

BULLETIN



*EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES*

*ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE*

The Bulletin reports every month (10 issues yearly) on the activities of the Economic and Social Committee, a Community consultative body. It is edited by the Secretariat-General of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities (2 rue Ravenstein, B-1000 Brussels) in the official Community languages.

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Catalogue number: ESC 85-013-EN

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European
Communities, 1985

Catalogue number: EX-AA-85-011-EN-C

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Printed in Belgium

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Extract from the speech by the ESC Chairman, Mr Muhr, concerning his visit to the United States

The Chairman outlined the main points raised during his fact-finding visit to the United States:

‘The success achieved by the United States in the fight against inflation, in economic growth and the employment situation, has been accompanied by some less favourable developments which lead even government politicians to fear that the economic policy pursued to date is no longer tenable. It should also be noted here that the much-quoted employment miracle in the United States has been largely bought by lower productivity and relatively low pay in the services sector. The aggregate US debt has reached the astronomical sum of over 2 000 million dollars. The budget deficit is over 200 000 million dollars per year, ironically under a President who on taking office had promised to balance the budget.

The trade deficit, which is of particular concern to us, has in the meantime reached 150 000 million dollars, and is still rising. This has caused a major protectionist groundswell, reflected in more than 300 Bills in Congress. All the Americans we spoke to felt that free trade — to which the US is as committed as the Community — has become a one-way process, and that the loser is the United States. In this situation, the US administration is focusing on three areas which are of great importance to us.

Firstly, measures under GATT. We were told that this was not so much out of enthusiasm for GATT as because it is the only possible vehicle for future multilateral agreements. It is to encompass new areas such as agriculture (about which more later) and more particularly services; on the American side it was not always clear exactly what was meant by this. However, it mainly seems to cover areas like banking and insurance, and intellectual property such as copyright protection and measures to combat the pirating of trade marks. It was unanimously agreed that the GATT mediation procedure must be tightened up to prevent mediation taking years to complete.

The second area is monetary policy. Since September, the US administration has made a U-turn on this. Leaving behind its previous policy of allowing the dollar to float, it now seems prepared to accept a monetary cooperation policy which could at least limit exchange-rate fluctuations in some respects.

Thirdly and finally, the US administration is assuming that the locomotive effect of the US economy cannot be kept up for the foreseeable future because of the expected slowdown in growth. Given that the growth of the European economy was to a large extent engendered by exports to the US, Europe should now try to place greater emphasis on internal demand. This is justified above all by the fact that at the moment there need be little fear of inflationary pressures in Europe.

Agriculture was another major topic. The Americans are suffering even greater surpluses than we are, but unlike us have as yet made no progress towards curbing them.

The Americans too are currently engaged in the reform of their agricultural policy, the tangible reflection of which is to be the Farm Bill. However, at present this seems unlikely to be able to provide a significant curb in certain production areas, particularly cereals. There is thus the prospect of a subsidies competition on the world market. This would have to be financed by our tax-payers, and would benefit insolvent markets and countries such as the Soviet Union.

To sum up: going beyond the hard economic factors, the most interesting result of our visit seems to me to be the attitude of politicians and the leading economic and social groupings. For the first time, the United States is faced with the fact that, particularly in manufacturing industry, it has become an integral part of the world economy. In 20 years, the proportion of US industrial products exported to other countries has more than trebled; and the proportion is still rising.

Lower long-term productivity gains than in Japan or even Europe have brought widespread uncertainty about what should be done to restore the competitiveness of wide swathes of American industry.

The policy on the coming GATT negotiations has not yet been settled. This means that the Community has a real chance to influence future developments if it can recognize and seize its opportunity in time.

Under no circumstances must we allow relatively minor areas of friction such as the problem of canned and citrus fruit to escalate into a general trade war. The way we tackle these problems is important for more than just trade policy. We should also always remember that the Community and North America are the two largest democratic blocs in the world, and that the Third World looks to us. It is thus up to us to provide an example of how

democratic societies, to which we are all committed, can settle their differences.

This brings me back to a point I made at the beginning: the need for work — of a form yet to be decided — to be carried out by the Section for External Relations to look into relations between the Community and the United States. Our findings should then be communicated, via the institutional channels and the informal channels available to our organizations, to the appropriate authorities on the two sides of the Atlantic. We have a particular responsibility in the preliminary stages of political decision-making.

Finally, while dealing with external relations we have not forgotten the internal development of the Community. Immediately after the Plenary Session, I am to meet the Luxembourg Prime Minister to brief him on our position for the EEC Government Leaders' Summit to be held in Luxembourg.

Being the practical people that we are, we will not fall into any illusions about the importance of this meeting, particularly as we have been right to be sceptical about the outcome of past summit conferences. Nevertheless, it is still worth noting that such an encounter with the President of the Council of Ministers just before a summit is a "first" in the records of the ESC, of which we shall endeavour to make the best possible use.'



Y. Smets, Photo News

Plenary Session. From left to right: Mr Muhr, ESC Chairman; Mr Pfeiffer, member of the European Commission.

231st PLENARY SESSION

The 231st Plenary Session of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities was held at the Albert Borschette Conference Centre in Brussels on 27 and 28 November 1985. The Chairman, Mr Gerd Muhr, presided.

The Session was attended by Mr Alois Pfeiffer, Commissioner, who took part in the debate on the economic situation 1985/86.

Mr Pfeiffer was a member of the Committee from September 1974 to December 1983.

Excerpt from statement by Mr Pfeiffer

He particularly stated:

'We feel that, if all concerned make their contribution, the Community could achieve an annual growth rate of between 3 and 3.5%, and an annual increase in employment of 1 to 1.5%, in the five years ahead. This is the great hope for the coming years. Mass unemployment is not inevitable. If we work together, we will be able to achieve something.

This would open up the prospect of cutting unemployment to 7% or so by 1990. But 7% would still be far from full employment. If we could get such a dynamic process under way, however, further changes could be achieved more readily. The propensity to invest might be boosted by greater confidence, the adaptability of the markets might improve without creating socially unacceptable situations, the reorganization and reduction of working time could be pursued without pushing up costs. All these developments could further improve the growth and/or employment situation.

Important in all these questions is that economic efficiency and further development of the main social achievements should be made as compatible as possible.

Our social security systems have cushioned the financial consequences of unemployment to begin with. But at enormous cost. If the Member States did not have to carry the costs generated directly or indirectly by the recession and unemployment (additional expenditure,

loss of revenue), there would be no question in most countries of any need to put public finances on a healthy footing. Indeed, many countries would be running a surplus.

The cushioning of the financial consequences of unemployment has its limits, however. Furthermore, a number of unemployed have already fallen through the meshes of the social security net. Many young people are not entitled to unemployment benefit or welfare assistance. Furthermore, some young people are becoming increasingly alienated from the State and the system. What can young people believe in, when they are refused entry to the working world and by the same token integration in society? Will these people, given what they are going through at the moment, be able to support our democratic society later when present leaders leave the stage?

We must not underestimate the potential implications of continuing mass unemployment.

The great economic interdependence and the complicated decision-making machinery in Europe make it impossible for any country or political faction, or either side of industry, to resolve the unemployment problem on its own. All concerned have considerable power to block certain remedies. But none can implement a balanced, promising approach on their own.

Recent years have shown that in the present political and social circumstances of Europe, behaviour patterns will not change spontaneously. But neither can they be imposed from above. People will have to be convinced by rational, objective arguments. All concerned must realize that progress towards more employment depends on their contribution. All concerned, whether public authorities, management or workers, have a major responsibility here.'

Opinions adopted

1. ANNUAL ECONOMIC REPORT

**The Commission's 1985-86 Annual Economic Report
(COM(85) 570 final)**

Gist of the Commission's Annual Economic Report

This report gives a brief survey of the current economic situation and the outlook in the Community, the imbalances and convergences and some risk factors in the medium-term.

On the basis largely of the approach adopted in last years' report, the Commission then outlines a cooperative strategy for more employment-creating growth which, in the Commission's view, will bear fruit whatever the international environment.

The strategy in question is essential if unemployment in the Community is to be reduced while avoiding a resurgence of inflation.

The proposed strategy has two main elements:

strengthening of economic cooperation within the Community (Community institutions, Member States, organizations of the two sides of industry) and at international level;

intensification of supply-side and demand-side policies along with a greater contribution on the part of the Community.

In its proposals the Commission sets objectives, specifies the instruments to be used and describes the method to be employed.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹⁾

The Economic and Social Committee considers that restraining of costs and support for demand (both consumer demand and investment demand) must go hand-in-hand. It thus endorses the dual strategy proposed by the Commission. In the Opinion on this report, which was adopted by 84 votes for, 2 votes against and 5 abstentions, the Committee stresses the need for a constructive dialogue and consensus between the two sides of industry and governments at national level and the Council at Community level.

The Committee considers that this dialogue should focus in particular on the reduction and adaptation of working time, greater labour market flexibility, a say for workers in the introduction of new technologies, continuation of an appropriate wage trend and a more job-creating expansion of private and public investment.

It observes that the growth rate expected in 1985 (2.3% of GDP) will be insufficient to bring about a return to economic equilibrium. Also, unemployment will not come down appreciably. The ESC notes with regret that, although a slight improvement in employment is expected in 1986, it will not be enough to reduce the number of jobless. It is therefore necessary to achieve higher growth through measures to improve the supply-side situation in all the markets. These measures should go hand-in-hand with a policy designed to support the demand side of the economy.

¹⁾ CES 1022/85.

The ESC calls for the implementation of a programme of investment in construction, housing, infrastructure, protection of the environment, welfare and health care. The Community has sufficient borrowing capacity to finance such infrastructure projects. The ESC points out, however, that it could be beneficial if the Community were to develop a new financing formula for cases where the present financing instruments are inadequate. The real problem is how to stimulate private investment, particularly investment in new firms and the expansion of existing firms. These investments are of the greatest importance for maintaining and increasing the competitiveness of European industry. With a view also to the creation of new jobs, the Commission and the Member States should therefore continue their efforts to bring about a favourable climate for an expansion of such investment.

A contribution to European economic recovery could be made by lower interest rates, which Europe could bring about on its own as a fairly stable monetary bloc and which would also be facilitated if there were a prospect of more balanced monetary relationships.

A new GATT round and an international monetary conference are desirable in the interests of an orderly world monetary system. An effective competition policy is also important for the success of the Community growth strategy. This applies both to policy on agreements between firms and to policy on government measures that distort competition.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Economic and Financial Questions, chaired by Mr Marvier (France — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Goris (Netherlands — Various Interests).

2. INTERNAL MARKET

Completing the internal market — White Paper from the Commission to the European Council (Milan, 28-29 June 1985) (COM(85) 310 final)

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Commission's White Paper sets out the essential and logical consequences of accepting the European Council's repeated commitment to completing the internal market by 1992, together with an action programme of the measures needed to meet that objective. The annex sets out the detailed timetable for implementing the Commission's proposed programme.

The specific measures set out in the timetable aim to eliminate barriers of all kinds (physical, technical and fiscal). By 1992, Community citizens would for the first time be free to move within the Community without systematic checks on their identity or personal belongings; goods would be freed of all controls at internal frontiers; Community manufacturers would be able to market freely their goods on the basis of mutually agreed standards throughout the Community; and enterprises would be relieved of the current obstacles to providing cross-border services.

The White Paper addresses the internal market in the broadest sense. Its proposals thus cover:

the removal of physical barriers, especially administrative checks, commercial policy (Art. 115), health and veterinary controls, transport (quotas and safety standards), and controls on movements by individuals;

removal of technical barriers, putting into action the new approach examined recently by the Committee (Opinion of April Plenary, rapporteur: Mr Pearson);

public procurement, (report currently under examination by the Section for Industry);

free movement for workers and the professions, including the removal of remaining obstacles to free movement and residence of migrant Community workers, recognition of qualifications, promotion of mobility of students;

common market for services, including financial services, transport (cabotage, passenger transport, sea and air transport), new technology services, especially information;

capital movements;

conditions for industrial cooperation, including company law, trademarks and patents, company taxation;

application of Community law, including competition policy;

the removal of fiscal barriers, with prospects for significant approximation of excise and VAT rates.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

The Economic and Social Committee warmly welcomed some of the EC Commission's recommendations for completing the internal market by 1992. The Commission's deadlines might seem ambitious because of the

¹ CES 1019/85.

obstacles which still had to be overcome, the Committee said. In its Opinion, adopted by 90 votes for, 14 against and 17 abstentions, the Committee urged the Council to reform its procedures and accept decision-making by a qualified majority.

However, the Committee, which for several years has been calling for a totally unified internal market, regrets the lack of a social dimension in the White Paper.

The completion of the internal market must be accompanied by a narrowing of the gap between the most prosperous and the least prosperous economies of the Community. The opening of the market will require a clear commitment to implement accompanying structural policies (such as regional policy); otherwise some of the Member States will not be able to accept, and tolerate, such a high level of liberalization.

An internal market cannot be achieved without a forward-looking European policy on economic growth and jobs.

The Committee considers that an effective competition policy is essential to maintaining and improving the internal market. Any abusive concentration in a market or anti-competitive restrictive trading practices must be fought vigorously. The Committee particularly calls for legislation to ensure Community-level control of company mergers.

The programme put forward by the White Paper must not be considered as being of purely mercantile interest. Measures such as the removal of frontier checks and the mutual recognition of diplomas will have a direct positive effect on many citizens of the Community, and are thus significant for society as a whole. They represent an important step forward towards a 'People's Europe'.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by a Sub-Committee, chaired by Mrs Strobel (FR of Germany — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Poeton (United Kingdom — Employers).

3. MARITIME TRANSPORT

Progress towards a common transport policy — maritime transport (COM(85) 90 final)

Gist of the Commission document

The European Community is the leading trading area in the world. Its trade with non-EC countries in 1982 represented 21% by value of world imports and 20% of world exports. Maritime transport is far and away

the most important carrier of this trade. About 95% of the total quantity of EC trade (in tonnes) with non-EC countries and about 30% of intra-Community traffic is carried by sea. This shows how the EC is dependent on world trade and how its maritime shipping interests are in turn dependent on the international maritime shipping markets.

The Commission holds the view that the maintenance of a multi-lateral, market-economy orientated maritime shipping policy remains in the interests of the EC maritime shipping industry and that of shippers, in spite of EC vessels' declining share of the world fleet. It is consequently more necessary than ever for the Community and the Member States to take action against the growing danger to EC interests posed by practices and policies employed by non-EC countries which make it more difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a market economy system. One of the priorities of the memorandum is therefore to set out proposed counter-measures.

The concrete proposals annexed to the memorandum (legal basis: Article 84, paragraph 2 of the EEC Treaty) cover the following subjects:

Draft Council Regulation concerning coordinated action to safeguard free access to cargoes in ocean trades.

(Measures designed to ensure that counter-measures do not lead to the switching of freight from one port in the Community to another) (Annex II.1.).

Draft Council Regulation applying the principle of freedom to provide services to maritime transport (Annex II.2.).

Draft Council Decision amending Council Decision No 77/587/EEC of 13 September 1977 setting up a consultation procedure on relations between Member States and third countries in shipping matters and on action relating to such matters in international organizations.

(The amended decision would make it possible to hold prior consultations on relations between Member States and non-EC countries in the field of maritime transport) (Annex II.3).

Draft Council Directive concerning a common interpretation of the concept of 'national shipping line'.

(Under this Directive Member States are to take the necessary measures to ensure that shipping lines which are 'national shipping lines' within the meaning of the UN Convention on a Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences may take part in conferences in accordance with the procedure set out in Article 2 of Regulation (EEC) No 954/79,

provided that they meet the conditions set out in the second paragraph of Article 1 of the draft Directive) (Annex II.4.).

Amendment to the Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) laying down detailed rules for the application of Articles 85 and 86 of the Treaty to maritime transport.

(The Commission is concerned over the growing tendency to exclude outsiders from traffic in which closed conferences are operating. These cases are particularly serious when a State prevents competition from outsiders at one end of a route. The Commission's proposal is aimed particularly at dealing with this problem) (Annex II.5.).

Draft Council Regulation on unfair pricing practices in maritime transport (liner trade).

(The aim of this draft regulation is to enable the Community to take measures to compensate for unfair pricing practices) (Annex II.6.).

The communication from the Commission also surveys developments in bulk shipping and open-registry shipping. In the case of both of these fields the Commission considers that the Community's interests are best served by pursuing a liberal maritime shipping policy. In the event of the misuse of this freedom, such as by the use of ships which do not conform to standards or the adoption of unacceptable working conditions, it should be possible to take strict measures to put a stop to unacceptable practices.

The Commission also wants to continue its work in the field of maritime safety and the prevention of maritime pollution. The main fields of action are as follows:

the development and coordination of port-State control (minimum standards for ships and working conditions);

consideration of the need for a network of shore-based navigation aids to improve maritime safety in the Community's coastal waters, followed by the establishment of such a network if it proves to be advisable;

measures to facilitate the transfer of ships between Community countries;

the establishment of common standards for the training of Vessel Traffic Management Services (VTS) staff (captains and crews).

As regards seaports, the Commission holds the view that they should be considered against the background of the establishment of a common transport policy covering maritime shipping and inland transport. In its memorandum the Commission therefore draws attention to

the proposal which it recently submitted to the Council on the elimination of distortions in competition between seaports owing to different regulations laid down by the various Member States with regard to hinterland traffic. The Commission has let it be known that it will be taking a fresh look at State aid to seaports and intends to tackle this issue on the basis of Articles 92 and 93 of the Treaty. The Commission also intends to intensify its cooperation with seaports in the field of information technology (exchange of information).

Finally, the Commission intends to put forward proposals, by 1986 at the latest, with regard to research programmes in the field of maritime transport (maritime systems, transport needs, new means of transport, ship-harbour interfaces, ship safety and environmental protection, ship economy and competitiveness). The Commission also wishes to exercise more effective control over the transport of EC food aid to developing countries and maritime fraud.

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Opinion, adopted unanimously, is confined to four Annexes to the Memorandum. The Committee will therefore continue its examination of the Commission document and deliver a (final) Opinion in the first half of 1986.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Transport and Communications, chaired by Mr Delourme (Belgium — Workers). The rapporteur was Mr Mols Sørensen (Denmark — Workers) and the co-rapporteur was Mrs Bredima (Greece — Employers).

4. COMMUNITY QUOTA/ENLARGEMENT SPAIN-PORTUGAL

Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 3164/76 on the Community quota for the carriage of goods by road between Member States (COM (85) 519 final)

Gist of the Commission Proposal

In December 1984, the Council of Ministers agreed to raise the number of road haulage authorizations by 30% in 1985 and by 15% in each of the four subsequent years (EEC Regulation No 3621/84).

¹ CES 1023/85.

To take account of the accession of Spain and Portugal, the Commission is fixing the quotas for the new Member States as from 1 January 1986 but it also thinks that provision should be made for a further increase in the quotas for the Member States of the Community of Ten in order to cater for the increase in trade resulting from enlargement (cf. point 1 in explanatory memorandum for method of calculation).

The proposed number of authorizations is as follows:

	1985	1986 ⁽¹⁾	1986 ⁽²⁾
Belgium	570	657	707
Denmark	469	581	625
Germany	914	1 034	1 112
Greece	131	158	170
France	801	890	957
Ireland	147	189	204
Italy	721	821	883
Luxembourg	179	227	245
Netherlands	785	888	955
United Kingdom	551	626	673
Spain	—	—	673
Portugal	—	—	233
	5 268	6 071 (+ 15,2%)	7 437 (+ 24% excluding both Spain and Portugal)

Gist of the Committee Opinion³

The Economic and Social Committee adopted unanimously less 2 abstentions, its Opinion on this subject.

While abiding by its previous comments on the subject of Community road haulage authorizations, it considers that Spanish and Portuguese accession is the sole justification for the Commission proposal.

¹ Increase of 15.2% vis-à-vis 1985;

² increase of 24% vis-à-vis 1985 or 7,6% vis-à-vis the shares laid down in Commission Decision 85/476/EEC of 27 September 1985;

³ CES 1016/85.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Transport and Communications, chaired by Mr Delourme (Belgium — Workers). The rapporteur was Mr Binnenbruck (Germany — Employers).

5. MORTGAGE CREDIT

Proposal for a Council Directive on the freedom of establishment and the free supply of services in the field of mortgage credit (COM(84) 730 final)

Gist of the Commission's proposal

There are no longer any major obstacles within the Community to the activities exercised abroad by commercial banks authorized to undertake their activities in accordance with the first Banking Directive of 1977 on the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the taking up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions (77/780). Such obstacles remain, however, for specialized mortgage credit institutions wanting to grant mortgage loans or to fund themselves outside their country of establishment.

This proposal for a directive abolishes all institutional and technical provisions preventing or obstructing a credit institution from undertaking mortgage business throughout the Community. The purpose of this proposal is not to coordinate the legal provisions applicable to mortgage credit in the Member States, but to create a legal environment which will enable the interested credit institutions to operate mortgage credit in the different Member States by a sort of mutual recognition of the relevant finance techniques authorized in these Member States.

This development presupposes that the national supervisory authorities are confident that the said institutions are properly licensed and properly supervised.

The opening up of the mortgage credit market on a European basis will be of great practical benefit to mortgage credit consumers who will then have available a wide choice of mortgage credit instruments.

In its Opinion adopted on 3 July 1981 following the Symposium on Construction and Growth held in September 1980, the Committee expressed the wish that mortgage credit institutions be allowed to extend their activities to the whole of the Community and called on the Commission to give priority to tackling freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services in this sector (point 2.2.6.).

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously less 9 abstentions, the Committee welcomes the Commission's new approach, which has taken the famous 'Cassis de Dijon' judgment of the European Court of Justice as the basis for finding a solution for the mortgage credit sector. This judgment lays down the principle that a product marketed in one EEC country in compliance with that country's regulations must be allowed to circulate on equal terms and without restriction in the other EEC countries.

The Committee supports this approach, which should help bring about a 'People's Europe' by providing consumers with a wider range of products.

This 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 Pelletier (France — Employers).

6. GSPs 1986

Proposal from the Commission to the Council fixing the Community's Generalized Tariff Preferences Scheme for 1986 (COM(85) 425 final)

Gist of the Commission proposal

This is the first annual GSP proposal submitted by the Commission following the review of the scheme (for the five-year period 1986/90)² on which the Committee recently gave its views.³

The Commission has acted on its review by initiating a 'cross selectivity' approach (by product and by country) which meets the concerns voiced by the Committee previously.

On the other hand, the Commission has not followed up the Committee's proposal to exclude countries whose GNP reaches the level of one of the Member States or its opposition to the setting-up of a management committee which, in the ESC's view, would handle questions falling within the competence of the Commission itself.

¹ CES 1018/85.

² COM(85) 203 final.

³ Opinion of 26 September 1985 (CES 774/85).

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its unanimous Opinion, the Committee thinks it unfortunate that the Commission's GSP proposals for 1986 incorporate the policies set out in its earlier proposal regarding a review of the European Community's Generalized Tariff Preferences Scheme for 1986-90, without waiting for the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee. The Committee is nevertheless pleased that from 1986 the Commission intends to put into operation the principle of cross-selectivity advocated by members of the Committee.

The ESC strongly reaffirms its belief:

that a more realistic economic threshold, namely per capita GNP, should be fixed for the purpose of working out when developing countries lose their entitlement to GSP benefits;

that the following should be excluded from the GSP: counterfeit products; products which, on entering the Community, are subject to anti-dumping and/or anti-subsidy measures; and manufactured goods from countries which levy excessive export duties on the raw materials used;

that in all aspects of external relations the Community should seek, notably through GSPs, to promote the observance of equitable labour standards as defined by the International Labour Organization.

Finally, the Committee maintains its opposition to the creation of a Management Committee which would make the decision-making procedure more cumbersome, protracted and expensive.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for External Relations, chaired by Mr Zinkin (UK — Employers). The rapporteur was Mr Cavazutti (Italy — Workers).

7. POSTAL CHARGES

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) abolishing certain postal charges for customs presentation (COM(85) 356 final)

Gist of the Commission document

In 1979 the Council adopted a decision to abolish customs presentation charges for consignments of goods shipped from a Member State which benefit from exemption from turnover taxes and excise duties.

¹ CES 1017/85.

However, where there are taxes to collect, eight Member States still levy presentation charges, perceived as customs charges, (Court of Justice — Case 39/82), even though these charges are formally a payment to the postal service for work done on the addressee's behalf.

This is why the Commission proposes abolition of postal charges for customs presentation in all cases where parcels containing Community goods are sent from one Member State to another. It does so at a time when it is pursuing its goal of mobilizing the current widespread public support for a 'People's Europe' in order to strengthen the internal market and foster the sense of belonging to a single Community.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

The Committee approves unanimously the Draft Regulation which is aimed at abolishing postal charges for customs presentation in all cases where parcels containing Community goods are sent from one Member State to another.

This 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 Broicher (Germany — Employers).

8. APPLICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to members of their families moving within the Community (COM(85) 396 final)

Gist of the Commission document

The Commission proposal seeks to include within the scope of the Regulation No 1408/71 certain non-contributory cash benefits (i.e. supplementary disabled, minimum social income) legislated for in some Member States. This is in response to uncertainties facing migrant workers and their families who have been refused such benefits on grounds of nationality or residence.

Entitlement to benefit will now be accorded to actual residents of a Member State, regardless of nationality or country of employment,

¹ CES 1015/85.

whilst taking into account periods of residence, employment or self-employment completed in another Member State if necessary for the purposes of entitlement to the special benefits where resident. A beneficiary who transfers his or her residence to another Member State will therefore apply for benefit entitlement legislated by the latter, the former Member State of residence no longer being obliged to export entitlement to the benefit accorded under its own legislation.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In an Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee supports the Commission's proposal. This proposal, in its moving away from the usage of the term 'migrant', is consistent with steps towards cohesion of the Community and the pursuance of a 'People's Europe'.

The Committee notes the growing significance of non-contributory benefits in the context of contemporary social and economic conditions.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Social Questions, chaired by Mr Kirschen (Italy — Workers). The rapporteur was Mr Pearson (Ireland — Employers).

9. EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) No 2950/83 on the implementation of Decision 83/516/EEC on the tasks of the European Social Fund (COM(85) 451 final)

Gist of the Commission document

The granting of recruitment aid to create additional jobs for job-seekers under 25, and for the long-term unemployed, is provided for under Article 1(c) of Regulation (EEC) No 2950/83. This notion of recruitment implies salaried employment, i.e. a work relationship based on a contract between employer and employee. Article 1(c) of this same regulation does not therefore cover young (under-25) job-seekers, or long-term unemployed people, who set up as independent workers.

The Commission considers that under present conditions of very high unemployment, the creation of additional jobs has a vital economic and social role and should not be confined to salaried

¹ CES 1012/85.

employment. The Community's objective of reducing the number of unemployed can be attained just as easily by creating independent jobs as by creating salaried jobs. This statement implies that in granting aid to create additional jobs, the self-employed should be covered as well as those in salaried employment.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In a unanimous Opinion, the Committee approves the Commission proposal, whilst stressing the accompanying needs for an increase in the Social Fund budget, for close cooperation with other EC structural instruments, and for the maintenance of the principle of 'additionality'.

The Committee stresses the importance of helping the self-employed in the interests of discouraging all forms of moonlighting, and considers that help should be given to self-employed persons who opt to join cooperative-type schemes.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Social Questions, chaired by Mr Kirschen (Italy — Workers). The Rapporteur was Mr Beretta (Italy — Workers).

10. SOCIAL FUND — SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 2950/83 on the implementation of Decision 83/516/EEC on the tasks of the European Social Fund in view of the accession of Spain and Portugal and Proposal for a Council Decision amending Decision 83/516/EEC on the tasks of the European Social Fund in view of the accession of Spain and Portugal (COM(85) 579 final)

Gist of the Commission document

The proposals aim to adapt the rules governing the Social Fund in the light of the accession of Spain and Portugal.

Under the proposed regulation, the whole of Portugal and the nine autonomous Spanish regions of Andalusia, the Canaries, Castille-Leon, Castille-La Mancha, Extremadura, Galicia, Murcia and the *ciudades* of Ceuta and Melilla would be included in the list of Social Fund absolute-priority regions 'characterized by especially serious and prolonged

¹ CES 1013/85.

imbalance in employment' (Council Decision: 83/516/EEC). These regions qualify for an increased Social Fund assistance rate of 55% of public expenditure (instead of 50% for other regions) and accelerated amortization of training centres. At present, the list of absolute-priority regions includes the whole of Greece and Ireland, Northern Ireland, the French overseas departments and the Mezzogiorno.

The proposed decision concerns the allocation of the appropriations available. At present, 40% of Social Fund appropriations are devoted to the absolute-priority regions. After the inclusion of Portugal and the Spanish regions referred to above, the Commission proposes that this percentage be raised to 42.5% in 1986, to 43.5% in 1987 and 44.5% in 1988. This percentage and the increase in the Social Fund budget will enable the Spanish and Portuguese regions to benefit from Social Fund resources on a basis similar to that of the absolute-priority regions of the Community as it now stands.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

The Committee's Opinion, adopted with 62 votes in favour and 7 abstentions, notes the proposals to include Portugal and nine autonomous regions of Spain in the list of regions qualifying for the increased rate of ESF assistance.

The Committee reiterates the need to increase the Fund's budget. Failure to do so would considerably heighten the risk of fragmenting the use of the money available. It also stresses the need for an acceptable balance between support for priority regions and support for other regions.

In view of the exceptional circumstances represented by the accession of two new Member States, the Committee supports the proposals for 1986 only and subject to the proportion for the absolute-priority regions being increased to 45%. It feels that in the meantime the Fund's objectives must be clarified and its budget increased, so that it can play its part in fighting unemployment and supporting the economic recovery in a spirit of solidarity.

The rapporteur-general for this Opinion was Mr Beretta (Italy — Workers).

¹ CES 1021/85.

11. EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TECHNOLOGY (COMETT)

Proposal for a Council Decision adopting an action programme of the Community in education and training for technology — Comett (1986-92) (COM(85) 431 final)

Gist of the Commission document

In announcing its work programme for 1985, the Commission stated its intention to present proposals to the Council in summer 1985 for strengthening cooperation between universities and other higher education institutions on the one hand, and industry on the other, so that the Community might better respond to the challenges posed by technological and social change. The purpose is to improve the initial training of undergraduate and postgraduate students, to foster the continuing training of skilled technical and managerial staff so that European firms apply modern and efficient equipment and production processes.

The proposals for a new Community action programme, to be known as Comett (action programme of the Community in education and training for technology) have been drafted to take full account of the comments and advice received following wide-ranging consultations. They have been designed to provide a Community dimension to university-industry cooperation on advanced level training as it relates to innovation and the development and application of new technology. Comett would complement existing achievements in the Member States by promoting:

- (a) the European identity through student mobility programmes which will enable the current generation of students to develop a practical commitment to European industrial and technological developments;
- (b) economies of scale through jointly organized new training programmes which are required by rapid technological change;
- (c) exchange of experience within the Community in the field of university-industry cooperation in advanced training.

The four main objectives of Comett may be summarized as follows:
to promote the European dimension of cooperation between university and industry in advanced level training relating to innovation and the development and application of new technologies;
to promote the exchange of experience, the pooling of resources and the realization of economies of scale, through the joint development of advanced training programmes;

to strengthen and diversify provisions for advanced training at local and regional level and contribute to the balanced economic development of the Community;

to identify progressively gaps and new priorities in existing training policies and provisions which could be filled by supplementary action both within Member States and at Community level.

The programme would be carried out in two phases over a period of seven years (1986-92). The first four-year phase would provide a period for the launching in 1986 and initial development over 1987-89 of a series of actions which could then be consolidated or adjusted as appropriate in the light of experience for the second phase.

During the first phase (1986-89), Comett would focus on the following five interrelated areas of action:

- (a) the development of a European network of university-industry training partnerships;
- (b) the launching of Community exchange schemes between university and industry, involving students as well as academic and industrial staff;
- (c) the design, development and evaluation of specific joint training projects directly related to the needs of high technology industry in the Community;
- (d) the promotion of joint efforts between university and industry in developing open learning systems and in pooling of efforts concerning the training of trainers;
- (e) supporting activities and exchange of experience including the setting up of a Community level data base on university-industry cooperation in advanced training, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of information.

The second phase of Comett (1990-92) would serve to consolidate and develop activities launched during the first phase. It should in particular:

- (a) strengthen the European dimension of the university-industry training partnerships by increasing substantially the number of cooperative projects carried out between university-industry training partnerships in different Member States; include in the network new initiatives in other parts of the Community; encourage the transfer of experience gained into the mainstream of the different systems in each Member State;
- (b) provide for the adaptation and expansion of Comett, in the light of experience during the first phase and the links developed with research activities at Community level, broadening out as

- appropriate to encourage the mobility of other categories of students, trainers, academic or industrial staff within the framework of university-industry cooperation;
- (c) promote further joint training projects between European industry using prototypes and incentives modified, as appropriate, in the light of experience during the first phase;
 - (d) intensify development work on European open technological university systems, broadening to include all Member States and extending operations related to the training of instructors and managers.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

The Committee unanimously adopted its Opinion which supports the action programme submitted by the Commission. It endorses the Commission's statement that in a highly technological age managers must not only possess specialist skills, but also have a 'broad appreciation of the economic, social and cultural repercussions of technological change'.

In its specific comments, the Committee deals with the practical procedures and objectives of university/industry cooperation, small firms' problems with respect to participation in the proposed exchange programmes, the use of distance learning systems and the way Comett will be implemented.

The European dimension of the Comett exchange programmes will promote the intensive learning of European languages.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Social Questions, chaired by Mr Kirschen (Italy — Workers). The rapporteur was Mr Nierhaus (Germany — Workers).

12. GAS OIL SULPHUR CONTENT

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive No 75/716/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels (COM(85) 377 final)

¹ CES 1014/85.

Gist of the Commission document

The proposed amendment to the framework Directive 75/716/EEC provides for:

- (a) a reduction in the maximum permitted sulphur content of gas oil placed on the market within the Community from 0.5% to 0.3% from 1 July 1987;
- (b) removal of the distinction made in the framework Directive between type A (0.3% sulphur content) and type B (sulphur content 0.5%) gas oils;
- (c) the responsible authorities to be permitted to require the use of gas oil with a sulphur content even lower than 0.3%, though not less than 0.2%, in certain specific regions or throughout the territory of a Member State where serious environmental problems so demand. This measure will, among other things, help to meet Germany's wishes.

The Commission takes the view that it would not be warranted to go below the 0.2% level for the sulphur content of gas oils in view of the substantial increase in the cost of desulphurization once that concentration threshold is crossed and the resulting risk of distorting the internal market in these products.

The oil industry has estimated that the additional cost per tonne of gas oil involved in applying the proposed Directive would be almost USD 3 (based on 1983 costs), assuming that the 0.2% limit is adopted in Germany and the 0.3% limit in all other Member States. Total annual operating costs (including capital costs) would be almost USD 450 million.

It should, however, be pointed out that the oil industry has gone on the basis of an average gas-oil sulphur content of 0.43% for the Community as a whole, whereas this figure is currently 0.34%. The estimated costs could therefore be too high.

It is also worth noting that the cost of desulphurization increases fairly steeply if the required sulphur content is below 0.2%. Below that figure, for example, the marginal cost of separation rises from USD 1 900 to USD 7 000 per tonne of sulphur.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

By a large majority (with 3 votes against and 7 abstentions) the Committee has adopted an Opinion which welcomes the proposed directive

¹ CES 1020/85.

wholeheartedly and asks the Commission to report by 1 July 1989 on its implementation.

The Committee also points out that measures to improve the environment may involve sacrifices for both producers and consumers.

It is the Committee's view that environmental protection is beneficial to human health and to jobs. But it should not lead to additional trade barriers between countries. Only standardized laws and other provisions applied strictly will ensure equal opportunities and sacrifices for national industries.

The rapporteur-general for this Opinion was Mr Flum (Germany — Workers).

13. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ECSC

Proposal for Council Decisions concerning contributions to the European Coal and Steel Community from the general budget of the European Communities to finance measures connected with the restructuring of the coal and steel industries (COM(85) 428 final)

Gist of the Commission proposals

The continuing restructuring of the coal and steel industries will involve major job losses in both sectors. Unemployment is already very high in several steel-producing regions, and it seems unlikely that the market will be able to redeploy the workers made redundant by restructuring.

The Commission therefore proposes that the Community continue to finance the special social measures which were introduced for the period 1984 to 1986 in connection with restructuring.

Total Community funding will amount to 510 million ECU. 122.5 million ECU of this was transferred from the general budget to the ECSC in 1984.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

The Committee adopted its Opinion by 48 votes for and 5 votes against. It approves the proposed transfer of contributions from the general budget to the ECSC, but thinks that it would be useful to consider the proposals in conjunction with the policy for restructuring these

¹ CES 1024/85.

industries and, as far as coal is concerned, in conjunction with the Community's energy policy.

In addition, the ESC thinks that the problem of financing, even in the medium-term, still has to be resolved, and it would ask the Commission to look for a solution to this problem.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Economic and Financial Questions, chaired by Mr Marvier (France — Various Interests). The rapporteur was Mr Arena (Italy — Employers).

14. TAX MEASURES IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR

Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs meeting within the Council concerning the adoption of tax measures in the cultural sector (COM(85) 194 final)

Gist of the Commission's proposal

The Commission proposes the adoption of a resolution providing an EC framework for:

- calculations of cultural workers' incomes being spread over a number of tax years;
- tax exemption for approved cultural foundations;
- tax deductions for gifts and bequests to approved foundations;
- works of art being accepted in payment of succession duties;
- tax abatement on private properties with cultural value, together with a systematic deduction from taxable income of expenditure on maintenance and conservation;
- similar tax treatment for cultural investment;
- protecting and promoting the demand for cultural products through an appropriate tax structure.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted unanimously, the Committee supports the initiative. It urges the Commission to propose a common definition of the term 'cultural worker', and it considers that a period of seven years

¹ CES 1011/85.

would be appropriate for spreading the income tax calculation applicable to such workers.

On other points, the Committee believes that care must be taken not to aid abuses in 'cultural speculation', whilst urging that tax relief be granted on expenditure on works of art in public buildings or in buildings benefiting from public aid.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the paper produced by the Section for Social Questions, chaired by Mr Kirschen (Italy — Workers). The rapporteur was Mr Roseingrave (Ireland — Various Interests).

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Chairman in Washington

An ESC delegation comprising Mr Muhr (Chairman), Mr Emo Capodilista and Mr Noordwal (Vice-Chairmen) and Mr Zinkin, Mr Lauga and Mr Curlis (members) was in Washington from 18 to 23 November 1985.

This was a fact-finding visit designed to establish closer relations between US and European business and trade union organizations. The delegation met members of Congress, senior officials from the US Departments of State, Agriculture, Labor and Commerce, and top-level representatives of the National Association of Manufacturers, the US Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Administration, the AFL-CIO and the American Enterprise Institute.

Visit by ESC Vice-Chairman to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)

Mr Philip Noordwal, Vice-Chairman of the Economic and Social Committee (Netherlands — Employers' Group), visited Kuala Lumpur to meet representatives of business in the Asean countries and in the Community Member States.

The discussions, which took place at the Asean Business Council on 28 November 1985, were concerned mainly with economic problems in general and the results of the EEC/Asean ministerial meeting that took place recently in Bangkok. Mr Noordwal also made some proposals for strengthening cooperation between Community and Asean socio-economic interest groups.

Other activities

Mr Mosar, Commissioner for energy issues, attended the 8 November meeting of the Section for Energy and Nuclear Questions.

Mr Schlechter, Luxembourg Minister for Transport and Energy and Council President-in-office, attended the 22 November meeting of the Section for Transport and Communications.

Mr Hemmer, ESC member, attended the Community conference on the European youth year held in Luxembourg on 18-20 November.

Mr Brassier, ESC member, and Mr Louet, Secretary-General, attended the formal meeting held by the EEC doctors' committee in Brussels on 21 November to mark its 25th anniversary.

Mrs Williams, ESC member, attended the conference on the prevention of accidental poisoning in childhood, held by the European Consumer Product Safety Association on 21/22 November in Brussels.

Mrs Rangoni-Machiavelli and Mrs Williams attended the consumer education conference hosted by the centre for practical studies of international negotiation in Geneva on 25/26 November.

Mr Schnieders, ESC member, attended the 26 November conference on Agrar- und Umweltpolitik als Zankapfel in Europa, hosted in Bonn-Bad Godesberg by the Deutsches Komitee für kulturelle Zusammenarbeit in Europa.

On 29 November Mr Murphy, ESC member, attended the round table conference on safety aspects of non-nuclear hazardous wastes, hosted in Dublin by the European Foundation.

NEW CONSULTATIONS

Since the last Plenary Session the Council has requested the Economic and Social Committee to deliver Opinions on the following subjects:

'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 80/102/EEC' (COM(85) 578 final)

'Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 82/501/EEC on the major-accident hazards of certain industrial activities' (COM(85) 572 final)

PROVISIONAL FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

December 1985 Plenary Session

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- Colouring matters in foodstuffs
- Transfrontier shipment of hazardous waste
- Research action programme on advanced materials
- Organization of the markets in the sugar sector
- Bovine leukosis
- Financial regulation
- Manufactured tobaccos

Information Report

- Effects of the CAP on the social situation of farm workers in the Community

Subsequent Plenary Sessions

Opinions upon consultation

- R&D Programme in the field of the environment
- System for the recognition of higher education diplomas
- Major accident hazards
- Consumer education
- Residues in meat
- 10th ERDF Report
- Public supply contracts
- Customs warehouses
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- Dangerous substances
- Quality of surface waters

Aids to shipbuilding (supplementary Opinion)

Facilitation of inspections/formalities in respect of the carriage of goods

GATT and EEC agriculture (additional Opinion)

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