles in use. Some vehicles which do not strictly conform with the Directives have a completely satisfactory behaviour.

For other vehicles, bringing them into conformity with the Directive would require substantial and costly modifications, endangering the investment involved and the health of small enterprises.

The Directive should remain optional in the interests of flexibility.

Finally, the Committee endorses the draft Directive on side-guards, subject to some technical comments.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mr Kazazis (Greece — Employers). The rapporteur was Mr Perrin-Pelletier (France — Employers).

4. TREAD DEPTH OF TYRES

'Proposal for a Council Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the tread depth of tyres of certain categories of motor vehicles and of their trailers'

[COM(87) 407 final]

Gist of the Commission document

The currently applicable provisions in the Member States of the Community on the minimum permissible tread depth of tyres for

¹ CES 80/88

motorcars, light commercial vehicles and light trailers vary from one Member State to another:

- (i) in seven countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands) it is 1 mm across the whole width of the tyre;
- (ii) in one country (United Kingdom) it is 1 mm across 75% of the width of the tyre, with visible tread pattern on the remaining 25%;
- (iii) in another country (Luxembourg) it is 1.6 mm across the whole width of the tyre;
- (iv) in the three other countries (Greece, Spain and Portugal) there are no laws on the matter.

The present Commission proposal seeks to harmonize these provisions by laying down a minimum tread depth of 1.6 mm over the entire tread surface of the tyre, applicable in all the Member States of the Community.

The draft Directive is expected to have at least two positive effects: (a) increasing the degree of safety for road users; (b) facilitating the free movement of vehicles among the Member States. It is worth noting that in the USA and Japan the minimum permissible depth is approximately 1.6 mm. Relevant studies in those countries have shown that this depth makes it possible to operate the vehicle safely in all conditions.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted by a large majority, 11 votes against and 15 abstentions, the Committee endorses the Commission initiative and stresses the benefits for road safety of increasing minimum tread depths.

It also emphasizes that, in addition to the Directive, uniform requirements must be introduced for regular vehicle testing in all Member States, since all evidence shows that fines are not a sufficient deterrent. The proposed minimum tread depth (1.6 mm) should be checked during tests.

To bolster the Directive the Committee also calls for the adoption of uniform requirements for the design, performance and marking of tyres. The current draft Directive on this subject could provide a suitable basis, provided it is adjusted to technical progress.

¹ CES 81/88.

Finally, the Committee proposes that Article 1 be reworded to explicitly ban the use of tyres with treads below the standard legal minimum.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Transport and Communications, chaired by Mr L.J. Smith (United Kingdom — Workers). The rapporteur was Mr Marvier (France — Various Interests).

5. CONDITIONS FOR REGISTRATION OF SHIPS

'Proposal for a Council Decision on the common position to be adopted by Member States when signing and ratifying the United Nations Convention on Conditions for the Registration of Ships'
[COM(86) 923 final]

Gist of the Commission document

In order to eliminate abuses of ship regulations that may become possible through the failure of flag States to meet their international obligations, the Commission fully supports the adoption of measures which aim at strengthening the link between ship and flag State.

However, during the conference which led to the United Nations Convention on Conditions for Registration of Ships, the Commission made it clear to the Member States of the Community that they would not be free under Community law to sign or ratify the Convention unless they obtained a clause which rendered the Convention compatible with the EEC Treaty or found another equivalent solution.

Coreper decided unanimously on 7 February 1986 that the text of the clause for this purpose which was being negotiated at Geneva was not acceptable as it did not meet the requirements of Community law. The clause was accordingly withdrawn by the Council Presidency.

In its explanatory memorandum, the Commission analyses in detail why the Convention and the Treaty of Rome are incompatible, and considers that Member States can apply the Convention in such a way as to comply with their obligations under Community law, if, but only if, they make a common reservation in appropriate terms, when they sign and ratify this Convention, concerning the application of Articles 8, 9 and 10 of the Convention. The wording set out in the annex to the proposal should be used for this reservation.

The Commission's proposal is based on Article 84 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community. Since the Single Act came into force on 1 July 1987, the procedural provisions contained in Article 75(1) (3) are now also applicable to Article 84. This means that the Council is required to obtain an Opinion from the Economic and Social Committee before adopting a decision on the subject in question.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its unanimous Opinion, the Committee noted that although the Convention goes some way to meet the objectives in regard to open registers identified in the Committee's 1986 Opinion, Opinions differ as to whether some of its more important provisions are adequate or not.

The points at issue — incompatibility between the Convention and the Treaty and the necessity or otherwise of a common formal reservation — are essentially of a relatively narrow legal nature and in the final analysis are for determination on legal advice. It is therefore vital for the Commission to take a firm stand on the matter. Nevertheless, the element of incompatibility is questionable and the risk of objection to a Community reservation is apparent.

Further, the Committee considers that there is a degree of inconsistency between the Commission's continued insistence on a common reservation and the fact that the Member States unanimously supported the adoption of the Convention in 1986 without the inclusion of a Community clause.

On the substance of the matter, there can be no question that all Member States acceding to the Convention must apply its provisions in a manner consistent with their obligations under the Treaty, the Committee said. The form of any qualification in this respect should, however, be expressed in the minimum terms necessary to register this overriding obligation, and for that purpose alone.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Transport and Communications chaired by Mr L.J. Smith (United Kingdom — Workers). The rapporteur was Mr Whitworth (United Kingdom — Employers).

¹ CFS 72/88.

6. JRC WORK PROGRAMME

'Proposal for a Council Decision adopting specific research programmes to be implemented by the Joint Research Centre for the European Economic Community (1988-91)'

'Proposal for a Council Decision adopting specific research programmes to be implemented by the Joint Research Centre for the European Atomic Energy Community (1988-91)'

and the

'Proposal for a Council Decision adopting a supplementary research programme to be implemented by the Joint Research Centre for the European Atomic Energy Community (1988-91)'

[COM(87) 491 final]

Gist of the Commission document

After two years of animated discussion on the future of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), along with its role and functions in the light of the new Community research strategy, guidelines and priorities embodied in the Framework programme of Community activities in the field of research and technological development (1987-91), the Commission has now come forward with its Communication on a new outlook for the Joint Research Centre [COM(87) 491 final].

This Communication comprises the three proposals for decisions referred to above, which relate to specific research programmes to be carried out by the JRC under the EEC and Euratom Treaties, as well as a supplementary research programme involving operation of the HFR (high-flux) reactor under the Euratom Treaty.

The Committee is asked to deliver an Opinion on these proposals. However, these decisions form part of a broader blueprint for reform of the JRC, prompted primarily by implementation of the Single Act and the adoption of the new Framework programme. The Commission's aim is 'to bring the JRC into step with the development of the Community and to give it a new impetus to assure it of an uncontested place within the European research and development system.'

In its November 1986 Opinion on the revision of the programme of research activities to be carried out by the JRC, the Committee itself stressed the need for effective phased reform to gear the Centre to the new Community research requirements.

Though the reforms proposed by the Commission are not encapsulated in a formal proposal requiring the Committee's Opinion, there can be no doubt that a favourable or unfavourable judgement, particularly by the Council, will significantly influence response to the Commission's proposals on the actual details of the JRC's research programmes and the size of the relevant appropriations.

Especially in view of its earlier stands, the Committee has also a duty to express its views on these proposed reforms, which concern:

- (i) the reshaping of the JRC's work;
- (ii) operation and management of the JRC;
- (iii) staff policy.

(A) Specific research programmes to be undertaken by the JRC

In keeping with the new Community research guidelines and priorities set out in the Framework programme of Community activities in the field of research and technological development (1987-91), the Commission proposes in future to focus JRC specific research programmes on three key areas.

(i) contribution to the creation of a large internal market

This heading covers research into the development of nuclear and non-nuclear measurement methods and reference materials, as well as into advanced materials.

(ii) enhancement of safety, prevention and mitigation of accidents

Research will concentrate on the following:

- (a) nuclear reactor safety, fissile material management, elimination of radioactive waste, actinides research and nuclear fuels safety;
- (b) problems connected with fusion technology safety;
- (c) safety of conventional industrial activities, in particular the evaluation and prevention of industrial hazards, and transport;

(iii) surveillance and protection of the environment:

Here the following fields will be studied:

- (a) research relating to environment protection proper, as defined in the Fourth Community action plan;
- (b) application of remote sensing techniques;
- (c) activities related to radiological monitoring.

It is estimated that a total appropriation of 690 million ECU will be required for implementation of these programmes (i.e. about 11% of the funds allocated for the 1987-91 Framework programme).

The specific research programmes will continue to account for a substantial part of JRC activities. However, the Commission proposes to reshape the JRC's work and promote new forms of intervention.

(B) Ways in which the JRC can act: future activities

In addition to specific research programmes, the Commission plans to expand three major types of work:

- (i) scientific and technical work in support of the other Commission services (to an amount of 120 million ECU);
- (ii) research or services provided under contract for third parties (to the amount of 118 million ECU);
- (iii) non-specific exploratory research intended to open up new avenues for the JRC and to maintain a high level of scientific excellence (to the amount of 70 million ECU).

Without seeking to undermine the JRC's institutional role, the Commission has two aims in mind: to consolidate the JRC's role in providing scientific and technical support for the implementation of other Community policies and make its expertise available to outside clients.

JRC funding in connection with the Framework programme should, in the Commission's view, be gradually scaled down until in 10 years' time it accounts for only 50% of total JRC funding (as compared with an average 87.2% during the period 1984-87 and 69% during the period 1988-91 — the 1991 target being 61%).

For the purpose of carrying out its new tasks, the Commission recommends a thorough overhaul of the JRC's management methods so as to achieve greater flexibility, a larger measure of autonomy and decentralization of responsibility. Consequently the proposed reforms relate to:

(i) The JRC's internal structures

In future the Commission wishes to distinguish more clearly between programme management (overall strategical management) and resource management (implementation of research activities).

With this in mind, the Commission proposes to reorganize the JRC on the basis of scientific institutes, each with full operational responsibility for all scientific, administrative and financial aspects of its particular sphere of activity. There would be nine such institutes (including six at Ispra).

Responsibility for programme management would be exercised by the JRC Directorate-General, whose main tasks are listed in the Commission document.

(ii) *Decision-making and advisory structures*

The Commission plans to back these internal structural changes by a reform of the advisory machinery. The key components are:

- (a) reinforcement of the powers of the JRC Board of Governors;
- (b) abolition of the Scientific Council for the JRC as a whole;
- (c) setting up advisory committees attached to the individual scientific institutes (one per institute).

(iii) *Staff policy*

The Commission feels that the imperatives of the new scientific objectives call for a review of staff policy, within the existing statutory framework. In this connection, the following measures are planned:

- (a) increased flexibility in assigning staff resources to scientific tasks, keeping within clearly defined ceilings;
- (b) management of temporary contracts to guarantee a significant rate of non-renewal;
- (c) a system of fixed duration secondments both from the JRC towards industrial and national centres, and vice versa;
- (d) an increase in the number of fellows and scientists visiting the JRC;
- (e) special arrangements for termination of service, directly related to the matching of qualifications to the new objectives;
- (f) new methods of cost control to reduce overheads.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In this Opinion on the three proposals for decisions concerning the future of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Economic and Social Committee called for: the reshaping of the JRC in keeping with the new Community research aims and priorities; diversification of funding sources; a more open attitude to the outside world (national and private sector research establishments); greater autonomy and decentralization of responsibility. In this incisive Opinion, the Committee confirms the JRC's institutional role as a neutral, independent body

¹ CES 82/88.

providing scientific and technical support for the Community. The Opinion was adopted by a substantial majority (with 2 dissenting votes and 2 abstentions). This meant that the ESC has stated its viewpoint, even ahead of the European Parliament.

Consequently, for the second time in two years the ESC has been consulted on the future of the JRC, in tandem with a major drive to revitalize Community research in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

On the proposed specific programmes, the ESC feels unable to endorse research cuts in the field of renewable energy sources and energy conservation. In its view, expertise, skills and investment in this sphere must not be fragmented but fully exploited by enlisting the cooperation of outside establishments.

On restructuring, the ESC is in favour both of a separation between programme management (to be the responsibility of the relevant Directorate-General in Brussels) and resource management (to come under the responsibility of the new scientific institutes, which would enjoy substantial operational autonomy). It also welcomes the setting-up of a consultative committee for each institute and increased powers for the Board of Governors, including annual approval of the work programme submitted by the Director-General of the JRC. In the ESC's view, provision must be made, at least at scientific level, for coordination among the institutions, which should be given some scope for local management.

The ESC also advocates increased responsibility for the members of the new Board of Governors and adequate representation of social interest groups. The ESC regards the proposed reforms in the status of JRC staff as innovatory and conducive to more flexible deployment of expertise. However, these arrangements must be compatible with the existing staff regulations. The ESC is opposed to systematic recruitment of staff on temporary contracts, which could undermine the stability of the JRC. It therefore calls for the creation and maintenance of an adequate core of established research staff to guarantee the Centre's continuity, independence and competence. For this purpose, the ESC recommends a satisfactory balance between established and temporary staff.

Another issue to which the ESC attaches great importance is the creation of a European Research Community so as to help check the exodus of researchers and skills to other countries and to serve increasingly as a magnet for projects and researchers of international standing, as has already been achieved in some areas of basic

research. The above imperatives and approach must be underpinned by appropriate staff management.

The Committee approves the Commission's proposals regarding the financing of the JRC's activities.

This Opinion prompted a very wide-ranging debate, during which Mr Campbell (United Kingdom — Employers), Mr Dunet (France — Workers) and Mr Moreland (United Kingdom — Various Interests) were the main speakers. None the less, the virtually unanimous Plenary Committee vote bore out ESC support for the Commission's proposals on the JRC's future.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research, chaired by Mr Romoli (Italy — Employers). The rapporteur was Mr Vercellino (Italy — Workers).

7. THERMONUCLEAR FUSION

'Proposal for a Council Regulation adopting a research and training programme (1987-91) in the field of controlled thermonuclear fusion'

and the

'Proposal for a Council Decision approving amendments to the statutes of the Joint European Torus (JET)'
[COM(87) 302 final]

Gist of the Commission document

The Community's controlled thermonuclear fusion programme is a long-term cooperation project covering all the work carried out by the Member States in this field.

It is designed to lead in due course to the joint construction of prototype reactors with a view to their industrial building and marketing.

The Commission considers that the long-term potential of fusion as a new environment-friendly method of producing electricity from a virtually inexhaustible fuel, justifies its vigorous development, regardless of the short-term fluctuations in the price of oil.

A research and training programme in the field of thermonuclear fusion for the period 1985-89 was adopted by Decision 85/201/Euratom (OJ L 83 of 28.3.1985). The Committee had previously approved the Commission's proposals in November 1984 (Opinion CES 1083/84 — OJ C 25 of 28.1.1985).

Pursuant to Article 3 of Council Decision 85/201/Euratom, the Commission has now carried out a review and proposes the substitution of a new five-year programme covering the period 1987-91 for the 1985-89 programme.

The proposed programme will cover:

- (a) plasma physics in the sector concerned, in particular studies of a basic character relating to confinement with suitable devices and to methods for producing and heating plasma;
- (b) research into the confinement, in closed configurations, of hydrogen, deuterium and tritium plasmas of widely varying density and temperature;
- (c) research into light-matter interactions and transport phenomena and the development of high-power lasers;
- (d) the development and application to confinement devices of sufficiently powerful plasma heating methods;
- (e) improvement of diagnostic methods;
- (f) predesign and possibly commencement of the detailed engineering design of NET (Next European Torus) and technological developments required for its design and construction as well as those needed in the longer term for the fusion reactor;
- (g) extension of the JET device to full performance; operation and exploitation of JET.

It is estimated that 911 million ECU will be needed from the Community budget for the programme.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee gives its wholehearted support to the new programme and the amendment to the statutes of JET. The Committee feels that the progress achieved to date is broadly in line with the objectives established in 1985. There are no factors so far which would appear to invalidate the assumptions of ultimate success.

The Committee welcomes the level of international cooperation in the field of thermonuclear fusion. Given the number of countries involved, however, effective coordination, managerial and decision-making systems are needed to avoid duplication of work and to ensure that administrative overheads are kept under tight rein.

¹ CES 84/88

Whilst stressing that the success of the nuclear fusion programme could make a major contribution to energy supplies in the mid-21st century, the Committee also emphasizes the need to pursue vigorously the search for other alternative energy sources.

The Committee notes the conclusions of the Expert Group's Report on the environmental impact and economic prospects of fusion and finds them reassuring. It points out, however, that the conclusions were reached on the basis of present knowledge and during the initial stage of the project.

These conclusions will therefore need to be revised and updated at frequent intervals to take account of the development of the project and the advance of knowledge.

The Committee points out that no tangible results can be expected for 40-50 years. A continuing impetus is therefore needed to ensure that the programme proceeds as rapidly as possible. It is also essential to carry out periodic critical reviews of progress in solving technical problems which arise in moving towards a practical production package. There must be a willingness to make changes if the results indicate the need for changes.

The possibility of abandoning the project should not be excluded if insuperable obstacles are encountered.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research, chaired by Mr Romoli (Italy — Employers). The rapporteur was Mr Whitworth (United Kingdom — Employers).

8. RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

'Proposal for a Council Recommendation to the Member States on developing the exploitation of renewable energy sources in the Community'

[COM(87) 432 final]

Gist of the Commission document

Commission estimates indicate that new and renewable energy sources could cover nearly 5% of energy demand in the Community by the year 2000.

It is proposed to step up the measures already undertaken to develop new and renewable sources, the objective being a threefold increase

in their contribution to the replacement of conventional fuels by the end of the century.¹

Thus new and renewable sources could represent the equivalent of 40 to 50 mtoe (million tonnes oil equivalent), as against a contribution of about 15 mtoe in 1985.

On 26 November 1986 the Council adopted a Resolution on a Community orientation to develop new and renewable energy sources (OJ C 316 of 9.12.1988) which (a) calls on the Commission to continue and develop its activities in the field of alternative energy sources and (b) recognizes the need for a Community approach to encourage the exploitation of these sources.

Following this Resolution the Commission adopted a Communication containing a proposal for a Recommendation, which the Council is asked to adopt, on developing the exploitation of renewable energy sources in the Community [COM(87) 432 final].

In order to pave the way for the attainment of the 1995 target, namely a tripling of the contribution of new and renewable sources to total Community energy consumption, and despite the decline in the economic conditions and competitiveness of renewable energy development, the Commission calls on the Council to recommend certain measures to the Member States, namely:

- (i) the introduction or adaptation of legislation and administrative procedures whereby the obstacles to the development of renewable energy sources can be overcome;
- (ii) the pursuit of R&D and demonstration programmes and their periodic assessment and adaptation in the light of technological developments;
- (iii) the completion of national inventories of renewable energy sources and the dissemination of these inventories widely at regional and local level;
- (iv) the promotion of cooperation among industries producing equipment for the exploitation of renewable energy sources;
- (v) ensuring that the contractual terms governing supplies to the distribution companies of electricity generated from renewable sources are such as to encourage the exploitation of those sources, and providing for measures for financial support towards feasibility studies for projects to exploit renewable energy sources, in particular for local authorities and SMEs;

¹ See COM(85) 245 final: 'New Community energy objectives for 1995'

- (vi) the establishment, where they do not already exist, of public advisory bodies to draft feasibility studies and for assembling technical and financial packages for projects, and the facilitation of the exchange of information concerning the development of renewable sources between Member States and at Community level, in particular via agreements for access to national data bases.

As far as standards are concerned, and with a view to the completion of the internal market, the Commission will examine the question of whether to propose common rules for the certification of equipment for the exploitation of renewable energy sources, should there be any obstacles to their free movement in the Community.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

This Opinion was adopted with no votes against less one abstention.

The Committee criticizes the Recommendation's lack of practicality in that it does not call on the Member States to take measures to exploit domestic energy potential.

Setting objectives for the development of renewable energy sources is an essentially theoretical matter unless there is a clear political will and appropriate funding making it possible to achieve those objectives, the Committee said.

A purely microeconomic assessment of the potential of renewable energy sources distorts reality by ignoring the positive effects of their development, particularly in the environmental, regional and employment fields.

The Committee welcomes the implementation of various Community programmes seeking to promote the development and use of renewable energy sources. However, it points out that certain problems with the implementation of the programmes reduce their efficiency.

To solve these problems — which it lists — the Committee proposes that 'demonstration centres for new and renewable energy sources' be set up; it goes on to list a number of their tasks.

The Committee comments specifically on the following aspects of the draft Recommendation:

- (i) the obstacles to the development of renewable energy sources;

¹ CES 74/88.

- (ii) dissemination and exploitation of the results of demonstration programmes;
- (iii) dissemination of technology relating to renewable energy sources;
- (iv) optimization of the use of renewable energy sources;
- (v) financial assistance for the use of renewable energy sources.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research, chaired by Mr Romoli (Italy — Workers). The rapporteur was Mr Flum (Germany — Workers).

9. BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH

'Proposal for a Council Decision revising the multiannual research action programme for the European Economic Community in the field of biotechnology (1985-89)'
[COM(87) 481 final]

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Council adopted the biotechnology research programme (1985-89) on 12 March 1985.¹

The Committee approved the 55 million ECU programme, subject to certain reservations, on 21 November 1984.² The main aim of the programme is to develop the Community's capacity to master and exploit the agricultural and industrial applications of modern biology. The programme covers genetic engineering, enzyme research, *in vitro* testing of the toxicological effects of molecules, cell technology, and collection of biotic materials.

Another aim is to help devise new ways of assessing biohazards and draw up consistent, uniform policies and regulations for the development of biotechnology in the Community.

The Commission has now reviewed the programme as required by Article 3 of the Council Decision.³ It proposes that the programme be revised in order to step up activity in certain areas as laid down in the Framework programme of Community activities in technological R&D.

¹ OJ L 83 of 25 3.1985.

² OJ C 25 of 28 1.1985.

³ COM(86) 272 final.

The Commission proposes a 20 million ECU increase in the programme's budget in order to expand activity in the following areas:

- (i) assessment of risks related to new biotechnologies, and particularly to the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms (4.40 million ECU);
- (ii) development of bio-informatics, with the emphasis on processing data related to culture collections, genome sequences and protein modelling (4.30 million ECU);
- (iii) development of training to meet the growing need for highly qualified researchers (4 million ECU);
- (iv) participation of Spanish and Portuguese laboratories in the activities covered by the programme (4 million ECU);
- (v) initiation of studies and feasibility projects for the next biotechnology programme (1990-94), in order to assess the technical requirements and expected value of fully integrated research on genome mapping and sequencing in species useful to man (2 million ECU).

The Commission proposes the allocation of 1.3 million ECU for staff expenditure and the operational costs of new initiatives, including the dissemination of results to industry.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously less 1 abstention, approving the proposal, the Committee stresses that biotechnology is an important area of research not only for reasons of agricultural and industrial competitiveness but also because it is in the interests of all citizens to protect health and improve the quality of life.

Biotechnology is an area where the Commission should supplement national programmes of research and development by a Community programme using Community funds. Objectives should include the promotion of effective interaction between Member States' industrial and technological research centres with regard to cross-fertilization, dissemination of information, training, risk evaluation, and certain fields of research and development.

An effective involvement with industry both in the research programmes and in the subsequent stages of development is a key factor in assessing the value which will accrue to the Community from the proposed expenditure. The Commission approach appears to be in

¹ CES 75/88.

line with the principles for effective shared-cost research which the Committee has enumerated in its earlier Opinions and information reports.

The Committee also views the Commission initiatives on the utilization of research results as a step in the right direction.

The Committee also comments on:

- (i) risk assessment and the regulation of biotechnology;
- (ii) the use of information technologies in applied biological research (bio-informatics);
- (iii) training;
- (iv) the inclusion of Spain and Portugal;
- (v) staffing levels;
- (vi) assessment of the impact on competitiveness and employment;
- (vii) public information on the issues involved;
- (viii) the possible extension of the programme to non-EEC European countries;
- (ix) the ethical hazards of biotechnological research.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research, chaired by Mr Romoli (Italy — Employers). The rapporteur was Mr de Normann (United Kingdom — Employers).

10. FAST

'Proposal for a Council Decision concerning Community action in the field of forecasting and assessment in science and technology (FAST)'
[COM(87) 502 final]

Gist of the Commission proposal

The aim of the FAST programme is to contribute towards the identification and definition of new guidelines and priorities for Community R&TD policy *per se* and in its links with other Community policies.

The programme's main task in this context is to analyse long-term scientific and technological changes and study their implications and consequences for the Community's socio-economic development and the quality of life.

The FAST programme was launched in 1978 for an experimental five-year period (1978-83). A second programme — FAST II — for the period 1983-87,¹ which was endorsed by the Committee in its Opinion of 19 May 1983,² was adopted by the Council in October 1983.

The continuation of the FAST programme, as proposed by the Commission, is one of the priorities of the Framework programme of Community activities in the field of research and technological development (1987-91).

The Commission has a two-fold objective:

- (i) first, the programme's activities are to be integrated into the different stages of Community research planning; this entails both greater flexibility in the planning and performance of the work and greater coordination and integration of the cross-disciplinary multi-sectoral activities of FAST with the activities of other Directorates-General at the Commission;
- (ii) the links between national activities of the FAST type and the Community's FAST activities are to be strengthened.

Three functions have been assigned to FAST by the Commission:

- (i) a forecasting function which will consist of presenting hypotheses and shedding light on the long-term opportunities, problems and challenges to Europe posed by scientific, technological, social and economic changes;
- (ii) a technology assessment function, which will involve three types of analyses: factual analyses, anticipation and impact analyses, and strategic analyses of the European situation;
- (iii) a monitoring function, which will include analyses of scientific and technological indicators, the methodology of forecasting and technology assessment, and the institutionalization and utilization of long-term analyses, together with the identification of new trends related to problems investigated and methods used.

The new FAST programme is to run from 1988 to 1992, and it is estimated that 14 million ECU from the Community budget will be required for its implementation.

¹ OJ L 293 of 25.10.1983.

² ESC Opinion 541/83 — OJ C 211 of 8.8.1983.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted by a large majority (2 abstentions), the Committee approves the Commission's proposal, and notes that the Commission has taken account of previous ESC recommendations on the FAST programme.

The Committee deplores the lack of knowledge of the FAST programme in the Member States, and asks that immediate steps be taken to remedy this.

Moreover, there is an urgent need to ensure that the results of the FAST II programme are made widely known. The Committee therefore approves the Commission's proposal to make diffusion and dissemination a priority in 1988.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research, chaired by Mr Romoli (Italy — Employers). The rapporteur was Mr Roseingrave (Ireland — Various Interests).

11. COCOA/CHOCOLATE

'Proposal for a Council Directive amending for the eighth time Directive 73/241/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to cocoa and chocolate products intended for human consumption'

[COM(87) 581 final]

Gist of the draft Directive

The purpose of the draft Directive is to keep in force Spanish national laws providing for the marketing of chocolate under the names 'familiar a la taza' and 'a la taza'.

It is desirable for Spanish consumers to be able to obtain this type of product under the same names on the market beyond 31 December 1987, the deadline set under the Act of Accession of 12 January 1985.

The products in question contain sugar, minimum 14% fat-free dried cocoa, minimum 18% cocoa butter, starch and flour (maximum 18% in the case of chocolate known as 'familiar a la taza' and maximum 8% in the case of 'a la taza' chocolate). These types of chocolate may be cooked and consumed as a drink.

¹ CFS 76/88

Directive 73/241/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States on cocoa and chocolate products for human consumption does not list in Annex 1 cooking chocolate containing starch products.

As it is however, not considered advisable to include these products in the Annex, the Commission proposes that they be excluded from the scope of the Directive.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee approves the Commission proposal.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture and Fisheries, chaired by Mr Laur (France — Various Interests). The rapporteur was Mr Gardner (United Kingdom — Employers).

12. ENZOOTIC BOVINE LEUKOSIS

'Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive No 64/432/EEC and revoking Directive No 80/1102/EEC as regards the arrangements in relation to enzootic bovine leukosis'
[COM(87) 594 final]

Gist of the Commission proposal

Council Directives 80/1102/EEC and 85/571/EEC, which amend Council Directive 64/432/EEC, lay down the health guarantees regarding enzootic bovine leukosis (EBL) for bovine animals intended for intra-Community trade. These health measures have been in effect for nearly seven years and, in general, the risk of the disease spreading has been greatly reduced and the measures themselves do not cause too much difficulty in trade. Some adjustments to these measures have been made. A new screening test has been added to the legislation.

Gist of the Committee Opinion²

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee supports the Commission's draft Directive.

¹ CES 73/88.

² CES 85/88.

In order to clarify the rules applicable, it is necessary to consolidate the provisions relating to EBL. These provisions will be applicable up to 31 December 1991. It will be necessary to review the situation by this date, taking account of the requirements for establishing the internal market.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture and Fisheries, chaired by Mr Laur (France — Various Interests). The rapporteur was Mr Storie-Pugh (United Kingdom — Various Interests).

13. TAX RELIEF ON SMALL CONSIGNMENTS

'Proposal for a Council Directive amending for the fifth time Directive 74/651/EEC on the tax reliefs to be allowed on the importation of goods in small consignments of a non-commercial character within the Community'

[COM(87) 583 final]

Gist of the Commission document

Council Directive 74/651/EEC of 19 December 1974 introduced a common system of tax relief for small non-commercial consignments sent from one Member State to another. The amount of the relief was last set at 100 ECU with effect from 1 October 1985.

On the occasion of the most recent increase, an article was inserted whereby, 'every two years, and for the first time on 31 October 1987 at the latest, the Council, acting in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Treaty in the matter, shall adjust the amounts of the reliefs referred to in order to maintain real value'. The relief referred to in paragraph 2 is one of 100 ECU while paragraph 2a concerns a derogation for Ireland.

After considering the weighted average increase in consumer prices in the Community, the Commission is suggesting that the relief of 100 ECU be increased to 110 ECU.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee approves the proposal, but would have preferred earlier Commission proposals for an automatic annual adaptation process.

¹ CES 77/88.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services chaired by Mr Kazazis (Greece — Employers). The rapporteur was Mr Noordwal (the Netherlands — Employers).

14. VETERINARY MATTERS — PURE-BRED BREEDING ANIMALS

**'Proposal for a Council Directive concerning pure-bred
breeding sheep and goats'
[COM(87) 591 final]**

Gist of the Commission proposal

Satisfactory results in the breeding and rearing of sheep and goats depend largely on the use of pure-bred animals for breeding.

The Member States are at present pursuing different breeding policies. The result is that trade in pure-bred breeding animals is encountering obstacles ranging from mere restrictions to total bans on intra-Community movement.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee approves the Commission proposal, which lays down basic rules for the liberalization of intra-Community trade in pure-bred breeding sheep and goats, with the aim of promoting an increase in productivity in this sector and completing the internal market.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture and Fisheries, chaired by Mr Laur (France — Various Interests). The rapporteur was Mr Gardner (United Kingdom — Employers).

¹ CES 86/88.

External relations

Activities of the Chairman and Committee Members

On 25 January 1988, Mr Margot, Chairman, Mr Burnel, Mr Löw, Mr Staedelin and Mr Vidal, Committee Members, accompanied by Mr Beretta, rapporteur for the Opinion on social aspects of the internal market attended the opening session in Brussels of the talks between Chairmen of the national and European Parliamentary Committees for Social Affairs and Employment. Secretariat officials, Mr Kuby, Mr Toft-Nielsen and Mr Brunagel also attended.

On 11 and 12 January Mr van de Graaf, Head of Division represented the Committee at a meeting in Dusseldorf of the inter-Parliamentary Delegation for Relations with the United States.

From 12 to 16 January Mr Carroll and Mr Roseingrave attended a conference in London on challenges for European firms faced with increasingly rapid technological development. The conference was organized by the Greater London Enterprise Board.

On 14 and 15 January Mr Margot, accompanied by Committee members Mr Burnel, Mr Ceyrac and Mr Staedelin attended a seminar held in Clermont-Ferrand on the Single European Act. Mr Toft-Nielsen and Mr Pourchet of the Secretariat also attended the meeting, which was organized by the Economic and Social Council of the Auvergne.

On 18 and 21 January Mr Margot, Chairman, and Mr Moreau, Secretary-General had lunch with Community and Belgian journalists in Brussels for the purpose of strengthening links with the press and discussing current issues, including a review of the Chairman's activities and the forthcoming Brussels Summit.

On 21 and 22 January an ESC delegation met in Venice to discuss Community transit traffic via Switzerland, Austria and Yugoslavia. The 25-man delegation was headed by Mr L.J. Smith, Chairman of the Transport and Communications Section.

The delegation also had talks with the Regional Authority of Venice in an attempt to ascertain the views of Italian road-haulage interests.

railway undertakings and transport unions, as well as those of delegates from the three countries concerned. A press conference was held on 21 January.

On 22 January Mr Margot had talks in Brussels with Mrs Deton of the European Institute for High-Level International Studies (Nice).

New consultations

Since the last plenary session, the Economic and Social Committee has been consulted on the following items:

'Proposal for a Council Decision to adopt a first multiannual programme (1988-93) for biotechnology-based agro-industrial research and technological development "Eclair" (European collaborative linkage of agriculture and industry through research)'

[COM(87) 667 final]

'Proposal for a Council Directive supplementing and amending Directive 76/116/EEC in respect of the calcium, magnesium, sodium and sulphur content of fertilizers'

[COM(87) 646 final]

'Proposal for a Council Directive on health problems affecting the production, placing on the market of the Community and importation from third countries of minced meat and meat in pieces of less than one hundred grams'

[COM(87) 658 final]

'Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) laying down general rules on controls in the wine sector'

[COM(87) 694 final]

'Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 77/452/EEC concerning the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of the formal qualifications of nurses responsible for general care, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services, and Directive 77/453/EEC concerning the coordination of provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in respect of the activities of nurses responsible for general care'

[COM(87) 649 final]

'Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 823/87 laying down special provisions relating to quality wines produced in specified regions'

'Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 358/79 on sparkling wines produced in the Community as defined in point 15 of Annex I to Regulation (EEC) No 822/87'

'Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 3309/85 laying down general rules for the description and presentation of sparkling wines and aerated wines'
[COM(87) 642 final]

'Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) on a specific common measure to encourage the development of agriculture in certain regions of Spain'
[COM(87) 368 final]

'Extension of the pharmaceutical Directives to medicinal products not yet covered'
[COM(87) 697 final]

'Proposal for a Council Directive on the charging of transport infrastructure costs to heavy goods vehicles'
[COM(87) 716 final]

Draft programme of future work

February 1988 plenary session

Opinions

Equal treatment for men and women in social security schemes
[COM(87) 494 final]

Lot identification marks — foodstuffs
[COM(87) 501 final]

Construction products [COM(86) 756 final/3]

Excise duty on imports in international travel
[COM(87) 570 final]

Controls in the wine sector [COM(87) 694 final]

Own-initiative work

Cross-frontier labour market problems

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The problem of ACP countries' indebtedness

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Recognition of medical qualifications [COM(87) 577 final]

Approximation of the laws relating to machinery
[COM(87) 564 final]

Regional statistics in respect of carriage of goods by road
[COM(87) 548 final]

Importation of minced meat [COM(87) 658 final]

Eclair programme [COM(87) 667 final]

Calcium content of fertilizers [COM(87) 646 final]

Sparkling wines [COM(87) 642 final]

Tax harmonization [COM(87) 320 to 328 final]

Protection of workers from carcinogens [COM(87) 641 final]

12th ERDF Report [COM(87) 521 final]

Recognition of nurses' qualifications [COM(87) 649 final]
Creation of a European Financial Area [COM(87) 550 final]
Social developments
Electromagnetic compatibility [COM(87) 527 final]
Driving licences [COM(87) 509 final]

Own-initiative work

Transit
Relations between the Community and State-trading countries
Consumer safety
Economic situation in mid-1988
Franchise agreements
Know-how licensing agreements
Social aspects of sea fishing
Commission Report on sardines and herrings [COM(87) 219 final and 542 final]

Information report

Upland areas
Relations between the Community and Mediterranean countries
Training and supply of researchers
Energy policy and completion of the internal market
GATT/Uruguay Round
Poverty

Personal items

New Chairman of the Section for Agriculture

Mr Laur (France) was elected Chairman of the Section for Agriculture and Fisheries on 20 January 1988 in succession to Mr Lopez de la Puerta (Spain) who had resigned.

Chairman of Coface

ESC Member, Mr Roger Burnel was recently elected Chairman of the Confederation of Family Associations of the EEC (Coface).

New post for Mr Louet

Mr Roger Louet, former ESC Secretary-General, was elected President of the Institute for International Social Cooperation in succession to Mr Max Theret.

PUBLICATIONS OBTAINABLE FROM THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

General documentation

The other European Assembly, January 1987 (CES 87-004)

Opinions and studies

National regional development aid (Opinion) (Brussels 1986)
Demographic situation in the Community (Information report) (Brussels 1986)
Consumer-producer dialogue (Opinion) (January 1985) (ESC 84-011)
Irish border areas (Information report) (February 1984) (ESC 84-002)
Transport policy in the 1980s (Opinion) (March 1983) 99 pp. (ESC 83-003)

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

Community Advisory Committee for the Representation of Socio-Economic
Interests (UKL 8.50)
European interest groups and their relationship to the Economic and Social
Committee (UKL 25)

Obtainable from Editions Delta, 92-94 Square Plasky, 1040 Brussels:

The economic and social interest groups of Portugal (BFR 350)
Action by the European Community through its financial instruments (Brussels
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The economic and social interest groups of Greece (BFR 350)
The right of initiative of the ESC (BFR 400)

Obtainable from Kogan Page Ltd, 120 Pentonville Rd, London N1

Directory of European agricultural organizations (UKL 39)

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

Bulletin (monthly publication) (per issue: ECU 3.50, UKL 2 50, USD 3.50,
IRL 2.70). Annual subscription: ECU 27.70, UKL 19.80, USD 29, IRL 21.20)
Effects of the CAP on the social situation of farmworkers in the European
Community (Brussels 1987) (ECU 3.40, BFR 150, IRL 2.40, UKL 2 10,
USD 3.50)
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EEC maritime transport policy (Brussels, June 1986) (ESC 86-008-EN)
(ECU 3.40, UKL 2.40, IRL 2.70, USD 4)
EEC air transport policy (October 1985) (ECU 5.50, UKL 3.30, IRL 4, USD 5)
The economic and social situation of the Community (1986) (84-015) (ECU 4,
IRL 3, UKL 3, USD 5)
GATT — towards a new round (Opinion) (Brussels 1986) (ECU 2 20, BFR 100,
IRL 1.60, UKL 1.40, USD 2.50)
Competition policy (ECU 3.40, BFR 150, IRL 2.70, UKL 2 50, USD 4)

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