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## INTERIM REPORT

drawn up by the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on simplification of customs procedures, customs legislation and institutional methods for dealing with customs matters (Doc. 356/76)

Rapporteur: Mr K. NYBORG

1.0.1

PE 50.749/fin.

English Edition



On 14 October 1976 the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Schwörer and Mr Mitterdorfer pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure on simplification of customs procedures, customs legislation and institutional methods for dealing with customs matters (Doc. 356/76) to the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs.

On 18 January 1977 the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs appointed Mr K. Nyborg rapporteur and, at its meeting of 17 March 1977, adopted an interim report (Doc. 14/77). In the course of subsequent work on the same topic, including the Commission's communication on the state of the customs union (COM(77) 210 final), the committee decided at its meeting of 30 September 1977 to draft a motion for a resolution expressing the European Parliament's support for the Commission's endeavours to draw the attention of the public and of national authorities - for example, by arranging a colloquy to which the European Parliament has been invited by letter from the Commission of 18 October 1977 - to the progress that has been achieved and the shortcomings that have been observed in implementing the customs union.

At its meeting of 3 November 1977 the committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution.

It was decided to propose that the motion for a resolution be adopted without debate.

Present: Mr Normanton, oldest member acting as chairman; Mr Nyborg, rapporteur; Mr Carpentier, Mr Delmotte (deputizing for Lord Bruce of Donington), Mr Guerlin (deputizing for Mr Lange), Lord Murray of Gravesend (deputizing for Mr Prescott), Mr Noe' (deputizing for Mr Ripamonti), Mr Schwörer and Mr Stetter.

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The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on simplification of customs procedures, customs legislation and institutional methods for dealing with customs matters

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the fact that free trade between the three new and six old Member States and between the Community and the countries with which free trade agreements have been concluded has been a reality as from 1 July 1977,
  - having regard to the political, economic and psychological importance of all measures aimed at improving the functioning of the customs union,
  - having regard to its resolutions of 7 July 1975<sup>1</sup> and of 19 April 1977<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the motion for a resolution pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure on simplification of customs procedures, customs legislation and institutional methods for dealing with customs matters (Doc. 356/76),
  - having regard to the interim report of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (Doc. 376/77),
1. Welcomes the Commission's decision to hold a colloquy in December with the aim of drawing the attention of the public and of national authorities to the progress that has been achieved and to the shortcomings that still exist as regards the implementation of the customs union;
  2. Supports in every respect the Commission's efforts to bring about the harmonization and simplification of the rules and procedures governing imports and exports;
  3. Reiterates<sup>2</sup> its urgent appeal to the Member States to do their utmost to support the efforts of the European authorities towards harmonization in the field of customs legislation;
  4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

<sup>1</sup> OJ No. C 179, 6.8.1975, p.7

<sup>2</sup> OJ No. C 118, 16.5.1977, p.30

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs is aware that, particularly in a situation where, as a result of economic developments and for other reasons, it has proved exceedingly difficult to reach agreement on Community policy in new fields, it is important to make a determined contribution to complete and systematic implementation of the very foundation of the Community, i.e. the customs union and the internal market. Furthermore, since the administrative formalities associated with the international movement of goods entail considerable extra costs for large sections of industry and commerce, major priority ought to be given to removing burdens of this nature, particularly in times of high inflation.
2. Therefore, on several occasions in recent years the committee has drawn attention to specific difficulties which ought to be remedied and, in drawing up an interim report in the spring of 1977 (Doc. 14/77), felt it appropriate, for example, to lay emphasis on 1 July 1977, the date on which customs barriers in principle disappeared between the old and the new Member States and between the Community and the countries with which free trade agreements have been concluded. The committee intended to return to the more wide-ranging aspects of the matter when the Commission's report on the state of the customs union was available. This report, which takes the form of a communication to the Council and to the European Parliament 'on the state of the customs union of the European Economic Community' was published on 15 June 1977 (COM(77) 210).
3. The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs is in the process of drawing up a report on the present state of affairs within the customs union. In addition to discussing progress achieved and shortcomings observed, the committee will, in this report, consider possible ways of overcoming the administrative difficulties associated with the movement of goods within the internal market, this being primarily a result of the lack of coordination in the field of taxation and duties.
4. With the aim of drawing the public's attention to what further steps are desirable and necessary, the Commission has arranged for a colloquy to be held on 6-8 December 1977. Members of the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and representatives of national authorities and of the press will be taking part.

In his draft report on the state of the customs union (PE 49.695, point 4.2) the rapporteur stated that the Commission ought to take effective action to inform the public in the Member States that it was primarily because of opposition by national governments to the harmonization of duties that the procedures and controls connected with internal trade and traffic had not been simplified or abolished on the scale originally planned.

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs therefore welcomes the fact that the Commission has taken the initiative to arrange this colloquy and considers it fitting that its approval should be officially placed on record. The committee does not, however, take the view that the adoption of a resolution on these lines ought to give rise to a general debate on the customs union and is therefore of the opinion that the motion for a resolution contained in this report ought to be adopted without debate.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

DOCUMENT 356/76

tabled by Mr SCHWÖRER and Mr MITTERDORFER

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on simplification of customs procedures, customs legislation and institutional methods for dealing with customs matters

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the political, economic and psychological importance of all measures aimed at improving the functioning of the Customs Union,
  - having regard to the statements made on 13 October 1976 by the President-in-Office of the Council and the member of the Commission during the discussion of Oral Questions No. 0-45 and 0-46/76 (Doc. 317/76),
1. Takes the view that the achievement of free movement of goods is proceeding too slowly;
  2. Calls on the Council and the Commission to work incessantly for the improvement of Community customs legislation;
  3. Makes an urgent appeal to the Member States to approve the measures aimed at simplifying customs legislation proposed by the Commission in its programme and approved by the Council, and to do their utmost to support the efforts of the European authorities towards harmonization;
  4. Bases its appeal on the conviction that, contrary to the objectives of the EEC Treaty, outdated customs regulations place an increased cost burden on the economy and dislocate transport and economic activity;
  5. Regards this situation as a luxury which the Community can ill afford at a time of growing economic difficulties for its Member States, having regard to the need to maintain the competitive position of its industries and especially in view of its efforts to maintain the highest possible living standards for its citizens;
  6. Calls on its President to forward this motion for a resolution to the Council and the Commission.