

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr von WOGAU, Mr PÖTTERING, Mr VERGEER,
Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO CERRETTI, Mr HABSBERG, Mr GIUMMARRA,
Mr PFLIMLIN, Mr WAWRZIK, Mr CLINTON, Mr COSTANZO
and Mr Konrad SCHÖN

on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party
(Christian-Democratic Group)

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on increasing the number of customs personnel at
the Community's external borders

The European Parliament:

- having regard to the heavy workload currently borne by customs personnel as a result of the steady increase in external trade;
 - having regard to the importance for the Common Market of safeguarding the Community's external borders;
 - having regard to the Member States' budgetary problems, which require energetic measures to be taken;
 - concerned that the reduction in customs personnel envisaged by a number of Member States might compromise the safeguards provided at the Community's external borders;
 - desirous of relaxing internal border controls, thereby contributing to the achievement of customs union;
1. Firmly believes that more intensive customs and passport controls at the Community's external borders, in particular at airports and seaports, would reduce the distinct tendency of Member States in recent years to impede the movement of goods and persons within the Community;
 2. Calls on the Council to make representations to the Member States with a view to securing the transfer of personnel from internal to external borders in order to ensure that adequate safeguards are henceforward provided there by customs and border controls.

Justification

At its meeting in June 1981 the European Council referred to the need to maintain and expand the Community's internal market. The European Council shared the Commission's concern at the danger to the internal market posed by the introduction of fresh obstacles to trade by the Member States.

However, all efforts simultaneously to facilitate travel between the Community Member States, the psychological effect of which on European integration should not be underestimated, have proved fruitless. In recent years the duty-free allowances applying to travel between Community Member States have been reduced. At present, customs officials at the internal borders are required to collect very small amounts of duty, which are out of all proportion to the administrative costs involved. Many Member States are facing financial difficulties, requiring drastic cuts in public spending. Certain of them are therefore envisaging a reduction in customs staff, although the latter are, even now, faced with a very heavy workload.

The Union of Financial Staff in Europe is justifiably concerned that adequate safeguards will no longer be provided at the external borders of the Community. Such safeguards however, form an important precondition for the essential removal of intra-Community trade obstacles and for easier travel across the Community's internal borders.

Existing customs personnel must be deployed primarily at the external borders; at the same time, the controls effected at the internal borders must be kept to an absolute minimum.