

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

# ANNUAL REPORT 1996



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE  
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EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

# **Annual Report 1996**

Brussels — 1997

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>)

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication

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## Preface

In 1996 the EU began preparatory work on the Intergovernmental Conference which is to undertake the institutional review of the EU treaties towards the end of 1997. The Committee has played an active role in this field, in particular by defining its priorities and its wishes.

In addition intense activity connected with the implementation of the legislative programme, Ecosoc has been exercised to strengthen links with civil society and to contribute to efforts to create or strengthen democratic structures in non-EU countries which enjoy special relations with the Union.

Commission President, Jacques Santer, singled out the Committee's role in this area, declaring that the ESC was close to citizens in the best sense of the word and stating that the new Commission attached particular importance to the ESC's consultative voice. The organizations, associations and unions to which Committee members belonged were pillars of European civil society. In many respects the Committee embodied the originality of the 'European model', Mr Santer said.

I believe that Mr Santer's declaration defines what the Committee is all about. Consultation of and negotiations with the economic and social interest groups is central to the European model, and these procedures are developing in line with their use at EU level.

This year's Annual Report illustrates the efforts made by the representative socio-professional organizations to cater for the real concerns of organized civil society and the major problems of our time.

*On these questions the debate continues; in the coming months it will focus on employment and more specifically on our ability to create new jobs and to assess the future role of work in the social model which we advocate. For our citizens, employment, job security and our ability to provide jobs for the next generation will be the litmus test of our major decisions, including those involving Europe, notwithstanding the inadequacies of the Union's powers in this field. The Committee has called for employment to be an integral part of all policies covered in the revised Treaty on European Union. This is a key factor in our work.*

The implementation of economic and monetary union is also a central concern. The Committee has already worked hard on this. We shall continue to do so and we shall cooperate in the Commission's campaign for the introduction of the euro.

Another priority is to abolish the plethora of major obstacles to the implementation of the single market.

Many of these have been identified by the Single Market Observatory set up by the ESC at the request of Parliament, the Commission and the Council; the Observatory's role would of course be considerably enhanced if it secured institutional recognition.

Other specific actions on our agenda include the promotion of dialogue with the younger generation and the campaign against racism and xenophobia, which we take particularly to heart, as 1997 has been proclaimed the European Year against Racism.

Finally, external relations are one of the Committee's key concerns as they will continue to provide a major prop for the world's democratic institutions, particularly in the EU's neighbours, through the development of organizations such as ours.

Against this global background the Committee will endeavour to promote its opinions and to adapt its structures, in order to consolidate its activity and to boost the impact of its position papers.

**Tom Jenkins**

President

## *CHAPTER I*

# **Presence and influence of the Economic and Social Committee**

### **1. CONSULTATIVE FUNCTION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

During the period concerned, the Economic and Social Committee issued 148 opinions on referral from the Commission or the Council and 25 own-initiative opinions, a total of 173 opinions in all, together with two *information reports*.

Detailed information of the Committee's important contribution to Community activity is contained in Chapter II.

### **2. TWO-YEARLY RENEWAL**

At the plenary session held on 30 and 31 October a new bureau was appointed for the second half of the 1994-98 term of office. The appointment of new section presidents was ratified at the November session.

**Economic and Social Committee bureau members**  
**Mandate 1996-98**

<b>President</b>	Jenkins, Tom	Group II — UK
<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	Regaldo, Giacomo Jaschick, Johannes	Group I — I Group III — D
<b>Members</b>	Andrade, Paulo	Group I — P
	Barrow, Dame Jocelyn	Group III — UK
	Burkhard, Wolfgang	Group I — AT
	Cassina, Giacomina	Group II — I
	de Bigault du Granrut, Bernard	Group III — F
	De Norre, Daniel	Group I — B
	de Paul de Barchifontaine, Etienne	Group III — B
	Donovan, Roy	Group I — IRL
	Folias, Christos	Group I — GR
	Geuenich, Michael	Group II — D
	Hamro-Drotz, Filip	Group I — FI
	Hågg, Leif <sup>1</sup>	Group II — SE
	Kallio, Seppo Ilmari	Group III — FI
	Loryfidis, Christoforos	Group II — GR
	Lustenhouwer, Colin	Group III — N
	Muller, Eugène	Group III — L
	Nielsen, Bent	Group II — DK
	Nilsson, Staffan Mats	Group III — SE
	Noordwal, Philip	Group I — N
	Panero Florez, Angel	Group I — ES
	Pé, Jacques	Group II — F
	Pelletier, Robert	Group I — F
	Petersen, Jens Peter	Group I — D
	Pezzini, Antonello	Group III — I
	Piette, Josly	Group II — B
	Quevedo Rojo, Leopoldo	Group III — ES
	Reuna, Martti Olavi	Group II — FI
	Sequeira, Victor Hugo	Group II — P
	Sigmund, Anne-Marie	Group III — AT
	Skiavounos, Georgios	Group III — GR
	Vogler, Heinz	Group II — AT
	Walker, Kenneth	Group I — UK
	Zufiaur Narvaiza, José María	Group II — ES

<sup>1</sup> Replacing Mr Olauson, who has resigned.

## Section Presidents

Agriculture	Margalef Masia, Pere	Group III — ES
Ecofin	Frerichs, Göke	Group I — D
Energy	Gafo-Fernandez, José Ignacio	Group I — ES
Environment	Ataíde Ferreira, Manuel	Group III — P
External relations	Carroll, John F.	Group II — IRL
Industry	Little, John	Group I — UK
Regional	Moreland, Robert	Group III — UK
Social	van den Burg, H.C.H.	Group II — NL
Transport	Eulen, Eike	Group II — D

## Group Presidents

Cavaleiro Brandão, Manuel	Group I
Briesch, Robert	Group II
Rangoni Machiavelli, Beatrice	Group III

### 3. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE'S RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In the area of preparatory work carried out by the Committee's sections and Parliamentary committees, exchanges of information and contacts between respective presidents, rapporteurs and secretariats continued to develop throughout 1996. Several ESC members were invited to hearings and meetings organized by Parliamentary committees.

As in previous years, the Committee's general-secretariat attended meetings of the working group on interinstitutional coordination, which was set up following the entry into force of the Single Act, in order to plan and coordinate legislative procedures between the various Community institutions and above all to work on the new legislative scheduling procedures specified in the Treaty on European Union

The general-secretariat was invited, on the same footing as the Commission and the Council, to meetings of the European Parliament's Conference of Presidents, in order to discuss scheduling and organization of the work of the Parliamentary plenary sessions.

On 10 April 1996, Mr Gunter Luttge, MEP, attended the meeting of the Section for Transport and Communications which drafted the opinion on the Pan-European Transport Conference and social dialogue — from Crete to Helsinki.



On 11 May 1996, in conjunction with the other European institutions, the Committee took part in the open day held at the offices of the European Parliament in Brussels to commemorate Robert Schuman who was born on 9 May.

At the extraordinary general meeting on 3 July 1996 of Group III — various interests, Mrs Ann-Karin Glase, MEP, took part in a discussion on the consultative role of the Economic and Social Committee.

The President, Mr Carlos Ferrer, attended the first conference organized by the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions on EU local and regional authorities in Brussels on 1, 2 and 3 October 1996.

The Co-President of the ACP/EU Joint Assembly, Lord Plumb, attended the 20th annual meeting of representatives of the ACP/EU economic and social interest groups at the Committee building in Brussels on 4 and 6 November 1996.

The new President of the Economic and Social Committee, Mr Tom Jenkins, was invited to address the trade union intergroup on 11 December 1996 during the European Parliament's plenary session in Strasbourg.

#### **4. RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL**

##### **Italian presidency (first half of 1996)**

- Mr Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, Italian Secretary of State for European Affairs, outlined the Italian presidency's programme to the Economic and Social Committee plenary session held on 28 February 1996.
- Mrs Matelda Grassi, Italian Secretary of State for Employment, outlined the Italian presidency's programme for employment and social policy at the plenary session held on 27 March.

##### **Irish presidency (second half of 1996)**

- Mr Gay Mitchell, Irish Minister of State for European Affairs, introduced the Irish presidency's programme to the plenary session held on 25 September 1996.

In 1996, the outgoing President of the Economic and Social Committee, Mr Carlos Ferrer, continued his tour of European capitals and met the prime ministers of the European Union in order to acquaint them with the institution's views on the process of European integration and on its own future role.

The ESC was also invited by the Italian Presidency to address the Messina Summit and the opening of the tripartite conference on employment in Rome in the context of the Confidence Pact.

## 5. RELATIONS WITH THE COMMISSION

*In 1996, working relations and cooperation with the Commission's departments were excellent, as in previous years. In particular Commissioner Pádraig Flynn, who is responsible for relations with the Committee, outlined the Commission's work programme at the Committee's 333rd plenary session held in Brussels on 29 February.*

In his address to the ESC's plenary session, Mr Flynn stressed the following:

*'The Intergovernmental Conference is a subject which looks set to dominate debate within the institutions, the Member States' governments and public opinion for many months, and I should like to make mention of the document which the Economic and Social Committee has produced on this subject.'*

The Commission has examined the Committee's views with great interest, particularly the sections concerning the Committee's own status and its range of powers. The Commission is aware of the Committee's concerns, we understand them and we share your objectives. The Commission intends to give its backing to upgrading your consultative function in the course of negotiations in the IGC.

Before concluding, I must refer to a list which I sent to you a few days ago. This is a list of subjects which feature in the work programme as published. The list has been established, on the one hand, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, and, on the other hand, by positive consideration of the opportunity to benefit from an opinion of the Committee on given matters. Moreover, in keeping with a wish which has been made by the Committee itself, account was taken of the advisability of involving the Committee at an early stage of proceedings. This will be done by referring documents such as Green and White Papers and other consultation documents, which precede legislative proposals, for the Committee's consideration.'

Mr Martin Bangemann presented the Communication from the Commission — the challenges facing the European defence-related industry, a contribution for action at European level at the 334th plenary session on 27 March.

Mr Mario Monti spoke on the completion of the single market at the 336th plenary session on 29 May.

Mr Franz Fischler spoke during the debate on the own-initiative opinion on the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis and its wide-ranging consequences for the EU at the 337th plenary session on 10 July.

Sir Leon Brittan, Vice-President of the Commission, spoke during the debate on the own-initiative opinions on the global challenge of international trade: a market access strategy for the European Union, and international trade and the environment at the 339th plenary session on 31 October 1996.

On 28 November Mrs Monika Wolf-Mathies addressed the 340th plenary session on economic and social cohesion.

On 18 December 1996 Mr Franz Fischler addressed the 342nd plenary session during the debate on the own-initiative opinion on the implications for the CAP of the entry of the countries of central and eastern Europe.

Mr Jenkins, the new ESC President, attended the launching of the 'Citizens first' information campaign which took place in Brussels on 26 November 1996 along with the presidents of the other European institutions.

## 6. GROUP VISITS AND EVENTS

During this period the Committee organized the following information visits:

<i>Member countries</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>	<i>Number of visitors</i>
Austria	6	97
Belgium	1	93
Denmark	23	615
Germany	36	1 000
Finland	8	228
France	39	1 086
Greece	—	—
Ireland	—	—
Italy	8	116
Luxembourg	1	37
Madeira	1	24
Netherlands	10	291
Portugal	14	451
Spain	15	403
Sweden	7	114
United Kingdom	26	686
<i>Total EU countries</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>5 241</i>
<i>Non-EU countries</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>	<i>Number of visitors</i>
ACP	2	32
Cyprus	2	33
French overseas departments and territories	2	37
Latin America	3	27
Macao	1	17
Malta	1	16
Norway	1	27
Poland	3	78
Russia	2	24
Turkey	2	58
United States	8	177
<i>Total non-EU countries</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>526</i>
<i>Grand total</i>	<i>771</i>	<i>5 743</i>

### **Committee attendance at European events of public interest**

The Committee set up a general information stand outlining its role and its consultative work at the following events:

- from 27 to 30 March 1996 at the forum on European social policy in Brussels;
- on 29 March 1996 at the opening of the Intergovernmental Conference in Turin;
- from 29 April to 7 May 1996 at the Porto International Fair;
- on 8 and 9 May 1996 at the Milan conference on lifelong education and training in the context of the Citizens' Europe initiative;
- on 11 May 1996, jointly with the European Parliament, at the 'Europe Day' in Brussels;
- from 15 to 19 May 1996 at the 'Frühjahrsmesse/Euroexpo' at Ried, in Austria;
- on 21 and 22 June 1996, at the Florence European Council;
- on 19 and 20 September 1996 on 'The economic role of older people in the 21st century' as part of the 'Citizens' Europe' initiative at Utrecht;
- on 20 September 1996 at the conference of the European League for Economic Cooperation (ELEC);
- from 1 to 3 October 1996 in Brussels at the conference organized by the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions on EU local and regional authorities;
- from 1 to 3 October 1996 at the conference in Brussels on 'Managing economic transition in central and eastern Europe and central Asia';
- from 5 to 7 November 1996 at the fourth 'Employment week' conference at the Palais des Congrès, Brussels;
- on 5 and 6 November 1996 at the XXth annual meeting of the ACP/EU economic and social interest groups at the Committee building;
- on 7 and 8 November 1996 in Brussels at the conference on 'The future of employment and social security in Europe (ESC/ISE)';
- on 13 and 14 December 1996 at the European Council in Dublin.

## 7. RELATIONS WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS

1996 saw a considerable strengthening of relations and exchanges between the Economic and Social Committee and the international, national and regional Economic and Social Councils (ESCs).

The following were particularly significant:

- 1 February 1996: the Committee was represented at the international conference organized by the regional Economic and Social Council for Languedoc-Rousillon on 'The role of regional consultative assemblies in Europe';
- 11-13 March 1996: the ESC was represented at the international conference on youth unemployment in Algiers at the invitation of the Algerian National Economic and Social Council;
- 21 March 1996: at the headquarters of the French Economic and Social Council, the Committee was represented at a meeting of the follow-up committee responsible for planning the fifth international meeting of Economic and Social Councils and similar bodies, scheduled for 7 and 8 March 1997 in Caracas (Venezuela);
- 25 and 26 April: the ESC secretary-general, Mr S.-P. Nothomb, attended the annual meeting of the secretaries-general of EU Economic and Social Councils, which was held at the headquarters of the French Economic and Social Council in Paris. The theme was 'Following the social aspects of the economic cycle';
- 29 and 30 April 1996: the ESC was represented in Montevideo at the preparatory meeting for the creation of the socioeconomic consultative forum of Mercosur;
- 10 October 1996: working meeting at the ESC building with a delegation from the French and Spanish Economic and Social Councils on the continental diagonal (regional policy);
- 20 November 1996 in Paris: annual meeting of the presidents and secretaries-general of European Union ESCs: attended by the president, Mr Jenkins, and the new secretary-general, Mr Graziosi. The theme of the meeting was 'Social conciliation in the various European Union countries';
- 21 and 22 November, also in Paris: second Euro-Mediterranean summit of the Economic and Social Councils and similar institutions of the 15 European Union countries and the 12 Mediterranean basin countries. The issues covered were:
  - public debt in the southern countries;

- migration and the creation of a free trade area;
  - energy in the Mediterranean region.
- 2, 3 and 4 December 1996: the Economic and Social Committee attended the forum organized by the Economic and Social Council of Gabon on 'The mutual sector job creation and the campaign against poverty';
- 5 and 6 December 1996: meeting of the follow-up committee of the fifth international meeting of Social and Economic Councils and similar institutions (Caracas, March 1997).

## 8. CITIZENS' EUROPE

The Economic and Social Committee, with the cooperation of the Milan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Crafts and Agriculture, held a conference entitled 'Lifelong learning' in Milan on 8 and 9 May 1996. The conference was part of the Citizens' Europe programme, launched three years ago in an attempt to bring European Union institutions and policies closer to the people. It coincided with the Italian EU presidency.

Focusing on the theme of 'European Year for Lifelong Learning', the conference brought together members of professional, training and education institutions, along with representatives of Lombardy civil society. It comprised three round table meetings focusing respectively on 'management training and the challenges of the single market', 'technical training in the run-up to the 21st century' and 'knowledge and experience: a new way of tackling social exclusion'. In the wake of these meetings a progress report was drawn up on Community vocational training policy.

An ESC delegation, led by the Committee President, took part in the discussions, alongside representatives of the European Commission, Italy's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Italian Economic and Social Council, and the President of Lombardy.

The Economic and Social Committee also hosted a conference entitled 'Citizens' Europe' — what role for older people in the 21st century?' in Utrecht (Netherlands) on 19 and 20 September 1996. This conference was held in cooperation with the NPOE (Nederlands Platform Ouderen en Europa) on the occasion of the Dutch national 'older people's day'.

More than 200 participants from all Dutch bodies representing older people's interests exchanged views with officials from the Council, the Commission, the European Parliament, the Netherlands Economic and Social Council and the Economic and Social Committee on 'repercussions of an ageing population on social security costs', 'influence of older people in the various



sectors of the economy' and 'influence of older people on the social and political decision-making process'.

Among the topics discussed were the problem of future funding for pension schemes, the need to make such schemes more flexible and the social role of older people in voluntary help networks and in the various advisory services. The conference stressed the need for greater participation by older people in political and social services, the need to establish older people's networks at national and European level and the case for inserting an article on older people in the Treaty on European Union.



## CHAPTER II

### The Committee's work

#### 1. AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES

##### World Food Summit

From 13 to 17 November 1996, 100 heads of State and 150 national delegations took part in the World Food Summit in Rome. The summit was sponsored by the FAO, in an attempt to draw the attention of governments and world public opinion to the tragedy of famine, and to highlight the need for a formal commitment to halve the number of famine victims (currently 800 million people, or 16% of the world's population, including 200 million children) within 30 years, by boosting food resources by 70%.

The Committee shared the concerns and objectives of the summit, and felt it should make its own contribution by adopting an own-initiative opinion to draw the delegations' attention to the following points, which it felt were important in achieving the FAO's declared objectives:

- (i) the international community should see to it that the necessary conditions exist for maintaining global food production resources, taking due account of the suitability of different areas for different types of farming;
- (ii) the world's arable farming resources should be managed in such a way that they retain their productive capacity, taking into account, *inter alia*, erosion, air and water quality and controlled land use;
- (iii) there should be recognition of the right of each country to a sufficient level of food security;
- (iv) adequate account should be taken of environmental considerations in formulating agricultural policy, both at national and international level;
- (v) agricultural policy should also bear responsibility for ensuring availability of food under all circumstances;

- (vi) agricultural production throughout the world should respect the principles of sustainable development while at the same time exploiting the new opportunities offered by genetic engineering and biotechnology;
- (vii) the setting-up and development of family farms should be encouraged, as this is the type of farm best calculated to ensure stable production, to conserve the land and the environment, and to safeguard regional population balance and stem the flight from the land;
- (viii) there is a need for a distinct improvement in the coordination of international agreements and organizations which regulate food production;
- (ix) there should be recognition in international trade agreements of regional differences in agricultural production and differences due to the diversity of natural conditions;
- (x) reliable international criteria and a reliable international monitoring system should be established so as to ensure that safe, wholesome food is produced;
- (xi) it must be possible to maintain the vitality of the countryside all over the world through the pursuit of an active rural policy and consequently the restructuring of rural areas;
- (xii) all means should be used to support the motivation of farmers and other parties involved in the food chain, and the organizations representing them should have adequate opportunity to participate in decision-making concerning food security.

### **The CAP and accession of central and east European countries (CEECs)**

The Committee believes that the enlargement of the EU to those CEECs who wish to become members is an 'historic opportunity' to bring all European peoples within an authentic 'common home', to consolidate the stability and prosperity of the European continent on a lasting basis, and to strengthen the political, economic, social and cultural influence of Europe throughout the world.

The integration of CEECs agriculture thus merits particular attention, notably because of the size of the agricultural workforce in these countries.

If CEECs agriculture is to attain the productivity levels obtained in the EU and if persons employed in agriculture in these countries are to achieve income levels akin to those enjoyed by EU farmers, it will be necessary to:

- invest time and capital (required to privatize land, streamline farms and modernize downstream enterprises, as well as to improve yields);

— promote the creation of healthy, viable agricultural concerns.

All in all, the Committee takes the view that the EU does not have to fear a 'catastrophe scenario' of run-away production in the CEECs. On the basis of the conclusions reached in the Commission's White Paper, the Committee in fact believes that the possible accession of a number of CEECs in the year 2000 does not warrant a radical reform of the CAP by that date even though sectoral adjustments may have to be made in the meantime.

Wide-ranging estimates have been made of the budgetary consequences of enlargement to include the CEECs, with some experts not hesitating to predict an inevitable doubling of the CAP budget after enlargement.

The real cost of extending the CAP to include the CEECs will in reality depend on a whole range of factors: world price trends; international monetary fluctuations; developments inside the EU; the macro-economic situation of the CEECs at the time of accession (unemployment, living standards, domestic consumption, etc.); the resumption of trade between the CEECs and the CIS; the development of CEECs agricultural potential; CEECs price guarantees; the granting or otherwise of compensatory payments; the different types of direct aid.

The Committee thus considers that the burden of enlargement on the EAGGF Guarantee budget, however worrying, should not be regarded as a factor barring the way to enlargement. Whichever enlargement scenario is accepted, the CEECs will be net beneficiaries of the EU budget for many years. This should therefore be taken into account in preparing the new EU budget proposals after 1999.

If the EU allowed the CEECs to benefit from all the compensatory payments decided in 1992, it would most likely no longer be covered by the 'peace clause' contained in the Marrakesh Agreement (Article 13). Under this clause, which is in force until 2003, direct CAP aid is unlikely to be challenged before the World Trade Organization (WTO) as long as the Community programmes 'do not grant support for specific commodities in excess of that decided in the 1992 marketing year'.

The Committee nevertheless considers that:

- the probable schedule for further enlargement will no doubt coincide with the expiry of the Uruguay Round Agricultural Agreement and the launch of new international trade negotiations. The EU will thus have to shoulder the burden of CEECs agriculture while negotiating its future commitments in respect of aggregate measure of support and subsidized exports. For countries which have joined the EU by then, the Union will have to ask that the reference values expressed by the CEECs in national currencies in the Marrakesh Agreements (1994) be index-linked to the ecu in order to take account of inflation and the erosion of their currencies since then.

The GATT constraint will therefore be reviewed in the light of these new negotiations;

- the GATT constraint will be eased in particular if the EU negotiates with the CEECs support falling with the 'green box';
- given the accession procedures recommended by the Committee, there is no guarantee that CEECs production will create exportable surpluses on the scale suggested by the Commission White Paper;
- the Commission recognizes that these surpluses will at any rate be relatively low by comparison with the surpluses forecast for EUR 15 over the 2000 to 2010 period. The Committee accordingly feels that the integration of the CEECs will have only a marginal impact on the forthcoming adjustments to the CAP, such adjustments flowing mainly from current developments in the EU;
- the EU situation in the context of future negotiations will also depend on price trends in the EU before 1999.

The accession of the CEECs will unquestionably be a factor in forcing changes to the CAP. The accession problem however cannot be isolated from other equally important 'internal' factors which are just as important for the future of the CAP, namely:

- the 1992 CAP reform has still not been completed in the wine and rice sectors;
- the Committee expects the current bovine spongiform encephalopathy crisis to lead to a rapid structural reform of the common beef/veal market, with firmer and more lasting controls over production; the Commission has also said that it would like to submit proposals on the dairy sector in 1997;
- the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, which was confirmed by the Cannes European Council (in June 1995) and provides for a free-trade area between the signatory countries by the year 2010, also clearly embraces agricultural products;
- for reasons essentially related to the world market (and to the set-aside rate in the EU), the lower prices aimed at in the 1992 reform have not been achieved in the cereals market; the EU is already actively contemplating the future of its agricultural policy in this sector as well as its strategy *vis-à-vis* the international cereals markets;
- the EU's present funding system comes to an end in 1999 and will have to be reviewed in the light of the priorities to be fixed by the EU, and in the light of stringent budgetary controls;

- the prospect of a resumption of WTO trade negotiations in 1999 means that consideration will have to be given to possible strategies for adjusting to GATT constraints, notably in respect of the EU's capacity to export without subsidies, for example in the cereals, dairy products, poultrymeat and to a lesser extent beef/veal sectors.

In addition to the balanced management of agricultural markets, the CAP pursues other objectives: security of food supply, maintenance of agricultural employment, conservation and sustainable management of the environment and balance of rural areas.

The CEECs must not have an exclusively market-orientated approach to the CAP. The EU must persuade them to share the multifunctional vision which it has of its agriculture: through all its various functions (economic, social, spatial, environmental), agriculture is a formidable tool for enhancing agricultural and rural areas. For the CEECs to share this vision, the Committee recommends that the EU involves them as closely as possible in the actual functioning of the CAP (exchange of officials and socio-occupational partners, 'structured dialogue' mechanisms, etc. even before accession).

Political realism thus dictates that the CEECs will have to accept the CAP as it stands at the time of accession, in accordance with the principle of full acceptance of the *acquis communautaire*. The EU and CEECs must be agreed on this basic assumption.

It will therefore be necessary to introduce transitional periods before the CEECs can fully assimilate all CAP mechanisms and attendant rights and obligations, and have free access to the single market. The EU and the CEECs will also doubtless request transitional periods for other economic sectors. A variety of obstacles will stand in the way of the achievement of an immediate single market with the CEECs (social regulations, job protection, tackling crime, etc.).

These more or less long transitional periods (which could be shortened in the light of the progress made) would vary from country to country and from sector to sector. They would leave the CEECs sufficient time to adapt their agricultural structures in the course of clearly defined stages for bringing their agricultural policies into line with the CAP (planned reduction of customs duties, gradual replacement of national aid by Community aid, etc.). The CAP would continue to evolve at the same time.

As was the case with Greece, Spain and Portugal, this transition will be characterized by the existence of accession compensatory amounts (ACA) and supplementary trade mechanisms (STM) which will make it possible to gradually eliminate the price differential between EUR 15 and the new Member States (by lowering prices in the West or raising prices in the CEECs, or both). This procedure could likewise be tailored to sectors other than agriculture. It will also have to take account of currency fluctuations,



particularly in the CEECs, in order to avoid possible disruptions of agricultural markets.

According to this scenario the CEECs would be able to benefit from institutional prices at a level corresponding to their situation during the transitional phases. CEECs should not be given grounds for hoping that their farm prices will rise to current EUR 15 levels. For example, in the cereals sector, consumer protection would rule out any sharp increase in bread prices. Farmers in the CEECs would prefer to see a price stabilization mechanism introduced rather than price increases. To achieve stabilization, prices might initially be pegged more or less to world prices since these are often still higher than CEECs prices. Such a scenario could operate under current CAP instruments. During the transitional periods the CEECs would as far as possible be able to continue exporting to third countries without export refunds. At the end of the transitional periods, the aim would naturally be the alignment of CEECs prices (in those CEECs which had become members) on the institutional prices for EUR 15.

The Committee considers that if the CEECs become members of the EU at a time when production controls still constitute a market management instrument, they will have to accept their share of production restrictions.

The Committee is in favour of staggered entry since the political, economic and social situations of the CEECs vary greatly.

By taking this line the EU will be able to take more account of the agricultural realities of each country, its long-term capacity for being a net importer or exporter in one or other sector, the degree to which its agricultural markets are organized, and its progress in controlling the major economic aggregates.

Farmers and indeed everybody engaged in agriculture in the CEECs have been indelibly marked by the concept of 'collective property'. The EU and its socioeconomic organizations therefore have a specific responsibility in respect of them. The EU must give them the benefit of its experience in developing a human-scale, modern and efficient agricultural industry. It must inculcate in them the concept of individual or 'cooperative' property (in the western European sense of the term), as well as the spirit of individual initiative and responsibility which makes for the strength of Community agriculture.

This approach presupposes that the EU will help CEECs farmers to create or develop independent socioeconomic organizations (associations, trade unions, cooperatives, producer groups, etc.) in order to promote and defend their individual and collective interests (training, etc.). The Committee is committed to dialogue and cooperation between the socioeconomic interest groups of the EU and the CEECs. It calls for the development of partnerships between the socioeconomic organizations on both sides.

Moreover, the restructuring of CEECs agriculture will sooner or later lead to a reduction in the agricultural workforce in most of those countries. The Committee urges that an adequate social policy be gradually set up to cushion the impact of this trend, given the already high levels of unemployment prevalent in the CEECs.

In view of the importance of agriculture in the accession negotiations and the criticisms levelled at the PHARE programme,<sup>1</sup> the Committee suggests that financial assistance for agriculture provided under PHARE be transferred to an agricultural pre-accession fund (APAF) as soon as the first round of accession negotiations begins. The Committee is in agreement here with the suggestion put forward by the Commission in its strategy paper. This would give the CEECs a positive signal regarding the EU's determination to bring the negotiations on agriculture to a successful conclusion.

By agreeing to welcome the CEECs, the EU is ready to shoulder the major part of the costs of strengthening the socioeconomic structures of these countries in an effort to consolidate the European continent as an area of democracy, stability and prosperity.

The EU's major international partners, and more particularly countries in the industrialized world, can play their part here:

- by not calling on the EU to extend *erga omnes* the new concessions which the EU would have to make to the CEECs during the pre-accession stage under the Europe agreements, as the Commission suggests; the Committee considers that these agreements can no longer be treated in the WTO as simple free-trade agreements given that they represent a stage on the road to the enlargement of the EU and the creation of an area of stability in Europe;
- by agreeing to review the commitments entered into by the EU and the CEECs whenever a new country joins the EU, so that previous commitments are not an obstacle to enlargement;
- by not demanding agricultural compensation following the entry of an applicant country to the EU.

### **Agricultural prices 1996/97**

The Committee believes that the Commission proposals are consistent with the CAP reform whereby institutional prices, at least in the cereals and oilseed sectors, are to be brought closer to international prices, and have

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<sup>1</sup> Hard to understand, poor targeting, complexity and opacity of procedures, insufficiently funded investment, low benefits for the countries concerned and proliferation of 'consultancies' to the detriment of concrete projects.

been chiefly designed to ensure that the package is financially neutral. This explains why the Commission is not proposing a more radical simplification of Community legislation in the sectors covered by the reform, or 'stimuli' for individual and/or group initiatives to switch production in the sectors not covered by the reform. In short, the proposals do not provide a full, practical response to the problems faced by farmers.

However, the Committee — echoing the FAO's concern at the sharp rise in world prices in 1995 and with Community stocks at an all-time low — advised great caution in the management of mechanisms which directly affect domestic production levels. The aim must be to fix a balanced annual set-aside percentage that ensures a sufficient build-up of stocks to meet both domestic needs and, within the limits allowed under the Marrakesh Agreements, increased foreign demand.

As for products not covered by the reform, the Committee expressed its concern that the proposals seemed to overlook the weakened position of crops such as olive oil, fruit and vegetables, wine and tobacco, which are grown principally in the southern regions of the EU.

In other words, the Committee felt that the 1996/97 price package lacked the measures which could have helped farmers through the difficult transitional stage which they now face, given the increasing competition which Community products are likely to face on the international market.

As regards individual sectors, the Committee:

- considered that the proposals for the beef sector were insufficient. The crisis in this sector has reached dramatic proportions because of the widespread, virulent epidemic of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the United Kingdom. In endorsing the principle of financial solidarity with the United Kingdom as regards BSE, the Committee emphasized that the resources needed to meet the cost of this operation should come from the general budget, without drawing on the funds earmarked for CAP management and other measures;
- could not endorse the proposals for olive oil, which are designed to encourage imports from third countries;
- could not accept the proposals to reduce the monthly increases for cereals and rice and the refunds of sugar storage costs, as these measures would reduce farm incomes.

### **Identification and registration of bovine animals**

Fears over the safety of European beef and beef products have generated immense uncertainty, not only across the European Union but also in a range of third countries which have traditionally imported beef from Europe.

This has led to a fall in demand — in some cases on a dramatic scale — in *almost all Member States and a slump in prices which has caused severe economic damage to EU farms, and to the cattle and meat trade both inside and outside the Union.*

The frequent inadequacy, not to say absence, of information identifying the origin of meat and indicating other quality aspects has exacerbated people's insecurities and accentuated the drop in consumption. Meat is a highly sensitive product; new arrangements must therefore be made to improve identification, so as to provide a more comprehensive indication of 'quality'. After all, European consumers want to know exactly what they are buying.

It is essential to find a quick, and above all clear, identification system for *meat and meat products in order to head off the charge of failure levied at the European Union's common agricultural policy.* Any action taken in the beef sector will be compromised, unless people's demands for safe products are met.

EU beef farmers have among the highest production standards in the world as far as natural methods and beef quality are concerned. This must be highlighted by a clear and understandable identification system.

A number of product safety requirements, not all of them related to the case in hand, need to be considered when developing a new identification system. Attention must also be paid to the very varied traditions and different arrangements for beef trading and selling in the individual Member States.

A whole range of EU provisions already exist for identifying foodstuffs. Their application in meat marketing, however, has been both sporadic and inadequate. The improvements needed are clearly impossible without regulations laying down obligatory minimum requirements for the identification of beef.

The Committee notes some inconsistencies in the Commission's proposed approach. The proposed extensive and, in some cases, laborious changes to animal identification and the retracing of animal movements are to be obligatory, while meat identification is to be voluntary. The justification for this approach does not seem clear, and it may not achieve the — in itself undisputed — objective set.

*The Committee feels that other factors also call for a comprehensive identification system for bovine animals and for beef.* For a number of years now, the European cattle market has hung in a delicate balance. Beef consumption, a crucial parameter for the long-term functioning of the market, has been on a downward trend for years. The cattle cycle means that 1996 and the coming years should once again see a rise in production.

The commitments under the GATT Uruguay Round entail lower refunds and export levels and increasingly limit the scope for market control. Bilateral and unilateral EU commitments on the import of live cattle (lightweight and heavyweight calves, mountain breed livestock) and beef (high-quality beef, beef for processing), which are an important element in the European Union's trade policy, also serve to compound the difficulties on the EU's cattle market. This problem has increased dramatically because of the BSE crisis, without any fault on the part of farmers or the meat industry.

In contrast to other crises of confidence and slumps in sales in the meat sector, a number of forecasts also predict a medium-term drop of up to 15% in beef consumption unless effective counter-measures are taken. This is due to the complex nature of the BSE crisis and to the fact that no adequate research has yet been carried out into whether the disease can be transmitted to humans; continued negative coverage from the media also exacerbates the problem.

A combination of measures is the only way to get beef consumption back to normal:

- consistent eradication of the causes of BSE;
- removal of all problem animals from the market;
- continuation and expansion of the ongoing research programmes;
- a speedy improvement in the identification of bovine animals and beef, coupled with consistent implementation:
  - animal identification at every stage;
  - traceability of animals in the trade cycle;
  - use of secure declaration systems for beef retailing.

The Committee therefore endorses in principle the European Commission's efforts in proposing two Council regulations designed to create, within a short space of time, an EU-wide basis for improving cattle identification and the labelling of beef and beef products.

### **Agriculture in the EU's most remote regions and islands**

The accession of new Member States has meant that new regions with specific agricultural conditions have been added to those already covered under the Poseidom programme. It is in this light that the Committee decided to draw up an own-initiative opinion on the agricultural problems of the most remote regions of the EU. Its work was facilitated by study group visits to Martinique, French Guiana and northern Sweden.

The Committee feels that the Community has responded positively, through the POSEI programmes, to the problems of agriculture in the most remote regions, although there is still room for improvement. The programmes include production assistance, which in the case of some products is not enough to make them competitive, and marketing assistance, which needs to be extended to the local market.

Some restrictions on increased production and subsidies for specific infrastructure have been waived; these waivers should be maintained for as long as inadequate levels of self-sufficiency persist.

A major part of the programmes comprises a special system for supplying the local market's needs in certain staple products for direct consumption or for the food industry, at international prices, by allowing them to be imported from third countries without paying duty or from the Community with a subsidy equivalent to that benefit. The gradual alignment of Community and world prices is tending to make this measure inoperative; it would be necessary to include a safeguard mechanism comprising a minimum level of subsidy for those cases where recourse to the international market was not sufficient compensation for the supply difficulties caused by geographical remoteness.

The special supply arrangements can give rise to conflicts between local products and subsidized imports. The Committee recommends that, when the quantities are assessed annually, account be taken of local production and every effort made to limit subsidies to products for direct consumption which cannot reasonably be produced locally and to products used as inputs in the farming and agro-industrial sector. Similarly, every effort should be made to obtain the maximum added value locally (bulk rather than wrapped products for instance). It should be ensured that the levels of subsidy granted to imported products for direct consumption, compared with those applied to the corresponding raw materials, do not discriminate against local production.

As the programmes have developed it has become clear that increased cooperation in the planning and implementation of some measures is needed between the administrations concerned (Community, national and regional), the economic and social bodies, and the beneficiaries; where this cooperation is lacking, the usefulness of the measures has been slight or zero. Inefficiency has also resulted from the slowness of the authorities in framing and applying some measures and this needs to be remedied.

The Committee notes that the Arctic regions of the new Member States, in common with other remote regions and islands, are at a permanent disadvantage as regards production and marketing, with the result that their agriculture is less competitive. With this in mind, the Committee proposes that the CAP regulations and instruments — as well as R&D actions — be

adapted to help the production of characteristic and special regional products (tropical essences and flowers, reindeer meat, etc.). In the case of the Arctic territories, the Commission should study, with the Member States concerned, the possibilities under their accession protocols of establishing a specific integrated programme for agriculture and related activities.

Finally, the most remote regions have justifiably high hopes for the outcome of the IGC which is expected to amend the Treaty on European Union. To enable these regions to face the challenges of the new world order and EU enlargement with confidence in the future, it is essential to strengthen their legal status by including an article which provides for derogations from or flexibility in Community law where this proves necessary and an appended protocol which spells out the scope of this article.

### **Protection of geographical indications and designations of origin**

In every respect, issues relating to labelling, indications of origin and the wording of consumer information have become increasingly important in recent years, for suppliers and consumers alike.

It is important to the single market as a whole that this information should be provided in such a way that the rules can be respected by all market operators.

### **Agricultural policy — miscellaneous**

1. The Committee recognized the validity of the Commission's move to implement the pledge made by the EU to the USA concerning oilseeds under the Marrakesh Agreement (the 'Blair House Agreement'). The Commission proposed that measures be introduced to monitor and forecast production trends; a scheme for monitoring delivery contracts should prevent any breaches of the limit on by-products intended for use as animal feed. However, the Committee felt obliged to point out that, given the 1995 crop and that forecast for 1996, the proposed measures would in practice discourage the growing of crops which might be used for the extraction of fuels.
2. The Committee took the view that the Commission proposal on the guarantee thresholds for leaf tobacco for 1996 and 1997 was a step in the right direction towards a global strategy for reform of the sector. However, the Committee felt that, for a product in serious deficit, some degree of flexibility was needed in the management of quotas. Still on the theme of the common organization of the market in tobacco, the Committee obviously welcomed the Commission's proposal to extend to Austria the aid which the EU provides for certain tobacco types cultivated in northern European regions.



3. The Committee backed the Commission's proposal to:

- take account of consumption patterns for aromatized wines, aromatized wine-based drinks and aromatized wine-based cocktails, and insist on a proportion of wine of not less than 75%;
- define the sweetened, aromatized wine known as *Gluhwein*;
- provide a more precise form of wording for the application of the provisions on the treatment of wine-based drinks.

Relating more specifically to wine production, the Committee drew the Commission's attention to the fact that the current situation called for a reform of the common organization of the market, taking into account output, international trade and the effects of the Marrakesh Agreements. This basic comment aside, the Committee was fundamentally opposed to allowing table wines and quality wines *psr* to carry the same geographical designation as it feared that this would mislead consumers.

Similarly, the Committee opposed the proposed derogation under which wine *psr* may be blended with wine-sector products which do not originate in the specified region of production.

4. The Committee endorsed the Commission proposal to raise the sugar quota (A and B) for Portugal by 10 000 tonnes as the proposed increase did not call into question the quotas established for other regions of the Community and could even encourage local sugar production and make a refinery viable, thereby boosting local development.
5. Regarding the common organization of the market in bananas, the Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the Commission to adjust the Community banana regime to take account of all the interests involved. The Committee felt, however, that the Commission should pay particular attention to earlier ESC recommendations on working conditions and the need for banana production to meet environmental standards in all banana exporting countries.

The Committee opposed the proposal to reduce the share of the tariff quota allocated to Category B operators (traditional Community and ACP producers) in favour of Category A operators (Latin America). It regarded the proposal as contrary to the spirit of the regulation, which aimed to encourage the marketing of traditional Community and ACP bananas, given that the social costs were much higher than for Latin American production.

In keeping with this, the Committee endorsed the Commission proposal amending the special assistance regime for traditional banana producers. Finally, the Committee called on the Commission to lay down immediate, concrete economic and structural measures to support

Somali production, in order to help end the civil war for good by promoting an economic and social recovery and an upturn in employment.

6. The Committee broadly welcomed the Commission proposal to establish an aid scheme for citrus fruit producers. It particularly approved of the role to be played by producers' organizations, and the boost to the processing industry's negotiating power.

The Committee endorsed the extension to the whole citrus sector of the derogation allowing Member States to pay financial compensation directly to the grower.

Whilst supporting the proposal to extend the derogation to the 1996/97 marketing year, the Committee pointed out that annual extensions are not the best solution. The direct payment mechanism for the processing premium should obviously be made permanent.

The reasons for the delays in payment of the minimum price still apply and will continue to do so in the future.

It is an established fact that processors pay for the produce not at the time of delivery but when they receive the processing premium.

As the granting of the premium depends on fulfilment of certain administrative requirements and checks, it is difficult to eliminate delays. These delays create cash-flow problems for growers.

The Committee took the opportunity to draw the Council's attention to the urgent need for a radical revision of the Community system for the processing of citrus fruit. Experience has shown that processors do not always respect the minimum price and that purchasing contracts, once concluded, are not met in full (the average is around 50%).

7. The Committee felt that the Commission proposal to simplify a number of Directives (96/0112 to 96/0118) was a step in the right direction. Accordingly, it endorsed the broad thrust of the initiative and the contents of the proposal. Special attention was paid to the proposal to include vegetable fats other than cocoa butter as a chocolate ingredient. Whilst the Committee would have preferred a uniform solution, it endorsed the Commission proposal, which allows seven Member States to continue to use vegetable fats in chocolate manufacturing, and the other eight to ban it.
8. The Committee noted the need to update the two Regulations on the protection of the Community's forests against atmospheric pollution and against fire in order to achieve their declared objectives. In particular, it felt that the Regulation on protection against atmospheric pollution would not

achieve its aims unless account was taken of the long-term nature of forest life cycles. The Committee also noted that:

- the EU measures to protect forests against atmospheric pollution accord with the objectives of EU agricultural policy and the goals set out in the 1993 fifth Community programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development. The proposed measures also help the EU to honour its international obligations (Rio Conference of 1992);
  - support for Member States' fire protection measures is concentrated on at-risk regions and EU cooperation on improving fire protection systems is in future to be promoted by extending the information system. This information system is also of considerable importance with regard to monitoring work and research.
9. The Committee was not convinced of the need to convert the European Office for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection into an agency. The Committee believed that the office should be reinforced and provided with a larger permanent staff, unless it were proven beyond doubt that the creation of an agency would have substantially better results for public health, consumer protection and the food industry.

### **Veterinary policy and animal health**

In a market hit by BSE, issues relating to the health of animals and the wholesomeness of their meat have taken on particular importance. The Committee therefore welcomed the review of the legislation governing measures for protection against zoonoses. In discussing the Commission proposal, the Committee called for adequate, extensive control measures in order to prevent infection and food poisoning.

Accordingly, the Committee recommended that the harmonization of veterinary standards for poultry and hatching eggs should continue at a high level, and pointed out the need to lay down a general framework for animal health policy in the EU. Turning to the problem posed by Newcastle disease, the Committee felt that the next step should be to work towards a non-vaccinating status for the entire EU and thereby end its division into two areas. It did, however, admit that this was not feasible in the foreseeable future.

With regard to enlargement to central and eastern Europe, it is important that the Commission should already be gathering detailed information on the disease situation in those countries and making sure that they will be able, in terms of both administration and production, to meet the EU's veterinary requirements when enlargement takes place.

The Committee endorsed the Commission's proposed amendments to the legislation on the rules applicable to minced meat, meat preparations and certain other products of animal origin.

The Committee endorsed the broad thrust of the Commission proposals on the organization of veterinary checks on products from third countries, but thought that:

- the identity check should not be conducted separately but should form part of the physical check;
- rules should be introduced to ensure that products arriving at the Community border which do not have the Community as their final destination leave the EU after transit;
- locating border inspection posts in 'an area which is designated or approved by the customs authorities' could give rise to major operational problems and additional costs for the Member States if this new provision makes it necessary to relocate existing operational facilities, given the considerable adaptation which these have already undergone and which has been acknowledged by the Community bodies;
- information on the veterinary safety of consignments from third countries should not be communicated via the ANIMO network since this is exclusively concerned with intra-Community trade. Provision has for some time been made for a corresponding EU system, SHIFT, in respect of imports from third countries.

The Committee endorsed the proposed simplification of Directive 92/118/EEC of 17 December 1992, but asked that special attention continue to be paid to possible carriers of salmonella, avian influenza and Newcastle disease.

### **Common fisheries policy**

Whilst endorsing the principle that structural assistance should be granted primarily to measures which have a long-term effect, the Committee recommended that the overall limit of the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) assistance for the temporary cessation of fishing activities for each Member State be raised.

Concerning structural assistance policy via the FIFG, the Committee endorsed the Commission's proposal to amend the basic Regulation in order to promote fish products which can be demonstrated to have specific qualities resulting from the place where they are raised and from the processing techniques used.

The Committee opposed the Commission proposal to allow the Adriatic region to derogate from the rules on the protection of juvenile fish. However, mindful of the economic and social impact of such a decision, the Committee called on the Commission to use existing structural instruments to cushion the negative impact and meet the legitimate concerns of those fishermen.

In its opinion on technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources, the Committee fully shared the Commission's concerns about the state of many fish stocks and supported efforts to improve technical measures as one way to help conserve and increase stocks. A number of the proposed modifications would directly help to reduce the catch of juvenile fish and are welcomed by the Committee, as are the changes which would provide greater operational flexibility and which could promote a reduction in the discarding of dead fish.

However, the Committee felt that certain core proposals had been put forward without full regard to the practicalities of fishing operations and *without assessment of the economic and social effects*. The Committee was not persuaded that the proposals constituted a reasonable balance between safeguarding the short and medium-term interests of the fishing industry and improved conservation of fish resources. The Committee therefore called on the Commission to:

- (i) reconsider the proposed changes in mesh sizes and retain the concept of authorized mesh sizes for each fish species as the principal technical criterion for controlling fishing activities;
- (ii) reconsider the proposed minimum size of the square mesh panel, to be mandatory in nets with diamond mesh of 70 mm or over;
- (iii) dispense with the introduction of a 'one-net rule' as it would deny fishermen too many legitimate fishing opportunities;
- (iv) ensure that adequate and not merely token discussion takes place with fishermen and their representatives before decisions are taken on the proposals put forward;
- (v) not neglect — in the wake of the adoption of any new measures — inspection at sea, for which Member States should provide adequate resources.

The Committee endorsed the Commission proposal to extend the specific measures in favour of cephalopod producers established in the Canary Islands for a further two years.

Finally, the Committee endorsed the measures proposed by the Commission to prevent the spread of the parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris*, and on the

designation of the new UK national reference laboratory for the monitoring of marine biotoxins.

## **Codification**

Finally, the Committee endorsed the following Commission proposals which, by providing consolidated versions of a number of legal texts, answer the Committee's repeated calls for simplification of current legislation governing agriculture and fisheries:

- Proposal for a Council directive introducing Community measures for the control of classical swine fever;
- Proposal for a Council directive on the undesirable substances and products in animal nutrition;
- Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the common organization of the market in milk and milk products;
- Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of seed potatoes;
- Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of beet seed;
- Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of seed of oil and fibre plants;
- Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of fodder plant seed;
- Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of vegetable seed;
- Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of cereal seed;
- Proposal for a Council directive on the common catalogue of agricultural plant species;
- Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on improving the efficiency of agricultural structures;
- Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on improving the processing and marketing conditions for agricultural products;
- Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on producer groups and associations thereof;
- Amended proposal for a Council regulation (EC) laying down certain technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources.

## 2. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

### 1. Transport

In 1996, the Committee's work in the transport field focused, on the one hand, on various general policy documents dealing with horizontal aspects, namely the Green Paper on the citizens' network, and the Green Paper on fair and efficient transport pricing, and on the other, on the preparatory work for the Pan-European Transport Conference to be held in Helsinki in July 1997.

As well as taking an active part in the work of the conference's steering committee, the Committee issued an own-initiative opinion which welcomed the implementation of the Crete Declaration (1994) and called for concrete involvement of the Mediterranean countries in pan-European talks on transport policy.

Finally, within the framework of its contribution to the Helsinki Conference, the Committee also drew up an own-initiative opinion on problems and prospects concerning telematic systems in intermodal transport in Europe (Rapporteur: Mr Kielman).

In its opinion the Committee states, firstly, that telematic applications should be deployed solely to meet the genuine user needs of all actors in freight transport, and secondly that the social aspects of technology development should not be overlooked, given the impact which they can have on working conditions, employment and the organization of work.

Furthermore the Committee believes that the following points should be borne in mind when applying telematics to intermodal transport:

- it should be targeted to the use of total intermodal transport chains and should exploit existing, accepted techniques wherever possible;
- a bottom-up approach from the sector should be encouraged, involving as many branches as possible;
- small firms should also be able to use and apply telematics systems;
- *telematics systems development should be closely geared to the development of trans-European networks;*
- *there should be harmony between European programmes and initiatives and national and regional initiatives.*

## **1.1. Horizontal aspects**

### *1.1.1. Green Paper on the citizens' network* (Rapporteur: Mr von Schwerin)

The Commission, in presenting its Green Paper, sought to stimulate discussion and debate on how best to promote public passenger transport in the European Union, so as to reduce dependence on the private car (which now accounts for 75% of travel) and extend the transport choices of those without access to cars.

The Committee welcomed the Commission's Green Paper as a first step towards ensuring and improving the mobility desired by citizens — and for many people providing it for the first time.

The Committee believes, however, that citizens and users must be more actively involved in the debate envisaged in the Green Paper; they must be consulted, their needs identified in greater detail, and the decisions taken at grass-roots level.

The Commission should emphatically support this process by providing the initial impetus, creating the right regulatory environment and ensuring continuity from the smallest transport systems up to the European networks.

The ESC also calls on the Commission to consider whether the problems of competition and market regulation in public transport should not be studied thoroughly and reappraised in a separate Green Paper.

The focal points of the citizens' network should therefore be infrastructure, quality and the links with related policies such as zoning, physical planning and urban development. Competition on quality and performance should take precedence over competition purely on price.

### *1.1.2. Green Paper entitled 'Towards fair and efficient pricing in transport'* (Rapporteur: Mr Kubenz)

The Green Paper is a response to the request made by the Heads of State or Government at the Cannes Summit (June 1995), for the Commission to review current policies in order to establish fair competition between different modes of transport. It aims to launch a wide-ranging debate on the means to be employed to make the transport pricing system fairer and more efficient.

The Commission believes that the solution is to introduce a pricing system which takes account of the fact that costs differ across time, space and modes. The aim is not therefore to increase prices, but to use pricing to curb congestion, accidents and pollution.



In its opinion, the Economic and Social Committee regrets first and foremost the absence of complete EU statistics and precise definitions of the phenomena under examination. Consequently, the definition and calculation of the external costs to be allocated to transport users are hotly disputed at present.

Moreover, the external benefits are insufficiently taken into account and should receive much closer attention.

The Committee also feels that the Green Paper's objective of achieving a fair and efficient transport pricing system can only be one of the means of achieving a common transport policy based on market-economy principles, and that it should be accompanied by arrangements to use prices to control demand and to improve supply.

Any projected reform of transport taxes and prices must form part of an integrated strategy to set the 'right' price relationships between the different modes of transport. At the same time, the other modes must be able to absorb without difficulty any additional burden ensuing from a transfer.

Lastly, the Green Paper should also be assessed with reference to the goals of development of the economically weaker peripheral countries, cohesion in Europe and the integration of central and east European countries. Because of productivity problems, these countries will not be able to share in the economic progress and growth of the European single market until their accessibility is guaranteed and their ability to sell their products is not impaired by their distance from the market.

## **1.2. Air transport**

### *1.2.1. Air carrier liability in case of air accidents* (Rapporteur: Mr Moreland)

The Committee welcomed the Commission's proposal to improve passenger compensation in the event of air accidents, by establishing a certain number of principles at Community level. It did, however, feel that the Commission's approach needed to be amended, particularly to deal with:

- difficulties over the advance payment provision;
- legal interpretations of the words 'domicile' and 'permanent residence';
- possible effects of higher costs on smaller airlines;
- the need to protect the interests of and provide clarity for the user.

The Committee feels that these problems must be settled in such a way that the final regulation is able to act as a catalyst for a new, more appropriate world-wide system for the benefit of the travelling public.

### **1.2.2. Air traffic management** (Rapporteur: Mr Moreland)

The Commission White Paper examines the background to the current situation in air traffic management in Europe and the shortcomings of the present arrangements, before defining a 'single ATM system for Europe' and, finally, outlining the Commission's views on the best institutional arrangements for the future.

The Committee endorses, in general, the Commission's description of the shortcomings of the current air traffic management system in Europe and strongly supports the need for action to improve the system in the interest of reducing delays, air safety and in providing consistency of national management systems. The Committee believes the situation demands a multinational solution and supports the Commission's conclusion that Eurocontrol should be 'reinvented' with stronger regulatory powers.

The Commission does, however, need to provide more detailed information on its view of the differences between regulatory and operational functions and the role of the bodies responsible for their performance. The Committee's view is that central flow management should be the responsibility of the 're-invented' Eurocontrol with all other operational services being provided by national authorities.

In any event the Committee would welcome the membership of those EU Member States and other European States that are not currently members. Indeed, the Committee believes that the jurisdiction of Eurocontrol should be comprehensive of all European countries.

Finally, the Committee feels that the Commission's proposal — that the EU should be a party to the 're-invented' Eurocontrol — raises questions that need to be answered such as 'what would be the role and mandate of the Commission?', 'what would be the voting balance of the European Union *vis-à-vis* other non-EU States?' and 'under which jurisdiction would military airspace fall?'

### **1.3. Sea transport**

Work in the field of sea and inland waterway transport was dominated by a number of proposals designed to improve the safety of equipment and passengers, which the Committee supported unreservedly. The importance which the Committee attaches to safety has been highlighted in its opinions on the safety of passenger ships (Rapporteur: Mr Chagas), on the safety of fishing vessels (Rapporteur: Mr Chagas), and on marine equipment (Rapporteur: Mr Colombo).

*1.3.1. Short sea shipping*  
(Rapporteur: Mrs Bredima-Savopoulou)

The Committee also adopted an opinion on the communication on short sea shipping, in which it emphasized the need to integrate short sea shipping in trans-European networks; to upgrade the role of small and medium-sized ports to relieve congestion in large ports and main roads; to improve the image of short sea shipping as a commercially attractive alternative mode of transport; to concentrate on the social dimension of the short sea sector; and finally to continue support for and coordination with the MIF Short Sea Panel, of which the ESC is an official member.

This communication, the concrete results of which will only be made known next year, was followed up by another strategic document entitled 'Towards a new maritime strategy', which was also the subject of a Committee opinion.

*1.3.2. Towards a new maritime strategy*  
(Rapporteur: Mr Whitworth)

Whilst the Committee opinion endorses this new Commission initiative, it regrets the lack of progress towards enhancing the competitiveness of the EC shipping sector since 1989 and stresses that the consequence of the absence of positive measures is plain to see in the continued decline in the tonnage on Member State registers and in the employment of EC seafarers.

The Committee believes that a competitive and efficient maritime transport sector is an indispensable element for the global competitiveness of the EC economy, not only because of the latter's dependence on such transport for the carriage of its industry's goods and materials, but also because of the contribution to the broader economy made by the whole range of shipping-related activities.

Against this background steps should be taken to:

- neutralize the competitive advantage enjoyed by lower cost substandard ship operation and manning by imposing sanctions on such operators;
- ensure that EC shipping operates in a free market and can compete for the carriage of cargo and passengers on equal terms;
- alleviate cost burdens imposed on EC ship operators (particularly by way of taxation and social oncosts) which their competitors do not have to bear.

Finally, the Committee calls for further clarification and detail in many areas together with more precise facts and figures on which some of the assertions and arguments are based. In particular, it will be necessary for the Commission to identify with some precision which types of EC shipowners and

operators should qualify for each of the benefits which it expects to result from its various proposals for positive measures for enhancing competitiveness.

## **1.4. Rail transport**

### *1.4.1. Development of railways/access to infrastructures* (Rapporteur: Mr Liverani)

In its opinion on the proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 91/440/EEC on the development of Community railways, the Economic and Social Committee, while endorsing and acknowledging its logical consistency with the overall approach to transport reform in the single market and with the need to increase the competitiveness of the rail sector, considers that harmonization among the Member States by national implementation of the directives already adopted and those still awaiting final adoption by the Council of Ministers would greatly facilitate achievement of the stated aims.

Moreover, the Committee calls upon the Commission to stimulate greater consultation of the social partners in order to quantify the impact on employment should the directive, thus amended, be rapidly adopted, and avoid likely negative social consequences through a Community support programme to be agreed with the social partners. In this context the Committee also asks the Commission to speed up the presentation of its communication on public services.

Finally, the Committee believes that the time has come for further liberalization of the sector, but only if such liberalization is correlated with a consistent, harmonized political choice on the overall reform of the sector in all its aspects — economic, social and managerial.

Following the recent publication of the Commission White Paper on a strategy for revitalizing the Community's railways (Rapporteur: Mr von der Decken), which will be the subject of a Committee opinion in 1997, these issues are at the forefront once again.

## **1.5. Road transport**

### *1.5.1. Cabotage/road passenger transport* (Rapporteur: Mr Ghigonis)

It was with great interest that the Committee took note of the new proposal on cabotage in road passenger transport, and it welcomes the fact that the principle of the freedom to provide services has been extended.

Nevertheless, the Committee has some comments to make on the proposal, and would particularly suggest:

- that cabotage operations for special regular services should be governed by the same conditions as those for regular national services, referred to as other regular services in the proposal;
- deferring the extension of cabotage operations for other regular services, so that the sector will have time to gear itself up for competition;
- that the proposal should give a clearer indication of the conditions under which cabotage operations for regular international services may be performed, in order to avoid an unwarranted surge in competition for regular services which are only operated nationally, including regular urban services.

Finally, the Committee calls for clarification and harmonization of the regulations governing the application procedure and granting of authorization for cabotage, and highlights the need for control documents to be kept to a minimum.

#### *1.5.2. International transport/coach and bus services* (Rapporteur: Mr Ghigonis)

The Committee welcomes the Commission's proposal concerning the liberalization of international passenger transport by bus and coach at Community level. However, it points out that liberalization could result in cut-throat competition which could lead to a drop in prices, bankruptcy and hence increased unemployment.

In addition, the Committee:

- finds it necessary to retain an authorization procedure for own-account transport operations other than those defined in the proposal in order to avoid any unfair competition with carriers working for another party;
- feels that some control should be maintained over the operation of additional vehicles;
- points out that carriers will be hit by the fact that international occasional services will no longer be able to undertake local excursions.

Lastly, the Committee is particularly aware of the importance of coach passenger safety, especially during international long-distance journeys, and urges the Commission to take this factor into account when amending the proposal and preparing future initiatives in the sphere of international carriage of passengers by road.

## **2. Telecommunications and postal services**

The Committee's work on telecommunications focused mainly on a whole series of legislation aimed at implementing the policy of liberalization of the European telecommunications market initiated by Directive 90/388 and confirmed by several Commission communications and Council regulations.

In its opinions on this subject, namely interconnection and interoperability (Rapporteur: Mr Hernandez Bataller), satellite personal communications (Rapporteur: Mr Mobbs), competitive environment in telecommunications (Rapporteur: Mr von Schwerin), and authorizations and individual licences in the field of telecommunications services (Rapporteur Mr Hernandez Bataller), the Committee has been highly attentive to the social, economic and technical implications of liberalization, while recognizing its key importance for Europe's economic modernization. On several occasions, it has stressed the need for a universal service which takes account of Europe's changing society.

This most certainly spurred the Commission to issue its communication on the universal service for telecommunications, which was also the subject of a Committee opinion (Rapporteur: Mr von Schwerin).

The Committee opinion maintains that the concept of universal service must form a firm anchor for the regulatory reforms under way at national level with a view to fully liberalizing the telecommunications sector in Europe. The Committee considers it important to put pressure on Member States to introduce the universal service as quickly as possible.

Coordination of this work would be furthered by the establishment of a European regulatory body, which the Committee supported in its opinion on the open network provision (ONP).

The Committee supports the Commission's view that consumers at both national and Community level should be involved more closely in decisions concerning the fixing of quality targets, standards and future scope of the universal service. The Committee also welcomes the setting-up of a European monitoring committee to represent consumer interests.

Finally, as progress towards the information society continues, the Commission and the Member States are urged to adopt every possible measure in support of disadvantaged regions so that the digitalization of networks is speeded up in those regions and regional imbalances in the Community are thereby reduced. The aim of providing all citizens with a broad high-quality universal service will thus be furthered.

As far as the postal sector is concerned, the Committee was consulted on the development of Community postal services (Rapporteur: Mr Farnleitner), which, given the high stakes involved, is once again on the Council agenda.

The Committee opinion welcomes the creation of a universal service at affordable prices for all European citizens, and expects this to lead to higher quality standards which will benefit all users, consumers and firms.

At the same time, the Committee would suggest the Commission pays constant attention to the social effects, particularly the effects of an extensive liberalization of the postal services on income and working conditions in the sector, and calls for a thorough analysis of this question.

The Committee calls on the Commission to initiate and carry out the arrangements needed for this, in close consultation with the Economic and Social Committee and the Joint Committee for the Postal Services.

Should adoption of the directive be delayed, the Committee advocates a four-year time limit for the trial period and the scheduled interim review and decision. The Committee trusts it will also be consulted before the decision is taken.

As regards certain more specific issues, the Committee welcomes the scheduled separation of *operational and official tasks in the postal services sector*; recommends the supervision of competition by an independent authority; expresses reservations about the increased use of 're-mailing', especially from third countries; and supports the retention of certain restrictions on the distribution of inward cross-border mail.

Finally, the Committee thinks it essential to keep up continuous monitoring of technological developments and their consequences for the universal service.

### 3. SOCIAL, FAMILY, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

#### **Worker information and consultation**

A consensus was achieved on the most controversial of subjects in recent years — worker information and consultation. The opinion, massively endorsed, is testimony to the constructive role which the Economic and Social Committee and its three constituent groups can play alongside, and in anticipation of, agreements by the social partners. In its opinion, the Committee called for a comparative study which should be submitted to and discussed by the social partners prior to any EU framework regulation. It also stressed that there should be no question of transposing the particular participation model of one or a few Member States to the rest of the Community, nor should any national participation legislation be undermined or circumvented by a Community legal instrument. The opinion also called for

the separate and urgent adoption of a European legal framework for cooperatives, mutual societies and associations, with proper involvement of representatives from these organizations in the drawing-up of this framework.

### **Free movement**

There has also been a comprehensive review of free movement in the European Union, in terms of eliminating internal border controls, promoting the mutual recognition of diplomas and in extending Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 to apply to unemployed persons and to pre-retirement schemes. The rights of third-country nationals to travel throughout the EU with a mutually recognized visa was overwhelmingly supported.

### **Racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism**

The Committee welcomed the communication from the Commission on racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism and the proposal for a Council decision designating 1997 as European Year against Racism. It called for a Union-wide Treaty provision banning discrimination on grounds of sex, colour, race, opinions and beliefs. It considered education to be a key instrument in countering racial prejudice and fostering anti-racist awareness. The Committee also considered the role of the mass media in preventing and countering prejudice to be vital, and called for incentives and support to promote media material of an anti-racist character; development of a medium and long-term programme of education and training for those working in the media, together with a pan-European dialogue on a single set of ethical rules concerning the research, selection and presentation of news in order to equip citizens with mental defences against misinformation and lack of information. The Committee further called for the aim of prohibiting the distribution of racist material via the Internet to be set down as a Community action in the decision designating 1997 as European Year against Racism and it underlined the importance of the joint declaration by the social partners on the prevention of racial discrimination and xenophobia and the promotion of equal treatment in the workplace.

### **European cultural policy for children**

The role and problems of young people in Europe has been a recurring theme of own-initiative work. The opinion on a European cultural policy for children stressed the need for Treaty provisions in this field and explored some original ideas such as the encouragement of a European children's library, a European children's music academy, a European literary prize for children's books and an annual European children's entertainment festival.



## **Teaching and learning — towards the learning society**

The opinion on the Commission's White Paper 'Towards the learning society' was also keenly supported. The Committee regards the five objectives set by the White Paper as key aims for building the learning society. These are to: encourage the acquisition of new knowledge; bring school and the business sector closer together; combat exclusion; develop proficiency in three European languages; treat capital investment and investment in training on an equal basis. However, it stressed that at least one more central aim should be added to these — that of the humanist dimension of the learning society. It regarded the relevant proposed actions at European level as important — but ineffectual if they are not accompanied by specific financial allocation.

## **European voluntary service for young people**

The Committee welcomed the working document of the Commission on a European voluntary service for young people but thought that certain minimum conditions must be satisfied before such an action can be initiated beyond the level of pilot schemes: volunteers must have guaranteed social protection for health and disability hazards; volunteers must be fully covered against the financial risks of potentially serious mistakes; the social partners should be closely involved in the establishment of this programme.

## **Recognition of qualifications**

The Committee welcomed the Commission proposal on supplementing the general system for the recognition of qualifications. Urging the Commission to adopt gender-neutral terminology and to refer to citizens rather than to the outdated and insensitive term 'migrant', the Committee argued that the basic mutual recognition 'assumption' principle required fine tuning. This should include a mechanism to assist the professional bodies at Member State level in their bilateral negotiations; a *simplified and updated EU brochure on mutual recognition of qualifications*; rigorous and clear appeal procedures; the need to handle the burden of proof of good repute sensitively; the need to ensure the active participation of the relevant associations in the implementation of the directive and monitoring of its application.

## **Disabled people**

The Committee welcomed the draft Council recommendation on a parking card for disabled persons. Whilst expressing the need for personal permits and for card holders to be able to hire or borrow a vehicle in another place or country, the Committee considered the proposal to be well thought out, appropriate to achieve the declared objectives and that it should be implemented.

The Committee likewise supported the draft resolution of the Council on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. It stressed that the Member States should give the utmost attention to this resolution and take active steps to realize its aims and the aims of the UN standard rules. To enable the Commission to implement its mainstreaming strategy effectively, the Committee advocated that the Commission's disability group be backed by officials with sound expertise in the field. An internal liaison unit should be formed, and could appropriately be based on the team of experts currently attached to the Helios II programme. This group should provide back-up to the Commission's inter-service disability group. Adequate funding must be earmarked for this work. The Committee urged that future work on the communication and resolution should give high priority to employment. The Commission should assess what share of Structural Fund resources is allocated to people with disabilities and should assign it a high priority. The Committee also stressed the importance of ongoing dialogue between the Commission's disability group and special high-level group and the European disability forum.

### **Health and safety at the workplace**

The Committee approved the proposal for a Council directive on minimum requirements for improving the safety and health protection of workers potentially at risk from explosive atmospheres. It urged the Commission and the Council to confirm that explosion risks due to chemical substances containing oxygen and fuel will be covered by the chemical agents directive. It also drew attention to the importance and relevance of employers' obligations and workers' obligations in the framework directive.

The Committee also approved the proposal for a Council directive amending the protection of workers from the risk related to exposure to carcinogens at work as long as it in no way conflicted with the effect of established health and safety directives. The Committee drew particular attention to: the case for a 'guidance note' to help employers and workers; the classification of carcinogenic substances; the reasons for the scope and the duration of the proposed derogations; the 1 p.p.m. occupational exposure limit for benzene; the need for a uniform measuring procedure; cooperation with and between specialist institutes and other bodies in the field of occupational health and safety; comparability of data.

### **Gender equality**

The Committee endorsed the proposal for a Council recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making which should help to stimulate an integrated and comprehensive gender equality strategy. The Committee urged Member States to set clear goals with specific measures, to ensure broadly-based information campaigns and to work in

close cooperation with socio-professional organizations on achieving concrete progress towards more equality in decision-making. The reference targets should at least be backed up by timetables and other monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Positive actions could be better highlighted in the text, particularly in the fields of education and training. Direct reference also needs to be made in the recommendation to 'employment' and to work organization and working time. Labour market segregation, unequal pay, unequal promotion possibilities and career structures and the casualization of women's employment needed to be addressed.

The Committee also considered the proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of equal treatment of men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions. While appreciating the difficulties involved in trying to achieve unequivocal clarification of this question, the Committee believed that the Commission should take a clear stand on whether the principle of positive measures — particularly quotas — should in future be admissible and be incorporated in Community law on the basis of primary legislation. The Commission's proposal did not provide the definitive clarification the Commission itself claimed to be offering. In the view of the Committee, a directive was not the appropriate legal instrument for arriving at a clear and definitive clarification of this question of principle.

### **Cultural goods**

The Committee endorsed the amending Regulation and Directive on the export of cultural goods. It attached special importance to: the level of implementation; the advisability of introducing a form of 'passport' or accompanying certificate for particular works of art; increased cooperation between police forces and legal authorities in the field of the identification of stolen or unlawfully exported cultural goods.

### **Future of social protection**

In response to the problems raised by the Commission communication on the future of social protection, the Committee argued in favour of the development of a more dynamic European Union strategy for promoting convergence in social protection. This convergence should be based on the basic goals already contained in the Treaty and in the welfare state traditions of the Member States, and should be confirmed by the international norms these countries have accepted.

They should shore up and enhance social cohesion and prevent regressive policies from dragging everything down to the lowest common denominator.

Whilst accepting the need to reduce the burden of social costs on low wages and to lower non-wage labour costs by reducing social security contributions

through partial exemptions, the Committee considered that social security and pension schemes should be adapted to new working patterns with adequate protection based on ILO norms. The Committee also sought to ensure freedom of movement, through coordination mechanisms better adapted to cover complementary social protection rights.

Transforming passive expenditure on unemployment into active expenditure could involve promoting the productive deployment of unemployed persons enjoying social security cover for the performance of work for which there is still insufficient funding. The objective must be the creation of real jobs. Similarly, social protection systems could contribute to the financing of training. The Committee considered that social welfare schemes covering the entire population needed to be financed more by taxes and less by contributions; so that all taxable incomes are tapped. The tax take should be channelled in particular to benefits for which the entire population is potentially eligible, with priority being given to those groups in the population particularly threatened by social exclusion. Of the potential financing arrangements, capitalization did not appear to be appropriate to social protection where this is universal or designed to provide minimum cover.

Promoting family policy was viewed as an integral part of social protection.

In order to offset the loss of economically active persons from the working population, gradual retirement was supported. Individuals would progressively reduce their working hours (increasingly part-time activity) whilst simultaneously extending their working life (a gradual shift in retirement age). Solidarity between the generations could be promoted by a levy on all employed persons to finance support structures and assistance plans for old people as a means of reducing dependence.

Even though national health schemes are different, efforts were needed with a view to ensure that all Europe's citizens enjoy equivalent services in health insurance schemes which wholly or partly replace a State scheme and operate in the internal market.

Action throughout the EU against social exclusion should focus on a minimum income, work experience, a European poverty and exclusion observatory, and cooperation among charitable associations.

#### **4. ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND MONETARY QUESTIONS**

1. In its opinion on the economic situation in 1996, requested by the Commission in connection with the preparation of the broad guidelines of the economic policies of the Member States and of the Community, required

under Article 103 of the Treaty on European Union, the Committee stressed the need to achieve economic and monetary union so as to consolidate the single market, and to avoid monetary turmoil in the EU so as not to jeopardize the prospects for durable growth and hence jobs. The Committee considered that Member States' budgetary policies should be geared strongly to growth and jobs while maintaining inflation and budget deficits within acceptable limits.

2. The Committee stressed the need for better EU harmonization of macro-economic policies. In discussing the White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment, the Committee called on all those involved in economic policy to cooperate in a consistent economic strategy designed to boost growth and employment while still respecting the European economic and social model. The Committee considered that to escape from the vicious circle of pessimism and stagnant demand, a clear signal should be sent to the economic players. With this in mind, it advocated a European alliance for jobs and stability. The principal aim of such an alliance would be to develop an EU socioeconomic strategy to tackle unemployment, with due account for the need for stability and building on the considerations set out in the White Paper. The Committee considered it vital that all the socioeconomic and political players take part in this alliance.

3. While the Committee recognized that the EU had to tackle competition from other parts of the world, it felt that it would be very damaging if the findings of research funded by EU taxpayers were systematically exploited in third countries. Keen to make a detailed analysis of this issue in order to define medium-term strategies for innovative job-creating growth, the Committee began work on an own-initiative opinion on employment, competitiveness and economic globalization.

4. The Committee issued an opinion on the 13th Directive on takeover bids. It advocated the highest possible degree of legal certainty in such transactions, as this was the only way to protect the individual shareholder. The Committee also thought that the directive should provide for mandatory information and consultation of workers in the undertakings concerned.

5. The Committee has also adopted a number of opinions which all concern directly or indirectly, the completion of the single market.

6. On monetary matters, the Committee has delivered several opinions on the problems to be expected when introducing the single currency. In its opinion on 'Economic and monetary union: economic and social aspects of convergence and measures to increase awareness of the single currency', the Committee stresses that exchange rates should be set at a level which ensures that speculative distortions have no lasting impact during the introduction of the euro.

As regards the derogation countries, the ESC draws particular attention to the harmful consequences of their long-term exclusion from EMU, especially against the background of EU enlargement. It recommends that countries which fail to meet only one of the five convergence criteria be examined again on the basis of real convergence criteria.

The ESC would like to see an inflation target published in the future single currency area. An intermediate monetary target should be a main plank of the ECB's monetary policy. In order to make money-market control more effective the ESC would like to see a minimum reserve requirement applied to deposits with commercial banks, attracting a rate of interest close to the market rate.

The ESC urges that monetary relations between the core group of Member States participating in the third stage of monetary union and the other Member States be regulated in order to guarantee the continued smooth operation of the internal market, ensure a high degree of exchange-rate stability between the single currency and the national currencies and facilitate the non-participating countries' subsequent transition to the single currency.

With these aims in view, the ESC supports the establishment of an exchange-rate mechanism on the lines of the EMS in which the single currency would act as an anchor.

The Committee has highlighted the importance of effective training, education and training strategies in promoting acceptance of the euro by the general public. In its opinion on market implications of the legislation and regulations required for the transition to the single currency, the Committee took the basic line that European legislation regarding the introduction and use of the euro should not only meet the need to create a sound legal framework, but should also be responsive to market requirements. The transition must be kept as straightforward as possible, free of bureaucratic and procedural obstacles and, as far as possible, compatible with the usages and customs of each market.

During the reference period, the Section for Economic, Financial and Monetary Questions continued to play its part in multilateral surveillance in the form of reports on the economic situation in the Member States, focusing in turn on Denmark, Italy, Austria and Luxembourg. The contacts established in conjunction with this work with economic and social players in the countries concerned invariably provide a valuable opportunity for discussing the national measures taken to comply with the convergence criteria, and thereby contribute to the attainment of EMU.

## 5. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

As it has every year since its creation, the Committee examined the annual report on the Structural Funds (1994) (CES 886/96 of 10 July 1996). This report is particularly interesting as it covers the first year of the new 1994-99 programming period, in which there is an increased focus on economic and social cohesion and job creation. The Committee again affirmed the importance of upholding the principles of structural policy, while highlighting certain difficulties in applying some of them, such as proper implementation of the partnership principle and checks on compliance with additionality. While endorsing the emphasis on job creation, the Committee felt that as economic development was a long-term process, job creation should not be the sole criterion in the allocation of support.

The Committee also supported the Commission's decision on the allocation of the reserve for Community initiatives, particularly the upgrading of the initiative for employment. It felt that the allocation was in keeping with the priorities previously set by the Commission, which it had already endorsed (CES 92/96 of 31 January 1996).

Again with a view to boosting economic and social cohesion, the Committee supported a Commission communication which sought to create the conditions for greater synergy between cohesion and environmental policies in the implementation of Structural Fund and Cohesion Fund programmes (CES 1072/96 of 25 September 1996).

Pursuant to its work on spatial planning and the scrutiny of large geographical regions begun with the opinions on the Atlantic Arc and the Mediterranean, the Committee considered the specific problems of the Alpine Arc (CES 548/96 of 25 April 1996) and endorsed the Commission communication on the integrated management of coastal zones (CES 890/96 of 11 July 1996).

As in earlier years, the Committee focused attention on the tourism sector, this time in an opinion on the Philoxenia programme. The programme, which is designed to stimulate the quality and competitiveness of European tourism and thereby contribute to economic growth and job creation, was supported by the Committee although it regretted the modest funding that was to be allocated to it (CES 1094/96 of 26 September 1996).

For the first time, and although this subject does not fall within the EU's direct competence, the Committee decided to examine urban policy (CES 1084/96 of 25 September 1996). Building on the work done in the context of Europe 2000 and Europe 2000+, the Committee sought to show the added value of integrated and differentiated action — social, economic and environmental — for strengthening economic and social cohesion.

Cohesion is the guiding thread that links all regional policies and it represents an important challenge, particularly with the prospect of EU enlargement and economic and monetary union. The Committee decided to address these issues by drawing up an own-initiative opinion on the future of cohesion and the long-term implications for the Structural Funds, bearing in mind that the present programming period comes to an end in 1999 (CES 246/96 of 28 February 1996).

## 6. INDUSTRIAL POLICY

As the Committee is stepping up its role as single market observatory, the work of the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services is strongly coloured by this issue. The section has set up a permanent study group to coordinate work in this area. As well as issuing opinions on the Commission's annual reports on the operation of the single market in 1995, the Committee has held four hearings (in Stockholm, Milan, Bonn and Dusseldorf) to assist in the drafting of two opinions on particularly delicate topics: public contracts, and technical standards and mutual recognition in the single market. The plenary debate on the 'single market' opinions, held on 29 May 1996, was attended by Commissioner Mario Monti. The Committee also issued opinions on the Community customs code and various technical harmonization directives. These related *inter alia* to cars (limits for pollutant emissions), telecommunications terminal equipment, and pollutants from engines of non-road mobile machinery.

The Committee was consulted by Commissioner Van Miert prior to the review of the merger regulation, in the run-up to the Commission Green Paper on the subject, and the Committee later issued an opinion on the Green Paper itself. An opinion was also drawn up on the system of aid to shipbuilding (related to an OECD agreement on the subject).

The issue of intellectual property, particularly in relation to the new information society, is a matter of great interest for the Committee, which has a long record of authoritative work that has influenced the legislative bodies. Three Committee members, including one from the Industry Section, belong to the Information Society Forum set up by Commissioner Bangemann; the former section president, Mr Connellan, is a member of the high-level expert group on the social and societal aspects of the information society. The Committee has issued a number of opinions on both copyright and the information society (some opinions consider the two issues jointly). These concerned the Green Paper on the legal protection of encrypted services; the Green Paper on copyright and neighbouring rights in the information society; the Green Paper on legal protection of the utility model; Community models and designs and a major opinion on legal protection of biotechnological inventions.



The Industry Section, which is also responsible for work on the media, drew up an opinion on the establishment of a guarantee fund for the audiovisual sector.

The Committee continues to take part in the work of the maritime industries forum set up under the aegis of the Commission, and it attended the forum's plenary meetings in Marseille (July 1996).

Work on banking and insurance included opinions on stepping up prudential supervision of insurance undertakings in an insurance group, freedom to provide banking services, and the problems involved in the calculation of solvency ratios.

As the Committee includes a special category representing small firms, it made a detailed scrutiny of the third multiannual Community programme for SMEs. The Director-General of Commission DG XXII, Heinrich von Moltke, presented this programme at a section meeting.

The Industry Section meetings were attended by leading figures such as the Director-General of Commission DG III (Industry), Mr Stefano Micossi; the Director-General of DG XXIII (Enterprise policy), Mr Heinrich von Moltke; the Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee for Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy, Mr Karl von Wogau; and the President of the legislative and administrative simplification group, Mr Bernhard Molitor.

## **1. Competition policy**

1.1. The Committee has delivered its opinion on the Commission's XXVth annual report on Community competition policy. This opinion, which the Deputy Director of DG IV (competition) regards as one of the best on the subject, covers the three key areas of competition policy: anti-competitive agreements and practices, the regulated or monopoly sectors and State aid.

The Committee considers it desirable to devote more space to the chapters on the application of national and EU competition rules in the Member States and reiterates its recommendation to review vertical cooperation with the requisite flexibility; such cooperation need not necessarily *per se* be prohibited under Article 85 of the Treaty of Rome.

Procedural law: The Committee advocates that defendants' rights, access to files and the length of procedures should all be improved.

Monopolies: The opinion goes on to analyse the question of monopolies and considers that the provision of a universal service must be guaranteed in the context of a liberalization policy.

Trans-European networks: The Committee supports the setting-up of trans-European networks for transport, telecommunications and energy, all of which will have a substantial impact on European competitiveness.

**Shipping:** The Committee calls for a realistic assessment of the effects of the block exemption of Regulation (EEC) No 4056/86 concerning maritime conferences.

**Transport of goods by air:** The Committee approves the Commission's decision to abolish block exemption.

**Telecommunications:** The application of competition rules will help to preserve the dynamism of the expanding telecommunications sector.

**Environment:** The Committee agrees with the inclusion of enhancement of the environment among the grounds for exemption under Article 85(3).

**Liberal professions:** The Committee feels that certain practices and association agreements, let alone certain corporate arrangements, may impede trade and hamper free movement.

**Merger control:** Regarding the revision of Regulation (EEC) No 4064/89 on merger control the Committee confirms its preference for a lowering of thresholds but has not ruled out alternative solutions based on 'multiple filings'.

**State aid:** The Committee's opinion calls for greater transparency and protection of third party rights. It underlines the importance and topical relevance of the close link between competition policy and economic and social cohesion policy, and asks the Commission to give this matter specific consideration in its next report on State aid.

**Independent European agency for competition issues:** The Committee has already stated its opposition to the idea of an independent European agency on several occasions.

**Relations with CEECs applying for EU membership:** The Committee considers it a matter of priority that the CEECs guarantee transparency in public aid forthwith and that national authorities be established as soon as possible to monitor State aid and to apply the rules laid down in the European agreements. It also recommends a gradual convergence of competition rules at world level. Finally it states that a judicious, forward-looking competition policy must create conditions conducive to the emergence of new professions and new specializations, particularly in the environment, leisure and culture sections.

1.2. In its opinion on the Commission's communication on cooperation between the Commission and the national competition authorities on matters relating to Articles 85 and 86 of the Treaty, the Committee takes a somewhat critical position; it believes that efficient and workable decentralization would be achieved by revising Regulation (EEC) No 17/62, for example, and by harmonizing national competition law, giving urgent priority to the rules of procedure.

1.3. In its opinion on the proposed amendment of Council Regulation (EEC) No 4064/89 on the control of concentrations between undertakings the Committee confirms its support for the reduction of turnover thresholds to ECU 3 billion and ECU 150 million but has serious doubts as to the soundness of the proposed system for extending the scope of the regulation to multiple filings. It also believes that the solution adopted for joint ventures does not resolve the problem of legal certainty and equal treatment of all cooperative joint ventures. The Committee endorses the other alterations already put forward in the Commission's Green Paper.

## **2. Intellectual property**

The Committee has stated its views on a proposed Commission directive on the harmonization of legal arrangements for artists' resale rights, namely the *right of the copyright holder or his heirs to receive a percentage of the price of a work of art when it is resold by public auction or through an agent*. The Committee's opinion is somewhat divided but it welcomes the proposed provisions, which seek primarily to remove distortions of competition within the single market. The Committee calls on the Commission to do everything possible within international forums and in multilateral and bilateral negotiations with third countries to obtain a world-wide extension of the artist's resale right in the interest both of copyright holders and of art dealers.

## **3. The information society**

The action plan on the information society, adopted on 19 July 1994, has successfully established an initial framework for the European Union information society policy. The guidance given by the Council placed particular emphasis on the liberalization of telecommunications. The Committee has been asked for its opinion of a new action plan to take account of new priorities and to prepare for further stages.

The Committee reiterates its concern over employment patterns in the information society, taking the view that it is essential to gear the information society to individuals rather than vice versa. Particular account must be taken of *social groups which have no contact with information and communication technologies (ICT) at present and are in danger of finding themselves at an even greater remove in future*. Training programmes must be provided for certain groups of workers, such as the self-employed and 'teleworkers' and the financing of training programmes for SME employees must be addressed. The Committee believes that urgent action is necessary to respond to concerns regarding the necessary legislative framework for full telecommunications liberalization and highlights the problems arising from convergence of the telecommunications and audio-visual sectors, the safety of information transmission and the protection of privacy. It also stresses the prime importance of the universal service coverage, its financing and extension of access

to information society networks. Steps should also be taken to regulate media concentration before further steps are taken towards liberalization.

#### **4. Single market**

4.1. In a major opinion on the Commission's Green Paper on commercial communications in the internal market the Committee gave its views on all forms of advertising, direct marketing, sponsorship, sales promotion and public relations promoting products and services in the information society. The Committee welcomes the suggestion that Member States should notify the Commission and other Member States of proposals for new legislation or regulations affecting commercial communications. It accepts that recent developments in IT and new broadcasting technologies will create pressure for Member States to coordinate their regulatory regimes and welcomes the suggestion in the Green Paper that the impact of these technological developments will be a matter for early consideration by the proposed consultative committee. The Committee also commends the examination of potential chain reactions as an important part of the overview process.

4.2. Pressing ahead with its earlier work on non-tariff barriers to trade, the Committee has given an opinion on the proposed technical harmonization directive for a maximum design speed for tractors. The Committee supports the Commission's proposal to increase the maximum permissible speed.

#### **5. Industrial policy**

5.1. The Committee welcomes the Commission's communication on an industrial competitiveness policy for the European chemical industry. It agrees that it is up to the industry to define a strategy for the future and it is for the Commission to establish a legal and regulatory framework which facilitates the industry's efforts to achieve competitiveness.

The Committee calls for an in-depth cost/benefit analysis, based on sound scientific data, of all new rules on the classification, labelling and use of these products. Possible national exceptions to Community legislation should first be notified to the Commission and may under no circumstances be incompatible with the single market, in accordance with Article 100a of the Treaty. The Committee advocates effective liberalization of trade with emergent countries and the exploration of alternative solutions to correct distortions caused by different levels of environmental protection.

In line with its concern to ensure a high level of environmental protection, the Committee welcomes the establishment of voluntary programmes or agreements on the part of the chemical industry which supplement or go beyond the minimum levels required under existing regulations. It asks the Commission to take adequate account of the needs and priorities of the chemical sector when drawing up the fifth Community R&TD programme. This means

strengthening the cooperation between industry, universities and research institutes. The training side must be stepped up, with more cooperation between industry, universities and other socioeconomic players. The Committee also recommends making better use of the support opportunities opened up by the bilateral cooperation agreements and regional programmes (PHARE, TACIS, MEDA), with the direct participation of industry and other players in the chemical sector.

The Commission has published a communication on the competitiveness of subcontracting in the textile and clothing industry in the European Union, which aims to propose a package of measures and a structure for supporting efforts by the sector to improve competitiveness. In its opinion, the Committee acknowledges the justification for a communication but it is concerned about the Commission's lack of ambition in failing to draw the logical conclusions from its observations, namely the need to:

- have the EU and its Member States carry out an appraisal of the necessity of ceasing the practice of imposing the lion's share of taxation and social charges on employment;
- revise the goals of external trade policy in order to make the opening-up of the markets of non-EU States the top priority before consideration is given to any further opening-up of EU markets.

The Committee welcomes the proposal to set up a group on subcontracting in the textile and clothing industry, bringing together European and national representatives of the industry and trade unions. It is in favour of enlarging this group, in the light of the matter under discussion, to include representatives of the parties concerned, such as distributors or consumer associations.

## 6. SMEs

The ESC has its own organized SME category and supports the Commission's 'Integrated programme for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the craft sector — the multiannual programme (1997-2000)'. It endorses the Commission's approach and hopes that the Council will also undertake to support the activities set out in the programme. The Committee supports the Commission's plan to draw up a recommendation to the Member States calling upon them to pay more attention to SMEs in proposals for joint financing under the European Regional Development Fund (EDRF). It trusts that the Commission communication on direct taxation will produce concrete proposals to simplify trans-national activities for SMEs, thus reducing the attendant costs, and shares the Commission's views on preparing SMEs for the introduction of the euro. The ESC, which is in charge of the Single Market Observatory, emphatically wishes to be involved in setting up contact points linking the national authorities responsible for enforcing the rules governing the internal market, as well as the Member

States and the Commission. It is in favour of stepping up surveillance and believes that all forms of State aid should be examined more critically — not just aid from central government but also the aid increasingly available from regional authorities. The Commission considers that there is still too little transnational investment by SMEs, for lack of a suitable financial instrument. The ESC endorses this view but feels that it is absolutely vital to involve both the banking sector and venture capital funds in the preparation of such a financial instrument. The Commission highlights innovation, research and development and the question of access to the information society. The ESC notes with satisfaction that, especially in the latter area, measures are to be taken to identify the needs of SMEs and to tackle the obstacles hampering their use of information technology.

## **7. EXTERNAL RELATIONS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The Committee had a heavy workload to cope with last year in the field of external relations, trade and development policy.

This higher output can be explained by the increased responsibilities and action of the European Union on the international front and a growing desire on the part of the Committee to express the views of the socioeconomic interest groups on how international issues are dealt with. Indeed, this desire reflects an expectation. On the one hand, in a context of increasing globalization, international questions have major repercussions on the internal decisions of societies and on the lives of their citizens. On the other hand, new information technologies and rapid communications make it even more unacceptable for international questions to be restricted to a small group of specialists who are often remote from day-to-day life.

The Committee therefore sought to take up this challenge in the past year. It gave its views on all the major issues concerning the Union, trying as far as possible to contact its counterparts in third countries, by organizing hearings or sending delegations abroad.

These contacts have invariably borne fruit and have reinforced the case for the Committee's strategy of broadening the range of topics and participants in external relations. Moreover, it is a source of satisfaction that this approach and the Committee's role have been recognized and supported by the Community institutions.

### **Relations with the countries of central and eastern Europe**

The Committee continued work on relations between the European Union and the countries of central and eastern Europe by adopting an opinion on

the White Paper on preparation of the associated countries of central and eastern Europe for integration into the internal market of the Union.

In this opinion the Committee states that the CEECs governments, as well as the socioeconomic interest groups of their countries, will clearly find the White Paper a crucial instrument for tackling the various problems connected with membership of the European Union.

The meeting with representatives of socioeconomic organizations held in Warsaw in May 1996, at the invitation of the Minister for Labour and Social Policy, shows that the White Paper can act as a powerful catalyst within the CEECs.

However, the main problem is that alignment of legislation is not sufficient *per se*; the requisite structures, and hence resources, are also necessary. The technical and financial assistance that the EU can provide under PHARE and other aid programmes will therefore be of key importance in facilitating standardized implementation of internal market legislation.

Whilst recognizing that the Commission has drawn up a blueprint of key importance for both the CEECs accession process and the framing of future Community policies, the Committee regrets that the White Paper's main thrust is to ensure that the internal market is as 'operational' as possible, rather than securing better living and working conditions for Community citizens.

The internal market's four guaranteed freedoms must be closely tailored to the social dimension. Hence, social dialogue must be part of the process of creating a single market.

The Committee considers that social policy must be treated as a core feature running through all areas of integration — not merely as a sectoral issue. Accession strategy must focus on two main fronts: economic and social.

The aim must first and foremost be to integrate ordinary individuals into a *social market economy model of society in which the social partners play a fundamental role*.

The Committee notes that all CEECs social partners, as well as academic experts, point out that the integration process is not the exclusive preserve of governments.

It is also important that the CEECs, whilst preparing for accession to the EU, seek to maximize integration within their own ranks — a goal which can also be achieved by stepping up regional cooperation.

The Committee further emphasizes the importance of structured dialogue, as provided for in the association agreements, between the ESC and repre-

sentatives of the main socioeconomic organizations of the associated countries.

### **The Euro-Mediterranean partnership**

In the work programme annexed to the Barcelona Declaration (adopted at the Inter-Ministerial Conference in November 1995), it was stated that regular contacts between other European bodies, particularly the EU Economic and Social Committee and its Mediterranean counterparts, would contribute to a better understanding of the main questions relating to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. At the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of economic and social committees which took place in Madrid on 12 and 13 December 1995, the new Euro-Mediterranean cooperation based on decentralized cooperation between civil societies was organized. Apart from its permanent task of coordinating the work, the ESC was entrusted with the drafting of a report on the theme of migration and the creation of a free trade area.

In this report, the Section for External Relations, Trade and Development Policy highlights the difficulties currently encountered by our Mediterranean partners in their development. It would thus seem necessary to redefine the role of the State and social institutions and to review the social and economic policy options if even worse poverty is to be avoided. Such a radical reform will not be possible without popular acceptance. For this, the thrust of the reforms, the measures involved and their foreseeable consequences would have to be the subject of public debate, with the participation of the organizations and institutions of civil society.

This gives the representatives of civil society in Europe the opportunity to provide meaningful support for the measures planned by the EU and the governments of the partner countries by helping them to set up and develop the associations and organizations of a civil society and discussing with them the scope and consequences of the reform process.

The section also notes that the failure of the different development policies pursued by the various international bodies, the EU and the individual North African States highlights the need to change the approach and henceforth to place the individual at the centre of a process of comprehensive development which takes account of economic and social aspects while respecting the cultural identity of all concerned.

### **International trade**

In 1996 the Committee took an interest in the new problems of international trade and tackled topics still awaiting discussion or to be dealt with in the light of the WTO ministerial conference.



The Committee thus drew up an opinion on the global harmonization of direct investment regulations. Since negotiations had already begun within the OECD, the Committee took the view that the Community and the Member States should take an active part in the talks without losing sight of the need for a future agreement at WTO level.

In the Committee's view the definition of investment in the multilateral agreement on investments (MAI) must be broader than the present definition of DFI (direct foreign investment), so as to cover other forms of capital movements, as is already the case within the European Union. The regional economic integration clause (REIC) must continue in order to allow Member States of the EU to continue and deepen their process of economic integration and liberalization.

The Committee considers that the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises must be included in the MAI, thus contributing positively to the future negotiations to be held within the WTO.

While hoping that efforts will be undertaken to bring the United States back into the multilateral framework, the Committee recommended adoption of the decision concerning the conclusion of the results of the WTO negotiations on financial services and on the movement of natural persons.

In its opinion on the global challenge of international trade: a market access strategy for the European Union, the Committee asked the WTO to ensure the full implementation of the outcome of the GATT Uruguay Round and the Marrakesh Agreements.

Among the issues on the 'new trade agenda' for the WTO, the Economic and Social Committee places particular emphasis on the future debate on trade and competition policy.

The priority for WTO negotiations in this field should be to strengthen the world trading system and enhance competition through the establishment of a multilateral policy framework which aims at avoiding potential conflict between trade and competition policy objectives.

With regard to labour standards, the Economic and Social Committee has argued in favour of social clauses in international trade agreements in several opinions.

At the moment there is a wide agreement on five labour standards:

- non-discrimination (ILO Convention 111);
- the prohibition of forced labour (ILO Conventions 29 and 105);
- the prohibition of child labour (ILO Convention 138);

- the right to organize (ILO Convention 87);
- the right of collective bargaining (ILO Convention 98).

The inclusion of labour standards in the work of international trade forums will give the international community the instrument to encourage countries to respect them. For this reason, the Economic and Social Committee prefers basic labour standards to be dealt with also in the WTO.

The Community should deploy all available trade policy instruments in order to achieve effectively the objective of further liberalization in third country markets.

The Committee welcomes the establishment of a database with information on tariff and non-tariff barriers to European exports. A better information system will help to ensure transparency in the global economy, creating new business opportunities and providing information resources which small and medium-sized enterprises in particular find it difficult to access on their own. It will also help to ensure an efficient monitoring process.

The Committee also adopted an own-initiative opinion on international trade and the environment.

The document, which basically supports the line taken by the Commission, analyses the environmental impact of trade liberalization, the need for multilateral cooperation in international trade relations, product-related measures, production methods and new environment policy instruments.

The primary cause of environmental problems, the Committee says, is not liberalized trade, but the failure of markets and governments to price the environment appropriately. The ESC therefore supports any effort to internalize environmental costs, including the 'polluter pays' principle.

The ESC considers that the concerns of developing countries and countries with economies in transition must be taken very seriously.

The ESC endorses the need to develop an adequate framework within GATT/WTO for trade measures taken pursuant to a multilateral environment agreement (MEA). It is convinced of the need for a generally recognized and authoritative environmental organization which can act as the natural counterpart to the WTO.

### **Transatlantic relations**

After the signature of the Uruguay Round agreements, transatlantic relations were revitalized when the European Union and the United States agreed to a political declaration and a joint action plan at the time of the Madrid Summit of December 1995. A similar agreement is being negotiated between the European Union and Canada.

The Committee has followed these developments attentively, adopting an opinion on relations between the European Union and the United States. This opinion calls for the European Union and the United States to act together to implement multilateralism based on initiative. It also notes that there are very interesting possibilities for cooperation in the fields of social policy and employment policy, as well as in those of environment and overseas aid, and that there are significant advantages in an approach concentrating on new cooperation prospects and specific trade questions *involving the policy of regulation*. *The Committee proposes that bilateral work should cater for the various interests concerned by the major questions involving the policy of regulation, including competition policy, the mutual recognition of standards, financial services, the information society, air transport and State aid.* The European Union and the United States should also discuss monetary policy. On the other hand, the negotiation of a free trade agreement seems inopportune and, to say the least, premature.

The Committee could envisage a regular exchange of views with its American counterparts, bearing in mind the favourable reception given to this idea in the United States.

The Committee also adopted an opinion on relations between the European Union and Canada. A delegation was sent to Canada. The Committee notes in the opinion that Canada has its own characteristics, mid-way between what are sometimes called the American and European models. This offers very interesting possibilities for cooperation and exchange which should be exploited more intensively than in the past; they include bilateral trade and environment, social policy, employment and overseas aid. Given the dynamism of Canadian civil society and its interest in constructive exchanges on many questions, the Committee recommends that a structured dialogue be organized. These regular meetings would have the aims of improving mutual understanding, acting as a conflict prevention mechanism and finally involving civil society, and hence the population at large, in the transatlantic dialogue, which too often remains confined to specialists.

### **Relations with Asia**

Apart from an opinion on relations with Japan, the Committee has not been exercised by Asia over the last decade. This situation has been remedied over the last two years since, on the one hand, the growing importance of Asia in international relations and world trade has been rightly taken into account and, on the other hand, the Committee wished to present its viewpoint on the European Union's new strategy towards that continent, before the first European Union/Asia meeting was held (in Bangkok in February 1996).

The Committee therefore adopted an opinion on relations between the European Union and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN),

and sent a delegation to Thailand and Indonesia. The opinion notes that ASEAN has succeeded in its initial objective of avoiding any conflict among its members, and that this stability has enabled those countries to secure rapid economic growth.

In this region, the Committee takes the view that Europe's presence should be hallmarked by quality rather than quantity. To this end it advocates setting up joint ventures between the countries of the European Union and the countries of ASEAN through the ECIP (EC International Investment Partners). The Committee also calls for Union cooperation activities to concentrate on specific sectors such as the environment, telecommunications, energy and vocational training.

The Committee notes that the differences between Europe and Asia are substantial and that it is necessary to devote considerable energy and resources to information and cultural cooperation. In order to achieve better mutual understanding, the Committee thinks there is a need to encourage exchanges and contacts of every kind — visits by officials, trainees and young graduates from the ASEAN countries — including contacts between economic and social partners from EU countries and their Asian counterparts.

### **Africa and development problems**

Taking account of recent developments in South Africa, the Committee issued an opinion on relations between the European Union and South Africa. The Committee shares the view that the conclusion of a trade and cooperation agreement would help to steer national and foreign investors, as well as world trade partners, towards the South African market, and to restore confidence. Moreover, noting that labour relations in South Africa are likely to play a crucial role in cooling the social climate in general and in improving competitiveness, attention is drawn to the importance of the social dialogue. The proposed wide-ranging political dialogue will make a major contribution to the further stabilization of democracy, to the rule of law, human rights and the promotion of social justice, as well as measures to combat poverty and all forms of discrimination.

The Committee also points out that a bilateral cooperation agreement between South Africa and the EU must be compatible with the regional development interests of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as well as the ACP States and the rules of the WTO.

The Committee further urges the EU to reach agreement in good time with the South African government on institutional and legislative preconditions to guarantee the efficient, transparent and responsible administration of public and development aid funds.

The Committee finally endorses the draft Council regulation applying a *multiannual scheme of generalized tariff preferences from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1999* in respect of certain agricultural products originating in developing countries, while advocating greater consistency between the trading advantages granted by the European Union in the context of free trade areas and the generalized system of preferences (GSP).

### **Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean**

The Committee continued its work on Latin America, launched a few years ago, by drawing up an opinion on relations between the European Union and Cuba.

In its opinion the Committee takes the view that the EU can play a leading role in the reform process on which Cuba has recently embarked. This would also strengthen the Union's presence in Latin America. Concluding a trade and cooperation agreement founded on reciprocal cuts in import tariffs, together with *arrangements for development cooperation*, is the best way of placing EU-Cuba relations on a more systematic and effective footing.

The agreement should be founded on mutual respect for human rights and democratic principles. The Committee also highlighted a number of important features which could be included in the cooperation agreement: stepping up trade and easing access to each others markets; boosting and protecting investment to pave the way for a stable, attractive environment which encourages increased investment to the advantage of both parties; fostering contacts and cooperation between the economic and social players with a view to *developing economic and social infrastructure*; encouraging collaboration between civil society organizations concerned with training, etc., cooperating on the environment and in the promotion of tourism.

### **Other work**

In the opinion on the European 'fair trade' marking movement, the Committee encourages greater cooperation between the movement and the representatives of business, trade unions and consumers, in order to improve information on sources of supply and acceptable markings. Marking should ensure that the commercial benefits are shared with the original producers and that the *supplier complies with independent standards regarding producer protection*, ecological aspects and working conditions. It is important to preserve the voluntary nature of the programme both in the European Union and the developing countries. It is also proposed that the European Union create a distinct budget heading to finance the marking movement's work.

## 8. ENERGY POLICY, NUCLEAR QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH

The number of referrals received by the section in 1996 rose in comparison with 1995.

During the course of 1996 the trend observed over the previous five years, whereby apart from a number of exceptional moments, a smooth but constant increase in the number of opinions issued took place, was consolidated.

The section took advantage of the absence of such exceptions to organize two hearings on highly topical matters: cooperation with third countries in the energy sector and cooperation with third countries in the field of research and technological development (R&TD).

Of the nine opinions adopted, five were concerned with energy issues, three with R&TD and one on a nuclear question. One of these opinions was drawn up on the Committee's own initiative.

Work also continued throughout the year with a view to the adoption in early 1997 of the opinion on the illustrative nuclear programme for the EU.

In the latter part of the year the section received three new referrals on the following subjects:

- Europe's research at the service of its people;
- Green Paper on renewable sources of energy;
- cooperation on agreed Community energy objectives.

Work on these opinions will be carried out during the first months of 1997.

The section secretariat was also instructed to provide secretarial services for the sub-committee set up to prepare an own-initiative opinion on the impact of the new technologies on employment, adopted in November 1996.

### 1. Energy

Significant progress was achieved in the sector with the emergence of the Council joint position on applying single market rules to the electricity sector. This highly important and long-awaited position broke the legal deadlock affecting the energy market and, as the outcome of an agreed consensus, followed the guidelines previously laid down by the Committee.

It is to be hoped that this breakthrough, once under way, will be followed in the near future by the emergence of a consensus-based solution for the natural gas sector.

Work also continued in 1996 on the simplification of Community energy legislation. The Committee had already drawn up an opinion in 1995 urging that the different legislative acts contained in an initial group presented by the Commission be updated or repealed.

In accordance with its previous opinion, the Committee warmly welcomed the presentation of the second report on the second package presented in 1996, and particularly welcomed the follow-up given to a number of comments and recommendations which it had made.

The presentation in December 1995 of the White Paper on an energy policy for the European Union helped clarify the energy policy background to this review of Community energy legislation.

The limited scope of the Commission's review was once again noted. The Commission's proposals for the repeal of legislation were, here again, more a legal 'tidying-up' operation than a real contribution to reducing and simplifying Community legislation. For this reason, in its November 1996 opinion the Committee stressed the importance of consolidation to existing legislation in the energy sector, which it called upon the Commission to carry out.

It was again noted that the Commission subsequently planned to present explanatory reports for 6 of the 18 acts under consideration. The Committee, however, considered that the review of Community energy legislation would not be complete until the reports were presented and their conclusions could be assessed.

Progress continued to be made towards achieving the objective of stabilizing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions with the Directive on rational planning techniques in the electricity and gas distribution sectors, on which the Committee adopted an opinion in April.

The Committee endorsed the Commission's objective of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Gas and electricity undertakings could contribute to the achievement of this objective by taking economic initiatives to improve consumers' energy use efficiency.

It pointed out, however, that while the purpose of the directive was to provide the framework for implementation, it was necessary to look beyond the objective of stabilizing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000.

It was also important to improve end-use energy efficiency through the application of rational planning techniques to the supply and distribution functions. Use of integrated resource planning, which began in the USA as a demand management tool, was considered inappropriate for the EU.

The Committee felt that small-scale decentralized combined heat and power (CHP)/co-generation had an important role to play in demand management, as it was designed to improve end-use energy efficiency. The Committee

also highlighted the need to differentiate between the distribution and supply functions.

A further opinion on gas supply and prospects in the EU was also adopted in April.

The Committee believed that there were legitimate questions about the security of supply to the European Union in the light of the rapid increase in the market share of natural gas, the restricted choice of overseas suppliers from whom it seemed likely to be economic to import, and its potential growth as one of the major fuels for generating electricity.

The Committee recommended that the Commission go further and work out with each Member State a standard of security of supply which should be published and which could be used as a yard-stick for assessing the adequacy of gas companies' contingency plans.

In September the Committee was able to express its views on accepting new European energy transport networks.

The Committee's own-initiative opinion on public service obligations in the internal energy market, also adopted in September, was of particular importance. The opinion was supported from the outset by the Commission.

The subject was controversial and discussion was lively, making the virtual consensus finally reached all the more noteworthy.

Work has commenced in 1997 on a future opinion on general interest services, carrying forward the latter and other Committee sector-based opinions.

In its September opinion, the Committee reiterated the need to create an internal energy market as one of the basic pillars of Community energy policy, at the same time recognizing that the supply of gas and electricity was crucial to all citizens and that economic efficiency therefore needed to be tempered by respect for the public interest, namely the regular and continuous supply of these products as an indispensable social objective.

The Committee therefore noted the need for a regulatory framework of minimum criteria focusing as far as possible on striking a balance between the competition rules and the fulfilment of public service obligations.

Without prejudice to the above comments, and given that public services were the guarantors of fundamental social rights and economic and social cohesion, the Committee urged the Commission to support the position of the European Parliament and either to incorporate the concept of public service and its underlying principles in the Treaties as part of the revision procedure at the Intergovernmental Conference, or to adopt a 'public services charter' to be incorporated in the new Treaty as an appendix. Such



a charter, with its valuable interpretative function, would make Community regulations more transparent and more secure.

## **2. Nuclear questions**

The section had practically no work in this field, pending the commencement of work under the illustrative nuclear programme for the EU.

The Commission communication on this programme was eventually referred to the Committee halfway through the year: the opinion would be discussed at the April 1997 plenary session.

Work was completed on the opinion on the revision of the Directive on health protection of individuals against the dangers of ionizing radiation in relation to medical exposures. The opinion was adopted in May.

In the opinion, the Committee noted with great regret that, 12 years after its adoption, the 1984 directive had still not been implemented in full in all Member States and, in particular, that the inventories of radiological equipment had not been drawn up.

The Committee also warned against unsupervised proliferation of radiological installations and urged that the use of medical physicists be put on an official footing.

## **3. Research and technological development**

The sector was affected by two essential issues: cooperation with third countries and the forthcoming publication of the fifth framework programme.

In connection with international cooperation, in April the Committee adopted an opinion concerning one of the two current priorities, the modification of the specific programme under the fourth framework programme in the field of cooperation, which focused chiefly on the International Association for the Promotion of Cooperation with Scientists from the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union (INTAS).

The Committee appreciated the role of the association and advocated integrating its activities into the fourth R&TD framework programme, as well as boosting the CORDIS, Cosine and EIMS networks and following the example of the VALUE centres, with a view to preventing the dispersal of the human resources of the high-level science schools in the NIS.

The imminence of the fifth framework programme also determined legislative activity in the sector, such as the second modification of the financial allocation for the fourth framework programme.

In the opinion adopted in May, the Committee emphasized a number of points similar to those made in previous opinions on the same subject:

SMEs, transparency and cohesion. It was also suggested that part of the new resources be earmarked to improve dissemination and use of R&TD resources, to set up an innovation task force, and additional appropriations be provided in the field of nuclear fission safety.

This summary of section activities in the field of R&TD would be incomplete without mention of the opinion on the Green Paper on innovation, adopted the same month.

In its opinion, the Committee urged the Commission to take immediate action on the basis of its action programme, giving priority to the most urgent measures and to those which most clearly fell within the remit of the authorities and the Commission.

The Committee was consulted on the action plan in November 1996.

The Committee opinion proposed a series of guidelines and general objectives.

The cooperation provided by a number of its members on the sub-committee which discussed the impact of the introduction of new technologies on employment must not be overlooked.

This own-initiative opinion followed in the wake of the opinions prepared for the special plenary session on employment held by the Economic and Social Committee in October 1995 and of the section's work in this area.

The opinion aimed to enlarge upon, update and study in greater depth the subjects under discussion and look specifically at the impact of the introduction of new technologies on employment.

The subject had also been dealt with extensively by various Community and international bodies.

It was pointed out that the technological developments of the last 30 years had not been accompanied by an increase in investment or the resulting economic and social growth.

This key opinion concluded by putting forward several recommendations concerning the social model, education and training, the role of the public sector, the way firms are organized and new labour relations, as well as voicing concern at the aggravation of social and regional exclusion due to the speeding up of the technology-growth-employment dynamic.

Lastly, no description of the section's activity throughout the year would be complete without referring to its external activities, particularly those focusing on the Community institutions.

The traditional visits by figures responsible for subjects of relevance to the section continued. The recently appointed Director-General of DG XII —

Science, Research and Development, Mr Jorma Routti, visited the Committee, as did Mr Robert Verrue, the new Director-General of DG XIII — Telecommunications, Information Market and Exploitation of Research.

The section was also honoured by the presence of the representative of the Irish Presidency of the Council of Ministers for the energy sector, Mr Emmet Stagg, Minister of State for Energy, Transport and Communications, who attended the September section meeting and provided valuable information on the Irish Presidency's programme in the sector.

Mr Labounov, Ambassador of Belarus to Belgium, attended the April section meeting.

The section president made numerous official visits with a view to establishing contacts of benefit to the section's work. Prominent among these were the visits to the energy and research advisers of the permanent representations of Italy, Ireland and the Netherlands, and to the Commission's Director-General for Energy, Mr Benavides. In addition, as part of the cooperation with the economic and social councils of the Mediterranean basin, Mr Gafo-Fernandez represented the ESC at the Paris meetings of the French Economic and Social Council at which the report on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of energy and water was drawn up.

Other important events during 1996 included the section hearings on cooperation with third countries in the energy sector and cooperation with third countries in the field of research and technological development, in March and November respectively. These hearings were attended by 17 relevant Commission desk-officers, together with representatives of the European Parliament, the Council and socio-occupational organizations.

## **9. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

### **Environment action programme**

The Community's commitment to the principle of sustainable development, in line with the Rio de Janeiro Conference of 1992, was tested during the past year through the review of the current (fifth) environment action programme (1993-2000, entitled 'Towards sustainability'). The review aimed to check whether the approach and strategy to reach sustainable development remained valid. In addition, and in order to carry on meeting the principles set out in the programme, the Commission put forward proposals for promoting awareness and information on environmental degradation through the action of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and to achieve a much needed

EU-wide sustainable water policy. The Committee adopted opinions on all these proposals.

### **Review of the fifth environment action programme — 'Towards sustainability'**

The Commission's action plan of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development represents a comprehensive set of EU-level measures. From this point of view, the Committee endorses the Commission's proposal and the selection of priority measures. Despite this basically positive attitude, however, the Committee wishes to make the additional points and criticisms set out below.

- The co-decision procedure is welcomed, but the Committee is doubtful whether measures contained in the proposal are sufficiently concrete to be dealt with under the co-decision procedure.
- The action plan should be made more specific, with incorporation of specific timetables and objectives, in order to assure all the parties involved about where they stand when drawing up their plans and in view of the political dimension involved.
- The proposal does not pay adequate attention to the social dimension of environmental policy. In this context, the Committee's proposals<sup>1</sup> for easing the burden of labour costs when environmental taxes are introduced should provide the background for the new economic instruments of environmental policy.
- The action plan skates over the link with the 'Citizens' Europe' advocated in the Treaty, as there is no reference to enhancing the participation of citizens and their organizations in the transposition and implementation of the plan.

### **Promoting NGOs in the field of environmental protection**

The proposal for a Council decision introduces the main principles for Community financial assistance to NGOs.

The Committee calls upon the Commission to review the funding of the aid programme in so far as its scope is to be extended.

In the view of the Committee, aid should be concentrated on NGOs which are primarily active in the field of environmental protection at European level and which have their headquarters in a Member State of the European Union.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 155, 21.6.1995.

Actions or programmes carried out jointly with organizations active at national level should also be eligible for financial support.

### **Community water policy**

The Committee warmly welcomes the Commission's move to review Community water policy, as it had requested it in its opinion <sup>1</sup> on the revision of the 'Drinking water' Directive, which focuses on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of water. The Committee agrees that a framework directive on water resources is needed to round off and update existing legislation.

However, the Committee considers that the communication does not give sufficient thought to certain key aspects of a sustainable water policy, such as:

- a new approach to water use, re-use and saving encompassing protection of the quality and quantity of existing resources;
- rigorous studies, in accordance with the precautionary principle, in order to provide reliable forecasts of socioeconomic variables;
- the social partners' involvement in the protection and management of water resources as these cannot be treated exclusively as items of merchandise;
- greater consideration of water policy in agriculture, and of groundwater and coastal water's management;
- account of international agreements and existence of different types of river basin within the Community when drawing up integrated water management plans on a river-basin basis;
- the recommendations concerning control of point source pollution of water resources and monitoring of water quality made at the Conference on Community Water Policy held by the Commission in May 1996;
- EU regulatory measures in order to reduce the risk of accidental pollution of water-supply catchment areas;
- the zoning system should respect the overall protection of the basins concerned and would have to be drawn up according to existing technical and scientific knowledge;
- more information about the state of water resources, with periodic updating and guaranteed public access to it.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 82, 19.3.1996.

## **Animal welfare**

Community policy on the environment is concerned with animal welfare through Article 130r of the Treaty which states that one of the objectives of this policy is 'protecting the quality of the environment'. During the year the Committee was active in the area of animal welfare drawing up two opinions as follows:

### **Keeping of wild animals in zoos**

The Committee deplores the fact that the Commission has withdrawn its proposal for a Council directive laying down minimum standards for the keeping of animals in zoos and has replaced it with the present proposal for a Council recommendation.

It is unlikely that a recommendation will achieve practical results, and there is a risk of allowing the situation in some European zoos to deteriorate further, resulting in suffering for animals and risks for the public which would only strengthen that strand of public opinion which already wants to see all zoos closed.

### **Leghold traps**

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1771/94 decided to suspend the import prohibition, envisaged in Council Regulation (EEC) No 3254/91, on certain furs and products thereof, unless the Commission established that a third country had banned the use of leghold traps or had implemented trapping methods for 13 animal species that met internationally agreed humane trapping standards. As a result, the option for a third country to ensure that trapping methods meet humane trapping standards is not available.

The Commission is thus proposing to postpone the entry into force of Regulation (EEC) No 3254/91 while exploring alternative ways to achieve such standards.

After examining the legal and commercial considerations, the Committee is concerned with the Commission's failure to exert sufficient pressure for the establishment of supervisory procedures guaranteeing humane trapping standards and feels that the proposal is only acceptable if accompanied by clauses and commitments which specifically tailor the amendments to the goal of humane trapping.

The Committee has also drawn up opinions on other aspects of environmental protection, namely the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms; the placing of biocidal products on the market; a terminological amendment to the directive on the classification, packaging and labelling of

dangerous substances; the ratification of the Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube; and an amendment to the Directive on aeroplane noise.

### **Contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms**

The Committee welcomes the proposal for an updating of Directive 219/90 on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms to keep pace with technical and scientific progress in the light of experience gained at Community and international level. However, given that in a field of technological development risk assessment involves a number of unknown factors and public acceptance is of fundamental importance, the Committee regards the present proposal as an amendment of the existing legislation, which should maintain the basic premises and philosophy of the directives adopted in 1990, and not as a deregulation measure.

The Committee endorses the new risk-based classification system and the new division into four classes, *but estimates that the lumping together of risk-free activities with very low risk activities in Risk Class I can only be assessed if the procedure for determining types of GMMs covered by Appendix II.B has been clarified.*

### **Placing of biocidal products on the market**

The Committee issued a favourable opinion<sup>1</sup> on the original Commission proposal.

The new proposal introduces a new Annex VI which sets out the rules on the assessment by Member States of potential risks for human and animal health as well as for the environment.

The Committee has no objection to establishing common principles for evaluating dossiers (for the authorization of biocidal products) under the current amended proposal, which it approves subject to comments designed to clarify and/or emphasize the contents of the annex.

### **Convention for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube**

The Committee shares the Commission's view that the rapid entry into force of the convention is highly desirable and it therefore advocates speedy ratification by the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 195, 18.7.1994.

## **Aeroplane noise**

The Economic and Social Committee endorses the draft directive formalizing, modifying and expanding the provisions governing exemptions to the ban on the use of aircraft which do not meet certain international noise abatement standards in Community territory. These are practically confined to older aircraft operated by carriers from developing countries, which should be phased out by 2002.

## **Public health**

The year 1996 was marked by the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis, which had serious implications for the field of public health and others such as the operation of the single market, and for the EU decision-making mechanisms, which were compromised by unilateral obstructionism. As a response, the Committee drew up an own-initiative opinion on the wide-ranging consequences of the crisis for the EU, which was developed under a sub-committee procedure in order to coordinate and reflect the inputs from not only the Public Health and Consumer Protection sectors, but also Agriculture and Industry.

## **The BSE crisis and its wide-ranging consequences for the EU**

It is not for the Committee to take on the work of scientific bodies or political bodies, but being mindful of the concerns of the representative organizations of the EU's farmers, industry, traders, consumers and workers, it feels that, in accordance with Article 198 of the Treaty, it must make a number of general remarks and offer recommendations to the Community institutions in order to see what lessons can be learned from this crisis concerning:

- public health
- internal market and the consumer
- cattle production
- animal health
- beef and veal sectors
- employment
- social aspect.

In conclusion, the Committee calls on the Council, Commission, Parliament and Member States to take all appropriate measures in their respective spheres of responsibility to guarantee that food products are safe for consumers and to prevent any worsening of the present situation.



The Committee also calls for:

- a directive on cosmetics labelling and for the labelling of all products of animal origin and standardization of labelling of cattle feed, with full disclosure of all the ingredients and the percentage of each ingredient;
- removal of Council Directive 85/374 on the exemption for agricultural products and unforeseeable risks;
- encouragement of further scientific research into viable methods of diagnosis of BSE, with a view to determining its causes and the link with the new strain of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD);
- provision to European agencies, Community bodies and Community services with the legal, financial and human resources needed to take protective measures against BSE;
- support, in addition to measures to help beef farmers and other sectors affected, for workers and business, in sectors and areas losing income as a result of BSE, through adoption of a special Community initiative using the available Structural Funds (agricultural, social, regional).

During the year, the Committee also actively participated in two new developments in the area of Community public health, namely the establishment of a network for the surveillance and control of communicable diseases and action on health monitoring.

### **Network for the epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases**

The Committee welcomes the establishment of a transnational EU epidemiological network for communicable diseases as a means of effective prevention and control which also offers synergistic benefits.

However, the Committee is concerned about the financial allocation and asks for it to be reconsidered — especially in view of the importance it attaches to the epidemiological monitoring of the new strain of the Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

The Committee also calls for the definition of 'control' to stress the preventative aspect as follows: the 'formulation of common guidelines and the coordination or harmonization of counter-measures' in respect of communicable diseases.

### **Health monitoring**

This proposal falls in the context of the framework for action in the field of public health and the Committee endorses its general aims and principles, but feels that:

- the programme should place even more emphasis on the development and implementation of new indicators at this development stage;
- comparable data are not only needed from EU Member States, but also from other countries;
- cooperation, based on agreements, is needed with all Mediterranean countries.

More specifically, the Committee considers it very important that the expertise available in Member States and in Community committees handling health and safety statistics (e.g. Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work) should be utilized in the preparatory work on the selection of 'domains' and 'headings' for Community health indicators.

In addition and during 1996, the Committee drew up an own-initiative opinion on the removal of barriers hampering the free movement of medicines in the EU, as it felt that the process for the harmonization of the mechanisms governing the production and proper use of medicinal products in the EU, started in the early 1990s, had come to a halt.

### **Free movement of medicinal products**

The Committee's intention in drawing up this own-initiative opinion is to draw attention to the decisive role which Community action could play in this sector by outlining the strategic and operating suggestions which all the social forces it represents commended to the Commission and the EMEA to further a policy supporting medicines.

The Committee believes that this type of action should take place within a reference framework which reflects, in terms of:

- general policy:
  - the objectives and priorities of medical treatment;
  - a strengthening of the European Commission's initiative in providing guidance on decisions to be made by national bodies, encouraging measures which further convergence and slowing down those which move away from the necessary process of Community-level harmonization;
- social policy:
  - a future guarantee of equal availability of medicines to all European citizens;
  - social protection arrangements adapted to the need for a high level of health protection;

- industrial policy:
  - conditions enabling the European pharmaceutical industry to become highly competitive with their US and Japanese counterparts;
  - encouragement for expanding employment within the sector.

### **Consumer protection**

Bearing in mind the general guidelines contained in its own-initiative opinion on the single market and consumer protection,<sup>1</sup> the Committee gave its views on the Commission communication on priorities for consumer policy and on a series of measures designed to consolidate legislation on consumer protection and to integrate consumer policy in other policies, notably in the financial and foodstuffs sectors.

### **Priorities for consumer policy**

The Commission's sixth action plan confirms the considerable importance now attached to Community consumer policy and sets out new guidelines which the Committee fully endorses. Nevertheless, the Committee regrets the failure to review the successes and setbacks experienced in implementing the earlier plans and in creating the single market since this could provide insight into the instruments and means selected.

On the issue of information and education, the Committee calls on suppliers to make a better contribution to informative labelling. It stresses the natural task of consumer organizations in providing independent views, and the crucial role of the Member States in promoting consumer education.

With a view to improving the efficiency and reducing the costs of public services, the Committee suggests that the establishment of performance and reliability standards for non-liberalized services might help to increase consumer confidence.

The Committee calls on the Commission to examine ways of ensuring the active involvement of consumers in building the information society, since they are crucial to its success. In the case of foodstuffs, where product safety and purity control systems are of fundamental importance, it opposes any change in existing food labelling requirements apart from their — very necessary — adjustment to real consumer needs.

The need for sustainable consumption levels must be accepted by all parties, from the producers with their know-how, to governments with opportunities for tax incentives and mature, well-informed consumers. In this connection,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ 39, 12.2.1996.

the Committee thinks that the European Union should strengthen its eco-labelling scheme.

The development of this policy could be decisive in the transition of the central and east European countries to a market economy. Lastly, the Committee fully supports the goal of integrating consumer policy into EU development policy.

### **Consumer credit**

The proposal is the logical and scheduled follow-up to previous work on the revision of the first directive on consumer credit. Accordingly, the Committee supports the proposal's aim to introduce a uniform method of calculating the annual percentage of charge (APR) and thus establish a basis for comparing the interest rates used in all EEA countries.

The Committee notes, however, that the objective has only been achieved in part: there are still considerable discrepancies in the definitions and items used in calculating the APR for a single market for consumer credit which has still to see the light of day.

### **Green Paper on financial services**

The Committee views the Green Paper as an important opportunity to study the existing problems and barriers in greater depth, in order to provide better protection for the user of financial services and encourage wider cross-border provision of financial services.

The Committee notes that the document presented by the Commission is full of information and reflections, but also of questions and contradictions. It seems to present consumer protection as secondary and, above all, subordinate to the completion of the single market. The Committee believes this viewpoint ought to be changed, with both objectives being given equal importance.

In the Committee's view, two alternative approaches are possible for producing reliable, comprehensive protection for financial service users: a horizontal directive establishing common rules for financial services targeted at private individuals and, if necessary, specific rules in the directives for individual sectors; or alternatively, the continuation of the current situation, with the Commission continuing to legislate through specific directives, with the aim of identical treatment for all financial products as regards consumer protection.

The Committee is convinced that the codes of conduct are also certainly useful and should be encouraged: however, a basic legal framework is

required for both more effective protection and more transparent competition with a level playing field across the Community.

Community-level harmonization should focus on three principal aspects: market transparency and consumer information, contractual terms and consumers' right to redress.

The Committee concludes, after a series of specific comments on various points of the Green Paper, that a White Paper on financial services and consumers should be drawn up, listing the rights to be protected and the mechanisms for protection (right of access, information, transparency of services and means of redress). The Committee also calls for a broad inquiry *into disputes on financial services, in collaboration with trade associations from the sector and consumer organizations, in order to identify the priorities for Community intervention.*

### **Sale of consumer goods and associated guarantees**

*For consumers, the single market can only be deemed to be functioning properly if, when buying goods in a Member State other than their own, they can be sure of enjoying a comparable degree of protection against faulty goods as they enjoy at home. As the law stands at the moment, many consumers are wary of purchasing items abroad for fear of encountering difficulties when exchanging them or having repairs carried out.*

To remedy this deplorable state of affairs, which has come in for particular criticism from consumer groups, legislation has to be harmonized on the basis of a directive passed under Article 100a of the EEC Treaty. It must be remembered that, while systems of private law are in many ways similar, they are each built on very differing concepts. Complete harmonization of legal and commercial guarantee systems therefore would not appear advisable, or indeed necessary to provide consumers with a minimum degree of rights.

The time limit of two years set for statutory guarantee corresponds to the time limit set under UN law of sale and represents a compromise among the existing, very different time limits set in the Member States. This time limit would appear acceptable from the point of view of consumer protection, given that the objective here is to guarantee a minimum degree of harmonization.

The Committee notes that the time limit pursuant to Article 3(1), within which a claim has to be lodged on a defect which was present from the outset, but only became apparent at a later stage, does not prejudice the time limits set for commercial guarantees. Unlike legal guarantees, commercial guarantees usually comprise all defects which arise within a certain period after buying the product, regardless of whether they were present at the time of delivery.

## **Injunctions for the protection of consumers' interests**

The Committee is pleased that the proposal gives concrete form to the objectives set out in the Green Paper on consumer access to justice, and that it accords with the comments made in the Committee's 1994 opinion. The Committee welcomes the move to coordinate national provisions on injunction proceedings with regard to certain cross-frontier illegal trade practices.

However, the Committee considers that the scope of the proposal is too limited. Under the principle of mutual recognition, its main aim is to authorize the qualified bodies to take court proceedings in the country where the infringement has occurred. The Committee feels that the provision authorizing Member States to require a national body to take proceedings is inconsistent with the proposal's main objective, namely to improve speed of action.

## **Foodstuffs**

### **Sweeteners for use in foodstuffs**

The Committee approves the Commission proposal which, without changing its restrictive policy on sweeteners, updates the list of foodstuffs in which their use is authorized.

The Committee fully supports the technical amendments made to Directive 94/35/EC and recommends that the Commission stick to one single method in printing the names of additives. It does, however, express some reservations about the cumbersome procedure adopted for a simple adaptation of the list.

### **Extraction solvents**

The Committee approves the proposal directed mainly to enable technical amendments to Directive 88/344/EEC to be made by a Committee procedure, rather than passing through a new Council directive for each amendment.

The Committee considers that the deletions and additions of solvents proposed are in line with the findings of the Scientific Committee for Food (SCF) and present needs of users.

### **Foodstuffs/additives other than colours or sweeteners**

The Economic and Social Committee approves the proposal for a directive amending the General Additives Directive (95/2/EC), which mainly involves applications of existing additives other than colours and sweeteners, as necessary and urgent, subject to some comments.

The current amendment procedure involving Council and Parliament is complicated and results in an extremely long timescale to adapt additives to new developments. In addition, there is a real need for having a procedure which involves the citizen adequately. The Committee therefore suggests the following compromises:

- changes involving new additives should continue by a Council and Parliament procedure;
- changes involving only changes in application should be made by a Committee procedure involving the Standing Committee for Foodstuffs, prior consultation of the various socioeconomic partners represented on the Advisory Committee for Food.

## 10. UNIT FOR DELEGATIONS/RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

### Introduction

In its opinions, the ESC lays down the broad lines along which dialogue and cooperation is to be conducted in meetings, joint advisory committees and joint working groups with third-country partners. At the same time, the store of knowledge and experience thus acquired permeates the ESC advisory work and provides a solid foundation for its external relations expertise. The ESC is thus developing into a forum in which players from both trade and industry and from society as a whole can work together to promote enhanced European integration and external relations.

The following factors in particular were taken into account during 1996:

- the development along market economy lines of the national economies of *central and eastern Europe* as part of a strategy to prepare for future accessions linked to the establishment of economic and social organizations and consultation mechanisms;
- the Union's association policy, under which (not least on account of the Committee's activities in this area) the economic and social organizations are increasingly involved in cooperation in practical ways (central and eastern Europe, Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco);
- the partnership concept in relations with Europe's neighbours (especially non-EU Mediterranean countries) arising from the realization that geographical proximity and the resultant interdependence are a compelling argument for common solutions;

- the extension of the concept of decentralized cooperation (hence also the inclusion of the economic and social groups in cooperation) in the context of development policy after the mid-term review of the fourth Lomé Convention;
- the adjustments needed in cooperation within the European Economic Area (EEA) in the wake of the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden.

In recent years, the European Union has begun to strengthen its political and economic ties with its eastern and southern neighbours by means of association or partnership agreements already signed or due to be signed in the future, thus allowing the ESC to develop its relations with, in particular, the countries of central and eastern Europe and those in the Mediterranean region.

### **Countries of central and eastern Europe (CCEE)**

In its opinions on the EU's relations with the associated States of central and eastern Europe, the ESC has called for the setting-up of consultative committees consisting of members of the ESC and their counterparts in the associated States. In each of the Association Agreements, it is stipulated that the Association Council may set up bodies of this nature.

On 16 July 1996, the EU/Hungary Association Council formally decided to set up a joint consultative committee in connection with the Europe agreement. Its task is to promote dialogue and cooperation between the economic and social interest groups in the Community and in Hungary.

The ESC would now like to see the other Association Councils also take a decision to this effect so that the joint advisory committees can start their work soon.

The ESC's aim in its work on the associated countries and in its contacts with partners in those countries is to involve economic and social organizations in a structured dialogue as part of a pre-accession strategy. The ESC is convinced that the restructuring and adjustments necessary to bring the EU and the associated countries of central and eastern Europe closer together require the involvement and participation of these economic and social players.

Structured dialogue may be founded on two pillars:

- meetings with economic and social organizations in the associated countries on topics of common interest; and
- the setting-up of joint advisory committees between the ESC and partners in the associated countries.



On 18 January 1996, as part of his official visit to Belgium, the then new President of Poland, Mr Kwasniewski, accompanied by one minister and four under-secretaries of State, visited the Economic and Social Committee for talks with the President. The talks covered the ESC's present and future activities as part of its relations with the countries of central and eastern Europe (dealing, for instance, with meetings with economic and social organizations in the associated countries on subjects of common interest). ESC relations with Poland particularly concerned the steps which it was taking to adapt its own legislation to the corpus of Community legislation in the internal market.

These meetings also raised the possibility of a consultative committee involving the ESC and its Polish partners. Under the provisions of the Association Agreement (Article 107), the Association Council may decide to set up its own committees to help it to carry out its responsibilities. Poland could also be invited to make use of this possibility, following the example of other associated countries.

On 26 March 1996 the President of Latvia, Mr Ulmanis, visited the Economic and Social Committee. The ESC President, Mr Ferrer, described the ESC's role and the basic priorities of its work, particularly its activities concerning the single market. The ESC had already highlighted in its opinion on relations with the Baltic States the important role played by economic and social operators on the road towards accession and had pointed out that it itself promoted the idea of strengthening relations between economic and social groups in the EU and the Baltic States; such cooperation could take the form of a joint advisory committee.

Mr Ulmanis mentioned that Latvia already had an institutional framework which brought together economic and social interest groups. He was very interested in initiating cooperation in this area and emphasized that such organizations in Latvia were still developing and consolidating and that it would be very worthwhile to be able to benefit from the experience of their EU counterparts.

These were very successful visits as they revealed that the Committee had a role to play — complementing that of the other EU institutions — in the plans for the run-up to EU membership, by encouraging relations with the economic and social interest groups of the associated countries of central and eastern Europe.

The following should also be noted:

- the meeting/hearing on the preparation of the associated countries of central and eastern Europe for integration into the internal market of the Union (study group visit to Warsaw in May 1996) to assist in drawing up an opinion on the White Paper on this subject; and

- the meeting/hearing held with representatives of the economic and social interest groups of the Baltic States in Tallinn, Estonia, in September 1996 to assist in drawing up an information report on relations between the EU and the countries bordering the Baltic Sea (see under external relations).

### **Euro-Mediterranean partnership**

The Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference held in Barcelona on 27 and 28 November 1995 gave the ESC the task of strengthening its links with Mediterranean economic and social groups and playing a promotional role. At this juncture it was admitted that the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership would be facilitated by, among other things, encouraging contacts between the social partners.

In the work programme appended to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at this conference, it was noted that 'regular contacts between other European bodies, particularly the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities and their Mediterranean counterparts would contribute towards a better understanding of the major issues of interest to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. To this end, the Economic and Social Committee is asked to take the initiative in establishing links with its Mediterranean counterparts'.

In the conclusions to the Euromed Civil Forum held in Barcelona at the end of November 1995, stress was again laid on the need for regular contacts to be maintained between economic and social partners in all the countries involved in the process of creating a free trade area. The initiative for organizing such cooperation was to come from the ESC.

This task is in keeping with Committee opinions on Mediterranean policy and with its relations with its Mediterranean counterparts. The ESC's role is part of the EU's institutional framework and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership can only work if all the EU Member States and their economic and social groups are involved.

The aims of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of economic and social councils held in Madrid in December 1995 were to make the contents of the declaration adopted in Barcelona known to the economic and social partners, to debate and evaluate the agreements concluded and to consider the principles underlying the contribution of the social groups so as to define the future relations needed to set up a zone of peace, stability, prosperity and cooperation based on dialogue and solidarity.

As part of the organization of the second Euro-Mediterranean Summit — held in Paris in November 1996 — the economic and social councils responsible for preparing the summit, namely the ESC, the French Economic

and Social Council and the Algerian National Economic and Social Council (CNES), coordinated the preparation of studies on the following subjects:

- migration and the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area;
- the problem of external debt; and
- energy, the environment and water resources.

The Committee's particular responsibilities in this connection are as follows:

- maintaining the link with the 15 EU Member States and continued relations with the associated States in the Mediterranean;
- maintaining relations with Community institutions such as the Commission and the European Council; and
- the task of drawing up an information report on the subject of migration and the creation of a free trade area.

The Committee is faced with a major challenge, namely to:

- look after the coordination and activity of the working party, which involves keeping in regular contact with all economic and social councils or similar bodies in the Member States and in the associated Mediterranean countries;
- draw up reports based on the highest level of contact with the Committee's partners in the EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries; and
- study and express its views on all of the subjects that make up Mediterranean policy, for example industrial policy, transport policy and energy policy.

In order to do this, the ESC has *inter alia*:

- set up a study group of six members from different sections who have — individually or as a group — forged contacts with their counterparts in the Member States and in non-EU Mediterranean countries;
- formed a study group (that includes three co-rapporteurs) within the External Relations Section to draw up the above report; and
- involved the President of the Energy Section (who is a member of the follow-up group). He commented on and made his contribution to the report on energy due to be drawn up by the French Economic and Social Council.

At the Paris Summit, the Presidents of the Economic and Social Councils of the Euro-Mediterranean countries and the President of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Union, meeting on 21 and 22 November

1996, in association with the mandated representatives of those Euro-Mediterranean countries which do not have an economic and social council, suggested:

- the creation, in countries which do not have them, of economic and social councils or similar institutions for obtaining the opinions of representatives of the economic, social and cultural forces on subjects of general, national and international interest;
- that the economic and social councils or similar institutions continue to assemble the reflections of the principal economic and social actors with a view to finding innovative solutions for adjusting economies to the structural, and hence social, changes which the inauguration of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area will entail, and continue to further the exchange of information among those concerned;
- that the economic and social councils or similar institutions be the bodies of choice in which the social compromise needed for economic adjustment is matured;
- the gradual replacement of existing or pending bilateral agreements by multilateral agreements which are the fruit of overall reflection;
- encouraging the development of trade and commerce within the 'South and East' area;
- better definition of the European Union's role; the EU should — and it is in its long-term interest to do so — participate in the development of non-member States and aid them economically, technically and financially, in the context of the free trade area, in tackling the internal structural reforms essential to the constitution of a free trade area and co-development within a balanced partnership;
- rapid and transparent implementation, as of 1 January 1997, of the European financial and technical accompaniment programme MEDA, associated with full information on procedures;
- developing joint regulatory and legal harmonization in numerous fields: taxation, labour laws and social protection, environmental protection and pollution, recognition and protection of industrial and intellectual property, investment, etc.;
- deliberation, throughout, on harmonization of the legal rules (laws, codes, jurisdictions, etc.) governing investment by an area member country in one of its partner countries, and the location or delocation of enterprises in these countries, with the aim of enhancing the transparency and stability of legal norms;

- the institution of a common system of standards for all partner countries, aimed at guaranteeing the quality, both as concerns manufacturing procedures and respect for norms, of goods for export;
- action within each country for developing its legal and regulatory frameworks so as to make them simpler, more transparent and more stable, thereby favouring national and international investment;
- encouragement for resting the development of the South and East Mediterranean countries on a fabric of dynamic and effective small and medium-sized enterprises, competitive on outside markets, with staff trained in the operation of this kind of enterprise;
- participation by enterprises from non-EU Mediterranean countries in the work of the European Investment Bank (EIB);
- developing cooperation in the fields of training (vocational, initial, of trainers), research and technological development, respect being paid to the specificity of each country;
- promoting the study of European languages in non-EU Mediterranean countries and of the languages of these countries in the other States;
- remodernizing the economic and social roles of the State and the institutions of society.

To stress the importance — within the scope of discussions on creating a free trade area — of agriculture for both sides of the Mediterranean, and the need for giving thought as of now to the impact which the opening of borders will have on this sector; certain measures could already be taken in the following fields:

- training and technology transfers;
- development of agricultural advisory services and other basic services;
- improvement of agricultural infrastructure, irrigation and drainage, modernization of machinery, storage facilities and transport.

## **Turkey**

In its December 1993 opinion on relations between the European Union and Turkey, the Economic and Social Committee fleshed out ideas for cooperation between economic and social interest groups and recommended the establishment of a Joint Consultative Committee with equal representation for both sides. Subsequently, on 6 March 1995, the EU/Turkey Association Council noted with satisfaction that a body of this kind had been established in line with Article 27 of the Ankara Agreement. This committee comprises 36 members, half from the Economic and Social Committee, half from Turkish

economic and social interest groups. Its inaugural session was held on the ESC premises in November 1995.

The consultative committee held its second meeting in Istanbul on 19 April 1996, during which it examined and adopted its rules of procedure. A debate then followed on recent economic and social developments in the EU and Turkey. Other issues raised included the economic and social repercussions of the customs union in Turkey, and certain specific sectoral problems facing the economic and social partners. Committee members also discussed the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the role of economic and social interest groups in this specific context.

The EU/Turkey Joint Consultative Committee held its third meeting in Brussels on 13 December 1996 under the joint chairmanship of Mr Hüsamet-in Kavi, Chairman of the administrative council of the Istanbul Chamber of Industry, and Mr Roger Briesch, Chairman of the ESC's Workers' Group.

The Joint Consultative Committee was honoured by a visit from Mrs Ciller (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey), who presented the political, economic and social situation in Turkey, placing particular emphasis on a number of practical actions to promote human rights and democratization. She also stressed Turkey's desire for close cooperation with the European Union and called for both sides to show greater mutual respect for commitments.

During this meeting the consultative committee examined the workings of the customs union and was pleased at the good results achieved in this area, despite the existence of a certain number of problems.

The members of the consultative committee discussed two topics at the meeting:

- industrial SMEs and vocational training; and
- the energy sector within the framework of relations between the European Union and Turkey.

These two topics are to be considered in more depth at the consultative committee's fourth meeting.

### **African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries**

A delegation made up of three ESC members and three representatives of ACP economic and social partners attended the ACP-EU joint assembly, held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 15 to 22 March 1996. At this session the assembly chose the theme of the 20th annual meeting of representatives of ACP/EU economic and social interest groups, namely the future of ACP/EU relations and the position of economic and social interest groups.

The ACP/EU follow-up committee, comprising ESC members and representatives of organizations in the ACP States, held a full meeting at the Committee building in Brussels on 19 September 1996 in order to prepare for the 20th annual meeting.

The 20th annual meeting of representatives of ACP/EU economic and social interest groups was held on 5 and 6 November 1996 in Brussels.

In the final declaration it was noted that development cooperation between EU and ACP countries must be adapted to meet the changes in the economic situation, and especially globalization.

The representatives of ACP/EU economic and social interest groups stressed the importance of sketching out the basis and conditions of a new, sustainable convention based on the principles of equality, cooperation and partnership, in order to ensure the general welfare of the population, steady economic growth and the prevention of crises likely to cause political and social instability.

In this light they suggested that the Lomé Convention be adjusted or the treaty framework completely revamped, with a view to enabling a more flexible and differentiated approach to development cooperation. It would generally be appropriate that such a convention should further economic, social and cultural development and should also promote good governance, respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in ACP countries.

The participants stressed the important role of the economic and social interest groups in promoting sustainable development in the ACP countries, and hoped that involving them would enable more effective follow-up, assessment and information feedback systems to be set up for the projects concerned.

They further stressed the need to ensure active participation of economic and social interest groups in development programmes. This participation should include involvement in planning, organizing, establishing, implementing and monitoring development cooperation programmes. They pointed to the importance of institutionalized multipartite consultation, for example through national liaison, with a view to guaranteeing the role of civil society. These consultations would have to include representatives of all the main interest groups, such as farmers, trade unions and employers, as well as representatives of the government and the Commission delegation, in order to maintain effective contact and to make programmes more transparent.

This cooperation should be decentralized, in order to encourage a wider range of partners and increase the effectiveness of aid. This would also mean greater involvement of the private sector, particularly at local level; this was seen as one of the mainstays of sustainable development and ACP economic diversification. In order to strengthen the impact of the private

sector on the development process, the participants underlined the necessity to build up structures giving enterprises access to local sources of finance.

The participants pressed for a more differentiated approach which would reflect the different levels of social and economic development between countries.

As far as EU policies are concerned, the participants shared the opinion that consistency and coordination of EU policies concerning ACP countries were crucial for a balanced partnership. They also stressed the need for a balanced development contract in the agricultural sector, which, with the assistance of the European Union, would enable the ACP countries to build up a sustainable food supply.

Lastly, the participants pointed to the links between development, peace, social justice and transparency; hence the need on the part of the ACP States to guarantee responsible and transparent government through public participation, respect for human rights and the promotion of sexual equality and rights of association in the framework of international conventions.

## **European Economic Area**

In the light of the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden on 1 January 1995, technical adjustments of the EEA Consultative Committee (EEA-CC) to the new situation had to take place.

There was full agreement that the EU and EFTA social partners should continue their cooperation within the framework of the EEA-CC.

On 4 October 1995, the EEA-CC Bureau discussed the arrangements for future cooperation in the European Economic Area and decided on the subjects for discussion at the third EEA-CC meeting, which was held on 23 January 1996. The agenda included an exchange of views on the operation of the single market and on the problems of employment and social policy.

The fourth EEA-CC meeting was held in Iceland on 3 June 1996. The discussions here also covered the single market, jobs, social affairs and the Intergovernmental Conference.



## CHAPTER III

### Relations with the media

The measures taken in 1995 — to update the tools of the trade, develop communication with outside contacts and enhance in-house communication — were stepped up in 1996.

#### 1. Updating the tools of the trade

The mailing lists (including the addresses of journalists from both the mainstream and specialist press) have been systematically updated.

#### 2. Developing communication with outside contacts

A number of measures have been taken.

##### (a) *Circulation of press releases*

- Some 173 press releases have been drafted, translated into each of the languages and then sent out, by subject, to the most appropriate target groups. The press response has been considerable: the department has published five reviews of press cuttings totalling some 800 articles on the work of the ESC and its members.
- The most important press releases are now available in the Breydel press room at the Commission.
- Press releases are stored in the databases of the European Commission (RAPID) and the European Parliament (Epistel). RAPID and Epistel are information tools designed by the spokesmen's services of the Commission and Parliament to facilitate rapid access to press and information documents.
- Press releases are circulated to the Commission's offices in all the Member States as well as to national and regional economic and social councils.
- Since November 1995, they have also been sent by modem to press agencies equipped with this facility.

##### (b) *Circulation of other documents*

- The *ESC-Info* bulletin is published monthly and gives a broad outline of the ESC's activities. It is designed for the mainstream press and

the general public and was printed in colour for the first time in 1996. The current circulation is 14 050 for all languages and it is enjoying growing success.

(c) *Audiovisual communication*

- With the technical assistance of the Commission, the ESC's press department organized two teleconferences between the rapporteurs for the BSE and confidence pact opinions and Member State journalists. Their success is an incentive to repeat such initiatives.
- Audiovisual communication has developed with the help of the Commission's technical staff and the Europe by Satellite service; thanks to this collaboration, it is now possible to produce videos for interested journalists covering the main aspects of the Committee's plenary sessions (statements by guest speakers and closing press conferences).
- Since September 1995, a summary of the plenary sessions is also broadcast throughout Europe by Europe by Satellite (a service providing information on the European institutions which can be received by anyone with a satellite dish). The necessary equipment for receiving these broadcasts has been installed at the Committee.

(d) *Press conferences and lunches*

Press conferences have been organized whenever the opportunity has arisen, in particular when the ESC President pays an official visit to EU Member States or third countries.

(e) *The ESC's image in the Member States*

On the occasion of the ESC President's visit to the EU capitals, the press department met the directors of the Commission's offices in the Member States to discuss the prospects for new forms of cooperation to inform journalists and other national media. These contacts have proved fruitful in that the offices have undertaken to disseminate the information supplied to them by the ESC and to help organize press conferences during the Committee President's visits.

(f) *Internet*

With the cooperation of European Commission DG X's media support unit, in February 1996 the press department created an ESC site on the Europa internet server. Users can access a presentation of the ESC's role, sections and activities as well as its press releases (address: <http://europa.eu.int/ces/ces.html>).

### **3. Enhancing in-house communication**

In-house communication has been enhanced by:

- the systematic dispatch of press releases to staff (via electronic mail);
- the dispatch of a new quarterly press review not only to members, but also to former members, Commission press offices and delegations abroad;
- providing members and officials of the secretariat-general with several national newspapers and journals as well as the *ESC-Info*.



## CHAPTER IV

### The groups

#### GROUP I — EMPLOYERS

Sixty-eight representatives at a high level of private and public industry, chambers of commerce, small businesses, wholesale and retail trade, transport, banking and insurance and agriculture make up the membership of the Employers' Group, Group I.

During the mid-term elections on 30 October 1996 the Presidency of the Committee passed from Mr Carlos Ferrer, Spanish employer representative and simultaneously Vice-President of UNICE, to Mr Jenkins of Group II.

Twelve Group I members were elected to the new Bureau as follows: Committee Vice-President, Mr Regalado; members: Mr Andrade, Mr Burkhard, Mr de Norre, Mr Donovan, Mr Foliás, Mr Hamro-Drotz, Mr Noordwal, Mr Panero Florez, Mr Pelletier, Mr Petersen and Mr Walker.

*The Chairman of the Employers' Group, Dr Cavaleiro Brandaõ, was unanimously re-elected. Five Vice-Chairmen were elected to assist him, Mr Bousat, Mr Löw, Mrs Regnell, Mr Stecher Navarra and Mr Whitworth.*

At the constitutive section meetings, Mr Gafo-Ferdandez and Mr Little were re-elected to chair respectively the Section for Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research, and the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services. Mr Frerichs was elected Chairman of the Section for Economic, Financial and Monetary Questions.

Despite certain bureaucratic difficulties, and in order to overcome them, the group has continued its strong support for the work of the Single Market Observatory. The ESC opinion on the third annual report on the operation of the single market was again drafted by a Group I member and adopted by a large majority. Noting the progress made by the Commission in 1995 towards completion of the single market, the Committee finds that this still does not compensate for persistent drawbacks in relation to international competitiveness, economic growth, job creation, currency stability and comprehensibility to the 'average citizen'. If followed, the ESC's suggested actions will help to revitalize the process of completing the single market

using the opportunities offered in the run-up to the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) and to economic and monetary union.

At two extraordinary meetings held in April and September the group considered in depth and in detail the identity, role, organization and working methods of the Committee, with a specific view to the Intergovernmental Conference and to the future strategy of the group.

Group I believes the Committee is uniquely well placed to gather information from European socioeconomic interest groups and to reflect their views to the other institutions and that it should make particular use of its right of initiative in order to fulfil this special role.

In general, however, employers continue to underline the fact that the Committee's first and principal task must be to furnish the opinions asked for by the Council and the Commission making sure that these are of the highest quality. In their view, every possible effort must be made to obtain earlier consultation by the Commission on the most important subjects and to persuade the Commission to inform the Committee of comments made by the specialized consultative committees. Group I would also support any move designed to ensure that ESC opinions were made available early enough to be of use to European Parliament rapporteurs.

As the date for the third stage of EMU was universally confirmed by the European Council at the Madrid Summit and the name 'euro' adopted for the single currency, employer members have been instrumental in the development of further own-initiative opinions supporting economic and monetary union. Individual members have also made themselves available at many conferences on the subject across the EU. This activity is now being increased in cooperation with a Commission programme aimed at informing European citizens about the effects of introducing the single currency.

The series of seminars in Barcelona, Rome, Vienna and London initiated by President Ferrer culminated in the 'Forum on the future of European society' organized by the Committee in May. A Group I rapporteur contributed a paper on 'The European social model', one of three subjects under debate. Some 20 employer members played an active part in the forum together with a number of internationally recognized experts. It was generally agreed that the ESC had, once again, demonstrated its expertise as a forum for forward socioeconomic studies.

Group I is in constant contact with UNICE (Union of Industrial and Employer's Confederations of Europe), CEEP (European Centre of Public Enterprises), Eurochambres (European Permanent Conference of Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and Eurocommerce (The Retail Wholesale and International Trade Representation to the European Union). They each receive a monthly newsletter immediately after each plenary session to keep them up to date on all new subjects of consultation or initiative and to enable them to

propose experts to assist Group I members on specific topics. The group also maintains links with a large number of trade and sectoral associations at European level whose advice enhances the accuracy of many of the more specifically technical opinions.

## GROUP II — WORKERS

At the two-yearly renewal of the Committee in October 1996, the plenary session elected Tom Jenkins (TUC-UK) as President of the ESC, the other bureau members being:

Josely Piette (CSC, Belgium), Jacques Pe (FO, France), José Maria Zufiaur (UGT, Spain), Victor Hugo Sequeira (UGT, Portugal), Giacomina Cassina (CISL, Italy), Christoforos Koryfidis (ADEDY, Greece), Michael Geuenich (DGB, Germany), Heinz Vogler (OGB, Austria), Bent Nielsen (LO, Denmark), Erland Olausson (LO, Sweden) and Martti Reuna (STE Finland).

Mrs Cassina, Mr Geuenich and Mr Vogler were appointed to the Budget Group and Mrs Cassina and Mr Vogler to the *Ad hoc* Group on the bureau's procedural rules.

Roger Briesch (CFDT, France) was elected president and Michael Geuenich (DGB, Germany) and Ettore Masucci (CGIL, Italy) were re-elected vice-presidents.

Group II nominees were elected to chair the following sections:

External Relations Section: John Carroll (ICTU, Ireland);

Transport Section: Eike Eulen (OTV, Germany);

Social Section: Ieke van den Burg (FNV, Netherlands).

Leo Straetemans retained the post of group secretary.

Group II held an extraordinary meeting in March which was attended by Emilio Gabaglio, Secretary-General of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The meeting focused on:

- renewal of the Committee;
- the Intergovernmental Conference — NGO;
- planning the Committee's own-initiative opinions for 1996.

Group II and the ETUC continued their collaboration on very specific issues. Thus Group II members attended meetings organized by the ETUC on subjects such as the single currency, Objective I of regional policy, social

policy, fundamental social rights, xenophobia and racism, social protection, lifelong learning and relations with the CEECs.

The campaign against unemployment and for job security remains the group's top priority, especially with regard to the capacity to create jobs for future generations.

For this reason Group II supported the opinion on the confidence pact for employment launched by Jacques Santer, the Commission President. A Group II member chaired the sub-committee which drafted this opinion and the co-rapporteur was also a trade union representative.

In this context, Group II and the ETUC called upon the IGC to insert an employment chapter in the revised Treaty.

A Group II member also acted as rapporteur for the own-initiative opinion which the Committee drew up for the IGC. The Group President accompanied the ESC President on official visits to Member States' Heads of State or Government to urge them to give special consideration to the ESC's concerns.

Members also contributed to work on the Single Market Observatory and to plenary session debates on the subject. The context of the debate was wider than for the first three single market opinions and covered aspects such as freedom of movement, information and consultation of workers.

In May 1996, the Committee held a forum on the future of European society. The forum discussed:

- the European social model (rapporteur from Group I);
- European citizenship (rapporteur from Group III);
- globalization, competitiveness and employment (rapporteur from Group II).

These subjects were first scrutinized at workshops in various European capitals and Group II members played an active part.

The group's members also took a keen interest in the 'Citizens' Europe' initiative, at meetings in Milan (Lifelong learning), Utrecht (The position of older people in the 21st century) and finally in Vienna (Economy and society in a larger Europe, including the CEECs).

True to its convictions, the workers' group played a key role in the Committee's external relations. As a result a Group II member was rapporteur for the 20th ACP-EU meeting on the future of ACP-EU relations and the position of the economic and social interest groups.



Group II also contributed to meetings of the European Economic Area and the joint committees with individual countries such as Turkey and Hungary.

For several years now the ESC has been considering the EU's relations with the Mediterranean countries. As a result it is regarded as one of civil society's main spokesmen for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Following the Barcelona Declaration, the ESC has been responsible for transparency and for regularly assessing the implementation of this partnership and it has taken steps to establish links with its Mediterranean counterparts and equivalent bodies. Two Group II members served on the preparatory group for the summit on migration and the creation of a free trade area which took place in November in Paris. The Committee had already issued an opinion on this subject and Group II provided one of the co-rapporteurs.

Finally, Group II demonstrated the importance which it accorded to the ESC's work by appointing rapporteurs or co-rapporteurs on other key subjects such as:

- social protection;
- technology and employment;
- EU/China relations, EU/Cuba relations;
- globalization of the economy;
- the global challenge of international trade.

### GROUP III — VARIOUS INTERESTS

Group III members have always seen their key goal to be the achievement of true economic and social democracy by involving citizens in every section of society in the Community decision-making process.

This ambition stems from the composition of the group, which increasingly reflects the deep-rooted changes which have occurred in European society in recent years.

The sectors represented within Group III include not only agriculture, craft industries, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the professions, but also groupings of cooperatives, mutuals and societies, consumers, environmental protection associations, families, women, persons with disabilities, academics, etc.

Aware of the responsibility of representing such a wide spectrum of European citizens through the socioeconomic organizations to which they belong, Group III members have unfailingly called for effective participation of these

socioeconomic players in Community decision-making and looked with concern at the exclusion of many socioeconomic sectors from the social dialogue procedure as it currently operates.

In view of Group III and the organizations represented within it, the agreement reached on parental leave is a particularly serious example of such exclusion. The framework agreement was concluded among three organizations: the Union of Industries of the European Community (UNICE), the European Centre of Public Enterprises (CEEP) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), and subsequently implemented by the relevant Council directive of 3 June 1996.

As early as the end of February, in the debate with Pádraig Flynn, Commissioner responsible for social affairs, who was attending the ESC plenary session, the President of Group III had stressed the importance of the social dialogue in the present serious situation where so many millions of European citizens are without work. At the same time she forcefully stated the need for all economic and social players to participate in the dialogue, pointing out that the framework agreement had been reached without involving those who represent such a large part of European society; they could not give their support to a text resulting from negotiations in which they had not taken part. Among them were farmers, artisans, small and medium-sized enterprises, cooperatives, the professions, etc.

Attention has also been given to the question of the Economic and Social Committee's role in the social dialogue — the subject of a wide-ranging debate at the extraordinary meeting held by Group III in July, which was attended by Ann-Karin Glase MEP, the European Parliament's rapporteur on the proposed directive on parental leave.

There was a broad convergence of views between the European Parliament and Group III, both agreeing on the substance but not on the procedure currently followed in the social dialogue. Group III endorsed the text of the EP resolution on parental leave, and particularly the point taking up the group's long-expressed wish for the involvement of all socioeconomic players in the decision-making process at Community level.

Ms Glase also stressed the need for the European Parliament and the ESC to join in the consultation process established by the Commission — which was unsatisfactory at present because some categories directly concerned were excluded.

A few months later, after the commission published its communication on the progress and future of the social dialogue, Group III asked the Economic and Social Committee to draw up an opinion on the document, and this request was accepted. The preparation of the opinion produced very fruitful cooperation between Group III members and the organizations it represents who were united in their awareness of the need for all

interested categories to participate in the social dialogue and for the ESC to be able to give full expression to its own consultative role in the course of this procedure.

In 1996, Group III members acted as rapporteurs for a large number of opinions, covering the full range of Community policies. Particularly noteworthy were the opinions on:

- Relations between the European Union and ASEAN
- The European 'Fair trade marking' movement
- Relations between the European Union and the United States
- European cultural policy for children
- Equality of treatment between men and women
- Consumer policy priorities (1996-98)
- The problems of agriculture in very remote regions and islands of the European Union
- The second integrated programme to assist SMEs and craft industries
- International trade and the environment
- Public service obligations in the internal energy market
- The Green Paper on commercial communication in the single market
- The implications for the CAP of the accession of the CEECs.

Concerned at the scale of the social exclusion problem, Group III proposed that the Committee analyse the costs of poverty in an own-initiative opinion. The Committee agreed to this proposal, and an opinion on the costs of poverty and social exclusion in Europe is in the process of being drawn up; a Group III member has been appointed rapporteur.

Group III members regularly consider and discuss the role and operation of the Committee. At its November meeting, the group heard the new secretary-general, Adriano Graziosi, outline how he intends to shape the Committee's organization; he stressed how the ESC, alongside the consultative role — its institutional function — had also become highly active in the external relations field.

The month of October saw the elections for the second two-year period of the Committee's term of office. Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli was re-elected as Group III President, and Francisco Ceballo Herrero and Eugène Muller as Vice-Presidents.

Johannes Jaschick was nominated and elected to the office of Vice-President of the Committee, while the Section Presidents drawn from Group III were re-elected. They are as follows:

- Agriculture and Fisheries — President: Pere Margalef i Masia;
- Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs — President: Manuel Ataíde Ferreira;
- Regional Development and Town and Country Planning — President: Robert Moreland.

## *CHAPTER V*

# **Internal aspects of the Secretariat**

### **1. STAFF**

The number of permanent posts in the secretariat-general in 1996 amounted to 135.

These were divided as follows:

- 48 category A posts, including one special career bracket;
- 29 category B posts;
- 58 category C posts.

In accordance with Protocol 16 to the Maastricht Treaty, the Economic and Social Committee shares a common organizational structure (COS) with the Committee of the Regions. The staff employed within this structure come largely from the ESC (about 80%).

There were 507 COS posts, divided as follows:

- 18 category A posts;
- 53 category B posts;
- 208 category C posts;
- 42 category D posts;
- 186 category LA posts.

The creation of the common structure has caused a number of problems which are currently being resolved by a joint agreement signed by the Secretaries-General of the ESC and COR. These problems include the definition of the responsibilities of each body regarding methods of organization and management of the common structure and its assets, staff management and the guarantee of a single career structure for officials, etc.

## 2. BUDGET

The following table gives the global expenditure of Section VI of the general budget of the European Union for the years 1995 and 1996.

	1995	1996
Economic and Social Committee	26 683 569	27 621 595
Committee of the Regions	15 696 652	16 070 395
Joint organizational structure	54 884 075	52 631 062
Total	97 264 296	96 323 052

## 3. MEETINGS

There were 10 plenary sessions and 13 bureau meetings in 1996.

Working bodies met as follows:

Sections	74
Study groups	325
Groups I, II and III	34
Recognized sub-groups	114
Visitors' groups	190
Miscellaneous	464

## 4. STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT IN 1996

### **President and Vice-Presidents**

Private office

Group secretariats

Press division

### **Secretary-General**

Private office

Secretariat

Budget department

## **Directorate for the Registry of the Assembly and the Bureau and for Planning**

Specialized department for the Assembly/Bureau, legislative planning, institutional affairs, official publications and the annual report

Mail/archives

## **Directorate-General for Operations**

*Specialized department for delegations*

Directorate for communications

- Public relations division
- Research and conferences division

*Directorate A — Consultative work*

- Division for industry, commerce, crafts and services
- Division for economic, financial and monetary questions
- Specialized department for protection of the environment, public health and consumer affairs
- Specialized department for regional development and town and country planning
- Division for transport and communications

*Directorate B — Consultative work*

- Division for agriculture and fisheries
- Specialized department for energy, nuclear questions and research
- Division for external relations, trade and development policy
- Specialized department for social, family, educational and cultural affairs

## **5. COMMON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

*Financial control division*

### **Directorate for Common Organizational Structure**

- Security
- General coordination

- Organization and methods department
- Library/documentation
- Specialized department for printing and distribution
- Specialized department for engineering, informatics systems and telecommunications (IST)
- Specialized department for finance
- Specialized department for the administration of rights and duties
- Department for vocational training/competitions/in-service training
- Medical/welfare department
- Specialized department for internal affairs

#### **Directorate for Translation and Typing**

- Eleven translation and typing divisions



*ANNEX A*

**List of opinions  
and information reports  
issued during 1996**

**332nd PLENARY SESSION — 31 JANUARY  
AND 1 FEBRUARY 1996**

**Green Paper — Copyright and related rights in the information society  
(CES 91/96)**

**Rapporteur: Robert J. Moreland**

**Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directive 89/686/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to personal protective equipment  
(CES 90/96)**

**Rapporteur: George Wright**

**The allocation of the reserve for Community initiatives for the period up to the end of 1999  
(CES 92/96)**

**Rapporteur: Campbell Christie**

**Proposal for a Council directive on marine equipment  
(CES 94/96)**

**Rapporteur: Sergio Colombo**

**Proposal for a Council directive amending for the first time Directive 90/394/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure of carcinogens at work  
(CES 95/96)**

**Rapporteur: Thomas Etty**

**Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending the Annex to Council Regulation (EEC) No 3911/92 of 9 December 1992 on the export of cultural goods, and**

**Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending the Annex to Council Directive 93/7/EEC of 15 March 1993 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State  
(CES 96/96)**

**Rapporteur: Beatrice Rangoni-Machiavelli**

**Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 1765/92 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops  
(CES 98/96)**

**Rapporteur: Giuseppe Pricolo**

**Communication from the Commission on the development of short sea shipping in Europe: prospects and challenges  
(CES 93/96)**

**Rapporteur: Anna Bredima-Savopoulou**

**Free movement of medicines in the European Union — Abolition of existing barriers (own-initiative)**

(CES 89/96)

Rapporteur: Sergio Colombo

**Relations between the European Union and ASEAN (own-initiative)**

(CES 99/96)

Rapporteur: Antonello Pezzini

**Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 92/117/EEC concerning measures for protection against specified zoonoses and specified zoonotic agents in animals and products of animal origin in order to prevent outbreaks of food-borne infections and intoxications**

(CES 97/96)

Rapporteur: José Luís Mayayo Bello

### 333rd PLENARY SESSION — 28 AND 29 FEBRUARY 1996

**Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending for the eighth time Council Directive 67/548/EEC on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances**

(CES 244/96)

Rapporteur-general: Giuseppe Pricolo

**Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the emission of gaseous and particulate pollutants from internal combustion engines to be installed in non-road mobile machinery**

(CES 245/96)

Rapporteur: Paulo Barros Vale

**The future of cohesion and long-term implications for the Structural Funds (own-initiative)**

(CES 246/95)

Rapporteur: Jan Jacob van Dijk

**Communication from the Commission on the development of the Community's railways — application of Directive 91/440/EEC: Future measures to develop the railways and**

**Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 91/440/EEC on the development of the Community's railways**

(CES 248/96)

Rapporteur: Giorgio Liverani

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on interconnection in telecommunications with regard to ensuring universal service and interoperability through application of the principles of open network provision (ONP) (CES 249/96)

Rapporteur: Bernardo Hernández Bataller

European cultural policy for children (own-initiative) (CES 250/96)

Rapporteur: Georgios Sklavounos

Proposal for a Council directive on minimum requirements for improving the safety and health protection of workers potentially at risk from explosive atmospheres (CES 251/96)

Rapporteur: Giorgio Liverani

Proposal for a Council directive on the right of third-country nationals to travel in the Community (CES 252/96)

Rapporteur: Gianni Vinay

Proposal for a Council directive amending Council Directive 94/80/EC laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections by citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals (CES 253/96)

Rapporteur-general: Vasco Cal

Current situation of the alcohol sector in the EU (information report) (CES 908/95 fin)

Rapporteur: Giuseppe Pricolo

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 90/539/EEC on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in and imports from third countries of poultry and hatching eggs, and

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 91/494/EEC on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in and imports from third countries of fresh poultrymeat (CES 254/96)

Rapporteur: Leif Erland Nielsen

Proposal for a Council directive introducing Community measures for the control of classical swine fever (consolidated version),

Proposal for a Council directive on the undesirable substances and products in animal nutrition (consolidated version), and

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on the common organization of the market in milk and milk products (consolidated version) (CES 255/96)

Rapporteur: Michael P. Strauss

Amended proposal for a Council regulation (EC) laying down certain technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources (consolidated version)

(CES 256/96)

Rapporteur: Jesús Muñiz Guardado

Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of seed potatoes (consolidated version) — 95/0302 CNS,

Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of beet seed (consolidated version) — 95/0303 CNS,

Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of seed of oil and fibre plants (consolidated version) — 95/0304 CNS, and

Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of fodder plant seed (consolidated version) — 95/0305 CNS

(CES 257/96)

Rapporteur: Antoon Stokkers

Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of vegetable seed (consolidated version) — 95/0320 CNS,

Proposal for a Council directive on the marketing of cereal seed (consolidated version) 95/0321 CNS, and

Proposal for a Council directive on the common catalogue of varieties of agricultural plant species (consolidated version) — 95/0322 CNS

(CES 258/96)

Rapporteur: José Bento Gonçalves

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2075/92 on the common organization of the market in raw tobacco and fixing the guarantee thresholds for leaf tobacco (1996 and 1997 harvests)

(CES 259/96)

Rapporteur-general: Vassilis Zarkinou

*Global harmonization of direct investment regulations (own-initiative)*

(CES 260/96)

Rapporteur: Vasco Cal

### 334th PLENARY SESSION — 27 AND 28 MARCH 1996

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending European Parliament and Council Directive 94/35/EC on sweeteners for use in foodstuffs

(CES 406/96)

Rapporteur: Joop Koopman

Co-Rapporteurs: Bo Green, Kommer de Kneegt

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision adopting a programme of Community action on health monitoring in the context of the framework for action in the field of public health

(CES 407/96)

Rapporteur: Markku Matti Lemmetty

Green Paper on the protection of utility models in the single market — 95/0238 COD

(CES 408/96)

Rapporteur: Giannino Bernabei

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 2913/92 establishing the Community Customs Code

(CES 409/96)

Rapporteur: Anne-Marie Sigmund

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the supplementary supervision of insurance undertakings in an insurance group (CES 410/96)

Rapporteur: Robert Pelletier

Draft Council recommendation on a parking card for disabled persons (CES 411/96)

Rapporteur: Christina Wahrolin

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 1785/81 on the common organization of the markets in the sugar sector (CES 412/96)

Rapporteur: Maria Luisa Santiago

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council regulation (EC) to amend Regulation (EEC) No 1601/91 laying down general rules on the definition, description and presentation of aromatized wines, aromatized wine-based drinks and aromatized wine-based cocktails

(CES 413/96)

Rapporteur: Adalbert Kienle

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 3699/93 laying down the criteria and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the processing and marketing of its products

(CES 414/96)

Rapporteur: John Little

Amended proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive concerning the placing of biocidal products on the market  
(CES 415/96)

Rapporteur: Kenneth J. Gardner

Co-Rapporteurs: Wilfred Aspinall, Hans-Joachim Wilms

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 1626/94 laying down certain technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean  
(CES 416/96)

Rapporteur: Jesús Muñiz Guardado

*Proposal for a Council directive on the elimination of controls on persons crossing internal frontiers*  
(CES 417/96)

Rapporteur: Gianni Vinay

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directive 68/360/EEC on the abolition of restrictions on movement and residence within the Community for workers of Member States and their families, and Directive 73/148/EEC on the abolition of restrictions on movement and residence within the Community for nationals of Member States with regard to establishment and the provision of services  
(CES 418/96) — 95/0202 COD

Rapporteur: Gianni Vinay

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on common rules for the development of Community postal services and the improvement of quality of service, and draft notice from the Commission on the application of the competition rules to the postal sector and in particular on the assessment of certain State measures relating to postal services  
(CES 419/96)

Rapporteur: Johann Farnleitner

Amended proposal for a Council directive introducing a tax on carbon dioxide emissions and energy (additional opinion)  
(CES 421/96)

Rapporteur: Klaus Schmitz

### 335th PLENARY SESSION — 24 AND 25 APRIL 1996

Proposal for a Council decision on a Community action programme promoting non-governmental organizations primarily active in the field of environmental protection  
(CES 525/96)

Rapporteur: Klaus Boisseree

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive relating to telecommunications terminal equipment and satellite earth station equipment (consolidation)

(CES 526/97)

Rapporteur: Michael Mobbs

Proposal for a Council decision establishing a European guarantee fund to promote cinema and television production

(CES 527/96)

Rapporteur: Giampaolo Pellarini

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision on an action at a Union level in the field of satellite personal telecommunications in the European Union

(CES 528/96)

Rapporteur: Michael Mobbs

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directives 90/387/EEC and 92/44/EEC for the purpose of an adaptation to a competitive environment in telecommunications

(CES 529/96)

Rapporteur: Alexander-Michael von Schwerin

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on a common framework for general authorizations — individual licences in the field of telecommunications services

(CES 530/96)

Rapporteur: Bernardo Hernández Bataller

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 91/439/EEC on driving licences

(CES 531/96)

Rapporteur: Roy Donovan

Proposal for a Council recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making

(CES 532/96)

Rapporteur: Bridin Twist

Communication from the Commission on racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, and

Proposal for a Council decision designating 1997 as European Year against Racism

(CES 533/96)

Rapporteur: Christoforos Koryfidis

Co-Rapporteur: Dame Jocelyn Barrow



Proposal for a Council decision modifying its Decision of 23 November 1994 adopting a specific programme for research and technological development in the field of cooperation with third countries and international organizations (CES 534/96)

Rapporteur: Giannino Bernabei

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation No 2686/94 establishing a special system of assistance to traditional ACP suppliers of bananas

(CES 535/96)

Rapporteur: José Luis Mayayo Bello

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on improving the efficiency of agricultural structures,

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on improving the processing and marketing conditions for agricultural products, and

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on producer groups and associations thereof

(CES 536/96)

Rapporteur: José Bento Gonçalves

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 823/87 laying down special provisions relating to quality wines produced in specified regions, and

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2332/92 on sparkling wines produced in the Community

(CES 537/96)

Rapporteur: Adalbert Kienle

European 'fair trade' marking movement (own-initiative)

(CES 538/96)

Rapporteur: Ann Davison

1996 Annual Economic Report

(CES 539/96)

Rapporteur: Ursula Konitzer

Commission proposals on the prices for agricultural products and on related measures (1996/97)

(CES 540/96)

Rapporteur: Giuseppe Pricolo

*Proposal for a Council recommendation relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos*

(CES 541/96)

Rapporteur: Giacomina Cassina

Co-Rapporteurs: Johannes M. Jaschick, Giuseppe Pricolo

Freedom to provide services and the interest of the general good in the second Banking Directive (additional opinion)

(CES 542/96)

Rapporteur: Robert Pelletier

Towards a European voluntary service for young people (own-initiative)

(CES 543/96)

Rapporteur: Jan Jacob van Dijk

Proposal for a Council directive to introduce rational planning techniques in the electricity and gas distribution sectors

(CES 544/96)

Rapporteur: Peter Morgan

Commission communication on European Community gas supply and prospects

(CES 545/96)

Rapporteur: John Lyons

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 77/388/EEC on the common system of value added tax (level of standard rate)

(CES 546/96)

Rapporteur: Kenneth Walker

Pan-European transport conference and social dialogue — from Crete to Helsinki (own-initiative)

(CES 547/96)

Rapporteur: Eike Eulen

The Alpine Arc — an opportunity for development and integration (own-initiative)

(CES 548/96)

Rapporteur: Ettore Masucci

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) applying a multiannual scheme of generalized tariff preferences from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1999 in respect of certain agricultural products originating in developing countries (additional opinion)

(CES 611/96)

Rapporteur-general: Michael P. Strauss

### 336th PLENARY SESSION — 29 AND 30 MAY 1996

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision on the review of the European Community programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development 'Towards sustainability'

(CES 689/96)

Rapporteur: Klaus Boisseree

Technical standards and mutual recognition (additional opinion)  
(CES 690/96)

Rapporteur: Johannes M. Jaschick

Public contracts (additional opinion)  
(CES 691/96)

Rapporteur: José Ignacio Gafo-Fernandez

Proposal for a Council decision on the adoption of a multiannual programme to promote the linguistic diversity of the Community in the information society  
(CES 692/96)

Rapporteur: Giampaolo Pellarini

Proposal for a Council directive on safety rules and standards for passenger ships

(CES 693/96)

Rapporteur: Eduardo Chagas

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision adapting for the second time Decision No 1110/94/EC on the fourth framework programme of activities in the field of research, technological development and demonstration (1994-98) (as adapted by Decision No 616/96/EC), and

Proposal for a Council directive adapting for the second time Decision 94/268/Euratom concerning the framework programme of activities in the field of research and training for the European Atomic Energy Community (1994-98) (as adapted by Decision 96/253/Euratom)

(CES 694/96)

Rapporteur: Henri Malosse

Draft Proposal for a Council directive on health protection of individuals against the dangers of ionizing radiation in relation to medical exposures, replacing Directive 84/466/Euratom

(CES 695/96)

Rapporteur: Claus-Benedict von der Decken

Communication from the Commission on worker information and consultation

(CES 696/96)

Rapporteur: Ursula Engelen-Kefer

Co-Rapporteur: Bernard Bousat

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on air-carrier liability in case of accidents

(CES 697/96)

Rapporteur: Robert J. Moreland

Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the single market in Europe in 1995

(CES 698/96)

Rapporteur: Bruno Vever

Co-Rapporteur: Flavio Pasotti

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3254/91 prohibiting the use of leghold traps in the Community and the introduction into the Community of pelts and manufactured goods of certain wild animal species originating in countries which catch them by means of leghold traps or trapping methods which do not meet international humane trapping standards

(CES 699/96)

Rapporteur: Giacomina Cassina

Co-Rapporteurs: Johannes M. Jaschick, Giuseppe Pricolo

Green Paper on innovation

(CES 700/96)

Rapporteur: Ulla Birgitta Sirkeinen

Co-Rapporteur: Ursula Konitzer

Relations between the European Union and the United States (own-initiative)

(CES 701/96)

Rapporteur: Ann Davison

Proposal for a Council decision concerning the conclusion on behalf of the European Community, as regards matters within its competence, of the results of the WTO negotiations on financial services and on movement of natural persons

(CES 702/96)

Rapporteur-general: Jean Pardon

Proposal for a Council directive amending directive 77/99/EEC and Directive 92/118/EEC with regard to the rules applicable to minced meat, meat preparations and certain other products of animal origin

(CES 703/96)

Rapporteur-general: Cornelius Scully

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 404/93 on the common organization of the market in bananas

(CES 704/96)

Rapporteur-general: José Fernando Rodríguez de Azero y del Hoyo

Proposal for a Council regulation setting up a system of aid for producers of certain citrus fruits

(CES 740/96)

Rapporteur-general: José Luis Mayayo Bello

The citizens' network — Fulfilling the potential of public passenger transport in Europe — European Commission Green Paper

(CES 705/96)

Rapporteur: Alexander-Michael von Schwerin

Co-Rapporteur: Joop Koopman

### 337th PLENARY SESSION, 10 AND 11 JULY 1996

Proposal for a 13th European Parliament and Council directive on company law concerning takeover bids

(CES 876/96)

Rapporteur: Umberto Burani

Priorities for consumer policy (1996-98)

(CES 889/96)

Rapporteur: Joop Koopman

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 90/219/EEC on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms

(CES 887/96)

Rapporteur: Sergio Colombo

Proposal for a Council decision on a third multiannual programme for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union (1997-2000)

(CES 877/96)

Rapporteur: Colin Lustenhouwer

Co-Rapporteur: Henri Malosse

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions

(CES 878/96)

Rapporteur: Henri Malosse

Green Paper on the review of the merger regulation

(CES 879/96)

Rapporteur: Edoardo Bagliano

Proposal for a Council decision on inter-administration telematic networks for statistics relating to the trading of goods between Member States — Comedi

(Commerce Electric Data Interchange)

(CES 885/96)

Rapporteur-general: Michael Mobbs

Sixth annual report on the Structural Funds 1994, and the new regional programmes under Objectives 1 and 2 of the Community structural policies

(CES 886/96)

Rapporteur: Campbell Christie

Co-Rapporteur: Leopoldo Quevedo Rojo

Integrated management of coastal zones  
(CES 890/96)  
Rapporteur: José Bento Gonçalves

White Paper on education and training — Teaching and learning: towards the learning society  
(CES 880/96)  
Rapporteur: Christoforos Koryfidis

Proposal for a Council decision amending Decision 93/246/EEC of 29 April 1993 adopting the second phase of the Trans-European Cooperation Scheme for Higher Education (Tempus II) (1994-98)  
(CES 881/96)  
Rapporteur: Angel Panero Florez

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending, for the benefit of beneficiaries of pre-retirement benefits, Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to the members of their families moving within the Community and Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71  
(CES 882/96)  
Rapporteur: Pierre Chevalier

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending, for the benefit of unemployed persons, Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to the members of their families moving within the Community and Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71  
(CES 883/96)  
Rapporteur: Pierre Chevalier

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive establishing a mechanism for the recognition of qualifications in respect of the professional activities covered by the Directives on liberalization and transitional measures and supplementing the general systems for the recognition of qualifications  
(CES 884/96)  
Rapporteur: Dame Jocelyn Barrow

The bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis and its wide-ranging consequences for the EU (own-initiative)  
(CES 888/96)  
Rapporteur: Manuel Ferreira  
Co-Rapporteurs: Campbell Christie, Giuseppe Pricolo

World Food Summit in Rome (13-17 November 1996) (own-initiative)  
(CES 891/96)  
Rapporteur-general: Seppo Ilmari Kallio

### 338th PLENARY SESSION — 25 AND 26 SEPTEMBER 1996

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision creating a network for the epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases in the European Community  
(CES 1068/96)  
Rapporteur: Christoph Fuchs

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on European Community water policy  
(CES 1069/96)  
Rapporteur: María Candelas Sánchez Miguel

Legal protection for encrypted services in the internal market  
(CES 1070/96)  
Rapporteur: Jean Pardon

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Article 12 of Directive 77/780/EEC on the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the taking up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions, Articles 2, 6, 7, 8 and Annexes II and III of Directive 89/647/EEC on a solvency ratio for credit institutions and Article 2 and Annex II of Directive 93/6/EEC on the capital adequacy of investment firms and credit institutions  
(CES 1071/96)  
Rapporteur: Robert Pelletier

Communication from the Commission on cohesion policy and the environment  
(CES 1072/96)  
Rapporteur: Ramón Mercé Juste

Proposal for a Council decision regarding the definition and implementation of Community policy in the field of telecommunications and postal services  
(CES 1073/96)  
Rapporteur: Lars Olof Kritz

Proposal for an eighth European Parliament and Council directive on summer-time arrangements  
(CES 1074/96)  
Rapporteur: Francis J. Whitworth

Communication of the Commission on the universal service for telecommunications in the perspective of a fully liberalized environment  
(CES 1075/96)

Rapporteur: Alexander-Michael von Schwerin

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3922/91 on the harmonization of technical requirements and administrative procedures in the field of civil aviation  
(CES 1076/96)

Rapporteur: Robert J. Moreland

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) laying down certain technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources  
(CES 1077/96)

Rapporteur: John Little

The problems of agriculture in the EU's most remote regions and islands (own-initiative)  
(CES 1078/96)

Rapporteur: Leopoldo Quevedo Rojo

Proposal for a Council directive amending Council Directives 66/400/EEC, 66/401/EEC, 66/402/EEC, 66/403/EEC, 69/208/EEC and 70/458/EEC on the marketing of beet seed, fodder plant seed, cereal seed, seed potatoes, seed of oil and fibre plants and vegetable seed  
(CES 1079/96)

Rapporteur: Antoon Stokkers

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending for the fourth time Regulation (EC) No 3699/93 laying down criteria and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and for processing and marketing of its products  
(CES 1080/96)

Rapporteur: John Little

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) derogating, for the 1996/97 marketing year, from Regulation (EC) No 1035/77 laying down special measures to encourage the marketing of products processed from lemons, and

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 1543/95 as regards the period of application

(CES 1081/96 — 96/0144 CNS — 96/0145 CNS)

Rapporteur: Giuseppe Pricolo

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agriculture products and foodstuffs  
(CES 1082/96)

Rapporteur: Staffan Mats Nilsson



Proposal for a Council regulation laying down the conditions under which non-resident carriers may operate national road passenger transport services within a Member State  
(CES 1083/96)  
Rapporteur: Hubert Ghigonis

The role of the EU in urban matters (own-initiative)  
(CES 1084/96)  
Rapporteur: Gianni Vinay

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) on aid to shipbuilding  
(CES 1085/96)  
Rapporteur-general: John Simpson

Migration and the creation of a free trade area (report drawn up for the Euro-Mediterranean Summit) (information report)  
(CES 595/96 fin)  
Rapporteur: Helmut Giesecke  
Co-Rapporteurs: Giacomina Cassina, Pere Margalef i Masia

Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of equal treatment of men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion and working conditions  
(CES 1086/96)  
Rapporteur: Anne Marie Sigmund

White Paper on the preparation of the associated countries of central and eastern Europe for integration into the internal market of the Union  
(CES 1087/96)  
Rapporteur: Ettore Masucci

Impact of economic and monetary union: Economic and social aspects of convergence and measures to increase awareness of the single currency (own-initiative)  
(CES 1089/96)  
Rapporteurs: Umberto Burani, Bernard de Bigault du Granrut and Michael Geuenich

Amended proposal for a Council regulation (EC) laying down certain technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources  
(CES 1090/96)  
Rapporteur-general: Nikolaos Lerios

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Directive 87/102 (as amended by Directive 90/88) for the approximation of laws,

regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning consumer credit

(CES 1091/96)

Rapporteur: Umberto Burani

Co-Rapporteurs: Roy Sanderson, Francisco Ceballo Herrero

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directive 89/647/EEC on a solvency ratio for credit institutions

(CES 1092/96)

Rapporteur: Robert Pelletier

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) introducing transitional measures into Regulation (EC) No 1626/94 laying down certain technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean

(CES 1093/96)

Rapporteur: Jesús Muñiz Guardado

First multiannual programme to assist European tourism (Philoxenia) (1997-2000)

(CES 1094/96)

Rapporteur: Georgios Sklavounos

Co-Rapporteur: Giacomo Regaldo

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on injunctions for the protection of consumers' interests

(CES 1095/96)

Rapporteur: Roger Ramaekers

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision amending European Parliament and Council Decision No 1254/96/EC laying down a series of guidelines on trans-European energy networks

(CES 1129/96)

Rapporteur: Bernardo Hernández Bataller

### 339th PLENARY SESSION — 30 AND 31 OCTOBER 1996

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on settlement finality and collateral security

(CES 1254/96)

Rapporteur: Roy Donovan

Market implications of the legislation and regulations required for the transition to the single currency (own-initiative)

(CES 1265/96)

Rapporteur: Umberto Burani

Communication from the Commission regarding the revision of the Merger Regulation,

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 4064/89 of 21 December 1989 on the control of concentrations between undertakings, and

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 4064/89 of 21 December 1989 on the control of concentrations between undertakings — Articles 87 and 235

(CES 1266/96)

Rapporteur-general: Edoardo Bagliano

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending Council Directives 74/150/EEC, 74/151/EEC, 74/152/EEC, 74/346/EEC, 74/347/EEC, 75/321/EEC, 75/322/EEC, 76/432/EEC, 76/763/EEC, 77/311/EEC, 77/537/EEC, 78/764/EEC, 78/933/EEC, 79/532/EEC, 79/533/EEC, 80/720/EEC, 86/297/EEC, 86/415/EEC and 89/173/EEC relating to the maximum design speed of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors

(CES 1267/96)

Rapporteur: Edoardo Bagliano

Communication from the Commission on an industrial competitiveness policy for the European chemical industry: an example

(CES 1255/96)

Rapporteur: José Ignacio Gafo-Fernandez

Communication from the Commission on the (second) integrated programme for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and craft sector (additional opinion)

(CES 1256/96)

Rapporteur: Colin Lustenhouwer

Communication from the Commission 'Towards a new maritime strategy'

(CES 1257/96)

Rapporteur: Francis J. Whitworth

Commission White Paper on air traffic management: freeing Europe's airspace

(CES 1258/96)

Rapporteur: Robert J. Moreland

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive relating to cocoa and chocolate products intended for human consumption — 96/0112 COD

Proposal for a Council directive relating to certain sugars intended for human consumption — 96/0113 CNS

Proposal for a Council directive relating to honey — 96/0114 CNS

Proposal for a Council directive relating to fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption — 96/0115 CNS

Proposal for a Council directive relating to certain partly or wholly dehydrated preserved milk for human consumption — 96/0116 CNS

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive relating to coffee extracts and chicory extracts — 96/0117 COD

Proposal for a Council directive relating to fruit jams, jellies and marmalades and chestnut purée intended for human consumption — 96/0118 CNS  
(CES 1259/96)

Rapporteur: Kenneth J. Gardner

Proposal for a Council directive amending, with regard to *gyrodactylus salaris*, Directive 91/67/EEC concerning the animal health conditions governing the placing on the market of aquaculture animals and products, and Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 93/53/EEC introducing *minimum measures for the control of certain fish diseases*

(CES 1260/96)

Rapporteur: Seppo Ilmari Kallio

Green Paper — towards fair and efficient pricing in transport — policy options for internalizing the external costs of transport in the European Union

(CES 1261/96)

Rapporteur: Michael Kubenz

Communication from the Commission on action for employment in Europe: a confidence pact

(CES 1262/96)

Rapporteur: Pierre Chevalier

Co-Rapporteurs: Klaus Schmitz, Kenneth Walker

International trade and the environment (own-initiative)

(CES 1264/96)

Rapporteur: Joop Koopman

Communication from the Commission on the global challenge of international trade: a market access strategy for the European Union (own-initiative)

(CES 1263/96)

Rapporteur: Jan Jacob van Dijk

Relations between the European Union and Cuba (own-initiative)

(CES 1270/96)

Rapporteur: Ramon Baeza Sanjuan

Green Paper on financial services: meeting consumers' expectations

(CES 1268/96)

Rapporteur: Giampaolo Pellarini

Public service obligations in the internal energy market (own-initiative)

(CES 1269/96)

Rapporteur: Bernardo Hernández Bataller

## 340th PLENARY SESSION — 27 AND 28 NOVEMBER 1996

Proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Community, of the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube

(CES 1384/96)

Rapporteur: Rudolf Strasser

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending for the third time Directive 88/344/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States on extraction solvents used in the protection of foodstuffs and food ingredients

(CES 1385/96)

Rapporteur: Kenneth J. Gardner

Co-Rapporteurs: Sergio Colombo, Ann Davison

Proposal for a Council directive amending directive 92/14/EEC on the limitation of the operation of aeroplanes covered by Part II, Chapter 2, Vol. 1 of Annex 16 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, second edition (1988)

(CES 1386/96)

Rapporteur: Klaus Boisseree

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the sale of consumer goods and guarantees

(CES 1387/96)

Rapporteur: Harald Ettl

Co-Rapporteur: Christos Folias

Green Paper from the Commission on commercial communications in the internal market

(CES 1388/96)

Rapporteur: John Simpson

Communication from the Commission on the competitiveness of subcontracting in the textile and clothing industry in the European Union

(CES 1389/96)

Rapporteur: Henri Malosse

Communication from the Commission on the information society: from Corfu to Dublin — the new emerging priorities, and communication from the Commission on the implications of the information society for European Union policies — preparing the next steps

(CES 1401/96)

Rapporteur: Roger Ramaekers

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 3528/86 on the protection of the Community's forests against atmospheric pollution, and

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2158/92 on the protection of the Community's forests against fire  
(CES 1402/96)

Rapporteur-general: Seppo Ilmari Kallio

The impact of the introduction of new technologies on employment (own-initiative)

(CES 1403/96)

Rapporteur: Vasco Cal

Co-rapporteurs: Giannino Bernabei, Roger Ramaekers

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals, and

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) regarding the labelling of beef and beef products

(CES 1404/96)

Rapporteur-general: Rudolf Strasser

Proposal for a Council directive laying down the principles governing the organization of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries and the proposal for a Council directive amending directives 71/118/EEC, 72/462/EEC, 85/73/EEC, 91/67/EEC, 91/492/EEC, 91/493/EEC, 92/45/EEC and 92/118/EEC as regards the organization of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries

(CES 1395/96)

Rapporteur: Cornelius Scully

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) establishing a European agency for veterinary and phytosanitary inspection

(CES 1396/96)

Rapporteur: Staffan Mats Wilhelm Nilsson

Proposal for a Council directive amending Council Directive 92/118/EEC of 17 December 1992 laying down animal health and public health requirements governing trade in and imports into the Community of products not subject to the said requirements laid down in specific Community rules referred to in Annex A(l) to Directive 89/662/EEC and, as regards pathogens, to Directive 90/425/EEC

(CES 1397/96)

Rapporteur: Turid Ström

Proposal for a Council decision amending Council Decision No 93/383/EEC of 14 June 1993 on reference laboratories for the monitoring of marine biotoxins

(CES 1398/96)

Rapporteur: Staffan Mats Wilhelm Nilsson

Relations between the EU and Canada (own-initiative)  
(CES 1399/96)

Rapporteur: José Isaias Rodríguez García Caro

Proposal for a Council regulation amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 684/92 on common rules for the international carriage of passengers by coach and bus  
(CES 1390/96)

Rapporteur: Hubert Ghigonis

Telematic systems in intermodal transport in Europe (own-initiative)  
(CES 1391/96)

Rapporteur: Dethmer Kielman

Proposal for a Council directive setting up a harmonized safety regime for fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over  
(CES 1392/96)

Rapporteur: Eduardo Chagas

Communication of the Commission on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities and the draft resolution of the Council and of representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities (own-initiative)  
(CES 1393/96)

Rapporteur: Christina Wahrolin

Communication from the Commission on the future of social protection: a framework for a European debate  
(CES 1400/96)

Rapporteur: André Laur

Co-Rapporteurs: Ieke van den Burg, Carlo Ernesto Meriano

Second Commission report on the review of Community energy legislation, and communication from the Commission concerning the repeal of several Community legislative texts in the field of energy policy  
(CES 1394/96)

Rapporteur: Claus-Benedict von der Decken

## 341st PLENARY SESSION — 18 AND 19 DECEMBER 1996

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive amending European Parliament and Council Directive 95/2/EC on food additives other than colours and sweeteners  
(CES 1504/96)

Rapporteur: Kenneth J. Gardner

Co-rapporteurs: Sergio Colombo, Ann Davison

Implications for CAP of the accession of countries of central and eastern Europe (own-initiative)  
(CES 1505/96)  
Rapporteur: Jean-Paul Bastian

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2075/92 on the common organization of the market in raw tobacco  
(CES 1508/96)  
Rapporteur-general: Rudolf Strasser

Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) setting up a specific measure in favour of cephalopod producers permanently based in the Canary Islands  
(CES 1509/96)  
Rapporteur-general: Jesús Muñiz Guardado

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive on the resale right for the benefit of the author of an original work of art  
(CES 1507/96)  
Rapporteur: Joël Decallion

XXVth report on competition policy (1995) and preliminary draft Commission notice on cooperation between national competition authorities and the Commission in handling cases falling within the scope of Articles 85 or 86 of the EC Treaty  
(CES 1510/96)  
Rapporteur: Edoardo Bagliano



*ANNEX B*

**List of opinions  
drawn up by the Committee  
on its own initiative during 1996**

Free movement of medicines in the European Union — abolition of existing barriers (CES 89/96) Rapporteur: Sergio Colombo	January 1996
Relations between the European Union and ASEAN (CES 99/96) Rapporteur: Antonello Pezzini	January 1996
The future of cohesion and long-term implications for the Structural Funds (CES 246/95) Rapporteur: Jan Jacob van Dijk	February 1996
European cultural policy for children (CES 250/96) Rapporteur working alone: Giorgios Sklavounos	February 1996
Global harmonization of direct investment regulations (CES 260/96) Rapporteur: Vasco Cal	February 1996
European 'fair trade' marking movement (CES 538/96) Rapporteur: Ann Davison	April 1996
Commission working document: Towards a European voluntary service for young people (CES 543/96) Rapporteur: Jan Jacob van Dijk	April 1996
Pan-European Transport Conference and social dialogue — from Crete to Helsinki (CES 547/96) Rapporteur: Eike Eulen	April 1996
The Alpine Arc — an opportunity for development and integration Rapporteur: Ettore Masucci	April 1996
Relations between the European Union and the United States (CES 701/96) Rapporteur: Ann Davison	May 1996
The bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis and its wide-ranging consequences for the EU (CES 888/96) Rapporteur: Manuel Ataíde Ferreira Co-rapporteurs: Campbell Christie, Giuseppe Pricolo	July 1996

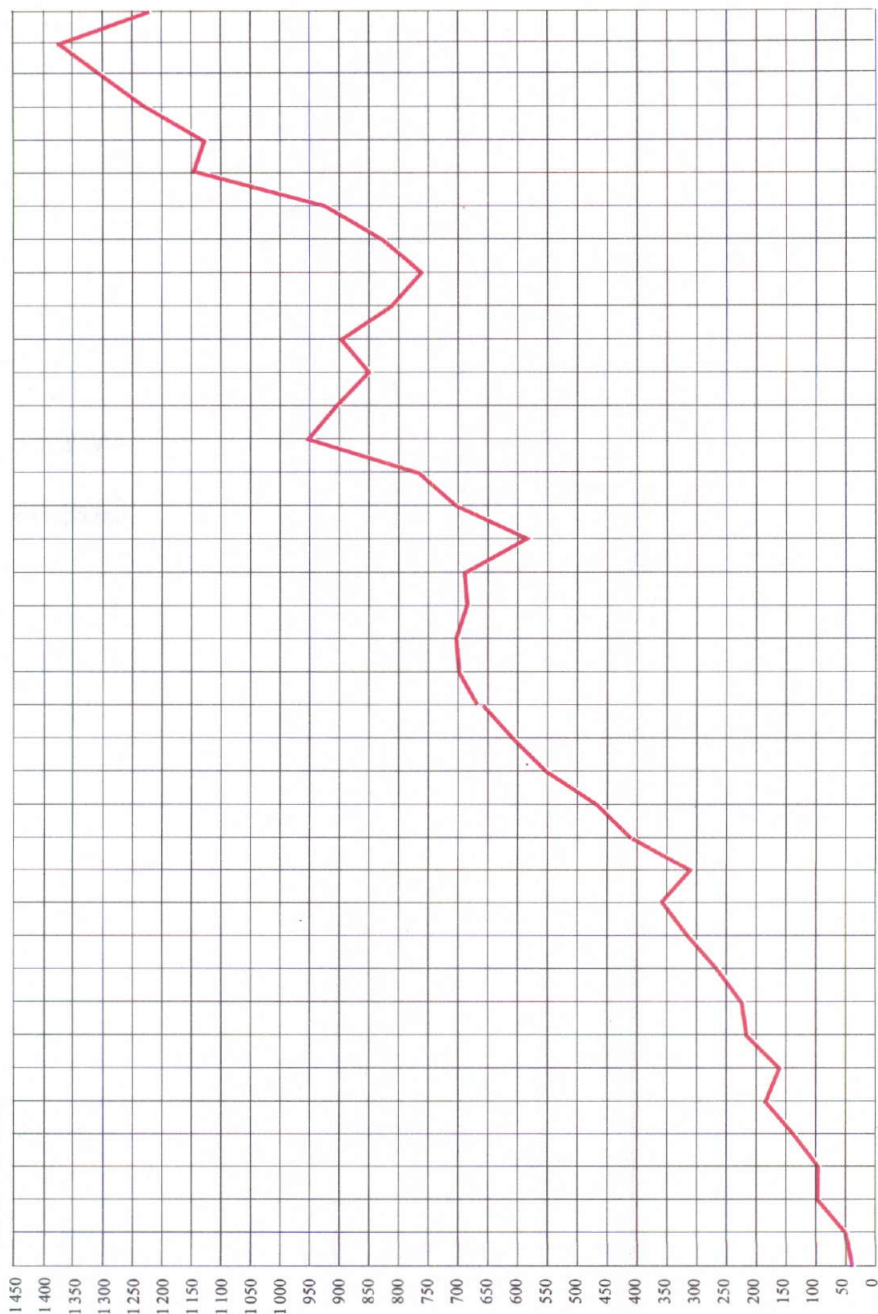
World Food Summit in Rome (13-17 November 1996) (CES 891/96) Rapporteur-general: Seppo Ilmari Kallio	July 1996
The problems of agriculture in the EU's most remote regions and islands (CES 1078/96) Rapporteur: Leopoldo Quevedo Rojo	September 1996
The role of the EU in urban matters (CES 1084/96) Rapporteur: Gianni Vinay	September 1996
Impact of economic and monetary union: Economic and social aspects of convergence and measures to increase awareness of the single currency (CES 1089/96) Rapporteurs: Umberto Burani, Bernard de Bigault du Granrut, Michael Geuenich	September 1996
Market implications of the legislation and regulations required for the transition to the single currency (CES 1265/96) Rapporteur: Umberto Burani	October 1996
International trade and the environment (CES 1264/96) Rapporteur: Joop Koopman	October 1996
Communication from the Commission on the global challenge of international trade: a market access strategy for the European Union (CES 1263/96) Rapporteur: Jan Jacob van Dijk	October 1996
Relations between the European Union and Cuba (CES 1270/96) Rapporteur: Ramon Baeza Sanjuan	October 1996
Public service obligations in the internal energy market (CES 1269/96) Rapporteur: Bernado Hernández Bataller	October 1996
The impact of the introduction of new technologies on employment (CES 1403/96) Rapporteur: Vasco Cal Co-rapporteurs: Giannino Bernabei, Roger Ramaekers	November 1996

<p>Relations between the EU and Canada (CES 1399/96) <i>Rapporteur: Jose Isaiás Rodríguez García Caro</i></p>	<p>November 1996</p>
<p>Telematic systems in intermodal transport in Europe (CES 1391/96) <i>Rapporteur: Dethmer Kielman</i></p>	<p>November 1996</p>
<p>Communication of the Commission on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities and the draft resolution of the Council and of representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities (CES 1393/96) <i>Rapporteur: Christina Wahrolin</i></p>	<p>November 1996</p>
<p>Implications for CAP of the accession of the countries of central and eastern Europe (CES 1505/96) <i>Rapporteur: Jean-Paul Bastian</i></p>	<p>December 1996</p>

ANNEX C

**Graphs**

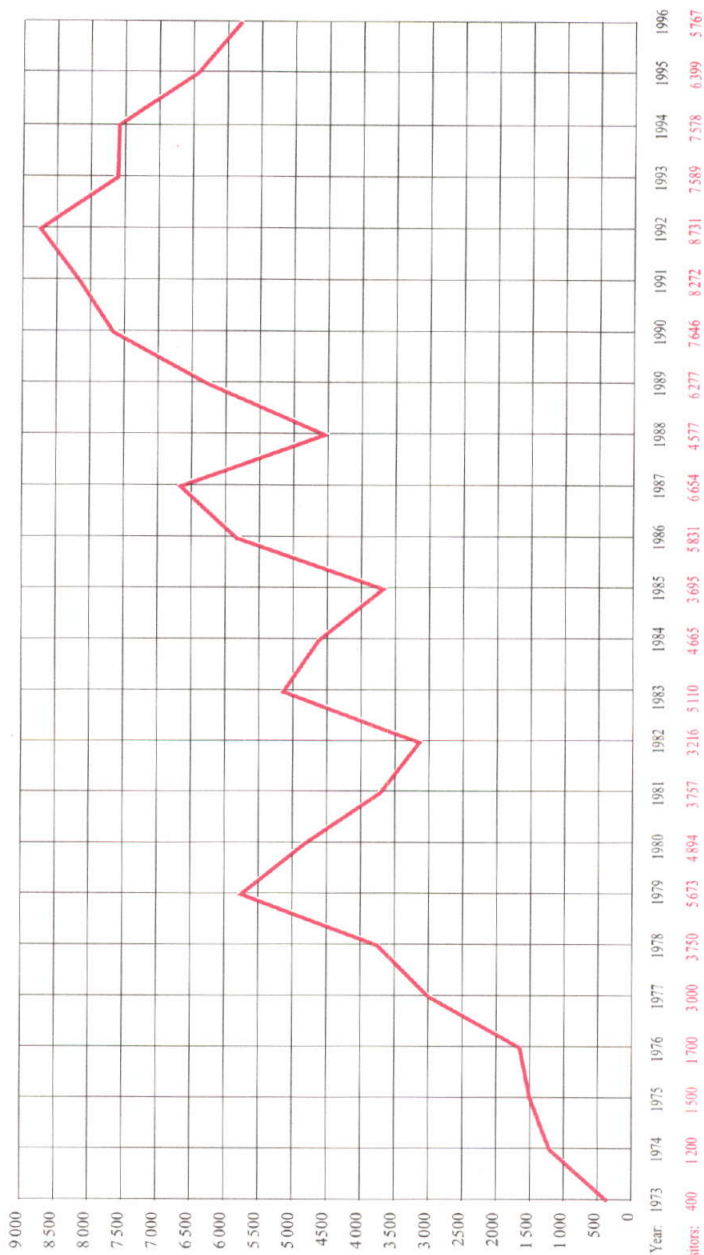
# MEETINGS



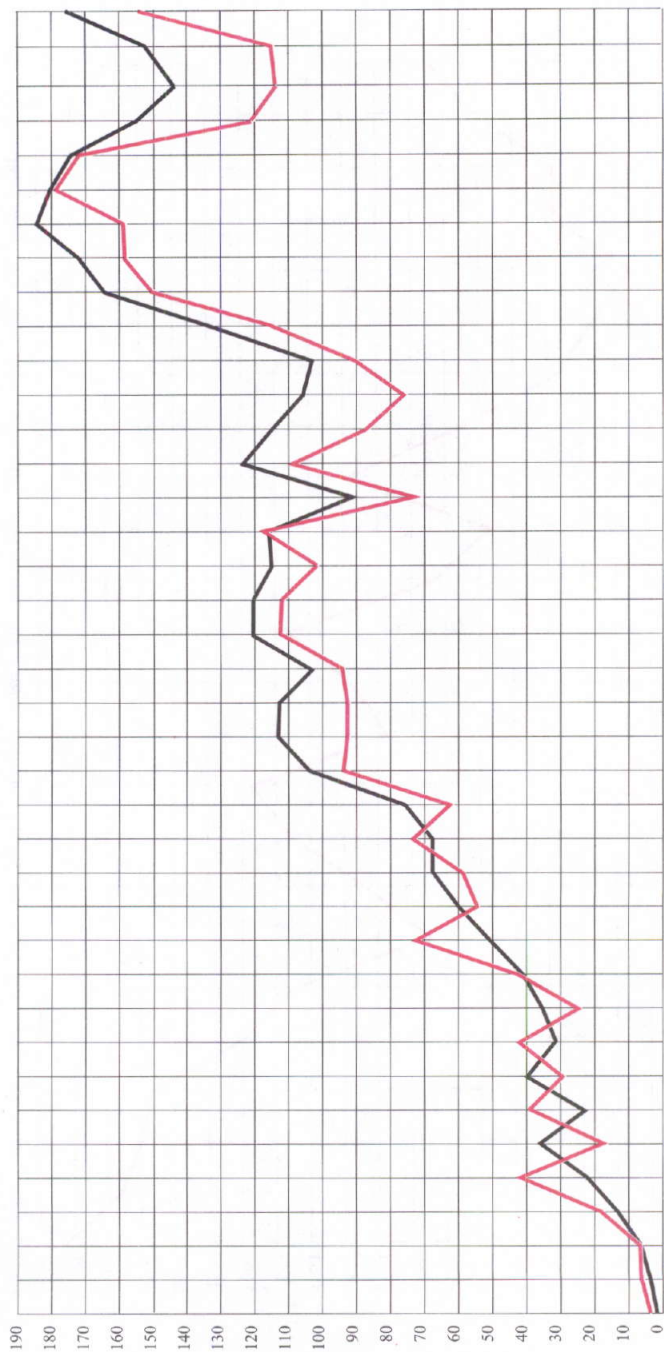
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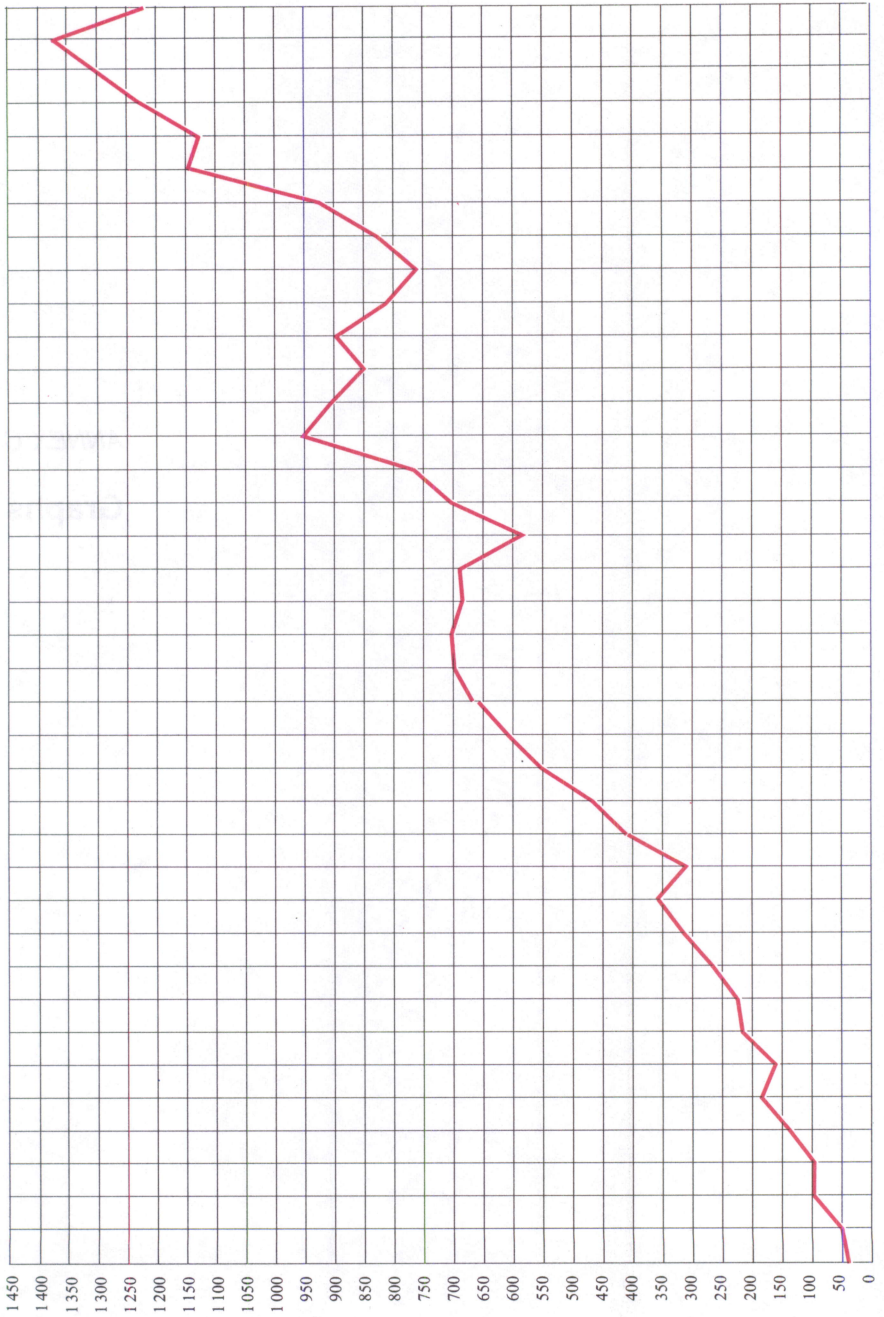
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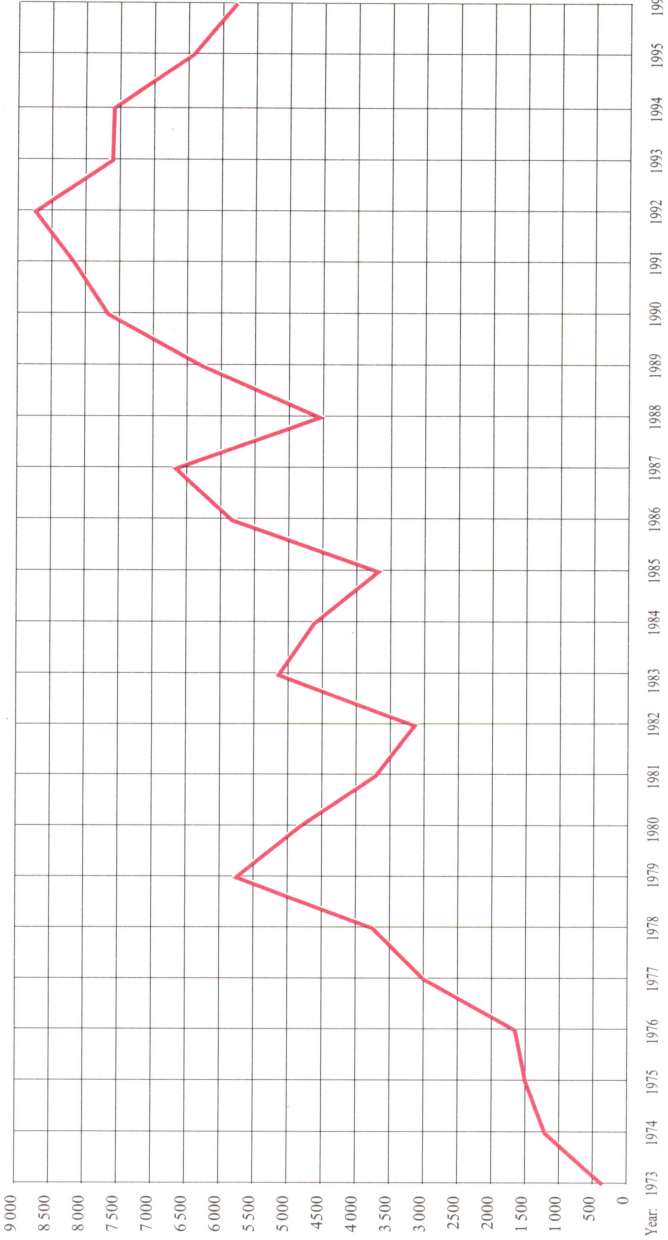
*ANNEX C*

**Graphs**

# MEETINGS

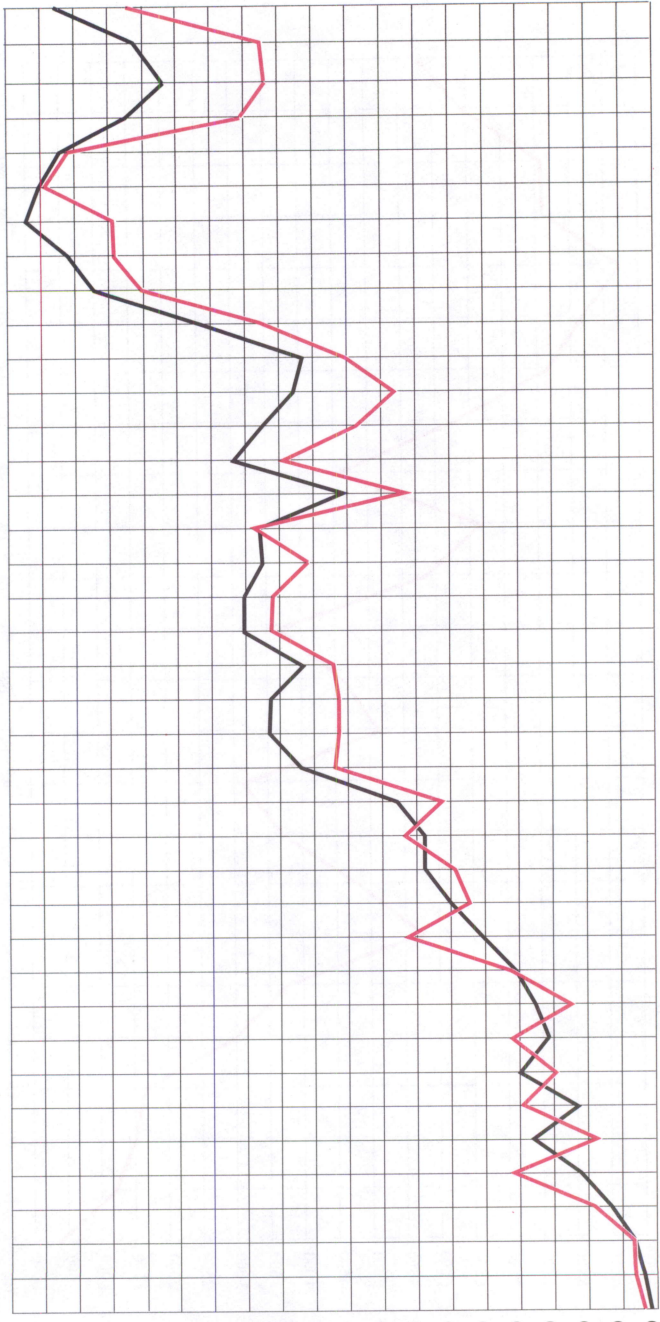


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