



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 12.06.1997  
COM(97) 288 final

COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL

on an interim programme of measures to promote the use of flax fibre for the period  
September 1997 to March 1998



## INTRODUCTION

1. Article 2 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 1308/70 on the common organization of the market in flax and hemp lays down that Community measures may be taken to encourage the use of flax. The Commission hereby notifies the Council of the programme which it plans to implement.
2. The flax promotion programme is needed to consolidate and develop a quality image for European flax in the face of international competition and to distinguish it from all other textile fibres.
3. The two-year programme financed from revenue from the marketing years 1993/94 and 1994/95, which runs until the end of August 1997, is to be the subject of an ex-post evaluation from which conclusions will be drawn about the results achieved and the guidelines to be laid down for the subsequent two-year programme. It will thus be at least six months before a new programme can be implemented on the basis of a Commission decision.
4. To maintain continuity in the information campaigns on quality European linen and consolidate its presence at the most significant events as far as its image is concerned, it seems appropriate to implement an interim programme of promotion measures to run from September 1997 until March 1998.
5. This programme will thus include schemes continuing and developing those currently under way, while at the same time enabling full and effective use to be made of the results obtained.
6. The prime objective of the action planned is therefore to maintain and reinforce the positive image of European linen in the trade and, in particular, the distribution chains, by continuing appropriate public relations exercises.
7. It is above all a matter of continuing to promote the product at the most significant textile trade fairs scheduled during the period in question and to take appropriate action to ensure an effective presence at these events.

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## COMMISSION COMMUNICATION

on an interim programme of measures to promote the use of flax fibre for the period  
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### PURPOSE

1. Article 2 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 1308/70 on the common organization of the market in flax and hemp<sup>1</sup>, as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 3290/94<sup>2</sup>, lays down that two types of Community measure may be taken to promote the use of flax: information campaigns and the search for new outlets and improved products. Such measures are to be adopted by. The purpose of this communication is to inform the Council of the programme which the Commission intends to implement. These measures will be financed from the deduction from the Community flat-rate aid per hectare under fibre flax.
2. This communication relates to the interim programme of measures which the Commission plans to implement during the period from September 1997 to March 1998.

### FINANCING

An amount of ECU 1 million is entered for this purpose in heading B1.380 of the 1997 budget, to which the requisite commitment appropriations for funding this programme can be charged.

### PLANNED MEASURES

The Commission considers it necessary to ensure continuity in the information campaigns on European quality linen for the following reasons:

- I. The strategy of enhancing its image on the basis of recognition of and familiarity with the trade mark "Masters of Linen" must continue without interruption if it is to be fully effective.
- II. The presence of European linen identified by its collective trade mark at the most significant textile trade fairs is a determining factor in the strategy referred to above.
- III. The information gap in the distribution sector detected in the evaluation of the first phase of the previous programme needs to be filled by appropriate public relations exercises.
- IV. It would seem a sensible reaction to a less favourable situation for flax - even if there are signs of a return to natural fibres in general - to continue efforts to consolidate the presence of flax in the textile trade by continuing the existing promotion programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No L 146, 4.7.1970.

<sup>2</sup> OJ No L 349, 31.12.1994.

In view of the reasons set out above, the Commission is planning to implement the following information and evaluation measures.

### **Information campaigns**

#### Public relations

For the reasons indicated above, enhancing the image of European linen and its collective trade mark "Masters of Linen" among distributors is one of the priority objectives of this interim programme. The target group needs to be made aware of it by means of public relations campaigns to improve information, by distributing technical/commercial information and also holding seminars focusing on the characteristics of the product and the advantages of using the collective trade mark "Masters of Linen".

Budget: ECU 168.000

#### Events

The Commission takes the view that the quality image of European linen should continue to be promoted by means of a stand at the most appropriate textile trade fairs scheduled during the period covered by this interim programme.

Technical and commercial preparation and assistance at trade fairs could be provided for representatives of the flax trade under Article 14(2) of Commission Regulation (EEC) No 1164/89.

Budget: ECU 240.000

#### Promotional material

Information campaigns should be based on the creation and distribution of promotional material conveying the desired messages to the selected target group.

During the period set for this programme (six months) it will be possible to use material already created during the previous programme, but it is also thought to be essential to distribute an information kit on fashion trends for 1999 to the trade at the events planned and by other means.

Budget: ECU 60.000

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### Advertising

The Commission takes the view that it should continue to support promotion measures by means of appropriate advertising in the principal trade journals, together with attendance at the textile trade fairs and the various public relations campaigns aimed at distributors.

It is also proposed to support public relations campaigns directed at distributors by creating and circulating appropriate information to users.

Budget: ECU 82.000

### Action on the American market

Continuation of the schemes undertaken under the previous programme, maintaining the presence of European linen at a textile trade fair in New York and continuing PR activity by means of press conferences in connection with the above-mentioned trade fair and when other opportunities arise.

Budget: ECU 120.000

### **Evaluation**

The Commission also intends that, in addition to their own systematic evaluation, contractors should call on the services of an independent consultant to carry out an external assessment of each of the schemes.

Budget: ECU 40.000

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. The Commission will ensure that the Community financial contribution is mentioned in all promotional material produced and circulated and at any event or in any communications in connection with the promotion programme.
2. The Commission reserves the right to review this programme and make adjustments to it in the light of information received concerning the impact of the current programme or in order to adapt to economic changes. In the event of significant changes, the Council will be informed immediately.

SUMMARY TABLE OF PROPOSED MEASURES

	<u>Budget allocation (ECU)</u>	<u>Percentage of budget</u>
<b><u>Information campaigns</u></b>		
1. Public relations (distributors)	168.000	23 %
2. Events	240.000	34 %
3. Promotional material	60.000	8 %
4. Advertising	82.000	12 %
5. US market measures	120.000	17 %
6. Assesment	40.000	6 %

ISSN 0254-1475

COM(97) 288 final

# DOCUMENTS

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Catalogue number : CB-CO-97-280-EN-C

ISBN 92-78-21209-1

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Office for Official Publications of the European Communities  
L-2985 Luxembourg

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