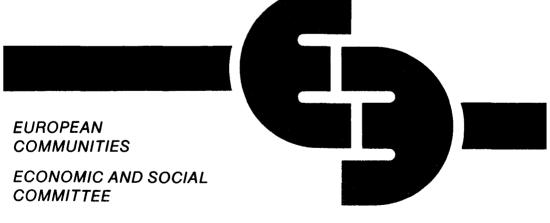
BULLETIN



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SUMMARY

		Page
23	2nd PLENARY SESSION	3
Mı	- Muhr	3
Mı	Goebbels	4
Op	vinions adopted	6
1.	GOOD LABORATORY PRACTICE — CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES	6
2.	COLOURING MATTERS	7
3.	SUGAR	8
4.	BOVINE LEUKOSIS	10
5.	RAW MATERIALS AND ADVANCED METERIALS	11
6.	HAZARDOUS WASTE — TRANSFRONTIER SHIP- MENT	13
7.	IMPLEMENTING RULES — FINANCIAL REGULATION	14
8.	CAP/FARM WORKERS (Information report)	14
EX	KTERNAL RELATIONS	17
Ac	tivities of the Chairman	17
Ot	her activities	17
RI	ECENT REFERRALS	19
ΡF	ROVISIONAL FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME	21
M	EMBERS' NEWS	23
TI	METABLE FOR PLENARY SESSIONS	25



3

232nd PLENARY SESSION

The 232nd Plenary Session of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities was held in Brussels on 18 and 19 December 1985. The Committee Chairman, Mr Gerd Muhr presided.

The session was attended by Mr Robert Goebbels, Secretary of State at the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs and President-in-Office of the Council.

Mr Muhr

In his speech of welcome Mr Muhr thanked Mr Goebbels for having come to address the Committee on the results of the Luxembourg Summit. In particular, the Committee Chairman stated the following:

'As we see it, the European Council's attention was focused on two main issues — firstly, the consolidation of the Community by completing the internal market (including the social component) and building the People's Europe which forms part of this, and, secondly, institutional reform. The latter includes greater use of majority voting at the Council, greater involvement of the European Parliament in Community decision-taking and a more important role for the ESC.

As far as the latter is concerned, we note with satisfaction that express provision has been made for the Committee's consultation in various areas, i.e. internal market, Community cohesion, the environment and social policy. For the moment, however, no such express provision has been made in the fields of research and technology.

We have, however, been assured that this was an oversight for which a technical solution can be found. Indeed, it was precisely with this in mind that I made representations to the Council of Ministers last week. The consultation of the Committee on tax harmonization is another question that can perhaps be solved in similar fashion. The subject of tax harmonization is clearly of great importance to the groups represented on the Committee.

As regards making a general assessment of the compromise, I would prefer not to anticipate what you yourself have to say.

Many people have expressed their disappointment that only a minimal compromise was possible although they sometimes add that not much more could be expected from an intergovernmental conference where unanimity is required. Then again there are others — and we would gladly join them if this were possible — who feel that the outcome of the conference paves the way for future progress and offers the first opportunity for a long time to restore both institutional and policy dynamism to a Community which seems to have ground to a halt. We therefore await your statement with great interest, since it will be of considerable help in enabling us to form a final judgment.'

Mr Goebbels

Mr Goebbels, President-in-Office of the Council, reported to the members of the Economic and Social Committee on the conclusions of the European Council held in Luxembourg on 2 and 3 December 1985, finalized by the Foreign Affairs Council on 17 and 18 December 1985. He stated: 'I consider that the ministerial meeting which has just finished fulfilled the task which it was set and that the outcome may be regarded as satisfactory...'

Following a very detailed account of the various points examined by the Council — single European instrument, internal market, monetary capacity, cohesion, role of the European Parliament, scientific and technological policies, environment, social affairs, role of the Commission and of the Court of Justice — Mr Goebbels stated that 'the conference of 16 and 17 December has therefore preserved what was achieved at the European Council and even, to a certain extent, improved the final outcome... Hence I see no particular reason to be pessimistic.'

Mr Goebbels devoted a large part of his speech to the internal market. He made several allusions — particularly in connection with the internal market and technology — to the role entrusted to the Economic and Social Committee in the revision of the Treaties.

The President of the Council had the following to say on the internal market: 'The text produced by the conference represents a compromise (...). Certain points are worth emphasizing. The Community has set itself an ambitious target: to create an area without frontiers by 31 December 1992. It has provided itself with the means of achieving its objective by improving the decision-making process. In a number of Articles which are important for completing the internal market, the unanimity rule is replaced by the qualified majority requirement. However, the unanimity rule remains for the indirect taxation field — where the Committee was not consulted before and will still not be consulted.



At the Plenary Session: Mr Goebbels, Secretary of State at the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs (on the right) and Mr Muhr, Chairman of the ESC.

None the less,' continued Mr Goebbels, 'the crucial point is the new Article 100(a) which clearly states that all the measures relating to the completion and operation of the internal market will henceforth be adopted by qualified majority. This is of fundamental significance...'

Still on the subject of the Economic and Social Committee's role, Mr Goebbels stated in connection with technology:

'I wish to stress that the conference acceded to a request by your Chairman that the Economic and Social Committee be consulted on proposals designed to implement Articles 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 (especially the definition of specific programmes and additional programmes).'

At the end of the debate, Mr Goebbels underlined that the Committee had not been overlooked in the discussions. From now on, the Committee would be consulted on the internal market, Community cohesion, social policy, the environment, research and technology. Mr Goebbels pointed out that the Community was still a group of nations wishing to retain their independence in many fields; it was therefore not yet a political entity. Mr Goebbels ended on an optimistic note by saying that the Luxembourg Summit was a compromise that nevertheless represented progress.

Opinions adopted

1. GOOD LABORATORY PRACTICE — CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

'Proposal for a Council directive on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the application of the principles of good laboratory practice and the verification of their application for tests on chemical substances' (COM(85) 380 final)

Gist of the proposed directive

The aim of this proposal is to make the principles of good laboratory practice set out in the OECD Decision of 12 May 1981 obligatory when the tests provided for by Directive 67/548/EEC are conducted. It also requires the Member States to adopt the control measures specified in the OECD Recommendation of July 1983.

Gist of the Committee Opinion 1

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee approved the proposed directive, which seeks to get the principles of good laboratory practice (GLP) applied in all the Member States.

Compliance with these principles will be ensured by on-the-spot inspections of laboratories and verifications of tests.

Such procedures are based on the agreements adopted by the OECD and are fully in keeping with the Community's moves to bring about mutual acceptance and recognition of test procedures in this field.

The Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mrs Heuser (Federal Republic of Germany — Various interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Vercellino (Italy — Workers).

2. COLOURING MATTERS

'Proposal for a Council directive amending for the eighth time the Directive of 23 October 1962 on the approximation of the rules of the Member States concerning the colouring matters authorized for use in foodstuffs intended for human consumption' (COM (85) 474 final)

Gist of the Commission document

The objective of this proposal is to modify, update and consolidate the list of colourants (and relevant purity criteria) authorized for use as additives in foodstuffs in the Community.

Gist of the Committee Opinion²

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously.

It accepts the Commission's proposal but draws attention to the increasing public concern about food additives as health hazards.

It also made a number of critical comments regarding the methods and procedures hitherto used for the interpretation and modification

¹ CES 1086/85.

² CES 1084/85.

of the authorized list of colourants, and looks forward to improvements in the future.

Finally, the section made a number of technical comments on specific colourants.

The Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mrs Heuser (Federal Republic of Germany — Various interests). The Rapporteur was Mrs Williams (United Kingdom — Various interests).

3. SUGAR

'Proposal for a Council regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 1785/81 on the common organization of the markets in the sugar sector' (COM(85) 433 final)

Gist of the Commission proposals

Since:

the present situation on the world sugar market is nothing short of disastrous,

future prospects are bleak,

there is heavy overcapacity, both in the Community and elsewhere, the Community is required, under an existing standing commitment, to import 1.3 million tonnes of sugar from the ACP countries and India at Community prices,

the discontinuation of the production-quota arrangements must be ruled out at this stage. The Commission is accordingly proposing that the present production arrangements be renewed for a further period of five marketing years.

An increase in current production quotas must also be ruled out.

Since the production surpluses for quota sugar will fall heavily as a result of enlargement of the Community, and since there are favourable prospects as regards outlets in the chemical industry, the Commission is proposing that the A and B quotas for sugar and isoglucose be kept at the same level as in 1985/86.

The Commission is proposing that the basic levy limit be increased to 2.5% of the intervention price (instead of 2%) and that the maximum permitted B levy be raised from 37.5% to 47% of the intervention price. This will allow the cumulative balance at the end of the period covered

by the 1986 budget to be absorbed during the new period of application of the quotas.

It also wishes to underline the importance it attaches to the provisions relating to the reserve quantity. The Commission is accordingly proposing that this quantity should be set at 15% (instead of 10%) of the original quotas, which can be allocated to other sugar-producing or isoglucose-producing undertakings in order to meet the restructuring needs of new or existing undertakings.

Moreover, the Commission is proposing that there should be greater emphasis on the Community aspects of the 'mixed price', i.e. the arrangements whereby producers can, via agreements within the trade approved by the Member State in question, derogate from the system of differentiated contracts. The Commission is therefore proposing that the Council should henceforth authorize the Member States to approve — for a single marketing year at a time — derogations made via agreements within the trade.

Gist of the Committee Opinion 1

The Committee, adopted its Opinion by 91 votes for, 3 votes against and 3 abstentions. It feels that the system of production quotas in the sugar sector should be retained for the time being, because there is no valid alternative.

It also considers it necessary to retain the principle of self-financing, whereby producers bear the cost of marketing sugar in excess of quota A. However, it rejects the Commission proposal as it is based almost exclusively on an increase in producer contributions which, in the Committee's view, is unacceptable for producers.

On the other hand, the Committee welcomes the Commission's recognition of the need for the Community's chemical industry to be able to guarantee its supply of domestically-produced sugar. It feels that the limited refunds financed by levies on B quota sugar will not be enough to allow the chemical industry to set up a production network in the Community.

In addition to promoting the use of sugar by the chemical industry, careful attention must be paid to trends in the consumption of sugar and in the isoglucose market.

¹ CES 1089/85

The proposed increase from 10% to 15% in reserve quantities is welcomed by the Committee as a means of taking greater account of regional needs and restructuring requirements.

The Committee does not agree with the Commission's contention that the possibility of waiving the system of differentiated contracts via inter-trade agreements approved by the Member States concerned is 'undesirable', because the mixed-price arrangement has enabled a number of Member States to take specific regional needs into consideration.

The Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture, chaired by Mr Lauga (France — Various interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Della Croce (Italy — Workers).

4. BOVINE LEUKOSIS

'Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 64/432/EEC as regards the definitive arrangements made in relation to enzootic bovine leukosis as laid down by Directive 80/1102/EEC' (COM(85) 578 final)

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Commission finds existing Community legislation on enzootic bovine leukosis and intra-Community trade satisfactory. The purpose of the proposed directive is to finalize current arrangements.

Gist of the Committee Opinion 1

The Committee unanimously approved the Commission's proposal.

The Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture, chaired by Mr Lauga (France — Various interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Storie-Pugh (United Kingdom — Various interests).

¹ CES 1088/85.

5. RAW MATERIALS AND ADVANCED MATERIALS

'Proposal for a Council decision adopting a multiannual research action programme on materials (raw materials and advanced materials)' (COM(85) 399 final)

Gist of the Commission document

The present proposal is a follow-up of Community R&D actions initiated in 1978-79 in the areas of primary mineral raw materials and waste recycling. These actions were expanded in 1982 to include wood as a renewable raw material, substitution of materials and a small-scale action on technical ceramics. EC funding for the programmes which terminate in 1985 amounts to 63 million ECU.

The results of these programmes, which were implemented through shared-cost contracts and coordination actions, have led to sound industrial and economic applications, and in order to maintain continuity of work and to preserve the gathered momentum, the Commission proposes a programme with a budget of 110 million ECU now subdivided into the four following sub-programmes:

Raw materials

Primary raw materials (prospecting, mining engineering and ore processing)	30 million ECU
Secondary raw materials (recycling of non- ferrous metals and utilization of waste)	22 million ECU
Wood as a renewable raw material (wood production and utilization)	20 million ECU
Advanced materials	38 million ECU

Metal alloys Technical ceramics Composites

Whereas the first of these sub-programmes is the follow-up of the current 'Metals and Mineral Substances' sub-programme, the second includes all'the activities pertaining to the economic recovery and use of scrap and waste materials. The third continues the current wood sub-programme and the fourth is a follow-up and an extension of the current sub-programme on substitution and materials technologies.

The broad objectives of the programme are to develop and promote economic processes for the provision of primary and secondary raw materials;

to raise the level of availability and mastery of advanced materials technology relevant to future industrial needs;

to promote cooperation within the EC scientific community in all phases of the materials cycle;

to contribute to the training of specialists in the fields covered.

The reason behind them is the fact that the European Community is highly dependent on external sources of supply for both renewable and non-renewable raw materials. The dependence is on average around 75%, although it approaches 100% for such important commodities as manganese, cobalt, etc. For wood and wood products the degree of dependence is more than 50%. The production in the EC of certain advanced materials for high technology applications in aerospace, telecommunications, etc. is conditioned by the availability of strategic metals, such as cobalt, samarium, neodymium and others, which are 100% imported. The problem is compounded by the determination of producing countries to process their indigenous resources in order to add as much value as possible. This inevitably leads to imports into the EC of more and more semi-finished and finished products, which jeopardizes the competitiveness of Community industry.

In view of the broad scope of the raw materials and advanced materials fields, interconnections inevitably exist with areas of other EC research programmes.

Special mention should be made of the relations with the programme on industrial technologies (Brite), with regard to which the basic principle upon which differentiation between materials-related work in the two programmes is based as follows:

where the research is principally concerned with the provision (i.e. the creation and production) and characterization of advanced materials, it will be carried out as part of the present programme;

where the research is principally concerned with the uses and means of use of materials, it will be carried out as part of Brite.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

The Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously (less 2 abstentions). It endorses the proposal and recommends that it be adopted by the Council without delay in order to give the Commission adequate time to alert potential contractors to prepare their transnational groupings.

¹ CES 1087/85.

It is desirable that there should be a smooth transition from existing to new programmes in order to maintain the existing Commission teams involved in management.

The Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mr de Wit (Netherlands — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr de Normann (United Kingdom — Employers).

6. HAZARDOUS WASTE — TRANSFRONTIER SHIPMENT

'Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 84/631/EEC on the supervision and control within the European Community of the transfrontier shipment of hazardous waste'

Gist of the Commission proposal

The proposal's aim is to amplify the provisions of the basic Directive 84/631/EEC in the light of the OECD's work on transfrontier movements of hazardous waste. The OECD's recommendations, which are very close to the Committee's thinking, have led the Commission to put them into practice in the Community.

The proposed Directive lays down that the importing country and, where appropriate, transit countries, must give their agreement to the importing of hazardous waste, and the importing country must have the facilities and expertise to dispose of such waste correctly.

Gist of the Committee Opinion 1

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee welcomes the Commission's proposal, since it is aimed at amplifying the provisions concerning exports of hazardous waste to third countries for disposal there.

The Committee considers, however, that provision should be made for a system of control so as to provide assurances as to the capacity and competence of the party responsible for disposing of the hazardous waste.

¹ CES 1085/85.

The Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mrs Heuser (Federal Republic of Germany — Various interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Zoli (Italy — Various interests).

7. IMPLEMENTING RULES — FINANCIAL REGULATION

'Draft amendments to certain articles of the Draft Commission Regulation laying down detailed rules for the implementation of certain provisions of the Financial Regulation of 21 December 1977' (COM(85) 337/2)

Gist of the Commission proposal

The rules governing the budget of the European Communities are set out in the Financial Regulation of 21 December 1977. These are backed up by implementing rules which were last laid down by the Commission on 30 June 1975. The Commission has been unable to adopt new implementing rules because of a long-standing inter-institutional debate on the amendment of the Financial Regulation itself.

Pending resolution of the underlying issues, the Commission now proposes a number of minor, technical changes needed to ease the day-to-day running of the budget.

Gist of the Committee Opinion 1

The Committee Opinion, adopted unanimously, approves the Commission proposal, and calls for a comprehensive updating of the financial instruments in the interests of efficient management.

The rapporteur-general was Mr Burnel (France — Various interests).

8. CAP/FARM WORKERS (Information report)

'The effects of the CAP on the social situation of farm workers in the Community' (Information report)

Gist of the Information report²

What impact do Community decisions have on agriculture and the people who work in agriculture? to what extent should their interests

CES 1083/85.

² CES 728/85 fin. + Appendix.

the issues dealt with in the report.

be taken into account in the forthcoming reform of the CAP? These are

The ESC's report is openly critical of the present approach to agricultural problems, which is geared primarily to the self-employed farmer: 'In all decisions on measures to reform the CAP, the Community bodies responsible should therefore remember that the job security of hired workers as well as self-employed farmers is affected.' The ESC points to the milk quotas introduced in 1984 as a striking example of the adverse effects of the CAP on the workers concerned. This Community measure led to dismissals of milking staff in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and France. The lower level of utilization of dairy capacities has also put jobs at risk in the dairy sector. The ESC's report notes that 'measures adopted nationally to ease readjustment came too late as a rule and by no means matched up with the assistance dairy farmers received'. Against this background the ESC calls for the creation of a Community programme for adjustment aid for farm and food industry workers. In particular this should support measures on further training and retraining, create alternative

According to the statistics, some 3.3 million workers in agriculture and the food industry are affected by the CAP. The ESC fears that statistical shortcomings — especially for seasonal and casual workers — have resulted in a substantial underestimate of those affected. Hence the ESC regards the drawing up of a comprehensive social report as an urgent priority.

jobs and provide arrangements for early retirement.

According to surveys in the Federal Republic of Germany, one farm worker in two has health problems. As working conditions are similar in other Member States, the situation there is probably much the same. Therefore one of the main demands of the ESC's report is an improvement of health protection in agriculture through closer cooperation between national social security bodies. It also calls for standardized Community rules on safety at work and accident prevention. Some Member States still do not have any generally binding safety regulations for agriculture.

There is agreement that in the final analysis it is technological progress which involves the biggest changes for farm workers: since the beginning of the 1980s new technological developments such as microelectronics and biotechnology have led to a sharp rise in unemployment. Feed rations are dispensed automatically; greenhouse conditions are controlled automatically: in short, even in agriculture, human labour is being replaced by mechanized processes. Two consequences are clear. Firstly, such new systems, right up to EDP-based manage-

ment, are only cost-effective if production is on a sufficiently large scale. Clearly the long-term trend is towards larger farms. Secondly, this structural change will make greater demands on worker skills. According to the ESC report, 'the demand is mainly for qualified and specialized workers who can handle expensive equipment'. In some Member States the proportion of skilled workers in the total hired agricultural workforce has already reached 60%. On farms of over 50 ha only about 6% of the workers do not have some vocational qualifications.

This new, far-reaching change must be taken into account in the reform of the CAP. The ESC report therefore calls for detailed guidelines for vocational training, priority for employment the whole year round — the demand for higher qualifications is not compatible with seasonal working — and environment protection measures as a means of providing employment. It is also necessary to step up the dialogue between employers and trade unions.

The Section for Agriculture drew up the report on the effects of the CAP on the social situation of farm workers in the Community. The Rapporteur was Mr W. Lojewski (Federal Republic of Germany — Workers, President of the Union of Horticultural, Agricultural and Forestry Workers).

The Committee decided unanimously to forward this Information report to the Council and the Commission.

The Information report was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Agriculture, chaired by Mr Lauga (France — Various interests). The Rapporteur was Mr W. Lojewski (Federal Republic of Germany — Workers).

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Activities of the Chairman

Mr Muhr met Mr Santer, Head of the Luxembourg Government and President of the European Council, in Luxembourg on 29 November 1985 to inform him, on the eve of the Luxembourg Summit, of the Committee's wishes in connection with the institutional reform of the Community. He also made a speech on the 10th anniversary of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin, which was celebrated on 28 November 1985. On 4 December the Chairman held a press conference in Bonn on air transport. He was accompanied by Mr Kenna, the Committee's Rapporteur for this subject.

Other activities

On 30 November 1985 the Secretary-General, Mr Louet, addressed the Cercle Européen pour le Luxembourg belge on the Community outlook for the next decade. On 3 December he made a speech to the Cercle de l'opinion, Paris, on Mediterranean policy.

Mr Roseingrave, a member of the Committee, took part in the conference on 'Initiative for research in informatics applied to society' (IRIS), held under Commission auspices in Venice from 2 to 4 December 1985.

Mr Burnel, a member of the Committee, took part in the 'International conference on families and urbanization' held by the International Union of Family Organizations in New Delhi from 2 to 5 December 1985.

RECENT REFERRALS TO ESC

'Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament concerning the completion of the internal market: Community legislation on foodstuffs' (COM (85) 603 final)

'Proposal for a Council directive on the prevention of environmental pollution by asbestos' (COM (85) 632 final)

'Proposal for a Council directive on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to benzene at work (Fifth Individual Directive within the meaning of Article 8 of Directive 80/1107/EEC)' (COM (85) 669 final)

'Proposal for a Council directive imposing a standstill on VAT and excise duties' (COM (85) 606 final)

'Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 77/99/EEC on health problems affecting intra-Community trade in meat products' (COM(85) 678 final)

Own-initiative work

Financial integration in the Community

Development of insular regions

Outlook for common railway policy (information report)

Problems with USA and Japan

Local job-creation initiatives

Shared-cost Community research (Opinion in light of previous information report)

Farmworkers (Opinion in light of previous information report).

PROVISIONAL FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

January 1986 plenary session

Opinions

Residues in fresh meat General system for recognition of higher education diplomas

Own-initiative Opinions

National regional development aids
Three information reports on new technologies

Later plenary sessions

Opinions

Quality of surface fresh water

10th ERDF Report

R&D environment

Public supply contracts

Customs warehouses

Market organization — cereals

Consumer education in primary and secondary schools

Major accident hazards

Dangerous substances

Cancer prevention

Conditions under which non-resident carriers may operate road haulage

Interim report on the economic situation

Turnover taxes/manufactured tobacco

Dumping of waste at sea

Shipbuilding (additional Opinion)

Facilitation of formalities/carriage of goods

Conditions under which non-resident carriers may transport by inland waterway

Maritime transport, Part 2

Information reports

Importance of technology R&D for SMEs Public health Upland areas SMEs in the tertiary sector

Own-initiative Opinions

EEC/Asean relations Criteria and efficiency of integrated operations GATT/agricultural aspects (additional Opinion) GATT. MEMBERS' NEWS ESC 23

MEMBERS' NEWS

Appointment

The Council of the European Communities has appointed Mr Klaus Schmitz (Federal Republic of Germany) of the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) (German Trade Union Confederation) to replace Mr Cremer, who has resigned.

1986

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Plenary Sessions

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JULY

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Plenary Sessions



PUBLICATIONS OBTAINABLE FROM THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

General documentation

The other European Assembly, January 1986 (CES 86-001)

European Union, a people's Europe and the Economic and Social Committee (Committee Chairman Muhr's speeches to the *ad hoc* Committees for Institutional Affairs and a People's Europe), 1985 (EX-43-85-35)

Opinions and studies

Consumer-producer dialogue (Opinion) (January 1985) (ESC 84-011)

Europe and the new technologies — Conference report (January 1985) (ESC 84-016)

Irish border areas (Information report) (February 1984) (ESC 84-002)

Tourism (Opinion) (June 1984) (ESC 84-004)

The economic and social situation in the Community (2 opinions) (July 1983) (ESC-83-013)

Youth employment (Opinion) (June 1983) (ESC-83-011)

Transport policy in the 1980s (Opinion) (March 1983) 99 pp. (ESC 83-003)

Guidelines for Mediterranean agriculture (4 opinions) (September 1982) 64 pp. (ESC 82-010)

The economic and social situation of the Community (2 opinions) (July 1982) 57 pp. (ESC 82-008)

The promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (Opinion) (June 1982) 70 pp. (ESC 82-007)

Agricultural aspects of Spain's entry into the EC (Opinion) (February 1982) 107 pp. (ESC 81-017)

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