

European Economic and Social Committee



European Economic and Social Committee



BULLETIN

7 '99

Facts and figures - September 1999

PRESIDENCY

President: Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli
(Italy - Various Interests)

Vice-presidents: Josly Piette
(Belgium - Workers)

Aina Margareta Regnell
(Sweden - Employers)

Secretary-General: Patrick Venturini

ORIGINS

The ESC was set up by the 1957 Rome Treaties in order to involve economic and social interest groups in the establishment of the common market and to provide institutional machinery for briefing the European Commission and the Council of Ministers on European Union issues.

The Single European Act (1986), the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) have reinforced the ESC's role.

MEMBERSHIP

The 222 members of the ESC are drawn from economic and social interest groups in Europe. Members are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union for a renewable 4-year term of office. They belong to one of three groups: Employers (Group I - president: Manuel Eugénio Cavaleiro Brandão - Portugal), Workers (Group II - president: Roger Briesch - France), Various Interests (Group III - president: Anne-Marie Sigmund - Austria). Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom have 24 members each. Spain has 21, Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Austria and Sweden 12, Denmark, Ireland and Finland 9 and Luxembourg 6.

THE MEMBERS' MANDATE

The task of members is to issue opinions on matters referred to the ESC by the Commission and the Council, as well as the European Parliament pursuant to the Amsterdam Treaty.

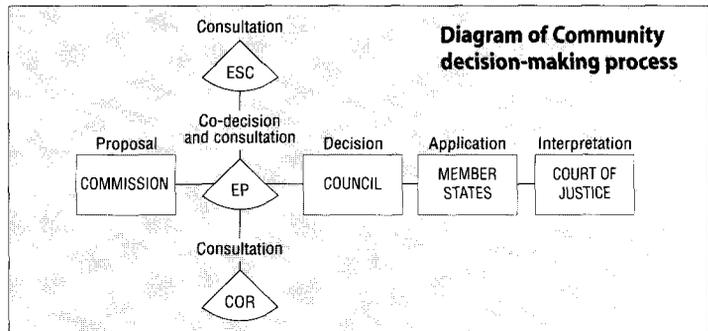
The ESC is the only socio-occupational advisory body that can be consulted by the EU Council of Ministers.

ADVISORY ROLE

Consultation of the ESC by the Commission or the Council is mandatory in certain cases; in others it is optional. The ESC may, however, also adopt opinions on its own initiative. The Single European Act (17.2.86), the Maastricht Treaty (7.2.92) and the Treaty of Amsterdam (signed on 2.10.97) extended the range of issues which must be referred to the Committee: regional policy, environmental policy, employment policy, broad guidelines for economic policies, combating social exclusion, etc. The ESC produces 180 opinions a year (of which 15% are issued on its own-initiative). All opinions are forwarded to the Community's decision-making bodies and then published in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

INFORMATION AND INTEGRATION ROLE

Over the last few years the ESC has stepped up its role in the European Union and has transcended the straightforward duties flowing from the treaties. It acts



as a forum for the single market and has hosted, with the support of other EU bodies, a series of events aimed at bringing the EU closer to the people.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

1. Presidency and Bureau

Every two years the ESC elects a Bureau made up of 24 members (eight per group), including a president and two vice-presidents chosen from each of the three groups in rotation.

The president is responsible for the orderly conduct of the Committee's business. He is assisted by the vice-presidents, who deputize for him in the event of his absence.

The president represents the ESC in relations with outside bodies.

The Bureau's main task is to organize and coordinate the work of the ESC's various bodies and to lay down policy guidelines for this work.

2. Sections

The Committee has six sections:

- Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion - secretariat tel. 546 9366 (president: Umberto Burani - Group I - Italy)
- Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption - secretariat tel. 546 9598 (president: Klaus Schmitz - Group II - Germany)
- Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society - secretariat tel. 546 9611 (president: José Ignacio Gafo Fernández - Group I - Spain)
- Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship - secretariat tel. 546 9215 (president: Jan Olsson - Group III - Sweden)
- Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment - secretariat tel. 546 9687 (president: Etienne de Paul de Barchfontaine - Group III - Belgium)
- Section for External Relations - secretariat tel. 546 9537 (president: George Wright - Group II - United Kingdom)

3. Study groups

Section opinions are drafted by study groups, varying in size from three to 15 members, including a rapporteur who may be assisted by as many as four outside experts.

4. Other bodies

The ESC has the right to set up other ad hoc structures under its Rules of Procedure, known as sub-committees, for specific issues. It has also set up a permanent Single Market Observatory.

5. Plenary session

As a rule, the full Committee meets in plenary session ten times a year. At the plenary sessions, opinions are adopted on the basis of section opinions by a simple majority. They are forwarded to the institutions and published in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

1. Relations with economic and social councils

The ESC maintains regular links with regional and national economic and social councils throughout the European Union. These links mainly involve exchanges of information and joint discussions every year on specific issues.

The ESC also liaises worldwide with other economic and social councils at the "International Meetings" held every two years.

2. Relations with economic and social interest groups in third countries

The ESC has links with economic and social interest groups in a number of non-member countries and groups of countries, including Mediterranean countries, the ACP countries, central and eastern Europe, Latin America and EFTA. For this purpose the ESC sets up delegations headed by the president or a vice-president. Some meetings involving the countries of central and eastern Europe have been institutionalized with the agreement of the Council, e.g. with the Committee's counterparts in Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland. There are also formal links with socio-economic interest groups in Turkey.

PUBLICATIONS

The ESC regularly distributes a number of publications, including its main opinions, a monthly newsletter entitled ESC INFO and its Annual Report.

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

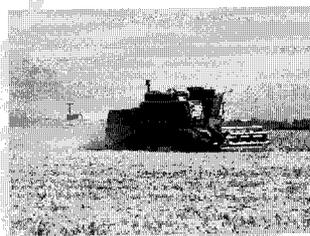
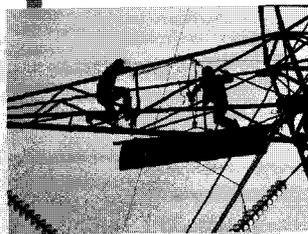
The Committee is serviced by a secretariat-general, headed by a secretary-general who reports to the president, representing the Bureau.

135 staff work exclusively for the Economic and Social Committee. Since 1 January 1995, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions have shared a common core of departments whose staff, numbering 516, are mostly members of the ESC secretariat. The secretariat's annual budget is currently in the order of 27 million euros.

European Economic and Social Committee



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This Bulletin reports on the activities of the Economic and Social Committee, a European consultative assembly. It is published after plenary sessions in French, English and German. Versions in the eleven official languages of the European Union are available on the ESC Internet site (<http://www.esc.eu.int>).

The complete texts of ESC opinions are available:

- *in the Official Journal of the European Communities,*
- *on the CELEX database,*
- *at the ESC Internet site,*
- *on written request from the ESC General Secretariat.*

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Catalogue no.: ESC-99-007-EN

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Printed in Belgium

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I. 366th PLENARY SESSION - 22 and 23 SEPTEMBER 1999

The European Economic and Social Committee held its 366th plenary session in Brussels on 22 and 23 September 1999. The ESC president, Mrs Rangoni Machiavelli, took the chair.

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In the course of the session, the Committee adopted the following opinions:

Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption
Joao Pereira dos Santos, Head of Division - ☎ (32-2) 546 9245

1. IMPACT OF ENLARGEMENT ON THE SINGLE MARKET (*Own-initiative Opinion*)

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee
on the *Impact of the enlargement of the Union on the single market (Single Market Observatory)*

(CES 852/99)

Rapporteur: Bruno VEVER (France - Employers)

Background

The single market is about to undergo major changes as a result of the enlargement process, which will increase EU membership from 15 to 26 and more Member States.

The advantages will be:

- a new economic order in Europe;
- a larger market;
- economies of scale;
- trade expansion;
- stimulus for growth;
- extension of Trans-European networks.

On the other hand, certain current problems will be exacerbated and others will emerge:

- prevention of new barriers;
- extension of mutual recognition;
- complications involved in unanimous decisionmaking;

- coordination of customs arrangements;
- fraud prevention;
- delocation.

The purpose of this own-initiative opinion is to assess the scale of potential changes and consider the priorities and ways of maximising opportunities and containing problems.

The emphasis will be primarily on:

- sectors which seem to require more stringent EU rules;
- sectors in which it would seem preferable to respect diversity;
- sharing of responsibility among Community Institutions, Member States and the economic and social partners.

Two hearings have been held to ascertain the specific experiences and views of socio-economic players in the EU and the applicant countries.

Gist of the opinion

The opinion lists a number of problems:

- problems for the candidate countries (first and foremost the unknown elements in the political process that has begun and the resulting un

certainty, but also the complexity and constraints of implementing Community legislation, underdeveloped infrastructure, problems facing SMEs, and the need for better information),

- problems for the EU Member States (adjusting regulations, liberalising the economy, as well as the institutional capacity in the applicant countries), and
- shared problems (striking the right balance between the economic competitiveness of a wider single market and the quality of life of the European public, as well as challenges in relation to the economic and monetary union).

In order to solve these problems, the opinion lists a number of priorities:

For the candidate countries, specific initiatives are proposed in enlarging the scope of the Central European Free Trade Agreement, monitoring the transposition of legislation by drawing up regular scoreboards on this progress, setting up single market coordination centres and contact points for businesses and the general public, and, in general terms, promoting social dialogue in the applicant countries and between the social partners on both sides.

The main priorities for the EU Member States are reforming its institutions, speeding up the completion of the single market in key areas and involving the applicant countries in the debate on the future management of the enlarged single market.

The shared priorities for the applicant countries and the EU are assuring the best possible use of EU aid to the applicant countries (including systematic assessment, careful targeting, and a wide consultation and cooperation, also involving socio-occupational organisations and businesses) and establishing a joint debate on the future of the single market.

Finally, the opinion lists a number of specific Economic and Social Committee initiatives: developing existing contacts with the socio-occupational partners in the applicant countries, tracking progress on the various recommendations made in the opinion, and extending the scope of the Single Market Observatory's PRISM survey (Progress Report on Initiatives in the Single Market) to cover

initiatives and good practice of relevance for the enlargement.

2. CORPORATE COMPETITIVENESS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Commission Communication on the competitiveness of European enterprises in the face of globalisation
(COM(98) 718 final)

(CES 854/99)

Rapporteur: Peter MORGAN (United Kingdom - Employers)

Gist of Commission document

The Commission's Communication launches an open debate on the orientation of a new industrial policy with a view to addressing the challenges of globalisation and accelerated technological changes.

The Commission views globalisation as an opportunity for Europe to seize, rather than a threat, and as a potential source of job creation. But to make the most of it, and to obtain maximum benefit in the interests of Europe's citizens and economy, the European Union must adjust to this new state of affairs without delay.

The Communication diagnoses European industry's weaknesses and proposes a series of measures to promote industrial competitiveness. These measures include:

- strengthening the Single Market via continued European standardisation, realisation of the European company statute, closer co-ordination of fiscal policies, and increased mutual recognition of qualifications in the services sector;
- continued liberalisation of public utilities, telecommunications and transport;
- reduction of barriers to export markets via mutual recognition agreements at a global level;
- taking advantage of the benefits of EMU at all levels;
- continued co-ordination of national job-creation policies;
- revision and modernisation of competition policy;

- orientation of state aid policy towards promotion of intangible investment;
- improved preparation and defence of European positions in the area of global trade policy (WTO, etc.);
- development of the Global Business Dialogue, and promotion of self-regulation for consumer protection;
- improved training and inclusion of entrepreneurship in school curricula;
- development of networks linking up innovative SMEs, risk capital suppliers and universities;
- implementation of the Action Plan for venture capital;
- removal of barriers between educational institutions and enterprises in order to develop technological competencies and to promote life-long learning, social cohesion, individual mobility and the use of information technologies;
- adaptation of legislation at all levels to the context of the information society;
- improved focusing of 5th RTD framework programme, and exploitation of research results through venture capital and the I-Tech initiative;
- promotion of best practices and technology transfer in the area of research;
- improvement of public policies concerning research (including public purchasing, competition policy and trade policy); and
- modernisation of the European Patent system.

Gist of the Opinion

The Committee welcomes the Communication from the Commission. It is in full agreement with the analysis and with many of the actions pro-

posed. In order to begin the debate the Committee poses the following questions:

- If all foreign domiciled enterprises operating in Europe are classified as "European", what are the implications for industrial policy ?
- To what extent is the late development of capital markets in continental Europe still holding back the participation of European enterprises in global markets and global Mergers and Acquisitions activity?
- How can the EU and Member States help current and former nationalised enterprises to participate in the rationalisation of European enterprises into competitive combinations with global scale? How can the impact of such restructuring on all stakeholders be mitigated?
- Can Europe develop a form of venture capital compatible with the norms of social market economy?
- What steps can be taken to develop the European market demand for high-tech products and services, so that there is demand pull as well as technological push?
- What steps should the EU take to promote its values, particularly the social market model, in international fora? What are the alternatives if it fails, or is only partly successful?
- In total, are the actions outlined in Section III of the Communication really sufficient to facilitate the spread of a new enterprise culture, encourage risk-taking and promote the emergence of innovative companies able and willing to conquer world markets? Can the industrial framework and business culture be adapted while economic and social cohesion is preserved? At stake is the ability of Europe to create enterprises which can compete effectively in the 21st century.

Section for Transport, Energy Infrastructure and the Information Society

Luigi Del Bino, Head of Division - ☎ (32-2) 546 9353

3. PERMITS FOR HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES / SWITZERLAND

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) on the distribution of permits for heavy goods vehicles travelling in Switzerland

(COM(1999) 35 final - 99/0022 SYN)

(CES 842/99 - 99/0022 SYN)

Rapporteur: Dethmer H. KIELMAN (Netherlands - Employers)

Gist of the Commission document

A political Agreement has been reached between Switzerland and the European Community for a system of rules on the transport of goods and passengers by rail and road. Article 8 of this Agreement grants for a transitional period a quantity of permits for hauliers of Member States enabling them to operate vehicles and vehicle combinations at weights in excess of 28 tonnes on Swiss territory (to be known as "full-weight permits"). These permits, therefore, allow Community hauliers to operate vehicles that meet Community weight limits before Switzerland fully aligns itself with these standards in the year 2005.

In addition, Article 40 of the Agreement grants for a transitional period a quantity of permits for EU hauliers enabling them to transit Switzerland at a reduced infrastructure charge, provided they are empty or are carrying certain specified loads. These shall be known as "empty permits".

The purpose, therefore, of this proposal for a Council Regulation is to lay down tables of distribution across Member States for the above-mentioned permits.

Gist of the opinion

The ESC thinks that, in view of the political straitjacket in which the Commission had to draw up the proposal on allocating permits, it has produced an initial proposal based on a methodology that is inherently acceptable.

The ESC assumes, moreover, that as soon as the results of the survey on the nationality of vehicles are available, permits will actually be redistributed, so as to correct the injustices mentioned earlier. The Committee feels that this should apply both to the allocation of permits among the Member States and to the ratio of bilateral to transit permits.

As regards the impact on road transport of the closure of the Mont Blanc tunnel, the ESC would highlight the social consequences, in particular, of this closure for the other tunnels and border crossings.

So that the Member States in question suffer no serious social or economic consequences, the ESC would urge the Commission, Council and Parliament to do everything in their power to approve temporary solutions as quickly as possible and to

put pressure on Switzerland using all possible means.

The Committee feels that the construction of rail tunnels through the Alps may in itself be a good option for road transport, but considers that use of the railway must not be imposed through artificial tariff incentives.

The Committee thinks the deadline of 15 November, by which the Member States are supposed to return unused permits to the Commission, should be brought forward to allow the permits to be used during the current year.

4. EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL OBSERVATORY

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the: *Proposal for a Council Decision concerning Community participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory*
(COM(1999) 111 final - 99/0066 CNS)

(CES 843/99 - 99/0066 CNS)

Rapporteur: Bernardo HERNÁNDEZ BATALLER
(Spain - Various Interests)

Background

In accordance with the mandate granted to the Coordinators' Committee of the Eureka programme, created in Paris on 2 October 1989, the ministers or representatives of 29 European countries and a Member of the Commission, meeting in Helsinki on 12 June 1992, decided to set up the European Audiovisual Observatory. The Observatory was accordingly established in Strasbourg on the basis of a "Partial Agreement" of the Council of Europe, adopted by means of Resolution (92)70 on 15 December 1992. The Observatory's continuation for an indefinite period was confirmed by Resolution (97)4, adopted on 20 March 1997 by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers.

The Observatory currently has 34 Member States (the EU Member States, the European Economic Area countries, all the applicant countries, Switzerland and Russia).

According to Resolution (92)70, "the aim of the Observatory shall be to improve the transfer of information within the audiovisual industry, to

promote a clearer view of the market and a greater transparency and specifically, the task of the Observatory shall be to collect and process information and statistics on the audiovisual sector (namely, legal, economic and programme information)".

The Economic and Social Committee, for its part, has drawn up several opinions on this subject.

The Community's statistical activities in the audiovisual field

With a view to harmonising Member States' data collection methods in the audiovisual sector, on 27 July 1998 the Commission proposed a Council Decision "establishing a Community statistical information infrastructure relating to the industry and markets of the audiovisual and related sectors".

Eurostat's activities and those of the Observatory are compatible, although unlike Eurostat, the Observatory provides largely legal information geared primarily to professionals in the audiovisual sector. The information is *functional* and pertinent to company needs. The two bodies established a "modus operandi" following the meeting of 15 September 1998.

The Commission proposal

The purpose of the draft decision is for the Community to be a member of the Observatory and to provide a legal basis for the Commission's financial contribution. The Financial Statement attached to the proposal puts the Community contribution to the Observatory at **12.25%** of its total budget, according to the weighting applied for Eureka Audiovisual. Total commitment appropriations for the 1999-2004 period are EUR 1,325,000.

Gist of the opinion

The Committee supports the Commission proposal as it will help to boost the competitiveness of Europe's audiovisual sector by improving the transfer of economic and legal information, providing a clearer picture of the market, encouraging transparency and investment in infrastructure. In short, the Committee considers that adoption of the proposal will help to strengthen the European audiovisual industry.

The Community should evaluate the importance of the audiovisual sector and future requirements for statistics on this sector, especially the data needed to deepen the social dimension of the Union, i.e. to develop and monitor employment, training and equal opportunities policy.

The Committee hopes that the Commission (a) promotes an audiovisual policy which guarantees genuine European added value by launching Community programmes and actions in the audiovisual sphere, especially the Media III programme, and (b) ensures in general that Community law is respected and applied, in particular through the proper application of the Treaty of Amsterdam's Protocol on the system of public broadcasting in the Member States.

The Committee reiterates that, if more practical action is to be taken in the cultural sphere to defend and promote the "European cultural identity" and endow it with a political dimension, it is necessary to raise awareness among users and provide them with information, as well as serving the industry and Member States. Hence the Commission should set up a "European Information Society Agency" which would also help to coordinate the various initiatives in the area of multimedia convergence.

5. TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS BY ROAD

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 94/55/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by road
(COM(1999) 158 final)

(CES 844/99)

Rapporteur: Helmut GIESECKE (Germany - Employers)

Gist of Commission document

Directive 94/55/EC, which entered into force on 1 January 1997, lays down a number of transitional provisions valid until 1 January 1999 to permit completion of standardisation work being carried out by the European Committee for Stan-

standardisation (CEN) and amendment of some of the provisions of the annexes to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR).

Because of delays in this work, the time-limit fixed in Directive 94/55/EC is not consistent with the current situation, leading to short-term problems of application.

This proposal for amending Directive 94/55/EC is therefore intended to:

- a) settle the problems that will arise from 1 January 1999 concerning the application of certain transitional provisions, namely:
 - Article 6(4) on receptacles for transporting class 2 gases and on tanks, the date limit for which is 1 January 1999;
 - Article 5(3)(b) on the centre of gravity of tank vehicles, the date limit for which is 31 December 1998;
 - Article 1(2)(c) which provides that before 31 December 1998 the Commission shall submit to the Council a report assessing safety aspects; as the CEN standard on quality assurance has not yet been adopted, the Commission is not at present in a position to produce a report on this subject;
- b) ensure coherence between certain provisions of Directive 94/55/EC and the amendments to the ADR annexes. The following provisions are no longer consistent with the 1997 version of the ADR annexes:
 - Article 1(2)(c), and
 - Article 6(4);
- c) amend certain provisions of Article 6 on derogations in order to specify certain derogations, their long-term treatment and their acceptance procedure in more detail.

Gist of the opinion

For the Committee, the Commission's proposal is appropriate and welcome.

The Committee recommends that individual Member States be allowed to apply stricter standards for local transport operations than the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage

of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR). This would also be conducive to equality of opportunity for rail transport.

However, the Committee asks the Commission to clarify what it understands by "local transport". Under no circumstances must the meaning of this term be broadened to cover large stretches of a distribution area.

In view of various occurrences in the past, the Committee trusts that the governments responsible will impose the strictest standards when granting derogations for "ad hoc transport operations".

6. TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS / RAIL

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 96/49/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by rail

(COM(1999) 157 final - 99/0087 COD)

(CES 845/99 - 99/0087 COD)

Rapporteur: Helmut GIESECKE (Germany - Employers)

Gist of the Commission document

Directive 96/49/EC, which came into force on 1 January 1997, lays down a number of transitional provisions - valid until 1 January 1999 - to permit completion of standardisation work being carried out by the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN).

Because of delays in this work, the time-limit fixed in Directive 96/49/EC is not consistent with the current situation, thus leading to short-term problems of application.

The aims of the present proposal to amend Directive 96/49/EC are:

- a) to resolve the problems concerning Article 6(4) on receptacles for transporting Class 2 gases and on tanks, which have arisen since the deadline of 1 January 1999 has been exceeded; and

- b) to amend certain provisions of Article 6 (Derogations) in order to specify certain derogations, their long-term treatment and their acceptance procedure in more detail.

Gist of the opinion

The Commission's proposal is appropriate and welcomed.

The Committee recommends that individual Member States be allowed to apply stricter standards than the RID for local transport operations. This is

also conducive to equality of opportunity for road hauliers.

However, the ESC would ask the Commission to clarify what it understands by "local transport". Under no circumstances must the meaning of this term be broadened to cover large stretches of a distribution area.

In view of various occurrences in the past, the Committee trusts that the governments responsible will impose the strictest standards when granting derogations for "ad hoc transport operations".

Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment

Sylvia Calamandrei, Head of Division - ☎ (32-2) 546 9396

7. CMO / FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products

(COM(1999) 55 final - 99/0047 CNS)

(CES 846/99 - 99/0047 CNS)

Rapporteur: Eduardo CHAGAS (Portugal - Workers)

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Commission considers that dwindling resources, the globalisation of markets, changes in consumer habits and the growing role of super-market chains in the retail trade makes it a necessity to reform the common market organisation. The main innovations being proposed are:

- **Management of supply in relation to demand.** Producer organisations will have to draft and implement annually a management programme that adapts catches to market needs. And will be available for a five year period to allow them to do so.
- **Development of new outlets.** Financial support will be provided to encourage producer organisations to conclude agreements with buyers

before the start of the fishing year, which will ensure that products caught will actually be sold and should help avoid final withdrawal matched with intervention. At the same time, it will help producer organisations to implement their annual management programmes.

- **Support for the development of producers' organisations.** The Commission intends to encourage the development of partnerships in order to overcome divisions between the different professions making up the sector. It plans to offer derogations from competition rules if necessary and five organisations financial support.
- **Updating of intervention mechanisms.** The Commission's goal is to reduce final market withdrawals and to encourage carry-over, i.e. storing and processing fish before placing it on the market when there is more demand. It therefore proposes a reduction in quantities eligible for withdrawal aid and lower compensation for final withdrawal, matched with an increase in quantities eligible for carry-over aid and measures encouraging added value for products.
- **Consumer information.** To avoid consumers being misled on the origin and value of products, in particular in the case of non-packaged fish products, the name of the species, method of production (fishing or aquaculture) and area of catch will have to be indicated.

- **Supply for the processing industry.** The Commission considers that imports of fish products at better prices are vital to secure jobs ashore and that a tariff regime more in line with the needs of the processing industry is therefore a necessity. The new regulation provides for a reduction in import duties by abolishing quantitative restrictions on seven species.

According to the Commission, spending under the common market organisation should initially increase - due to the new types of aid for management programmes and producer organisations' sales contracts - before dropping in the long term. On the basis of present tendencies, it estimates that measures necessitating financial aid will total EUR 20 million in 2001, 23 million in 2002, 24 million in 2003, 25 million in 2004, 22,7 million in 2005 and 2006 and 15,5 million in 2007.

Gist of the opinion

The Committee approves the proposed regulation and welcomes the fact that several legislative texts are brought into one single document. Although, the Committee considers the proposal well founded and consistent it puts forward a number of suggestions and improvements.

It recommends to collect more detailed and up-to-date information on Member State producer organisations and producers. This would help to ascertain whether the current Community system of producer organisations is in tune with the production situation. Measures should be taken to encourage organisations to draw up operational programmes that adjust catches to market needs. In the present difficult situation, price support is still particularly important and to a large extent guarantees the economic viability of many producers.

The Committee emphasises the importance of a high standard as regards consumer information, common marketing standards, quality policy and food safety.

It also stresses the need for stricter monitoring, throughout the EU, of the rules governing imports and landings from third countries or vessels flying flags of convenience; Community measures on the management and protection of fishery resources should be extended, both in international bodies and in bilateral agreements with third countries.

At the same time the processing industry must be guaranteed quality and quantity of supply.

The Committee thinks that the measures should be funded from the EAGGF and not by the Member States.

As regards the renewal of the fleet, the proposal stipulates that the capacity withdrawn must be at least 30% greater than the new capacity added. The Committee doubts whether these conditions will enable operators to renew the fleet.

As regards the suspension of the CCT duties, the Committee would prefer to see continuation of the current quota system and case-by-case analyses and it wonders about the socio-economic consequences of this measure. Finally, it is stressed that this ambitious reform must be backed by an equally extensive financial allocation.

8. MARKETING OF FORESTRY REPRODUCTIVE MATERIAL

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the *Proposal for a Council Directive on the marketing of forest reproductive material* (COM(1999) 188 final - 99/0092 CNS)

(CES 847/99 - 99/0092 CNS)

Rapporteur working alone: Seppo Ilmari KALLIO (Finland - Various Interests)

Gist of the Commission proposal

- Council Directive 66/404/EEC on the marketing of forest reproductive material and Council Directive 71/161/EEC on external quality standards for forest reproductive material marketed within the Community set out the requirements relating to genetic characters and external quality to be met by forest reproductive material before it may be marketed in the Community.
- The present proposal aims to update the legislation to take account of accessions of new Member States since 1975, the internal market and scientific advances, including the availability of new material. Furthermore, the proposal adapts the legislation to take account of the particular situation prevailing in Sweden

and Finland, both of which countries were granted transitional periods of five years in the Accession Treaty, during which they do not have to apply the legislation.

- The proposal has been drafted to ensure as much compatibility as possible with the OECD-Scheme (inclusion of two new categories).
- The proposal provides, in so far as forest reproductive material consists of genetically modified organisms, for an environmental risk assessment.
- In the interest of clarity, the proposal takes the form of a recasting of Directives 66/404/EEC and 71/161/EEC into a single text rather than numerous modifications to both Directives.

Gist of the opinion

The proposal, that responds to developments in the field (OECD-scheme), is generally supported by the Section. It acknowledges that account has been taken of the special needs of Finland and Sweden by adding a new category of reproductive material,

known as source-identified ("stand steed"). At the same time it comprises great flexibility (Member States may prohibit the utilisation of such material and they may impose more stringent rules).

As regards the prohibition of the use of unsuitable material in the Member States (for this the authorisation of the Commission is needed), the Section considers, that the procedures should be simplified and the Member States should be given greater discretionary powers while respecting the principle of the free movements of goods.

The accuracy of information on forest reproductive material must be guaranteed when material is sold into the territories of other Member States. This requires highly effective cooperation between Member States' control authorities

Implementation of the directive will increase national administrative costs as the documentation and control of forest reproductive material is intensified.

Because of the necessary revision of national legislation, the directive cannot be implemented before 2001, whereas the Commission proposes the end of 1999.

Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion
Arie Van De Graaf, Head of Division - ☎ (032-2) 546 9227

9. WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Draft Council Regulation (CE) on waste management statistics
(COM(1999) 31 final - 99/0010 CNS)

(CES 848/99 - 99/0010 CNS)

Rapporteur: Vasco CAL (Portugal - Workers)

Gist of the Commission document

The objective of the draft regulation is to establish a framework to oblige Member States and the Commission to produce Community statistics on the management of waste generated by businesses and households. The following areas are covered:

- waste production and recovery by economic activity;
- household and similar waste collection by businesses and municipal collection schemes;
- waste incineration, composting and disposal by businesses and municipal authorities.

The Commission is to be assisted by the Statistical Programme Committee and must, within three years of the date of entry into force of the regulation and every three years thereafter, submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the statistics compiled and in particular on their quality and the burden on business.

The financial impact is estimated at a total of 450,000 euros for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001.

Gist of the opinion

The Economic and Social Committee welcomes the proposed regulation and calls on the Council to adopt it forthwith. It will be an important weapon in the environmental policy armoury, in particular for preventing illegalities in the management of waste collection and incineration. The Committee is pleased to note that the proposal will pave the way for effective cooperation between EUROSTAT and the European Environment Agency (EEA).

The Committee would stress that Community policy on the collection, recovery and/or elimination of waste is universally welcomed and approved by the Member States. It is therefore up to them to provide the necessary means for optimal implementation.

The Committee proposes that the financial statement accompanying the proposal should be extended to include partial Community funding for Member States that are lagging a long way behind in the area of waste statistics.

Negotiations should be initiated right now with those countries applying to join the EU in order to help their statistical offices to meet the requirements laid down in this regulation.

10. 6TH PERIODIC REPORT ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE REGIONS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the *Sixth periodic report on the social and economic situation and development of the regions of the European Union* (SEC(1999) 66 final)

(CES 849/99)

Rapporteur: Campbell CHRISTIE (United Kingdom - Workers)

Gist of the Commission document

The report is the last in a series of three-yearly reports on the social and economic situation and development of the regions of the European Union dating from 1981. This report comes, however, six years after the last one because of the publication

in 1996 of the first report on economic and social cohesion.

In future, and in accordance with Article 130B of the Treaty, only the three-yearly report on cohesion will be published. It will contain information included until now in the Periodic Report.

This sixth report updates much of the information contained in previous Periodic Reports and in the first Cohesion Report. Nevertheless, it contains new data and assessments of the impact of: globalisation, the evolution of the information society, transition to the Euro and enlargement on regional economies and the labour market.

There are four sections:

- the situation in the regions with regard to the economy, unemployment and the labour market, and future demographic change;
- competitiveness in the regions and factors underlying competitiveness (research and technological development, SMEs, foreign direct investment, infrastructure and human capital, institutional factors and social capital);
- the role of EU structural actions;
- enlargement (the situation and demographic trends, the economy, competitiveness and administrative structures).

Gist of the opinion

The Committee is pleased to note the report's conclusion that regional disparities in per capita income across the EU have narrowed. The Committee attaches considerable importance to the continued evolution of the Funds as required in accordance with attaining the Treaty commitment to the principle of economic and social cohesion.

Despite the key role of the Structural Funds in boosting employment in regions receiving Structural Fund aid, the Committee nevertheless notes that there are still differences between Member States in this respect; it urges that the causes be reviewed and the appropriate lessons drawn. In this connection, it regrets the report's failure to include an assessment of the regional consequences of Member States' domestic policies.

In the light of the report's findings and as a matter of general policy, the Committee recommends that in future the Commission:

- address the implications of enlargement with respect to current recipients of Structural Fund support;
- examine why some recipients of Structural Fund support are failing to record a relative improvement in per capita income levels despite the general narrowing in regional disparities in per capita income since 1988; the impact of national policies on cohesion within Member States should also be examined;
- identify the "best practice" adopted by some Member States or regional authorities in regional economic development policies so that assisted regions can learn lessons from one another;
- account for differences in performance between the cohesion countries, particularly the respective contributions to regional economic growth made by the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund;
- provide general advice and information to Member States concerning those national policy measures which appear to be achieving the greatest success in regional economic development and which are consequently consistent with securing progress towards economic and social cohesion;
- investigate jointly with EUROSTAT the need for refining the NUTS classification to ensure that economic development support for disadvantaged regions is not compromised by the prosperity of core cities within the regions concerned, the impact of which could be to preclude these areas from Structural Fund support;
- incorporate specific commentary on the performance of assistance in Objective 2 regions and analyse the differences existing between the relative economic performance of the regions receiving assistance from the Funds;
- develop a robust statistical framework capable of measuring competitiveness or using indices to illustrate changes in competitiveness;
- undertake further research into the precise role that SMEs play in regional economic development;
- identify the real economic gains that will arise from enlargement both for the applicant countries and for the European Union, so as to ensure that the added cohesion costs are viewed in the appropriate light and are not seen as a dead-weight loss to the European Union.

11. APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY LAW TO THE CANARY ISLANDS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 1911/91 on the application of the provisions of Community law to the Canary Islands
(COM(1999) 226 final - 99/0111 CNS)

(CES 850/99 - 99/0111 CNS)

Rapporteur working without a Study Group: John SIMPSON (United Kingdom - Various Interests)

Gist of the Commission document

The Commission has proposed a new Council Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) 1911/91 on the application of Community law to the Canary Islands.

The amendment waives until 30 June 2000 a requirement for a further scheduled reduction in the scale of protection to local production of a limited range of products, offered through a local tax on production and imports (details below). The existing Regulation calls for annual reductions of 20 percent in this tax starting from 31 December 1996 and eliminating the tax completely from 31 December 2000 from which date the Canary Islands will also fully implement the Common Customs Tariff of the European Community.

Effectively, the amendment would postpone for six months the reduction which would otherwise have taken place on 31 December 1999. This postponement will be accompanied by an examination by the Commission of the impact of phasing out the tax on the several sectors concerned. The merits of, and the case for, further special measures in favour of these vulnerable sectors will be examined and, if

necessary, a further proposal will be made to the Council.

Gist of the opinion

The Committee recognises that the outermost regions of the European Union merit special consideration in the application of Community policies whilst adhering as closely as is practicable with the spirit and detail of those policies. The Committee particularly endorses the requirement of the Treaty (article 299(2)) that the integrity and coherence of the Community legal order should not be undermined.

The evidence of recent years is that the economic position of the Canary Islands has improved in both absolute and relative terms. Nevertheless, efforts to further enhance this progress are desirable.

The ESC, therefore, welcomes the commitment by the Commission with the Spanish authorities to examine the consequences of suspending the phasing-out of the APIM and, if judged necessary, to present a proposal on possible action. The objective is to eliminate the tax without jeopardising

some local production activities in vulnerable sectors.

Whilst the ESC endorses the general thrust of the proposal by the Commission, there would be merit in using this opportunity to review not just the impact of the APIM system of taxation but also the nature and impact of all Community policies on the development of the Canary Islands and seeking proposals which will more closely integrate the Islands into the Community and generate innovative actions to enhance their development.

The ESC, therefore, accepts the arguments made for the amendment of Regulation 1911/91 to suspend the phasing-out of the APIM as an appropriate mechanism to allow a more fundamental review of the methods of enhancing development in the Canary Islands.

When the review has been undertaken, the Economic and Social Committee will have a keen interest in the proposals which emerge and hopes that the Commission will arrange for the Committee to have an opportunity to offer its opinion on their implementation.

Section for External Relations, Trade and Development Policy
Georgina Willems, Head of Division - ☎ (32-2) 546 9471

12. PREPARATION FOR 5TH EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SUMMIT (*Information Report*)

Information Report of the Economic and Social Committee on *The role of women in economic and social life and, in particular, their integration into the labour market*

(CES 853/99)

Rapporteur: Giacomina CASSINA (Italy - Workers)

Co-rapporteur: Margarita LOPEZ ALMENDARIZ (Spain - Employers)

Background

At the intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona on 27/28 November 1995,

the economic and social councils and similar institutions of the EU and of the non-EU states bordering the Mediterranean, in conjunction with representatives of those Euro-Mediterranean countries which do not have an economic and social council, agreed on three main areas of cooperation: a political partnership on joint security, an economic and financial partnership for the creation of a free trade in the run up to the year 2010, and a partnership for social and human cooperation to draw the Mediterranean peoples closer together.

At the Euro-Mediterranean summit of economic and social councils held in Madrid on 12/13 December 1995, it was decided that a Euro-Mediterranean economic and social summit should be held annually. The second summit was held in Paris on 21/22 November 1996, the third in Casa-

blanca on 27/28 November 1997 and most recently the fourth in Lisbon on 24/25 September 1998.

The aim of all these meetings has been to contribute to greater understanding of the major topics of concern to the Euro-Mediterranean partners and to exchange information on their respective economic and social situations.

It was decided in Lisbon to hold the fifth Euro-Mediterranean summit of economic and social councils and similar institutions in Turkey in 1999.

As a permanent member of the working party responsible for coordinating these activities, the ESC has been asked to draw up, in preparation for the fifth summit, a report on the abovementioned topic, in cooperation with the economic and social councils of Greece, Spain and Tunisia.

Gist of the information report

The Stuttgart ministerial conference recently confirmed the importance which Euro-Mediterranean governments attach to cooperation and to the socio-economic integration of the Euro-Mediterranean area. Promotion of the role of women, their intrinsic qualities and potential, is an essential part of this, for both social and economic reasons, as the present report has endeavoured to show. The recommendations which follow are specifically designed to improve the position of women in the MPC; however, the most commonly advocated instrument for this is the establishment of networks with women in the EU Member States, first and foremost with those who still face difficulties and discrimination.

Since the launch of the Euro-Mediterranean initiative in Barcelona in 1995, a number of schemes for promoting the role of women have shown that socio-occupational organisations and NGOs are able and willing to intervene in this field. The time has come to extend these schemes beyond the limited financial and political confines of the MEDA-democracy programme. The measures proposed below should form the basis of a scheme for helping women to advance from equal treatment to equal opportunities, remembering that any policy must be checked for its ability to integrate women in economic and social development and make full use of their potential (mainstreaming).

In order to boost women's participation in the labour market (paid employment), the governments of the countries concerned must continue to promote it and improve compulsory schooling, guaranteeing equal opportunities both in basic education and in vocational and further training. The EU training programmes that are open to MPC citizens must facilitate access for women in general, and for young women in particular. The EU must instruct the Vocational Training Foundation in Turin to devise a specific training strategy tailored to the needs of MPC women. This should include the granting of qualifications that reflect the skills acquired; such qualifications should be recognised outside the country where they were obtained. Special attention should also be paid to the training of instructors.

When developing vocational training programmes, account must be taken of the needs of underprivileged groups of women, such as those in overcrowded urban areas and in rural or desert areas, *de facto* heads of household (where the husband has emigrated), and illiterate or functionally illiterate women. Vocational guidance services will have an important role and responsibility here.

To promote women's activity as managers of SMEs, appropriate support networks should be created or developed, in order to provide legal and fiscal advice and help businesses develop/modernise and market their products. These networks should be spread throughout the country, and should work closely with their counterparts in the EU.

Access to credit for small businesses run by women can be facilitated by setting up "mutual guarantee bodies" working closely with similar bodies in the EU. One of the main aims of such cooperation should be to encourage joint ventures and joint production and marketing strategies.

With a view to encouraging a move away from subsistence-based informal activity and towards officially recognised micro-enterprises and self-employment for women, the first task must be to set up self-help groups that will enable the women concerned to become more aware of their potential and opportunities.

It is recommended that the Commission conduct a regular (e.g. every two years) comparative survey of "good practice", and circulate its findings as

widely as possible among women in the MPC, the EU and the countries preparing for accession.

All over the world, women have always contributed to economic and social development. In the MPC, as in the EU, this fact still tends to go unrecognised, mainly because women are still insufficiently involved in decision-making and have an insufficient share of power (within the family, in political life, in the economy, over information). A more careful analysis of women's activity potential would show that their employment and economic activity do not replace those of men; on the contrary, they provide a quantitative and qualitative contribution which can do much to further the development of whole areas. In the EU Member

States, the mass entry of women into the labour market and into economic activity in general which has occurred over the last few decades has brought with it significant socio-economic advances. A similar process has begun in the MPC, albeit with differences between countries. This trend must be encouraged. It must be supported by appropriate instruments and become an integral part of the Euro-Mediterranean economic, social and cultural integration process outlined in Barcelona in 1995 and recently reviewed in Stuttgart.

The Committee decided to forward this information report to the other EU institutions

SUBCOMMITTEE "Civil Society Organisations"

13. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS
(Own-initiative Opinion)

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee
on the role and contribution of civil society organisations in the construction of Europe

(CES 851/99)

Rapporteur: Anne-Marie SIGMUND (Austria - Various Interests)

Aim of the own-initiative opinion

In her inaugural speech on 15 October last, the President of the Economic and Social Committee, Mrs Rangoni Machiavelli, stated her intention of making the Committee the focal point for civil society, in order to make a vital contribution to bringing the European Union closer to its public and to bolster the concept of Union citizenship in terms of the economic, social and civic rights it implies.

To fulfil that ambition and thus encourage the public to become actively and responsibly involved in European integration, through representative socio-occupational organisations, she announced that the organisation of a Civil Society Convention, to be held on 14/15 October 1999, was at the top of the Committee's list of priorities, as a first initiative.

This convention has four specific objectives:

- to highlight the value added that the Committee brings to the European decision-making process through its opinions;
- to enlarge and develop the Committee's function as the place where civil society is represented in Europe;
- to raise the profile of the contribution made by the economic and social partners to building Europe;
- to formalise that contribution and show that the Committee also bridges the gap between Europe and its people.

It is against this background that on 28 January 1999 the Committee decided to draw up an own-initiative opinion on the role of civil society in the construction of Europe. This opinion should provide a basis for the debates at the convention.

Gist of the opinion

At a time when European integration needs the commitment and support of ordinary people more than ever before, the EU faces a serious crisis of confidence among its citizens. They accuse it of inefficiency and point to democratic deficits.

It is precisely in connection with this lack of responsiveness to grassroots opinion that "civil society" is mentioned increasingly often, although people do not always have a clear idea of what the concept means. This is why the Committee thought it advisable first to describe the historical background and development of civil society.

From its analysis the Committee draws the conclusion that "civil society" is a collective and dynamic term for all types of social action, by individuals or groups, that do not emanate from the state and are not run by it.

While the concept is closely linked with specific historical developments in various societies, the Committee still thinks it possible to identify some key components which are characteristic of civil society: pluralism, autonomy, solidarity, public awareness, participation, education, responsibility and subsidiarity.

According to the Committee, civil society organisations can be defined in abstract terms as the sum of all organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens. Accordingly it regards the following as players in civil society: the social partners; organisations representing social and economic interest groups, which are not social partners in the strict sense of the term; NGOs; community-based organisations; and religious communities.

In the context of European integration, civil society organisations have also been set up at Community level; the basic common feature of these organisations is the intermediary role which they have taken over from the national level. While the social dialogue serves as a model for applying a form of communication intrinsic to civil society,

the Committee points out that numerous efforts have been made to set up structures for democratic establishment of a civil dialogue as a necessary complement to the social dialogue.

Stressing the need for Europe to develop a political awareness that provides transparency and requires cooperation, the Committee considers that civil society organisations therefore have the important task of contributing to a public and democratic discourse. Against this background, and by virtue of the fact that the Treaties make it the representative of civil society organisations at European level, the Committee considers that it has an important role to play in strengthening the civil dialogue.

To this end the Committee assigns itself a dual mission: (i) to foster its role vis-à-vis the Community institutions and (ii) to set up an organisational structure within the Committee itself whereby this dialogue could also be conducted with those civil society organisations that are not currently represented in the Committee. This would be a crucial contribution to developing the model of participatory democracy.

This structure would be called upon to introduce initiatives as part of a "civil society organisations" action plan. These initiatives would include the organisation of events and hearings, including outside the Committee, thus giving more people the opportunity to participate, and the consolidation and strengthening of interinstitutional contacts.

In the context of enlargement, the Committee should do more to set up civil society structures in those countries that do not yet have them, or in which they are not yet complete, to implant the European social model, and to set up in the candidate countries bodies similar to the Committee, or to the national economic and social councils.

II. FUTURE WORK

FOR INFORMATION

- Judicial and extrajudicial documents in civil or commercial matters (**INT-OCT**)
COM(1999) 219 final - 99/0102 CNS
- Community reserves of foot-and-mouth disease vaccines (**NAT-OCT**)
COM(1999) 290 final - 99/0121 CNS
- System of the European Union's own resources (**ECO-OCT**)
COM(1999) 333 final - 99/0139 CNS
- Integration of refugees (**SOC-OCT**)
COM(1998) 731 final - 98/0356 CNS
- Parental responsibility for joint children (**SOC-OCT**)
COM(1999) 220 final - 99/0110 CNS
- Coordination of social security systems (**SOC-DEC**)
COM(1998) 779 final - 98/0360 COD

FOR DECISION

- Insolvency Procedures (**INT-OCT**)
9178/99 + Corr. 1 - 99/00806 CNS
- Community Design (**INT-TO BE DETERMINED**)
COM(1999) 310 final - 93/463 CNS
- Green Paper - Liability for defective products (**INT-FEB**)
COM(1999) 396 final
- A Concerted Strategy for Modernising Social Protection (Communication) (**SOC-FEB**)
COM(1999) 347 final
- Additives in feedingstuffs (**NAT-DEC**)
COM(1999) 388 final - 99/0168 CNS
- COM in processed fruit and vegetable products (**NAT-DEC**)
COM(1999) 376 final - 99/0161 CNS

IN ANTICIPATION

- Recognition of judgments in civil and commercial matters (**INT-JAN**)
COM(1999) 348 final - 0154 CNS
- Protection of individuals/Processing of personal data (**INT-JAN**)
COM(1999) 337 final - 99/0153 COD
- Food additives other than colours and sweeteners (**NAT-DEC**)
COM(1999) 329 final - 99/0158 COD
- Protection of the Community's forests against atmospheric pollution (**NAT-DEC**)
COM(1999) 379 final - 99/0159 COD and 99/0160 COD
- Specific measure in respect of certain grain legumes (**NAT-DEC**)
COM(1999) 428 final
- Minimum Community measures for combating disease in fish (**NAT-DEC**)
COM(1999) 437 final
- Prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering (**ECO-DEC**)
COM(1999) 352 final - 99/0152 COD

OWN-INITIATIVE OPINIONS

- Safety problems in the agri-food sector (**NAT - to be decided**)
- Disadvantaged island regions in the European Union following the Amsterdam Treaty (**ECO- MARCH**)

ADDITIONAL OPINION

- Progress in the single market (5th additional opinion) (**INT/SMO - JAN**)

III. PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Activities of the ESC presidency

On 7 September **Mrs Rangoni Machiavelli**, ESC president, welcomed participants to a conference entitled "Towards a Sustainable Accession", organized by the ESC in co-operation with the Commission's Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office (TAIEX). (For more on this conference, see **Other News**, below.)

On 10 September, meanwhile, Mrs Rangoni Machiavelli met a delegation from the European Movement to discuss rural affairs, and on 21 September she held talks with Mrs Loyola de Palacio, new vice-president of the European Commission.

Activities of sections and members

Mr Olsson, president of the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, attended a working session dealing with the theme of the employability and employment of older workers, held in conjunction with the Informal Meeting of EU ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in Oulu, Finland, on 8-10 July 1999.

Mr Olsson also participated - together with representatives of the EU Presidency, the European Parliament and the Commission - in a round table discussion entitled "The Employment Guidelines: Are they working?", organised by the European Anti-Poverty Network on 10 September.

On 6 September, meanwhile, Mrs Santiago attended a conference on water pricing policy in Lisbon.

On 21 September, Ms Hassett, a member of the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, participated in a seminar on doping in sport, which was held in Brussels as part of the XXth Meeting of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies.

The study group preparing the ESC opinion on Enhancing Tourism's Potential for Employment held a hearing in Rhodes (Greece) on 13 September, followed by a study group meeting. The hearing was attended by twelve representatives of Rhodes and Dodecanese organisations and local government. It was followed by a brief press conference, attended by the study group chairman, Mr Vassilaras, and the rapporteur, Mr Malosse.

Other News

- ESC-TAIEX conference: "Towards a sustainable accession", 7-8 September

For a number of years the European ESC has been involved in activities to strengthen relations with the applicant countries, via their civil society organizations. For this reason it held a conference in Brussels on 7 and 8 September in co-operation with the Commission's Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office (TAIEX)

entitled "Towards a Sustainable Accession". Six delegates representing different economic and social organisations and civil society from each candidate country were invited to participate in the conference. Representatives of the European Institutions, the Permanent Representations, European professional federations and various EU institutions and organisations were also invited.

Mrs Rangoni Machiavelli, president of the Economic and Social Committee, welcomed the conference participants, and Ambassador Satuli, representing the Presidency of the European Council, outlined the enlargement process and the Presidency's objectives.

Participants called *inter alia* for EU support to be targeted more accurately on key areas and properly coordinated on the basis of clear guidelines and strategies. Due attention needed to be given to the development of human resources and bottom-up projects, which had a confidence-building effect on the populations concerned. The participants also agreed that the establishment of strong, independent and representative socio-economic organisations in each of the applicant countries was a necessary condition for the successful enlargement of the single market. Support for the social dialogue including collective bargaining at all appropriate levels should be stepped up. This was a short-term priority that should be reflected in the partnership agreements.

- EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee: 8th meeting

The EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) - a body comprising eighteen representatives of economic and social interest groups in Turkey together with an equivalent number of ESC members - held its eighth meeting in Trabzon (Turkey) on 17 September. The meeting focused on the current state of EU-Turkey relations, as well as the issues of migration and the role of women in decision-making in Turkey. The JCC adopted a resolution calling both for girls' attendance at school to be brought in line with that of Turkish boys and for women in rural areas to be given "second chance" help with reading and writing. The resolution also called for Turkish economic and social interest groups to put in place structures to increase women's share of decision-making.

News from the ESC's Single Market Observatory (SMO)

On 19 July, Mr Vever and Mr Glatz represented the Committee's SMO at the Single Market Coordination Centre in Dublin. They also sounded out the views of relevant Irish socio-economic organisations on how the single market was operating and to identify what improvements could be made.

The SMO's tenth meeting took place in Helsinki on 13-14 September. A number of representatives of public and private organisations were invited to pass on to SMO members their experiences of single market matters. The focus was on the functioning of the Single Market Co-ordination Centres and the Contact Points for Business and Citizens.

IV. APPOINTMENT

The Council of the European Union has appointed **Mr Jean-Jacques Carmentran** (France) to replace **Mr Jacques Pé**, outgoing member of Group II.

V. INFORMATION VISITS

A total of 31 groups visited the ESC during the period between the July and September plenaries. Of these, twelve came from Germany.

EN

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Catalogue Number: ESC-99-007-EN

