

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

# BULLETIN



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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

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## I. 290th Plenary Session of 30 and 31 October 1991

The Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities held its 290th Plenary Session on 30 and 31 October last. Mr Martin Bangemann, Vice-President of the Commission, addressed the Committee in the debate on the Opinion on trans-European networks.

During the session the Committee adopted the following Resolution:

'On the eve of the Maastricht Summit at which it is planned to reach a decision on European Union, the Economic and Social Committee underlines the importance which the decisions to be taken at this Summit will have for the future of the Community and its 340 million inhabitants, and voices the wish that despite the difficulties to be overcome and the complexity of the problems at stake, the Summit's conclusions will measure up to the hopes and expectations of Europe's citizens.

The Committee considers that the Community must have the political, economic and social instruments necessary to act as a beacon and mainstay for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their current difficulties.

The Committee would draw attention to the need to strengthen its consultative role in the Community's decision-making process as well as to preserve the powers conferred on it by the Treaty of Rome and the Single Act.

The Committee therefore calls on the Heads of State or Government meeting in Maastricht on 9 and 10 December 1991 to ensure that the Economic and Social Committee's role as an independent body (as already provided for in the Draft Treaty submitted by the Luxembourg Presidency and confirmed by the Netherlands Presidency) exercising its remit in full within the institutional machinery, is enshrined in the new Union Treaty and that the Committee is given the means and instruments required for this purpose.

With regard to the discussion in progress on a greater role and place for Europe's regions at Community level, the Committee confirms that it is willing, given the necessary material resources, to help find a solution to this problem.'

## 1. TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS

**Commission communication: Towards trans-European networks — For a Community action programme [COM(90) 585 final]**

### **Gist of the Commission communication**

In addition to its work directly linked to the completion of the internal market in 1993, the Commission is putting forward a Community action programme for the creation of trans-European infrastructure networks in the following areas: transport, telecommunications, energy and vocational training.

The Commission justifies this programme, in so far as it requires justification, on five grounds: volume, interoperability, dimension, quality and cohesion (point 2.1.). It describes the role of the Member States and the Community and stresses the environmental aspect of infrastructure networks.

Finally, the Commission outlines the obstacles to the emergence of trans-European networks, namely problems of transfrontier interoperability, the legislative environment, the competition aspect, and above all financing problems (private-public). Certain specific planned projects are already mentioned in the programme, which is followed by a draft Council resolution.

### **Gist of the ESC Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee supports the Community initiative to set up trans-European networks covering transport, telecommunications, energy, and — most of all — vocational training. These networks should improve the operation of the single market and help boost regional cohesion.

Alongside a number of comments on points of detail, the Committee advocates that several financial formulas be used: self-financing or private financing where possible; public or EC financing where

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<sup>1</sup> CES 1262/91.

the infrastructure to be built and the management costs rule out the possibility of short-term profitability, and where the only benefits will be seen in the long term (cohesion and solidarity between favoured and less favoured regions).

*This Opinion, adopted by a large majority with nine abstentions, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Subcommittee on Trans-European Networks, chaired by Mr Robert J. Moreland (United Kingdom — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Vasco Cal (Portugal — Workers).*

## 2. LONE PARENT FAMILIES

### Lone parent families (own-initiative Opinion)

#### Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>

There has been a growth in the numbers of lone parent families in most countries within the European Community, with the most marked increase being in the northern countries. No country has a coherent strategy or policy framework towards lone parent families. At best a series of *ad hoc* measures have been adopted in response to their growth, combined with an underlying reluctance to take any measures that could be seen as contributing to a further growth in numbers, and a hope that the trends will be reversed. The ESC believes that lone parent families as a group now face considerable disadvantage and exclusion and that action should be taken within the European Community to address the problems of such families, within the general context of already developed equal opportunities and family policies and programmes, to ensure that lone parents and their children have full and equal access to such programmes. The principle upon which the EC should formulate policy is that all families should have equal access to social participation, analysing the public investment requirement upon families' private economic and other resources.

A report drawn up by the Commission concluded that some generalizations about lone parent families are possible:

the overwhelming majority are women;

the unmarried category is the smallest. The largest consists of divorced/separated people;

<sup>1</sup> CES 1266/91.

- very few are aged under 25;
- they have fewer children than couples do. Most have only one child;
- their children are on average older than those in two parent families;
- most live on their own;
- over half leave the 'lone parent state' within five years.

The persistent characteristic of lone parent family income is that it is substantially lower than two-parent family income.

The rates of employment vary enormously from country to country, from under a quarter to over three quarters of lone mothers. In six countries lone mothers are more likely to be employed than mothers in couples and in three countries less likely to be so. The reasons for such wide variation within employment patterns depend upon the interaction of the welfare benefit system with training and employment opportunities and access to childcare. Some countries take a 'coercive' approach to labour market entry by providing time-limited welfare benefits, for example, but they may not take any further positive action towards the other elements within a positive employment strategy. In general, however, the employment rate of lone mothers is lower than that for lone fathers. Lone mothers who are employed work longer hours than other mothers who are employed, but both married and lone mothers are less likely to work if they have a very young child. Average earnings for lone parents in employment are lower not only than the average earnings of two-earner couples with children but also of one-earner couples with children. In general lone parents are working in low-paid employment, although their numbers include many women who have some formal or professional qualification. In addition large numbers of lone parents are forced into homeworking to overcome the lack of childcare for minimal pay and in conditions where employment protection is lacking. The objective of opening up employment to lone parents requires well-paid work opportunities to become available through a combination of decent vocational training, and equal opportunities strategies to give women entry into traditional male sectors of employment.

The level of childcare support available to lone parents is essential in opening up opportunities to escape the isolation of one parent family life, to support parenting skills, to train for better paid employment and to enter the labour market. It is clear that any support for lone parent family life requires a major improvement in the availability and affordability of childcare that is flexible

enough to meet the needs of working parents as well as the child's need for social and intellectual development.

One parent families are less likely to own their own homes than two parent families. In several countries one parent families were likely to be living in the least desirable public or social sector accommodation, and in subsidized housing in the least desirable parts of towns. Many lone parent families face homelessness when relationships with partners break down. A programme of building reasonable family social sector accommodation is essential to address these problems.

Whilst young never-married mothers form the smallest grouping of lone parent head of households, they face special problems. This is particularly the case where the mother has not finished formal education, or has not acquired any work skills.

As a move towards a more integrated EC policy approach the incoherence of policy developments around the one parent family should be resolved. The ESC recognizes that lone parent families are a disadvantaged group of families, and as such have special needs. But equally the ESC considers that the objective of any action must be to give them access to the mainstream life within the European Community.

Any strategies for action of lone parent families should recognize the principle of choice in whether or not the lone parent seeks work, but with an expectation that increasingly lone parents will choose to work.

In order to achieve equal access to participation for one parent families the following strategies should be followed:

- a general social policy allowing lone parents who have chosen to remain at home for certain periods to reintegrate into professional life through priority access to training leading to qualifications;

- the removal of disincentives to participation in the labour market from welfare benefit systems for lone parents;

- State intervention to enforce the regular payment of reasonable levels of child maintenance to ensure that the private parental contribution towards child maintenance is met;

- the European Community should ensure that legislation providing for reciprocal enforcement of maintenance orders made within Member States is streamlined and made more effective;

a housing strategy which takes into account the added pressure for good quality social housing created by relationship and marriage breakdown;

access to childcare resources that cater for the needs of both parent and child, according to family means and needs;

equal access to vocational education and training taking into account the need of the single breadwinner to maximize earnings potential;

introduction of appropriate tax facilities to assist the lone parent at work, and removal of existing facilities that discriminate against lone parents;

equal access to a minimum income for families made up of earnings, services supporting family life and children and a benefit system that alleviates in-work poverty;

supporting and improving services that offer information, guidance and training to lone parents across the range of legal, vocational and social welfare systems.

*This Opinion, adopted by a large majority with two abstentions, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Social, Family, Educational and Cultural Affairs, chaired by Mr Vasco Cal (Portugal — Workers). The Rapporteur was Ms Sue Slipman (United Kingdom — Various Interests).*

### 3. DIGNITY OF WOMEN AND MEN AT WORK

**Draft Commission Recommendation on the protection of the dignity of women and men at work**  
[COM(91) 1394 final]

#### **Gist of the Commission Recommendation**

The expert's report carried out at the Commission's request demonstrated that sexual harassment is a serious problem for many working women and some men in the European Community; research in Member States has proven beyond doubt that sexual harassment at work is not an isolated phenomenon.

Sexual harassment creates a bad working environment and can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it.

It also involves costs for employers and has a direct impact on profitability.

In general terms, sexual harassment is an obstacle to the full integration of women into the labour market and, in its third action programme on equal opportunities for women and men (1991-95), the Commission has undertaken to promote comprehensive measures to improve integration.

The Commission's Recommendation on the protection of dignity at work urges the Member States: (i) to take action to promote awareness that conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct affecting the dignity of women and men at work is unacceptable and may, in certain circumstances, breach the principle of equal treatment as defined in the equal treatment Directive 76/207/EEC; (ii) to implement the recommendations contained in the Commission's code of practice; (iii) to encourage employers' and employees' representatives, including trade unions, to implement the recommendations contained in the code of practice.

The code of practice drawn up by the Commission aims to provide practical guidance to employers, trade unions and employees on how to ensure: (a) that sexual harassment does not occur at the workplace; and (b), where it occurs, that adequate procedures are available to stamp it out.

The code sets out the legal position together with the Council's and Commission's view that, in certain circumstances, such conduct may breach the principle of equal treatment set out in the equal treatment Directive 76/207/EEC. It makes a series of recommendations to employers, trade unions and employees on practical steps which can be taken, both preventive and procedural.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee welcomes the Commission's draft and the accompanying code of practice but is disappointed that it is limited to a Commission Recommendation. Given the seriousness and widespread occurrence of sexual harassment or of unwanted behaviour demeaning the dignity of women and men at work, and considering that Ministers have already pronounced themselves on this problem, the Committee considers that at least a Council Recommendation is required, possibly leading at a future stage, after EC-wide monitoring, to a more binding EC instrument registering an appropriate degree of political commitment and scrutiny.

<sup>1</sup> CES 1253/91.

The definition of sexual harassment or offensive conduct at work corresponds to that already registered in the Council Resolution of 29 May 1990. The Committee would argue that the Commission ought to reconsider appending to the code practical examples of behaviour which it considers are covered by the definition.

It is crucial to the whole exercise that a fair and even-handed approach be instituted when complaints procedures are opened, so that the onus of proof is not exclusively borne by either the complainant or by the alleged harasser.

*This Opinion, adopted by a majority with one vote against, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Social, Family, Educational and Cultural Affairs, chaired by Mr Vasco Cal (Portugal — Workers). The Rapporteur was Miss Ada Maddocks (United Kingdom — Workers).*

#### 4. SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS: RESOURCES AND BENEFITS

**Draft Recommendation by the Council on common criteria concerning sufficient resources and social assistance in the social protection systems**  
[COM(91) 161 final]

##### **Gist of the Commission proposal**

The proposal for a Recommendation asks the Member States to recognize, as part of a comprehensive and systematic drive to combat social exclusion, a basic right to a guarantee of resources and benefits, and to adapt their social protection systems accordingly. To this effect it proposes common guidelines for the principles and procedures needed to make this right a reality. Recognition of the right must be based on the following general principles:

- (i) It is to be an individual basic right, based on need and subject to a means test.
- (ii) It is to be extended to all persons residing within the territory of the Member State, in accordance with the national and Community provisions in these matters.
- (iii) Every person who does not have access to resources equal to or higher than a specified guaranteed amount is to have access to the right, subject to active availability for work in the case of those who have reached the age of civil majority and

whose age, health and family situations permit such availability.

- (iv) Access is not to be subject to time-limits, assuming that the conditions governing access remain fulfilled and on the understanding that, in practice, the right may be granted for limited but renewable periods.
- (v) This form of assistance is to be a complementary right of general social protection.
- (vi) It is to be accompanied by policies necessary for the economic and social integration of those concerned, particularly, where necessary:
  - provisions for automatic access to health protection,
  - provisions ensuring access to rights, services or benefits contributing to such integration, particularly with regard to housing and training.

With this proposal for a Recommendation, the Commission is aiming to contribute towards the deliberations and initiatives in the Member States concerning what is often called 'minimum income' ('minimex' in Belgium, 'Sozialhilfe' in Germany, 'RMI' in France, 'income support' in the United Kingdom, etc.). General forms of resource guarantee exist in eight Member States (B, D, DK, F, IRL, L, NL and UK), although the procedures vary from one country to another. In the other Member States there are local or regional experiments (particularly E and I) or measures limited to certain population groups (e.g. the elderly or disabled).

In this context, the purpose of the Recommendation is to improve existing national provisions and, on the specific subject of solidarity with the most deprived, to promote the convergence of Member States' social policies.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee welcomes the draft Recommendation. The right to a guaranteed adequate level of benefits and resources sufficient to live in a state of human dignity should indeed be part of a comprehensive and systematic drive throughout the EC to combat poverty and eliminate all forms of social exclusion, notably in education, employment, training, health and housing. The Committee agrees with the Commission that, at present, the most

<sup>1</sup> CES 1252/91.

appropriate path is to establish basic common principles and criteria for all Member States, but that no rigid standard of amount or set procedure for implementing the proposed guarantee of resources be envisaged.

The individual basic right to sufficient resources and assistance proposed should be based on needs fixed and qualified by each Member State taking into account prevailing living standards and average disposable income. It should be subject, where appropriate, to recipients being actively available for work, where age, health and family situation permit professional activity, and on condition that no individual should be forced into a job or training which pays less than the normal rate, or to which he or she is evidently not suited. The accompanying social and economic integration measures, to be effectively implemented in terms of housing, health protection and training, should likewise be subject to quality control. Training, in particular, must be a worthwhile inducement, offering a real perspective of getting back into proper, not precarious, employment.

The Committee considers that the right recognized by the Recommendation should be extended to all persons resident in the Member State, in accordance with national and Community provisions.

The resources to be guaranteed as proposed by the Recommendation should be regarded as a springboard for full reintegration into society based on measures including: assistance in job searching, advice centres, education and training, access to health care. These measures should be voluntary, should lead to recognized qualifications, should meet proper health and safety standards, and should enable recipients who undertake training or work experience to have full employment rights, including the right to trade union representation.

Preventive policies are also required, to ensure that social exclusion does not occur in the first place.

The Committee agrees that it is not practicable to require all Member States to guarantee a minimum level of benefit at the same proportion of average income per capita in each State throughout the Community. However, the Committee also considers that Member States should use objective criteria when fixing the amount of resources considered sufficient.

The Committee considers that, at least at the initial stage, assistance might be offered to those Member States which would have difficulty complying with the instrument and that these Mem-

ber States be encouraged to make full use of funds which can be brought to bear on this problem.

*This Opinion, adopted by a majority with one abstention, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Social, Family, Educational and Cultural Affairs, chaired by Mr Vasco Cal (Portugal — Workers). The Rapporteur was Miss Ada Maddocks (United Kingdom — Workers).*

## 5. SINGLE MARKET IN DISTRIBUTION

**Communication from the Commission: Towards a single market in distribution — Internal trade in the Community, the commercial sector, and the completion of the internal market**  
[COM(91) 41 final]

### **Gist of the Commission document**

The aim of the Commission work programme is to create the right conditions for a single Community-wide market in distribution.

In the Community economy, commerce and distribution account for some 17% of output and employment, while commercial activities as a whole make up around half of the service sector.

The work programme is a collection of measures aimed at guaranteeing that the importance of the distributive trades and, in particular, their key role in the development of the internal market, are properly taken into account in the Community's policies on business, information, education, training, competition, innovation, etc.

### **Main points of the work programme**

#### 1. *Consultation and dialogue*

The Commission is fostering a process of social dialogue between trade federations representing the retail and wholesale trades on the one hand, and trade unions representing employees in these sectors on the other.

#### 2. *Transparency and understanding of commercial activity*

a programme of action to provide a reliable and comparable set of statistics on the commercial sector in the Community;

establishment of reliable sources of information on national and Community rules and regulations affecting commerce;  
more understanding and discussion of distributive issues;  
improved quality of information provided to the business community on the commercial implications of Community policies.

3. *The legal framework for distribution*

the Commission's aim is to anticipate problems arising from differences between national systems of regulation and to encourage self-regulation;

the newly emerging Community-wide market in mail order and telemarketing may require particular attention;

the Commission recognizes it is important to ensure that Community law in this field is both clear and clearly understood.

4. *Role of the distributive trades in promoting economic and social cohesion*

new efforts are required to boost vocational training. Commercial and distributive enterprises are not always aware of the opportunities open to them;

the retail trade will be the first area covered by the new programme for the development of vocational training within firms (Force);

the structural Funds have a role to play, particularly in regions where expansion of productive potential is liable to be held back by weaknesses in distribution networks. In particular, the ESC should discuss whether ERDF aid, currently reserved for production sector investment, should be extended to the distribution sector;

technology is fuelling a radical process of change in the nature of relations between firms. The Commission is starting new work to identify the difficulties which this raises, with special reference to small and medium-sized firms and transfrontier links.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee welcomes the high quality of this communication, but makes the following points:

<sup>1</sup> CES 1267/91.

More attention ought to be paid to the wholesale sector.

Likewise, the particular situation of SMEs is not adequately discussed. The Committee is concerned that the funds available under the 1992 budget will not be sufficient. It calls on the Commission to consider making more money available for commercial and distribution sector policy from the budget for general SME policy, particularly as an overwhelming majority of firms in this sector are SMEs.

The series of programmes proposed should be backed by a clear definition of how they apply to commerce.

The problem of economic and social cohesion in the Community is not adequately analysed.

The social repercussions of the introduction of new technologies are not dealt with.

The matter of vocational training is not fully discussed.

Not enough emphasis is put on the importance of competition policy and social policy for the distribution sector.

There is a clear imbalance between the issues the Commission communication aims to deal with and DG XIII's financial capability to carry out the programmes concerned.

The Commission should encourage meetings between the CCC (Consumers' Consultative Committee) and the CCD (Committee for Commerce and Distribution).

The Commission should issue a brochure explaining Community programmes applying to the commercial sector, setting out eligibility and application procedures for companies.

Discrimination between companies in securing European Investment Bank (EIB) funding is totally unjustified.

Many prospective young entrepreneurs' attempts to set up a business founder because they cannot obtain access to the necessary funding if they do not have enough assets to be acceptable to the backers as a loan guarantee. In some countries, *inter alia* Germany, special appropriation funds have been set up, with public money, to be run by mutual benefit commercial guarantee organizations for the purpose of providing prospective young entrepreneurs with the cover they need. The Commission would do well to provide similar facilities under the NCI programme.

European commerce associations — such as CECD/Fewita — should be recognized as permanent parties to dialogue with the Commission in the same way as Unice represents the industrial sector.

The Commission should apply itself to the problems of safeguarding traditional commercial districts in urban centres, countering businesses' general move out of both town centres and outlying areas and halting the disappearance of businesses from many rural areas. However, it should ensure that competition rules continue to operate.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mrs Ann Robinson (United Kingdom — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Paulo Jorge Marellino Baptista de Andrade (Portugal — Employers).*

## 6. OILSEEDS — CAP REFORM

**Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) establishing a support system for soya beans, rapeseed and sunflowerseed**  
[COM(91) 318 final]

### **Gist of the Commission proposal**

The Commission proposals are aimed at establishing a new support system for oilseed producers (soya, rape and sunflower); they are compatible with the January 1990 conclusions of the GATT Soya Panel which the Community has accepted. The proposed new system will apply from the 1992/93 season and provides for (a) the abolition of the subsidies currently paid to this sector through its processing industry and (b) direct income support for producers through a system of compensatory payments per hectare, rather than on the basis of the quantities produced. The key measures contained in the proposal are:

- (a) compensatory aid (Community reference amount) of ECU 384 per hectare (level of aid payable per hectare in a region where yields correspond to the Community average) used to determine the amount of the payments to producers;
- (b) projected reference price of ECU 163/tonne (based on the expected medium-term equilibrium price on the world market);

- (c) regionalization of compensatory payments per hectare (regional reference amount) on the basis of regionalization plans drawn up by the Member States so as to take account of variations in cereals yields across the Community;
- (d) introduction of an 8% margin to take account of variations in the world price compared with the projected reference price, i.e. the projected reference price and the world market price may diverge by about ECU 13.04/tonne without triggering a change in the level of compensation per hectare. The purpose of this measure is to compensate Community producers partially, but not totally, for such variations;
- (e) maintenance of stabilizers based on a maximum guaranteed area, set at the current level of plantings, except for producers of sunflower seed in Spain and Portugal until the end of their transitional period (1994/95 marketing year);
- (f) payment of a per-hectare bonus to producers depending on the date of sale of their harvest, with a view to encouraging greater discipline in marketing.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

While recognizing the Commission's obligations concerning the conclusions of the GATT Soya Panel, the Committee considers that the Commission proposal has many negative aspects. It provides for immediate implementation of CAP reform measures, although these measures are currently still under consideration. The weaknesses of the draft Regulation are such that the Committee calls upon the Commission to radically revise its proposal.

*This Opinion, adopted by a majority with four abstentions, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture and Fisheries, chaired by Mr André Laur (France — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Giovanni Mantovani (Italy — Various Interests).*

<sup>1</sup> CES 1263/91.

## 7. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FOR THE FRENCH OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS

**Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) introducing specific measures in respect of certain agricultural products for the benefit of the French overseas departments**

[COM(91) 160 final]

### **Gist of the Commission proposal**

Given the specific problems of the French overseas departments in the run-up to the completion of the internal market, Poseidom provides for a range of multiannual and multisectoral measures to improve supplies and provide financial assistance for the production and marketing of local products.

This draft Regulation involves measures establishing special conditions under which the departments can obtain certain supplies and measures to develop the productive sector.

In particular the measures concern supplies of cereals, the development of livestock farming, the improvement of animal and plant health, encouragement for the production and marketing of fruit and vegetables, plants and floricultural products and support for the cane/sugar/rum sector.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee approves the Commission proposal.

*This Opinion, adopted by a majority with one abstention, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture and Fisheries, chaired by Mr André Laur (France — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Guy Ovide Etienne (France — Various Interests).*

<sup>1</sup> CES 1261/91.

## 8. FOODSTUFFS — SCIENTIFIC EXAMINATION

**Proposal for a Council Directive on assistance to the Commission and cooperation by the Member States in the scientific examination of questions relating to food [COM(91) 16 final — SYN 332]**

### **Gist of the Commission proposal**

The Scientific Committee for Food (SCF) was established by the Commission in 1974 to advise it on questions of food safety.

In the Member States similar work is undertaken by national bodies. The adoption in recent years of a number of framework Directives on foodstuffs has placed excessively heavy demands on the SCF. Accordingly it has been agreed that the national bodies should cooperate with the SCF in carrying out scientific examinations of foodstuffs.

The object of the present proposal is to approximate the regulations governing the operation of the various national bodies and to define their tasks, in order to ensure smooth cooperation with the SCF.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee approved the Commission's proposal subject to the following comments:

- (i) the independence and competence of the members of the SCF, and the transparency and extent of their work should be ensured;
- (ii) membership of the SCF should be adjusted to cover fields other than toxicology (e.g. nutrition, microbiology, etc.);
- (iii) there is a need for greater involvement of the public with the SCF through publicity and resulting input;
- (iv) the operating procedures between the SCF and national bodies, not now specified in the actual proposal, should be added as Annex II;
- (v) the Commission should ensure priority for EC work in national bodies, and possibly financial help for such bodies in the smaller and poorer Member States.

<sup>1</sup> CES 1254/91.

A number of specific comments of a technical and/or procedural nature were also included.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mr Francisco Ceballos Herrero (Spain — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Kenneth J. Gardner (United Kingdom — Employers).*

## 9. GSP — LATIN AMERICA

**Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3835/90 in respect of the system of generalized tariff preferences applied to certain products originating in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama [SEC(91) 1109 final]**

### **Gist of the Commission proposal**

In 1990, the Council consulted the Economic and Social Committee on a Commission proposal to grant concessions in the area of generalized preferences (temporary and exceptional application to Colombia, Peru and Bolivia of the treatment accorded to the least developed countries). The Community wishes to go some way towards compensating these countries for the considerable costs being incurred in the fight against drugs. In the event, the Council included Ecuador in this concession.

The latest proposal from the Commission on which the Council is seeking the Committee's Opinion is intended to extend to agricultural products of concern to the Central American countries and Panama the treatment granted under the GSP to Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.

This proposal to the Council is consistent with the mandate given by the Community Ministers at the close of the San José VII ministerial meeting held in Managua in March, in which the Commission was called upon to:

‘assess as quickly as possible the effect the arrangements granted to the Andean countries could have on Central American exports to the Community market and, on the basis of this assessment, rapidly propose transitional trade or any other measures to avoid unfavourable consequences for trade between the two regions, thereby reflecting the Com-

munity's resolve to maintain its declared support for the peace and development processes in Central America. The Ministers of the Community will examine the European Commission's proposals in a constructive spirit and in the light of the note of urgency sounded by the Central American Ministers.'

Although less severely afflicted by drugs than some Andean countries, Central America is giving considerable cause for concern and should be aided in its preventive efforts and its struggle against the spread of the problem.

The Community has for many years maintained a unique relationship with Central America.

A high-quality political dialogue has grown out of the regular ministerial meetings since 1984, an experiment in a new form of international cooperation, in which political aims are closely linked to economic undertakings.

Despite the progress of recent years towards peace and democracy in the region, the economic and political situation on the Isthmus remains fragile in the extreme. The Commission, aware that consolidation of the regional economy is a prerequisite for the consolidation of democracy and social harmony, thinks it vital that the Community give practical support to Central America.

The Commission therefore considers it essential to back efforts to diversify the region's exports and improve access for its products to the Community market by a practical measure enabling the achievement of the level of economic activity required for the continuation of the peace and democratization process.

Only in the Central American ALA developing countries are three factors combined: a fragile peace process occurring against a disturbing economic and social background throughout the region, a considerable political and cooperation commitment by the Community and a serious risk that the drugs problem will spread. Furthermore, Central America includes two of the poorest Latin American countries, Honduras and Nicaragua.

An assessment carried out under the mandate by independent experts emphasizes the importance of extending the advantages of Regulation 3835/90 to Central American exports of coffee and the region's other main products of diversification. They are mainly: fish, shellfish, molluscs, honey, cut flowers, ornamental plants, vegetables and roots, tropical fruits, spices, fish preparations, vegetable preparations and tobacco.

With coffee, these agricultural products account for over 90% of those covered by Regulation 3835/90. It is therefore proposed that this Regulation be extended to cover only those agricultural products exported to the Community by Central America and Panama which are included in Regulation (EEC) No 3835/90. There will be no extension to cover textile or industrial products, since these are of no relevance in Central America.

The Central American countries and Panama should be offered stable outlets for products which account for the greater part of their production and exports.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee welcomes and fully endorses the proposal to grant extraordinary temporary assistance to the signatories to the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) as well as to Panama. The tariff preferences granted to these countries under the generalized system of tariff preferences (GSP) would be similar to those already granted to Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

If we look at the scale of the assistance to be provided and the appropriateness of the instruments to be used, it is clear that further measures are needed to improve the difficult situation in which these countries find themselves. Such measures should be part of a consistent development cooperation policy. The Committee refers to a number of critical comments on this subject made in its Opinion on the extension to Bolivia, Colombia and Peru of the generalized tariff preferences applied to certain products originating in the least developed countries (LLDCs).

Despite fundamental reservations regarding the effectiveness of the proposed measures, the Committee considers that the generalized tariff preferences treatment already applied to Andean countries can justifiably be extended to important agricultural products from the six Central American countries for the sake of equal competition.

The Committee nevertheless points out that although the regional extension of preferences is necessary to re-establish equal competition, such action further weakens the effectiveness of the instruments selected. The Committee is also unhappy that the

<sup>1</sup> CES 1269/91.

Community frequently resorts to GSPs in seeking to solve widely differing sets of problems.

The Committee takes this opportunity to refer to its Opinion on the Generalized System of Preferences: Guidelines for the 1990s, which states that 'the more the GSP is concentrated, the more it will have to be accompanied by other policies to provide active support for the developing countries'.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for External Relations, Trade and Development Policy, chaired by Mr Robert d'Hondt (Belgium — Workers). The Rapporteur was Mr Giorgio Liverani (Italy — Workers).*

## 10. GSP — 1991 EXTENDED

**Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) extending into 1992 the application of Council Regulations (EEC) Nos 3831/90, 3832/90, 3833/90 and 3835/90 of 20 December 1990 applying generalized tariff preferences for 1991 in respect of certain products originating in developing countries and the proposal for a Council Regulation extending into 1992 the application of Council Regulation (EEC) No 3834/90 of 20 December 1990 reducing for 1991 the levies on certain agricultural products originating in developing countries**

[COM(91) 303 final]

### **Gist of the Commission's proposals**

The Community's generalized system of preferences (GSP) is a measure of trade policy (suspension of customs duties on imports into the Community) aimed at helping the developing countries.

These preferences are non-discriminatory (they are granted to all developing countries) and autonomous (they do not result from any negotiations with the beneficiaries). Apart from certain restrictions for sensitive products, they apply to all finished and semi-finished industrial goods as well as a number of agricultural products.

Decided within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad), the GSP has already been implemented for two 10-year periods (1971-80 and 1981-90) by the Community.

The preferences are adjusted annually, and the Council has traditionally consulted the Economic and Social Committee on the proposed adjustments. And additionally, the Community carries out a five-year review, and this it last did in July 1990. It consulted the Committee on this occasion, as it has done on the occasion of previous five-year reviews, and the Committee duly gave its Opinion on the guidelines for the generalized preferences system for the 1990s (CES 142/91 — Rapporteur: Mr Liverani).

In its communication of 6 July 1990 to the Council, concerning the guidelines for the generalized preferences system for the 1990s, the Commission announced that it would present a comprehensive proposal for a revised scheme on the basis of these new guidelines as soon as the impact of the result of the Uruguay Round negotiations could be assessed.

Putting into operation a revised GSP from 1 January 1992 has become impossible as these negotiations have continued beyond the envisaged deadline and because it will be necessary, while reviewing the GSP, to take into account the most recent evolutions of certain beneficiaries' specific situations.

Consequently, the purpose of the present draft Regulation whilst awaiting the revised scheme to be finalized, is to allow for a provisional extension beyond 1 January 1992 of the scheme in force in 1991, on the draft of which the Committee also gave its Opinion (CES 1385/90 — Rapporteur: Mr Liverani).

In doing so the Commission says it does not aim at delaying for longer than is strictly necessary the proposal for the new scheme. It therefore intends to present such a proposal as soon as possible during the course of 1992. Hence the prolongation of the present scheme in 1992 is not envisaged as going on necessarily until the end of the year but only up to when the revised scheme might be put into operation.

The principle of the extension beyond 1 January 1992 of the 1991 scheme as it stands contains one exception: the elimination from the textile scheme of the so-called 'double return to the reserve' mechanism whose alleged advantages, compared to the complexity of its management, do not justify its being maintained and whose suppression has been repeatedly requested by all those services of the Commission, as well as of the Member States, charged with its administration.

## Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>

The Committee approves the provisional extension of the 1991 scheme beyond 1 January 1992 in the firm hope that the GATT/Uruguay Round negotiations can be brought to a speedy conclusion, thus enabling the revised scheme for the 1990s to be finalized.

The Committee calls on the Commission to submit, as soon as possible after the GATT negotiations are concluded, a comprehensive proposal for a revised GSP scheme in the light of the outcome of the Uruguay Round.

As the 1991 scheme is to continue virtually unchanged, the Committee refers to its Opinion on the proposal from the Commission to the Council fixing the Community's generalized tariff preferences scheme for 1991.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for External Relations, Trade and Development Policy, chaired by Mr Robert d'Hondt (Belgium — Workers). The Rapporteur was Mr Giorgio Liverani (Italy — Workers).*

## 11. EC/EFTA AGREEMENTS (AUSTRIA, FINLAND, NORWAY) — STEP

**Proposal for a Council Decision concerning the conclusion of bilateral Cooperation Agreements on science and technology for environmental protection (STEP) between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Finland and the Kingdom of Norway**

[COM(91) 94 final — SYN 334]

## Gist of the Commission proposal

In 1989 the Council adopted two R&D programmes in the field of the environment known respectively by the acronyms STEP and Epoch. This proposal covers only STEP (Science and technology for environmental protection) and concerns the approval of cooperation agreements in this field with the three EFTA countries Austria, Finland and Norway.

<sup>1</sup> CES 1270/91.

## Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>

The Committee approves the Commission's proposal and expresses satisfaction that some points made in its earlier Opinions have been taken into account.

It notes, however, that while Austria, Finland and Norway are adhering to the STEP (Science and technology) programme, in a parallel agreement Iceland and Sweden adhere not only to STEP but also to Epoch (climatology and natural hazards).

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mr Francisco Ceballo Herrero (Spain — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Klaus Benedict von der Decken (Germany — Various Interests).*

## 12. EC/EFTA AGREEMENTS (ICELAND, SWEDEN) — STEP/EPOCH

**Proposal for a Council Decision concerning the conclusion of bilateral Cooperation Agreements between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Sweden on research and development in the field of the environment: Science and technology for environmental protection (STEP) and European programme on climatology and natural hazards (Epoch)**

[COM(91) 93 final — SYN 341]

### Gist of the Commission proposal

In 1989 the Council adopted two R&D programmes in the field of the environment, known respectively by their acronyms STEP (Science and technology for environmental protection) and Epoch (European programme on climatology and natural hazards).

This proposal concerns the approval of cooperation agreements in these fields with two EFTA countries (Iceland and Sweden).

<sup>1</sup> CES 1255/91.

## Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>

The Committee approves the Commission's proposal and expresses satisfaction that some points made in its earlier Opinions have been taken into account.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mr Francisco Ceballo Herrero (Spain — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Klaus Benedict von der Decken (Germany — Various Interests).*

## 13. LIFE ASSURANCE (THIRD DIRECTIVE)

**Proposal for a third Council Directive on the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to direct life assurance and amending Directives 79/267/EEC and 90/619/EEC**  
[COM(91) 57 final — SYN 329]

## Gist of the Commission document

The life assurance sector is still divided into 12 national markets, each with its own set of rules. These rules often determine the kind of products which can be offered, the operating conditions for companies, their premiums and the way in which company funds must be invested.

The first Life Directive of 1979 laid down some basic rules for Community companies, enabling them to set up shop in one another's markets. But it retained entirely national systems of control. The second Life Directive of 1990 allowed individuals to seek insurance from companies established in other Member States. It also permitted the life companies to sell group insurance such as supplementary pension schemes across national frontiers.

The third Directive will allow companies to operate freely throughout the Community on the basis of the rules applied in their country of establishment — yet following, too, a set of prudential and consumer protection rules which are common to all.

The principle of mutual recognition and home country control depends on harmonized rules for defining and calculating the technical provisions which companies must hold against their

<sup>1</sup> CES 1256/91.

potential liabilities. The Commission proposes a common set of principles for the calculation of these provisions. It also proposes that the different methods used by Member States in the application of these principles should be published so that they can be analysed and compared by professional bodies and consumer organizations.

The proposed Directive will set out Community rules for investment of assets of life assurance companies. The latter must be free to place their resources anywhere in the Community. The Directive will include a list of the different types of assets which can be acquired and the percentage of total assets which each can represent, so ensuring diversification. The home country can limit this list and reduce the maximum percentages, but only for companies established on its territory.

A Member State will not be able to require that a certain percentage of assets be invested in public bonds — a practice which applies in some member countries at present.

While consumer choice at more competitive prices will certainly be expanded under this Directive, consumer protection will also be ensured in a number of ways, including:

- protection of policy holders under the law of their country of residence or their country of nationality;

- a host country may take immediate measures against a branch whose parent is in another Member State in cases where an urgent problem arises as a result of flouting of the rules;

- detailed information to be furnished to the policy holder, before completing the contract, on its precise terms and conditions, and on the company offering the policy;

- a 14 to 30 day period after a contract is agreed for the policy holder to change his mind;

- right for a Member State to prohibit, on its territory, the marketing of policies which are against the general interest as defined by the Court of Justice;

- equal treatment of all policy holders, regardless of nationality or country of residence, in case of liquidation.

## Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>

On the whole the Committee endorses the present proposal, though it has certain reservations.

The proposed third Directive should provide greater protection for holders of personal insurance policies.

As life assurance policies may run for very long periods and provide protection against calamities of a social nature (death, invalidity, incapacity), they must be given proper treatment enabling them to provide effective protection for policy holders.

It is for this reason that the Committee also urges that special attention should be given to the need for such contracts to be clear.

The Committee feels that the life assurance market should be the subject of a report drawn up, at the latest, three years after the implementation of the relevant Directives.

The intervening period should be used to:

- (i) encourage European insurers to draw up a code of good conduct concerning both the policy holder and competition; and
- (ii) study the possibility of setting up a European supervisory body which could either replace existing national supervisory bodies or put right their differences in interpreting and applying Directives.

At any event, the Committee believes that, at the very least, action should be taken to organize sufficient, consistent and harmonious coordination between national supervisory authorities.

The progressive implementation of the single insurance market will doubtless involve some inconveniences for employees in the sector.

The European authorities must take this into account.

The Committee makes a number of specific comments concerning:

- the scope of the proposed Directive,
- the legal form of insurance companies,
- the principle of subsequent supervision,
- the transfer of contracts,
- composite undertakings,
- prudential rules,

<sup>1</sup> CES 1257/91.

the solvency margin,  
contract transparency,  
the legal rules for adopting measures and sanctions, and  
statistical information.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mrs Ann Robinson (United Kingdom — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Roger Ramaekers (Belgium — Various Interests).*

#### 14. AFFIXING AND USE OF CE MARK

**Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) concerning  
the affixing and use of the CE mark of conformity on  
industrial products**  
[COM(91) 145 final — SYN 336]

##### **Gist of the Commission document**

Since the adoption of the Resolution of 7 May 1985 concerning a new approach to technical harmonization and standardization, the Council has adopted nine Directives based on the new approach:

simple pressure vessels,  
toy safety,  
construction products,  
electromagnetic compatibility,  
safety of machinery,  
personal protective equipment,  
gas appliances,  
non-automatic weighing instruments,  
active implantable medical devices.

Examination of the Directives adopted shows that there are differences as regards, in particular, the meaning, affixing and reproduction of the CE mark.

The aim of this proposal is to clarify the relevant Community legislation.

The CE mark is provided for in the new approach Directives on the basis of the presumption of conformity of a product. It therefore refers only to conformity with technical Community legislation.

The CE mark is intended above all for the market inspectors in the Member States. As such it does not claim to be a mark of quality, safety or environmental protection as generally understood by consumers.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee approves the proposal but feels that a certain number of comments are necessary.

It urges the Commission to consider extending the implementation of the Regulation to products regulated before the introduction of the new approach in 1985.

The obligation to indicate the year in which the mark was affixed, and the possibility of also indicating the identification number of the notified body, could distort competition. The problem could be solved by a requirement that the year and identification number be mentioned on the documents accompanying the product.

If use of a registered mark that could be confused with the CE mark is prohibited, the holder should be entitled to compensation.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mrs Ann Robinson (United Kingdom — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Georges Proumens (Belgium — Employers).*

## **15. SULPHUR CONTENT OF GASOIL**

**Proposal for a Council Directive relating to the sulphur content of gasoil**  
[COM(91) 154 final — SYN 340]

### **Gist of the Commission document**

Directive 87/219/EEC fixed a maximum level for the sulphur content of gasoils. It reduced the permissible sulphur content from 0.5% to not more than 0.3% by weight.

<sup>1</sup> CES 1258/91.

Overall SO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Member States, including those arising from the use of gasoil, have fallen by some 30% since 1980. However, it is possible to identify a number of reasons and new developments which justify the need for a further reduction in SO<sub>2</sub> emissions in general, and sulphur emissions from gasoil in particular.

The Commission is proposing a single value sulphur content in gasoil in 1994 as a first step. The value envisaged for this first stage is a sulphur content of 0.2% by weight for all types of gasoil by 1 October 1994.

A further reduction of emissions from diesel engines requires a lower sulphur content in diesel fuel. For this reason the sulphur content in diesel fuel for automotive use will be reduced to 0.05% by weight by 1 October 1996 in order to help the reduction of the particulate emissions and to allow catalytic converters to be used.

Since the Environmental Council on 18 and 19 March 1991 took the common position that the second phase of new types of heavy duty trucks will be entered on 1 October 1995, there is the need for the availability and balanced distribution of low sulphur content diesel fuel from this date.

In the case of gasoils used for other purposes, such as heating, the Commission proposes 0.1% sulphur content by weight for 1999.

Other sources of SO<sub>2</sub>, such as heavy bunker oil or coal, currently generate emissions on a far more serious scale and future activities will concentrate on reducing them.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee welcomes this new Directive. It stresses the usefulness of the long-term reference framework laid down by the Directive. Such a framework will help to dispel the uncertainties of manufacturers and consumers. It does however regret the one-year delay in publishing the proposal.

The Committee recommends that the Commission carry out in-depth studies into the costs and benefits of reducing the sulphur content of heating gasoils and marine gasoil. It recommends measures resulting in a more rational use of heating gasoil, and

<sup>1</sup> CES 1259/91.

initiatives aimed at the conclusion of international agreements on marine gasoil specifications.

The Committee points out that the reduction in the sulphur content of gasoil must be judged in an overall context, in view of the negative effects which it may have indirectly.

Given the relative inelasticity of demand in the short run, tax incentives to accelerate the introduction of the new qualities of automotive gasoil would be inappropriate. However, from 1 October 1996 the higher costs of manufacturing and distributing these more environment-friendly fuels should be compensated for, at least in part, by adjusting the excise duties levied on these products.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mrs Ann Robinson (United Kingdom — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr José Ignacio Gafo Fernandez (Spain — Employers).*

## 16. TYPE-APPROVAL — MOTOR CYCLES

**Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) on the type-approval of two or three-wheel motor vehicles**  
[COM(90) 669 final — SYN 331]

### **Gist of the Commission document**

The Commission's aim is to harmonize existing Member State legislation on two- and three-wheel motor vehicles.

This involves defining the administrative conditions for the granting of vehicle and component type-approval and, in specific texts, the technical requirements applying to various vehicle components and characteristics affecting road safety and the protection of the environment.

Since the proposed method is total harmonization, a Regulation is the most logical means of ensuring identical implementation of Community provisions in all Member States.

It is essential to supplement this Regulation by all the specific Regulations as soon as possible. The latter will cover the conditions essential to safety and environmental protection and more particularly the efficiency of the braking, lighting and light signalling

and exhaust systems, etc., and nuisances due to air and noise pollution.

This proposed framework Regulation lays down the scope and definitions, the general and component type-approval procedures, the conditions attaching to the free movement of the vehicles concerned and any exemptions in the form of transitional provisions, the procedure for adapting to technical progress the technical requirements of this Regulation and of the subsequent specific Regulations, and its date of entry into force.

The Commission has proposed the Advisory Committee procedure for the adaptation to technical progress of the Regulations.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee approves the Commission proposal, subject to the following comments:

In the run-up to 1992 the harmonization of technical regulations will put the industry in a better position to compete with Japanese industry.

The link between low speeds and safety cannot be regarded as significant for the purposes of establishing a second category of mopeds.

The Committee considers that the derogations for mopeds during the transitional period included in Article 14(4)(a) must also cover automatic transmissions, weight limits, small production runs, specialist builders and personalized machines.

With regard to the environmental aspects, the Committee recommends a step-by-step approach which takes account of the time needed by the industry to adjust.

*This Opinion, adopted by 57 votes for, 30 votes against and 3 abstentions, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mrs Ann Robinson (United Kingdom — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Eduardo Bagliano (Italy — Employers).*

<sup>1</sup> CES 1265/91.

## 17. STANDARDS AND TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

**Report on the operation of Directive 83/189/EEC in 1988 and 1989 (prevention of technical barriers to trade)**

[COM(91) 108 final]

### **Gist of the Commission document**

Directive 83/189/EEC sets down an information procedure which is one of the main tools for preventing technical barriers to trade. It requires that draft standards and technical regulations be notified to European standards organizations, the Commission and other Member States capable of suitable follow-up.

This report follows in the wake of Report COM(88) 722 of 8 December 1988 on the operation of Directive 83/189/EEC laying down a procedure for providing information on technical regulations and standards (1984-87).

This is the instrument for briefing both the Parliament, as set out in Directive 83/189/EEC and amended by Directive 88/182/EEC, and the Economic and Social Committee.

It also reflects the Commission's willingness to report on Community-level progress in technical standards and regulations, by virtue of the information procedure.

The information procedures for standards and technical regulations are dealt with in Chapters II and III respectively. Several tables of statistics are also appended.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion <sup>1</sup>**

The Committee welcomes the report, but would draw attention to the following points:

It is important that the stage at which new work should be announced by national bodies be laid down and made common to all.

The statistics on the operation of the information procedure in 1988 and 1989 should be viewed with some caution, since they are not based on the most accurate of parameters.

<sup>1</sup> CES 1260/91.

The Committee fully endorses the proposal to set up a bibliographical databank for standardization activities so that the process of setting or adopting standards and regulations is made more transparent.

It is recommended that employers', employees' and consumers' representatives are given the opportunity to express their concerns at the two annual meetings which the Standing Committee (Article 5 of Directive 83/189/EEC) has the right to hold with representatives of the national standards institutions.

The report does not bring out the difficulties of the safeguard clauses which can circumvent or qualify clauses in individual Directives when they are adopted.

*This Opinion, adopted unanimously, was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mrs Ann Robinson (United Kingdom — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Gordon Pearson (Ireland — Employers).*

## II. Outside presence and influence of the ESC

### Activities of the Chairman and the Secretary-General

1 October 1991, at EP headquarters, Brussels, preparatory inter-institutional conference for the Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union.

24 October 1991, in London, meeting of chairmen and general secretaries of national economic and social councils.

28 October 1991, in Brussels, attendance at the gala concert to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation.

30 October 1991, in Brussels, talk with Sir Christopher Prout, chairman of the European Democratic Group of the European Parliament.

31 October 1991, at ESC headquarters, Brussels, participation in the EFTA/ESC preparatory meeting.

### Other activities

30 September to 2 October 1991, in Rome, meeting of a study group of the Section for Economic, Financial and Monetary Questions with Italian occupational organizations under the auspices of the CNEL (Italian National Economic and Labour Council).

7 October 1991, in Brussels, speech to the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs by the Dutch Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Mrs Van Rooy, on consumer protection policy under the Dutch presidency.

10 and 11 October 1991, in Ispra (Italy), visit to the Joint Research Centre (JRC) by the Study Group on the JRC activities programme 1992-94 (Section for Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research).

17 and 18 October 1991, in Leipzig (Germany), meeting of the Section for Regional Development and Town and Country Planning's Study Group on the new *Länder* to study the planning and implementation of Community support frameworks in the new German *Länder*.

29 to 31 October 1991, in Prague, attendance at the pan-European Transport Conference by a delegation from the Section for Transport and Communications.

### III. Fact-finding visits

During the period under review the following fact-finding visits were made to the ESC:

- 1 October 1991 Europäische Akademie Bayern, Munich (Germany).
- 3 October 1991 New Caledonian Economic and Social Regional Committee, Paris (France).
- 7 October 1991 Strode College, Somerset (UK).
- 7 October 1991 Huygens Lyceum, Voorburg (Netherlands).
- 7 October 1991 UILTuCS (Italian Union of Tourist and Service Trade Workers), Rome (Italy).
- 8 October 1991 Comunidad de Madrid — Consejería de Agricultura y Cooperación (Spain).
- 9 October 1991 Huygens Lyceum, Voorburg (Netherlands).
- 10 October 1991 Preussag AG Works Committee, Salzgitter (Germany).
- 10 October 1991 Students from Göttingen (Germany).
- 10 October 1991 Juridisk Selskab i Århus (University of Århus law students' association) (Denmark).
- 10 October 1991 BVG (association of employers and employees in the public health sector for the implementation of social security) (Netherlands).
- 14 October 1991 Norwegian local government officials.
- 14 October 1991 Secretários-Gerais de Associações do Comércio e dos Serviços e de Técnicos do CECO (Centro de Formação Profissional para o Comércio e Afins) (general secretaries of national trade and

- service associations and of the CECOJA) (Portugal).
- 15 October 1991 Landkreis Hannover (Germany).
- 15 October 1991 Funktionærernes og Tjenestemændenes Fællesråd (FTF) (Danish employees' and civil servants' confederation).
- 16 October 1991 Christopher Newport College (USA).
- 16 October 1991 Key to Europe (students from Augustinus College) (Netherlands).
- 16 October 1991 Chambres de métiers de Haute-Seine et du Conseil général (France).
- 17 October 1991 Instituto Superior de Ciências da Informação e da Empresa, Porto (Portugal).
- 17 October 1991 College van Burgemeester en Wethouders, Veldhoven (Netherlands).
- 18 October 1991 IUC-International Education Centre, Svendborg (Denmark).
- 22 October 1991 IUC-International Education Centre, Svendborg (Denmark).
- 22 October 1991 Grupo de Acción Social en Navarra, Pamplona (Spain).
- 23 October 1991 Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden (University of Leiden Law Faculty) (Netherlands).
- 23 October 1991 Hogeschool Haarlem, Sector Hoger Economisch Onderwijs (Netherlands).
- 24 October 1991 Marselisborg Gymnasium Åarhus (Denmark).
- 24 October 1991 Association de coopération entre la Bretagne et les pays de la Loire (France).
- 24 October 1991 Private Wirtschaftsakademie Feldafing eV (Germany).

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- 25 October 1991 Key to Europe (Centre for European Education of Stockholm) (Sweden).
  - 28. October 1991 Heads of employment offices in the new German states.
  - 28 October 1991 Lauder College (UK).
  - 30 October 1991 McCauley School (UK).
  - 31 October 1991 Representatives of publications published in Europe by and for immigrants, Brussels.

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND BROCHURES

### Available from the ESC

#### *General documentation*

The other European Assembly (CES 90-024)  
Leaflet on the ESC

#### *Opinions and studies*

Disadvantaged island regions (July 1988) (ESC 88-009)  
Horizon 1992: The ESC supports the removal of fiscal frontiers (July 1988)  
(eight Opinions)  
Target date 1992: The ESC supports 'the new-frontier Europe' (June 1988)  
(seven Opinions) (ESC 88-010)  
A policy for upland areas (December 1988)  
Contribution to a European environmental policy (ESC-89-020)  
Economic and monetary union in the European Community (ESC-89-021)  
Competition policy (ESC-90-003)  
The right of the European citizen to move freely (ESC-90-004)  
Consumer information (ESC-90-008)  
The future of rural society (ESC-90-011)  
Statute for the European company (ESC-90-016)

#### **Available from the EC Publications Office**

Bulletin (monthly) (per issue: ECU 5; annual subscription: ECU 45)  
Annual Report 1990 (ECU 13)  
Effects of the CAP on the social situation of farmworkers in the European  
Community (Brussels, 1987) (ECU 3.40)  
European environment policy: air, water, waste management (Brussels,  
1987) (ECU 3.50)  
Community rail policy (ECU 7.40)  
EEC maritime transport policy (Brussels, June 1986) (ECU 3.40)  
EEC air transport policy (October 1985) (ECU 5.50)  
GATT — towards a new round (Opinion) (Brussels, 1986) (ECU 2.20)  
Competition policy (ECU 3.40)  
The economic and social situation in the Community (1989) (ECU 7.50)





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