

# EURO - info

The bulletin of enterprise policy

## The 1998 work programme in favour of tourism

**Social Economy:**  
The official establishment of  
the Consultative Committee for  
Cooperatives, Mutual Societies,  
Associations and Foundations (CMAF)



European Commission

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## "ERRATUM"

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In place of "Prepare a communication on tourism and employment to be presented to the European Council in Cardiff (June 1998)"

Please read "Prepare a communication on tourism and employment to be presented to the European Council at the end of the year".

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Paola PICCAROLO - European Commission - Directorate General XXIII  
 "Enterprise Policy, Distributive Trades, Tourism and Co-operatives"

## Tourism



### Work programme for 1998 - Survey

The importance of tourism for growth, GDP and employment is always at the centre of the Tourism Unit's work programme for 1998. Many of the policies of the European Union have an impact on tourism, and the institutions of the European Union support the work of the Commission in this area, despite the lack of a decision by the Council on the "Philoxenia" programme.

That is why the 1998 work programme is devoted to following objectives that aim to **improve the quality** and **the competitiveness** of European tourism, because they contribute in an important way to the objectives of the Community. It is in this direction that the Tourism Unit will continue its policy with the resources at its disposal: the Consultative Committee for the consultation of Member States, the inter-services group which takes care of internal coordination on tourism matters, and consultation with experts and the tourism sector.

Here are the key guidelines of the Tourism Unit's programme:

### Employment

As last year, the creation of, and improvement in, employment remains a priority for the Tourism Unit. The contribution of the Unit to this important Community objective lies in the management of the follow-up of the issues identified by the Conference on Tourism and Employment which was held in November 1997 in Luxembourg. This task will be brought to completion with the help of the work of the High Level Group, created on the initiative of Commissioner Papoutsis, in charge of of tourism and liaison with other departments of the Commission.

### Policy of the SMEs

Given the high proportion of SMEs (95%) in the tourism industry, the Commission systematically tries to integrate the tourism dimension into actions carried out in favour of SMEs. SMEs in the tourism sector already benefit from various community activities in favour of SMEs. In order to examine the questions concerning tourism SMEs in greater depth, the Commission will support the "Conference on Tourism and SMEs", which will be

held under the British Presidency and which will examine how to reinforce the contribution to the Community objectives of the small businesses in the tourism sector (Wales, 20-22 May, 1998).

### The Euro

The Tourism Unit will be actively involved in the efforts and activities aimed at ensuring the smooth introduction of the Euro into the SMEs in the tourism sector. For this reason, the Tourism Unit is organising a seminar on tourism and the Euro in October 1998. To prepare for this seminar, a technical working party, consisting of tourism professionals, bankers, issuers of paper currency and experts from the Member States will study related problems in depth in order to determine the best introduction strategies for tourism operators. As well as the seminar, the practical consequences of the introduction of the Euro on the SMEs are the object of a study which was initiated in 1997. The results of these studies will be available later in the year and will contain a chapter especially devoted to tourism.

### Information technology

In order to contribute to the question of competitiveness in European Tourism, DGXXIII will undertake activities in conjunction with other DG's in the IT domain. This will take the form of workshops and studies on technology and new technology, its impact on the tourist industry (e.g. electronic commerce) and the needs of the tourist industry in this area.

### Statistics

Action will be centred on the following two elements: the consolidation of the European Statistics System on tourism, which has been developed under the Council Directive 95/57/CE, and the dissemination of information on the work carried out. This will include publication of the Methodology of tourism statistics and the results of the Eurobarometer on the holidays of Europeans.

### Cohesion and Regional Policy

Policies for the regions and for cohesion will be examined and certain aspects of the impact on tourism of the Community's structural funds will be analysed. A working group on urban tourism will contribute to the European debate on urban issues.



resent the CMAF. The Commission holds the presidency of the Committee.

The Committee will help the Commission in its decision-making in the area of social economy by responding to all its requests for advice on the major political and social issues which impact on the life of its citizens, and also on the organisation of the job market, business life and society. It will also be able to give opinions on its own initiative regarding issues which it judges to be interesting for the social economy in the other policies of the Commission.

The Consultative Committee is the privileged interlocutor of the Commission. It allows the Commission to be in permanent contact with the sector and to follow closely developments in the different Member States.

Previously, since 1995, the organisms of the CMAF were consulted via a self-managed consultative committee, by means of subsidies granted annually by the Commission. It was presided over by Professor Bernard Thiry, director of CIRIEC-International, and had many times expressed the desire of the CMAF to have an institutional committee, in order to work better with the Commission. This has now been created.

By its institutionalisation, the current Committee will give greater political visibility to cooperatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations, which will then be able to demonstrate the importance of the structures of the social economy in the economic and social life of Europe.

### **A committee which has been able to work in the interests of cooperatives as well as for mutual societies or associations and foundations**

At the meeting of experts on "Relations between Associations and Foundations", which was organised in the framework of the action plan for the implementation of the Communication on "The promotion of the role of Associations and Foundations" (Com/241/97 of 4/6/97), Professor Bernard Thiry summed up the work of the outgoing, self-managed consultative Committee of the CMAF. On this occasion, EURO-info interviewed Mr. Thiry.

*You were elected to be president of the self-managed Consultative Committee for a three year period. Could you summarise these three years of activity?*

There is no point in being modest in the sense that the work accomplished was the fruit of a collaborative effort which can be judged to be very positive. We have published a dozen recommendations on various themes, of which half were at the request of the Commission and half on the initiative of members of the Committee. We have also developed many contacts with European institutions: the Commission, but also the Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions. We have developed the links which existed between the different bodies which make up the social economy, and we are very pleased that, in this framework, the United Kingdom has accepted to organise the 6th European Conference on the social economy in Birmingham in June 1998. However, it seems to me that the most positive point is that over a period of three years we have demonstrated that we can work together in a positive atmosphere on issues of common interest. Thus, we have demonstrated that a Committee of this type can act in the interest of its various constituents, that is to say the cooperatives, the mutual societies, the associations and the foundations. It is this last element that I put first when considering the report on activities.

#### **I N F O R M A T I O N**

Alice Copette,  
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*Can one talk about the self-managed Committee as a pilot phase?*

Yes, it was a period of testing: we were formed on a private initiative, but we were recognised by the Commission and in particular by Commissioner Papoutsis. It was a trial period, in line with what had been agreed,

and which had come to its term.

*The Commission takes over the new presidency. What was the route taken to arrive at this decision?*

The social economy is made up of different groups and it is sometimes difficult to find a person who accepts to be placed above the interests of the various parties. It was by chance that I was able to take on this role for three years, but the constituent parties do not find themselves at this moment in a position to agree easily on one person who would take on this responsibility. It was therefore preferable to have, in the place of a single interlocutor, in this case the president, also a bureau composed of the three vice-presidents, one from each of the three groups. That way, one has a collective interface instead of one interface represented by the president. By having the

Commission as president, the outlook is very positive. The Commission prepares the dossiers, is above the various parties and has consensus as an objective.

*Is there one question that you would like me to ask you?*

I think that it is the future of relations between the Committee on the one hand and the Commission on the other, aside from the question of the presidency. I think that the need for the Committee is greater now than in the past. It is in the interest of the Commission and the constituent parts of the social economy to have this Committee as an area of dialogue between the services of the Commission and the social economy. Now that the Committee is established and has the respect of the sector, it will be able to put forward advice on a whole series of questions which exceed the sphere of activities of DG XXIII, and this is important. Through the intermediary of DG XXIII, and with its collaboration, the Consultative Committee, and therefore the social economy, can put forward views on issues which are dealt with by other DG's.

## **National and European Conferences of the Sector of the Social Economy, with the support of the Commission**

### **Relations between the Voluntary and the Public Sector 5 may 1998 Stockholm (Sweden)**

Organiser: Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan  
Raymond Svensson  
Tel. + 46-8-787 58 41  
Fax +46-8-20 41 55

### **Para uma Formação em gestão de Associações e Fundações**

#### **8-9 mai à Lisbonne (Portugal)**

Organizador: União Misericórdias Portuguesas  
Victor José Melícias Lopes  
Calçada das Lajes 12-A  
P- 1900 Lisboa  
Tel. +351-1-811 10 540/59  
Fax +351-1-812 13 24

### **Il co-finanziamento e lo sviluppo del partenariato tra poteri pubblici e settore associativo**

#### **15-16 mai 1998 à Rome (Italie)**

Organizzatore: ACLI  
Ascani

Via Marcora n° 18/20  
I- 00153 Roma  
Tel. +39 6 58 40 419/572/612  
Fax +39 6 58 40403

### **Conférence française pour la valorisation et la diffusion de la communication de la Commission européenne sur la promotion du rôle des associations et des fondations en Europe**

#### **25-26 mai 1998 à Paris**

Organisateur: CNLAMCA  
Coursin  
46, rue de Liège  
F-75008 Paris  
Tel. +33-1-42 93 56 08  
Fax +33-1-42 93 55 76

### **Biennial forum on the Social Economy organised in conjunction with the UK Social Economy Forum, the Commission and the European leaders of the CMAF.**

#### **3-5 June 1998 in Birmingham (United Kingdom)**

Organiser: UK Social Economy Forum  
Sophie Servagnant  
c/o Unity Trust Bank plc  
4 the Square, 111 Broad Street  
Birmingham B15 1AR  
Tel. +44-121-616 4146  
Fax +44-121-631 2365

### **In the European Parliament, the "Third Sector" Intergroup is interested in CMAF (cooperatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations)**

The "Third Sector" Intergroup of the European Parliament, formerly called "social economy", has decided to give a new rhythm to its activities by meeting in Strasbourg every two months on the central issues which are the common preoccupations of parliamentarians and the representatives of the sector.

Thus, under the presidency of Fiorella Ghilardotti, the first meeting devoted exclusively to mutual societies was held. The theme was "Between Competition and Solidarity - The role of Mutual

Societies in Social Protection in Europe". The administrators of mutual societies set out for parliamentarians the principles which characterised their activities, as well as the trends in reforms taking place in Europe in the health sector and their impact on insurers. An interesting debate followed. The respective responsibilities of public authorities and mutual societies were discussed, as well as the increasing role of competition in the health sector and its interaction with the development of mutual societies, the practices and values of mutual societies, the entrepreneurial dimension and training. Finally, the meeting also touched on the experience of mutual societies in the area of partnerships with third countries, in particular the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CCEE).

The Commission presented the short-term aims of its activity in favour of the social economy and the main lines of its forthcoming work programme. It was made up of actions centred on the mainstreaming and the increase of visibility of the sector, on the promotion of its potential for entrepreneurship and employment, as well as the preparation of the management of cooperatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations (CMAF) for the challenges of the single currency and enlargement.

The next meetings will be devoted in particular to de-mutualisation and de-cooperation, to the reform of structural funds and the preparation for enlargement.

#### INFORMATION

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The call for tenders was decided upon within the framework of the third pluriannual programme for Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union (1997-2000).

Here are a few examples of the projects which are being subsidised.

### "Excellence of the ultraperipheral regions"

The aim of the project is to promote cooperation between the European ultraperipheral regions in order to support small enterprises, craftsmen, the husbands or wives of small entrepreneurs and individual entrepreneurs. The enterprises in these regions are often confronted with similar problems of access to European and or international markets. Their major challenges are the improvement in their international communications, the development of subcontracting, transport and distribution, the development of partnerships and cooperation with other companies.

In order to achieve these objectives and to improve the competitiveness of small local enterprises, the project proposes the creation of a programme of continuous training on the means available to facilitate access to international markets: new information technology, sub-contracting, inter-entrepreneur agreement formulae and European actions in favour of small enterprises.

## The Craft Sector and Small Enterprises



### Financial contribution of 7 million ECU to approximately twenty programmes

Following the 97/C 117/17 tender for proposals "**Assistance to the Craft Sector and to Small Enterprises**", the Commission recently decided to subsidise approximately twenty programmes. The subsidy will be for a maximum of 50% of the cost of each project and the total amount of the subsidy will be 7 million ECU.

### "Promotion of young entrepreneurs, men and women, in the craft and micro-enterprise sector"

The project includes the creation of 5 support centres, 4 in Greece (Athens, Larissa, Ioannina, Thessalonika) and 1 in Italy (Bologna), which will provide support services to young entrepreneurs. The objective is to promote entrepreneurship and to develop a financial instrument for the target group in collaboration with the regional and local authorities.

The first task of the project is to study the major needs and the problem areas of the target group. Training programmes will then be organised in order to prepare future entrepreneurs for their business. Each support centre foresees the setting up of sixty enterprises and a 3-year monitoring period. Other actions include the creation of a Web page which connects the enter-

prises to the support centre, the dissemination in seminars of the results achieved, contacts with the organizations which represent the craft sector and small enterprises, contacts with public authorities in order to obtain their support for the continuation of the action after the Commission subsidy.

## Follow-up of the Milan Conference of 20-21 November 1997

The Group in charge of the follow-up of the conclusions of the Third European Conference on the Craft Industry and Small Enterprises, which took place on 20 and 21 November 1997 in Milan, met on two occasions in order to take stock of progress made.

The meeting of 19 December 1997 examined how to incorporate the Milan conclusions in the Commission's work programme and underlined the continued importance of this sector as a creator of growth and employment.

On 19 January 1998, the group analysed the new website for the network of the European Information Centre (EIC) and reflected on how to use the site to improve information on the activities of the Commission available for the craft sector and small enterprises.

The meeting of 2 April 1998 is planned to include a discussion on the recent steps taken by the Commission in fields such as training, VAT for labour intensive services and access to credit for small enterprises.

### INFORMATION

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## The Euro-Info Centres help enterprises in implementing the norms



For all enterprises, whatever their activities or their size, norms have a strategic importance.

They help enterprises to rationalize their production (master the technical characteristics of their products, validate the methods of manufacturing, ensure the security of the operators and of their plant) and improve their sales. In fact, compliance with norms is an excellent commercial argument. It also regulates the markets.

These norms exist in large numbers: there are several thousands of them in Europe.

In 1997 the Euro Info Centres (EIC) of 5 countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway, the United Kingdom and Sweden) organised an awareness campaign for SMEs with regard to the European normalization policy and the EC mark. Thanks to 120 seminars and workshops specially organised for them, the SMEs were able to familiarise themselves with the essential security requirements and the harmonised European norms of a technical nature.

They were given explanations on the highly technical areas of expertise concerning the norms and technical regulations that enterprises must respect in order to obtain the EC mark. This conformity mark system is mandatory for a whole series of products such as toys, machines, building materials and medical devices.

In order to guide enterprises in their operations, Euro Info Centres have also developed practical information products for the application of norms. Approximately 35,000 copies of these products have been published and distributed. Guides and brochures such as "Safety of machinery", "ISO 9000" and "ISO 14000" can be obtained from the

Reykjavik EIC, fax: 00.354.5114000. CEMACH, the software devised to aid the implementation of the EC mark system, is available in 5 languages from the Ghent EIC, fax: 00.32.9.267 86 96 and the CD-Rom which offers interactive sectorial information on normalisation, can be ordered from the Herning EIC, fax: 00.45.97 129244.

The awareness campaign was accompanied by numerous actions in the press and on radio and television. It established a total of 6 million contacts.

Aside from this campaign, the whole Euro Info Centre network continues to inform and guide the various enterprises on this subject, an area in which they are highly competent.



## Exchange of best practices: Concerted Actions with Member States

The **concerted actions** were set out in the **Integrated Programme of 1994**. It proposed a reinforced partnership between all the parties concerned by the development of the SMEs at the European, national and regional levels in order to achieve a greater coherence in activity. In the implementation of Article 130 of the Treaty on the European Union, the objective of the concerted actions is to ensure consultation between Member States and the Commission, in order **to favour the exchange of best practices** with regard **to the improvement of the environment of enterprises** as well as **the policies and support measures for the SMEs**.

The Integrated Programme proposes a series of fora on fundamental issues which arise at different stages in the life cycle of an enterprise, involving political leaders, national and regional officials, business organisations and professionals. It also provides various follow-up activities.

The added value of the concerted approach lies in its capacity to mobilise all the parties concerned, including public and para-public intermediaries. A concerted action as a whole is a dynamic process which can develop through different stages, such as the compilation of legislative measures and of support systems, the identification of best practices and of particularly innovative experiments, the organisation of debates and analyses and eventually in-depth investigation by a restricted group of experts, the organisation of large fora to present to the partners concerned the work progress achieved, the evaluation of measures taken and the follow-up of each action. It can lead to proposals at a community level.

Since 1995, the Commission has launched three concerted actions:

**Concerted action n° 1 on the improvement and the simplification of the environment of enterprises** was the subject of a forum organised in Paris in 1995 on the start-up of enterprises. It led to the adoption of a Recommendation to Member States on the start-up of enterprises.

**Concerted action n° 2 on the support measures for enterprises** started with the Madrid Forum, organised in November 1995. It was dedicated to the support measures

aimed at SMEs at the time of their creation and during their early years of existence. On this occasion, a **"European Directory of Measures in Favour of Business Start-ups and Assistance for the New Enterprises"** was created.

**Concerted action n° 3 on the stimulation of demand for services for SMEs** was the theme of a forum held in Dublin in November 1996 with the theme **"Increasing the profile and effectiveness of services to assist the SMEs"**.

Another **forum** was organised in Lille in February 1997 on the **transfer of enterprises** in order to examine measures for simplification and support in this matter.

A pilot group, concerned with actions 2 and 3, made up of representatives from Member States, is undertaking a task aimed at the development of an appropriate methodology for the identification and promotion of best practices. This work will be underpinned by a data base of support measures and by various Internet tools which encourage an exchange of information between the aiding organisations and business leaders. These two points were the subject of a call for tender in 1997 and the data base should be completed by the end of 1998.

**The 1998 Work Programme** includes the organisation of seminars and of a forum, the application of the bid for tenders on "the support measures for new enterprises" launched in 1997 as well as the preparation of a Report by the Commission to the Council on the Concerted Actions.

During this year the following events are being organised:

- 5 and 6 February in Rome: a seminar on the individualisation of the support services to enterprises has already been organised by Unioncamere in cooperation with the Italian authorities (50 participants).
- 5 and 6 May in Stockholm: seminar on training as a support service to SMEs during the start-up phase, organised by NUTEK. 100 participants are expected.
- 22 and 23 June in Madrid: seminar on the financing of SMEs during the start-up phase, organised by the Spanish authorities. 150 participants are expected.



- 21 and 22 September in Vienna: Forum organised by the Austrian Presidency on the services available to growing enterprises, particularly with respect to financing possibilities and information networks. Particular attention will be given to the support measures. Organised by the Austrian Ministry of the Economy, this forum is expecting 400 participants and could be extended to the Central and Eastern European countries.
- 19 and 20 November in Helsinki: seminar on support to innovative enterprises in the start-up phase. The themes discussed will cover technology parks, access to technology and innovation services. The Forum is organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and will be organised for 100 to 150 persons.

## INFORMATION

DG XXIII C1  
Fax: 00 32 2 2966278

## Conference of the Commerce and Distribution Committee (CCD)



### 23 April 1998 in Brussels

Commissioner Christos Papoutsis will be present at the CCD Conference which will take place in Brussels on the morning of 23 April 1998.

The CCD will meet in plenary session during the afternoon.

### Info-news

The Commission has adopted a proposal for a Directive concerning the fight against payment delays in com-

mercial transactions.

We will return to this subject in our next issue.

## Partenariat meetings

### Europartariat The Netherlands

#### 11-12 June 1998 in Apeldoorn (Netherlands)

Contact: the Europartariat Secretariat

Tel. +31-55-58 02 344

Fax +31-55-58 01 015

### Med-Interprise Syria

#### 20-24 June 1998 in Damascus & Aleppo (Syria)

Contact: Federation of the Syrian Chambers of Commerce

Tel. +963-11-333 68 86

Fax +963-11-333 11 27

## Action in favour of the Craft Sector

From 6 to 10 May, 1998, **the 1st Europe-Latin America Craft Summit** will take place in Zaragoza (Spain). Approximately 1,000 people and enterprises linked to the craft sector from 35 countries will participate in it.

This summit is organised by the Aragon Confederation of Small and Medium-size Enterprises (Spain), in collaboration with the main Craft Organizations from Europe and Latin America. The European Commission will support this event and participate in it.

The **1st Europe-Latin America Craft Summit** will focus on four major activities:

- Private working sessions between craftsmen of all participating countries.
- Individual meetings of craftsmen with the major trade and distribution networks at world level.
- Specific seminars and round tables on themes that are of major importance to the craft sector.
- International Craft Exhibition open to the public, where the most representative pieces of the artisans' work will be displayed.

## INFORMATION

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## European Conference on Distributive Trades in the less-favoured rural areas



### 11-12 May 1998 in Brussels, European Parliament

The European Conference on Distributive Trades in the less-favoured rural areas is organised jointly by DG XXIII and the Committee of the Regions on 11 and 12 May 1998 in Brussels, at the headquarters of the European Parliament.

The Conference will be opened by Mr. Guy Crauser, Director General of DG XXIII and by Mr. Dietrich Pause, Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions. Several workshops will be organised.

For more information, contact Mr. Patrick Fourguette:

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E-mail: [Patrick.Fourguette@dg23.cec.be](mailto:Patrick.Fourguette@dg23.cec.be)

## Interprise meetings

### Interprise Ecobusiness

#### 25-26 May 1998 in Graz (Austria)

Organiser: International Consulting Executives  
Louis Hermann

Tel. +43-1-712 04 19 - Fax +43-1-712 04 14-12

Participating countries: Finland, Italy, Spain

Activity area: Environmental technology

### Interprise AMITOM

#### 25-28 May 1998 in Pamplona (Spain)

Organiser: AMITOM- Ass. Méditerranéenne Intern. de la Tomate transformée  
Bieche

Tel. +33-4-90 86 16 95 - Fax +33-4-90 27 06 58

Participating countries: Italy, Spain

Activity area: Tomato industry

### Interprise Seafood

#### 27-28 May in Tromso (Norway)

Organiser: EIC Narvik/Vinn

Ingrid Martenson

Tel. +47-76-92 22 22 - Fax +47-76-94 72 60

Participating countries: United Kingdom, Denmark, Iceland

Activity area: Fish

### West Finland Interprise

#### 3-4 June 1998 in Seinajoki (Finland)

Organiser: South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce

Anna-Maija Kuusisto

Tel. + 358-6-41 42 202 - Fax + 358-6-42 35 104

Participating countries: Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sweden, Italy, Denmark

Activity area: Mechanised wood-working

### Interprise Basque Automotive Industry

#### 4-5 June 1998 in Bilbao (Spain)

Organiser: ACICAE

Antonio Reche

Tel. +34-4-420 96 77 - Fax +34-4-420 98 79

Participating countries: Germany, United Kingdom, France

Activity area: Automobile industry and servicing

### Interprise Agro Food and Drink

#### 14-17 June 1998 in Northampton (United Kingdom)

Organiser: Northampton Borough Council

David Bampton

Tel. +44-1604- 23 35 00 - Fax +44-1604-23 89 88

Participating countries: France, Belgium

Activity area: Food and Drink