



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

pursuant to the first subparagraph of Article 189 c (b) of the EC-Treaty

on

Council Common Position on

the Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC)

on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins

1. BACKGROUND

On 29 May 1997 the Commission adopted a proposal for a Council Regulation (COM (97) 247 final) on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins based on Article 105a(2) which was transmitted to the Council on 3 June 1997.

On 6 November 1997 the European Parliament issued its opinion on first reading on such proposal.

On the basis of the Parliament opinion the Commission reviewed its proposal and on 14 November 1997 the Commission transmitted its amended proposal to the Council (COM (97) 615).

On 20 November 1997 the Council has adopted its Common Position with a view to adopting a Council Regulation.

2. PURPOSE OF COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The proposal aims at harmonising the denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation.

It is based on the technical work carried out by the Group of European Mint Directors (MDWG) in response to a mandate given by the Finance Ministers and on intensive consultations of the various users groups (consumers associations, blinds organisations, the vending machines industry).

The proposal defines the denominations in the new coinage system indicating that there will be eight coins ranging from 1 cent to 2 euro. It also provides the technical specifications (diameter, weight, thickness, shape, colour, composition and edge milling) of the coins.

The proposed specifications have been mainly defined in order to facilitate recognition, in particular on the basis of the requirements expressed by the blinds and consumers organisations and ensure an adequate level of security against counterfeiting.

3. COMMENTS ON COMMON POSITION

3.1 General observations on common position

The common position reflects the Commission amended proposal and adds certain modifications aimed at bringing further clarification.

3.2 Parliament amendments on first reading

The Commission accepted and incorporated in its amended proposal 5 amendments adopted by the Parliament on first reading, with some slight modifications:

Amendment 1 to recital 4 has been included as such in the amended proposal.

Amendment 2 has been accepted as such by inserting a new recital 5.

Amendment 4 as been accepted, with a slight modification to the last sentence, by inserting a new recital 6.

Amendment 8 first sentence has been accepted by inserting a new recital 8.

Amendment 21 has been accepted with a slight modification by inserting a new recital 10.

All amendments accepted by the Commission have been incorporated in the common position in the form accepted by the Commission.

3.3. New provisions introduced by the Council and Commission's position on them

The differences between the Commission amended proposal and the Council common position result from the following textual adjustment aimed at clarifying and specifying certain references and amending some incorrect figures. The Commission fully agrees to such modifications:

- The title has been modified to specify that the Regulation concerns euro coins "intended for circulation" in conformity with article 105 a (2) of the Treaty;
- Recital 1 has been modified to specify that euro coins will be put in effective circulation on the date to be decided in the framework of the regulation on the introduction of the euro;
- Recital 4 differs from the Commission amended proposal to the extent that a precision has been added specifying that the mandate to the EC Mint Directors was given by the Council;
- A new Recital 12 has been added aiming at confirming that the draft Regulation is based on the technical report of the Mint Directors and that changes to such specifications are motivated by the need to ensure public acceptance; the Commission has stated this principle in many occasions and therefore agrees with such addition;
- A new Recital 13 has been added to specify that thickness values are only given for indicative purposes, according to the indications received from the Mint Directors after transmission of their report; a footnote is also added in Article 1 with the same purpose; the Commission agrees with such precision which has been indicated by the technical experts whose report served as a basis to the Commission for its proposal;
- In article 1 thickness of the 1 and 5 cent coins has been modified to 1.36 mm. following a correction communicated by the MDWG.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND GENERAL REMARKS

The Commission fully supports the Council common position which:

- includes all and exclusively the Parliament's amendments accepted by the Commission in its amended proposal,
- adds some specifications which do not change the content of the Commission amended proposal but clarify certain ideas which were implicit in the Commission amended proposal,

- corrects some technical information contained in the amended proposal on the basis of the indications received by the technical experts which provided the original information.