

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

BULLETIN

8

ECONOMIC AND
S O C I A L
C O M M I T T E E



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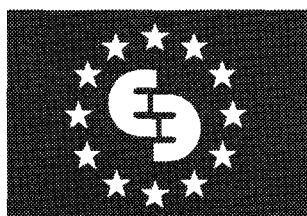
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This Bulletin reports on the activities of the Economic and Social Committee, a consultative body of the European Communities. It is published by the ESC's General Secretariat (2, rue Ravenstein, B-1000 Brussels) in the official Community languages (10 editions per annum)

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The complete texts of the Opinions summarized in this brochure can be obtained either in the Official Journal of the European Communities, Office for Official Publications, 2, rue Mercier, L-2985 Luxembourg, or directly from the ESC Public Relations Division (Fax: +32.2.519.98.22)

I. INAUGURAL SESSION ON 18, 19 and 20 OCTOBER 1994

The inaugural session of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities was held on 18, 19 and 20 October 1994 under the chairmanship of the oldest member present, Mr Filotas Kazazis (Greece - Employers). During the session the Committee was installed in office for its tenth four-year term of office for the period from 21 September 1994 to 20 September 1998.

The principal decisions taken during the session were as follows:

Presidency of the Economic and Social Committee

The Economic and Social Committee began by electing its President and two Vice-Presidents for a two-year period in accordance with its Rules of Procedure. Mr Carlos Ferrer (Spain - Employers) was elected President by 149 votes to 6, with four abstentions. The two Vice-Presidents were Mr Bent Nielsen (Denmark - Workers) and Mr André Laur (France - Various Interests).

Bureau of the Economic and Social Committee

Twenty-seven members were appointed members of the Bureau, in accordance with the Committee's Rules of Procedure, for a period of two years. The following were elected:

Paulo Jorge Andrade (Portugal - Group I)
Dame Jocelyn Barrow (United Kingdom - Group III)
José Bento Gonçalves (Portugal - Group III)
H.C.H. van den Burg (Netherlands - Group II)
Vasco Cal (Portugal - Group II)
Giacomina Cassina (Italy - Group II)
Campbell Christie (United Kingdom - Group II)
Michael Geuenich (Germany - Group II)
Camille Giacomelli (Luxembourg - Group I)
Johannes M. Jaschick (Germany - Group III)
Birte Johansen (Denmark - Group I)
Filotas Kazazis (Greece - Group I)
John Little (United Kingdom - Group I)
C.W.M. Lustenhouwer (Netherlands - Group III)
José Mayayo Bello (Spain - Group III)
Juan Molina (Spain - Group II)
Eugène Müller (Luxembourg - Group III)
Philip Noordwal (Netherlands - Group I)
Yiannis Papamichaïl (Greece - Group II)
Jacques Pe (France - Group II)
Robert Pelletier (France - Group I)
Jens Peter Petersen (Germany - Group I)
Antonello Pezzini (Italy - Group III)
Josly Piette (Belgium - Group II)
Guiseppe Pricolo (Italy - Group I)
Roger Ramaekers (Belgium - Group III)
Cornelius Scully (Ireland - Group III)

Group Presidents

The three Groups of the Economic and Social Committee (Employers, Workers and Various Interests) appointed their respective Presidents and Vice-Presidents. The result of the elections was as follows:

Group I

President: Manuel Eugénio Cavaleiro Brandão (Portugal)
Vice-Presidents: Giannino Bernabei (Italy)
Hubert Ghigonis (France)
Camille Giacomelli (Luxembourg)
Werner Löw (Germany)
Francis J. Whitworth (United Kingdom)

Group II

President: Tom Jenkins (United Kingdom)
Vice-Presidents: Michael Geuenich (Germany)
Ettore Masucci (Italy)

Group III

President: Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli (Italy)
Vice-Presidents: Francisco Ceballo Herrero (Spain)
Eugène Müller (Luxembourg)

Section Presidents

Immediately after the Plenary Session the nine Committee Sections provided for under the Committee's Rules of Procedure, elected the members of their Bureaux. The result of the elections was as follows:

Economic, Financial and Monetary Questions

President: Jean Pardon (Belgium - Group I)
Vice-Presidents: Gianpaolo Pellarini (Italy - Group II)
Bernardus Pompen (Netherlands - Group III)

External Relations, Trade and Development Policy

President: Roger Briesch (France - Group II)
Vice-Presidents: Göke Frerichs (Germany - Group I)
Michael P. Strauss (United Kingdom - Group III)

Social, Family, Educational and Cultural Affairs

President: John F. Carroll (Ireland - Group II)
Vice-Presidents: Werner Löw (Germany - Group I)
Pierre Chevalier (France - Group III)

Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs

President: Manual Ataíde Ferreira (Portugal - Group III)
Vice-Presidents: Joël Decaillon (France - Group II)
Georges Linssen (Netherlands - Group I)

Agriculture and Fisheries

President: Pere Margalef Masia (Spain - Group III)
Vice-Presidents: Giuseppe Pricolo (Italy - Group I)
Manual António Araújo dos Santos (Portugal - Group II)

Regional Development and Town and Country Planning

President: Robert Moreland (United Kingdom - Group III)
Vice-Presidents: Giacomo Regaldo (Italy - Group I)
Victor Hugo Sequeira (Portugal - Group II)

Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services

President: Liam Connellan (Ireland - Group I)
Vice-Presidents: Kommer de Knecht (Netherlands - Group II)
C.W.M. Lustenhouwer (Netherlands - Group III)

Transport and Communications

President: René Bleser (Luxembourg - Group II)
Vice-Presidents: Hubert Ghigonis (France - Group I)
Beate Ann Brookes (United Kingdom - Group III)

Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research

President: José Ignacio Gafo Fernandez (Spain - Group I)
Vice-Presidents: Claus Benedict von der Decken (Germany - Group III)
John Lyons (United Kingdom - Group II)

Speech by the new President of the Economic and Social Committee

Following his election, Mr Carlos Ferrer made the following speech in the presence of Mrs Nicole Péry, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Mr Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission, Ambassador Dietrich von Kyaw, representing COREPER, and a number of other distinguished personalities:

"By electing me President of the Economic and Social Committee for the next two years, you have bestowed upon me a great honour.

I am sincerely grateful and honoured by the trust you have placed in me. However, the post carries with it onerous responsibilities and my main task will be to continue the work of my predecessors, and more particularly Mrs Tiemann who is present here today. May I therefore take this opportunity to pay her a warm tribute and make it clear that hers will be a difficult act to follow.

I should also like to put on record the esteem in which I hold our colleague, Philip Noordwal, whose experience, political intuition and thorough understanding of the inner workings of the Economic and Social Committee will be vital to the satisfactory fulfilment of my duties during this term of office. I shall therefore be most honoured if I can continue to count on his support.

Allow me, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, to also say a few words in particular to Mr Jacques Delors who has honoured us with his presence today. You are all aware of the role he has played and continues to play in the process of building a United Europe and know that he is already seen in the history books as one of Europe's prime architects. But what you perhaps do not know is that Mr Delors has always been a friend of our Committee, has always taken a keen interest in our work and has supported us in our efforts to enhance the role of the consultative function in Europe. On behalf of the Committee and in my own name, I should therefore like to thank you, Mr Delors, and convey to you our warm greetings.

A Committee in existence for more than 36 years, several hundred members who have passed through its portals, some three thousand Opinions - all this represents an authentic encyclopaedia of economic and social progress in Europe. The work of the Committee, owing to its technical expertise, rigorous approach and on-going collective search for balanced solutions, now forms a pillar of knowledge vital to the future of Europe; it is also a source of deep, unshakable faith in the future of our continent.

We have every right to take pride in our achievements, in the quality of our work and in our own specific contribution to the progress of European Union - and find inspiration in them for tackling current tasks. A look at the work of our predecessors will in fact reveal the basic principle that ought to guide our efforts today, viz that **economic progress is neither viable nor sustainable unless it goes hand in hand with social progress.**

This principle, alongside our responsibilities as a consultative body representing economic and social interests, is of greater relevance today than ever before. It will be need to be applied if we are to overcome the major challenges now facing Europe. Three of these challenges seem to me to be of paramount importance:

- 1) The world has changed a great deal within a few years, and especially since 1989. Western Europe now has to face up to problems stemming from the restructuring of Central and Eastern Europe. It has to cope with competition from this part of Europe, just as it has to face up to competition from the countries of South-East Asia and other economic areas. The world is currently being transformed by the extraordinary expansion in the free movement of goods, capital and technologies.

The European Union must be more competitive, must achieve lasting growth and, above all, must learn how to create more jobs. The changes referred to above are now opening up huge markets and providing major opportunities for growth and job creation.

- 2) Western Europe has advanced a long way along the road to integration. At the moment, however, there are different views regarding its future and a period of restructuring will be inevitable from 1996 onwards. During this period the EU will have to achieve greater internal consistency and solidity whilst at the same time becoming more adaptable so that it can satisfy the needs, and meet the preferences, of its constituent Member States.

- 3) European integration has consciously been a 'top-down' process. Perhaps this was the only possible approach in the post-war years. But from now on the choice is simple: either Europe fully involves ordinary citizens and representative social and economic organizations, or its plans for greater integration in the future will come to nought.

The European Union is thus faced with new challenges. To deal with them a collective effort is needed both from those who hold political responsibilities and from socio-economic operators. Everyone has his own significant and specific contribution to make.

We in the Economic and Social Committee give '**added value**' to this collective effort to get Europe back on the road once more to dynamic growth, so we need to ensure that our work is **valued more highly by the other Institutions**. By succeeding in this area our work will be more effective and carry more weight.

Here I should like to put forward **a few ideas** and try to show where **the Committee's special strengths** lie:

* I am of the personal conviction that the "added value" we provide is important. The **consultation** of socio-economic interests is now more necessary than ever before and is of great help to Europe. We are in fact the **institution which formally embodies** the idea of socio-economic consultation within the Union.

One approach is to be found in political consultations; this aspect of democracy is guaranteed by the European Parliament. A parallel approach is that adopted by the Committee in the form of consultations of European citizens as workers or employers, craftsmen or consumers, members of the professions, representatives of family associations and environmental protection organizations - in other words, consultations of people in their capacity as **homo faber**.

* The Committee is made up of men and women who represent and are active in their chosen field of activity and social category. They are neither technocrats nor politicians. We are and shall continue to be the only **non-political consultative institution in the European system** and it is this unique characteristic which makes us a source of consistency and independence, a reference point in terms of expertise, and an ideal forum for providing a "multiplier effect" within organized European society and among European citizens in general.

* The Committee does not have national structures: its members are affiliated to necessarily multinational groups of similar interests.

* In addition, our relations with other European institutions and bodies have always been characterized by **cooperation** and an absence of rivalry. In presenting the contributions of socio-economic operators, our sole concern is to improve the work of the institutions as a whole.

* Our **representativeness of European society** is another asset of which we are particularly proud. The wisdom of those drafting the Treaties has enabled us to incorporate evolutionary changes in European society, offering a platform for new social groups and reflecting the new preoccupations of the public. This has been particularly evident in our recent initiatives on "The Citizens' Europe" - which we shall endeavour to follow up - and the adoption of working methods that give priority to direct contacts with European reality, notably through hearings involving representative citizens and the launching of decentralized initiatives.

* Our strength also derives to a large extent from the support given to us by the **organizations** behind our **Groups**.

Here I should like to welcome the unequivocal and fundamental support offered by the European Confederation of Trade Unions, and more generally all those bodies supporting Group II, to whom I intend to hand over the Presidency intact in two years' time.

I also believe, like all of you, that our work is particularly enriched by the contributions of organizations and associations falling under the umbrella of Group III, a Group which ensures that our Committee is and will be an even more faithful reflection of the European society of today and tomorrow.

Last but not least, you will understand that as a former Chairman and current Vice-Chairman of UNICE, I shall make every effort to promote more constructive cooperation with Europe's employers' organization in direct liaison with my Group I colleagues.

* Re-reading the Committee's annual reports, I have also come to the conclusion that we tend to take a **long-term view** of European affairs and are perhaps able to see further ahead than others because we are encouraged to do so by our organization and are not bound by any electoral constraints.

The Committee thus has a number of specific strengths:

- it is the institutional embodiment of socio-economic consultation on a European scale;
- it is the only non-political consultative institution in the European system;
- it reasons from a multinational point of view;
- its approach to the other institutions is characterized by cooperation;
- it is widely representative of European society;
- it gains strength from the support of major European and national socio-economic organizations; and finally
- it is able and willing to take a long-term view of European affairs.

The Committee can count on all these arguments and instruments to ensure that its action in deepening the process of European integration is effective.

Although these same arguments and instruments are sometimes also used to encourage those who are more inclined to pessimism, it is my belief that we must now go beyond mere statements of fact.

I personally take the view that the present economic situation in Europe and the short-term deadlines (particularly the revision of the Treaties in 1996) call for clearly defined objectives and priority commitments.

Whilst fully aware at the beginning of this term in office that nothing can be achieved without the active cooperation of my colleagues, I am eager to enhance the role of the Economic and

Social Committee, making it more dynamic and giving it its proper place in Europe and among the Institutions of the Union. Within this context, I therefore dedicate myself first and foremost to trying to achieve the following five operational objectives:

1. **Guaranteeing the dignity of Committee members**

This objective is to be achieved by giving priority to the improvement of our status, working conditions and remuneration.

2. **Increasing the effectiveness and impact of our Opinions**

This objective is to be achieved by clearly defining our priorities in close coordination with the priorities of the Union, taking into account our specific contribution and the "added value" we provide; by making judicious use of our right of initiative and by launching actions to enhance the value of our Opinions in the eyes of the Institutions and relevant sections of the public; and, finally, by adjusting our working methods where appropriate.

3. **Raising the external profile of the Committee**

This objective is to be achieved by a permanent commitment to explaining, and enhancing the importance of, our work in the eyes of the political leaders of the European Institutions and national authorities, at the highest level, as well as among the general public.

4. **Preparing for 1996**

This objective is to be achieved by carefully monitoring the preparations for the Intergovernmental Conference being carried out by the authorities in question (Institutions and Member States) and by holding internal discussions designed to ensure that the ESC makes a significant contribution to the work on the revision of the Treaty.

5. **Pursuing our task of building up contacts with non-Member States**

This objective is to be achieved by maintaining regular, structured relations with economic and social councils and socio-economic interest groups in neighbouring countries (Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area) without neglecting our relations with socio-economic operators in other regions of the world and particularly Latin America.

A two year term of office is a short period of time. We must start work immediately and I myself shall be doing just that.

I am counting on the support of our Secretariat. In it we have an excellent back-up team - so much so that there is a call for its services to be shared with another Institution. We shall, however, remain vigilant and work hand in hand with the Secretary-General to ensure that our Committee operates under the best possible conditions.

However, I shall not be able to achieve anything without your cooperation and dedication. I am therefore looking forward to being able to work together with the new Vice-Presidents of the Committee and the new members of the Bureau and congratulate them on their appointments.

The Economic and Social Committee has an invaluable contribution to make to the construction of a new European society capable of coping with the changes now taking place whilst not destroying the essential components of our "European model" which is the envy of countries outside our borders.

In this context - and I am also saying this as a business entrepreneur - I invite you to show creativeness, dynamism and an innovative turn of mind. I would ask you not to remain on the defensive but to vigorously promote our achievements and what we stand for, in the world at large. We must invest if we are to succeed; we must take risks if we are convinced of the correctness of our opinions; and we must shoulder our full responsibilities in the construction of a united Europe that is prosperous and at peace.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me and I wish you much luck during the new term of office.

II. 319th PLENARY SESSION - WORKING SESSION, THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 1994

Following the inaugural session, the Economic and Social Committee held a working session on Thursday, 20 October 1994, chaired by its new President, Mr Carlos Ferrer. During this session the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities adopted the following Opinions:

1. PRODUCTS SUBJECT TO EXCISE DUTY - MINERAL OILS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the *proposal for a Council Directive amending Council Directive 92/12/EEC of 25 February 1992 on the general arrangements for products subject to excise duty and on the holding, movement and monitoring of such products; Council Directive 92/81/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the harmonization of the structures of excise duties on mineral oils and Council Directive 92/82/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of the rates of excise duties on mineral oils*
(COM(94) 179 final)

(CES 1158/94)

Rapporteur-General: Mr José Ignacio Gafo Fernandez (Spain - Employers)

Gist of the Commission proposal

A Community movement and monitoring system for products subject to excise duty came into force on 1 January 1993 (Council Directive 92/12/EEC). With regard to the special arrangements for mineral oils, the structures of excise duties have been harmonized (Council Directive 92/81/EEC) and minimum excise-duty rates laid down (Council Directive 92/82/EEC).

After the first year of operation of these systems and further to the discussions held within the Committee on Excise Duties, the Commission concluded that it was necessary to fill the gaps in the Community legislation and simplify certain provisions in order to ensure that the internal market provided for in Article 7a of the Treaty operates smoothly. This is the aim of the present proposal.

The proposed amendments to Directives 92/12/EEC, 92/81/EEC and 92/82/EEC aim essentially to:

- better guarantee the safety of products being moved in the Community;
- define the formalities governing *inter alia* the movement of products under suspension arrangements and the discharge procedure in the event of loss;
- simplify the arrangements for the direct and indirect movement of products subject to excise duty between Member States and the State of San Marino, and speed up the dispatch of accompanying documents;
- promote administrative cooperation between Member States, particularly in the forms adopted by the Commission after consultation with the Committee on Excise Duties;
- determine the exemptions to be granted to international organizations and to certain products;
- lastly, with regard to mineral oils, limit the scope of the legislation governing excise duty to those products which are effectively used as motor and heating fuel or likely to be so, and update the Combined Nomenclature codes (CN codes) relating to leaded and unleaded petrol.

The Directive contains a number of provisions for simplifying and clarifying excise duty arrangements, essential if a cohesive Community legal framework is to be maintained and uniformly applied.

Gist of the Opinion

The Committee welcomes the programme for simplifying and clarifying the legislation and administrative formalities needed to ensure the free movement of petroleum products subject to excise. It would, however, wish to make a number of comments which aim to improve arrangements. These cover the harmonization of the exemption-in-advance system, the double taxation of damaged goods which are sent back to the authorized depot and the fiscal treatment of certain non-conventional hydrocarbons.

2. GSP 1995-1997

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the *Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) applying a three-year scheme of generalized tariff preferences (1995-97) in respect of certain industrial products originating in developing countries*
Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) extending into 1995 the application of Regulations (EEC) No. 3833/90, (EEC) No. 3835/90 and (EEC) No. 3900/91 applying generalized tariff preferences in respect of certain agricultural products originating in developing countries
(COM(94) 337 final)

(CES 1159/94)

Rapporteur-General: Helmut Giesecke (Germany - Employers)

Gist of the Commission proposals

The Commission confirms the new GSP guidelines for industrial products, namely:

- principle of neutrality: the level of liberalization will be neutral overall compared with the existing scheme as regards the impact of the preferential margin on the potential volume of preferential trade;
- simplification: volume restrictions are replaced by tariff modulation reflecting the sensitivity of different sectors;
- stability: the proposed scheme will run for three years;
- transparency: there will be a special product/country safeguard clause;
- graduation: graduation involves transferring preferential margins from the better-off developing countries to the less-developed ones;
- solidarity mechanism: the sector/country graduation system is supplemented by a "solidarity mechanism" applicable when beneficiary countries' exports exceed 25%;
- phasing in of the graduation and solidarity provisions;
- suspension of the GSP in certain cases (fraud, unfair trading practices, etc.);
- special incentive arrangements in response to social and environment concerns, and an intellectual property clause later;
- list of beneficiaries: unchanged, except South Africa.

Gist of the Opinion

The Committee welcomes the proposal to undertake a thorough revision of the Generalized System of Preferences. This time the emphasis is on giving priority to the poorest countries.

The proposal to achieve this goal, whilst at the same time adhering to the principle of "overall neutrality" whereby the total volume of preferential imports would remain the same but there would be a switch of emphasis in favour of the poorer countries, is considered to be a particularly positive development.

The Committee emphatically endorses the Community's efforts in undertaking a revision of this kind to simplify procedures, and to introduce a three-year time-scale and a graduated system of preferences linked to the sensitivity of the products in question.

The division of products into categories is necessary, but three such categories are entirely adequate, i.e. particularly sensitive products, sensitive products and non-sensitive products.

The Committee considers that a safeguard clause to protect the European Community's industries is absolutely essential.

Given that the tariff preferences scheme is intended to be only a temporary incentive for developing countries, the Committee welcomes the introduction of a graduation and solidarity mechanism.

The Committee believes that clear verification and decision-making rules are needed before the graduation and solidarity mechanism can be put in place.

The Committee agrees with the Commission that it should be possible for preferential treatment to be totally or partially withdrawn for a limited period if beneficiary countries engage in certain improper activities.

The Committee is pleased that special incentive arrangements in the form of an additional preferential margin are to be introduced in the case of particularly positive action (social, environment and later intellectual property clauses).

The Committee also recognizes the great importance of the rules on the cumulation of origin, particularly for the less-developed countries.

III. FUTUR WORK

Economic Affairs Section

- Taxes other than turnover taxes which affect the consumption of manufactured tobacco (COM(94) 355 final - 94/0204 (CNS))
Deadline: to be decided
- Cross-border transactions
(COM(94) 436 final)
Deadline: to be decided

Environment Section

- Action programme for the prevention of AIDS
(COM(94) 413 final)
Deadline: to be decided
- Indication of consumer prices
(COM(94) 431 final)
Deadline: January
- Approximation of legislation on mineral water exploitation
(COM(94) 423 final)
Deadline: to be decided

Industry Section

- Pluralism and media concentration
(COM(94) 353 final)
Deadline: to be decided

- Industrial policy (to be confirmed)
(COM(94) 319 final)
Deadline: to be decided
- Block exemptions: motor vehicle distribution (to be confirmed)
Deadline: to be decided
- Aid for shipyards
(COM(94) 444 final - 94/0238 (ACC))
Deadline: December

Agriculture Section

- Health measures - fresh meat from third countries
(COM(94) 394 final - 94/0208)
Deadline: November
- Common organization of the market - fishery products and aquaculture
(COM(94) 403 final - 94/0212 (CNS))
Deadline: November

Regional Development Section

- Europe 2000 plus (to be confirmed)
Deadline: to be decided

External Relations Section

- Conclusion of GATT/Uruguay Round agreements
(COM(94) 143 final - 94/0114)
Deadline: November

IV. FACT-FINDING VISITS

Over the period in question, the Economic and Social Committee received visits from the following:

7 October 1994	Fédération de l'Education Nationale (FEN), Paris (France)
7 October 1994	Information Office, Bavaria
10 October 1994	Padre A. Neto Secondary School, Queluz (Portugal)
10 October 1994	Mayors and municipal councillors from the Barcelona region (Spain)
10 October 1994	Technische Universität, Berlin (Germany)
11 October 1994	Deutsche Gesellschaft e.V., Berlin (Germany)

- 11 October 1994 NOPUS-SVERIGE - Nordic Education Programme for Social Service Development, Stockholm, Sweden
- 12 October 1994 FOCUS EUROPE - IUC International Education Centre, Svendborg (Denmark)
- 12 October 1994 Colloque réseaux transeuropéens (Trans-European networks symposium) Group (France)
- 13 October 1994 Politische Akademie Biggensee, Attendorn (Germany)
- 13 October 1994 Austrian mission
- 17 October 1994 Lycée Polyvalent de Sarcelles (France)
- 17 October 1994 Ecole nationale de la Magistrature et Centre Régional de Formation Professionnelle des Avocats, Bordeaux (France)
- 19 October 1994 Associations of the Region of Nüremberg (EUROPA-UNION DEUTSCHLAND, Kreisverband Nürnberger Land e.V. (Germany)
- 21 October 1994 Assembly of the Bavarian Municipal Council of the district of Lower Franconia (Germany)
- 26 October 1994 University of Turku - Centre for Extension Studies (Finland)
- 26 October 1994 University of Essex (United Kingdom)
- 26 October 1994 Union of post office workers, Aarhus (Denmark)
- 27 October 1994 KEY TO EUROPE (National Higher School for Tourism, Breda (Netherlands))
- 27 October 1994 Union of Law Students, University of Aarhus (Denmark)
- 27 October 1994 Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung des Landes Schleswig-Holstein und des Landes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany)

