

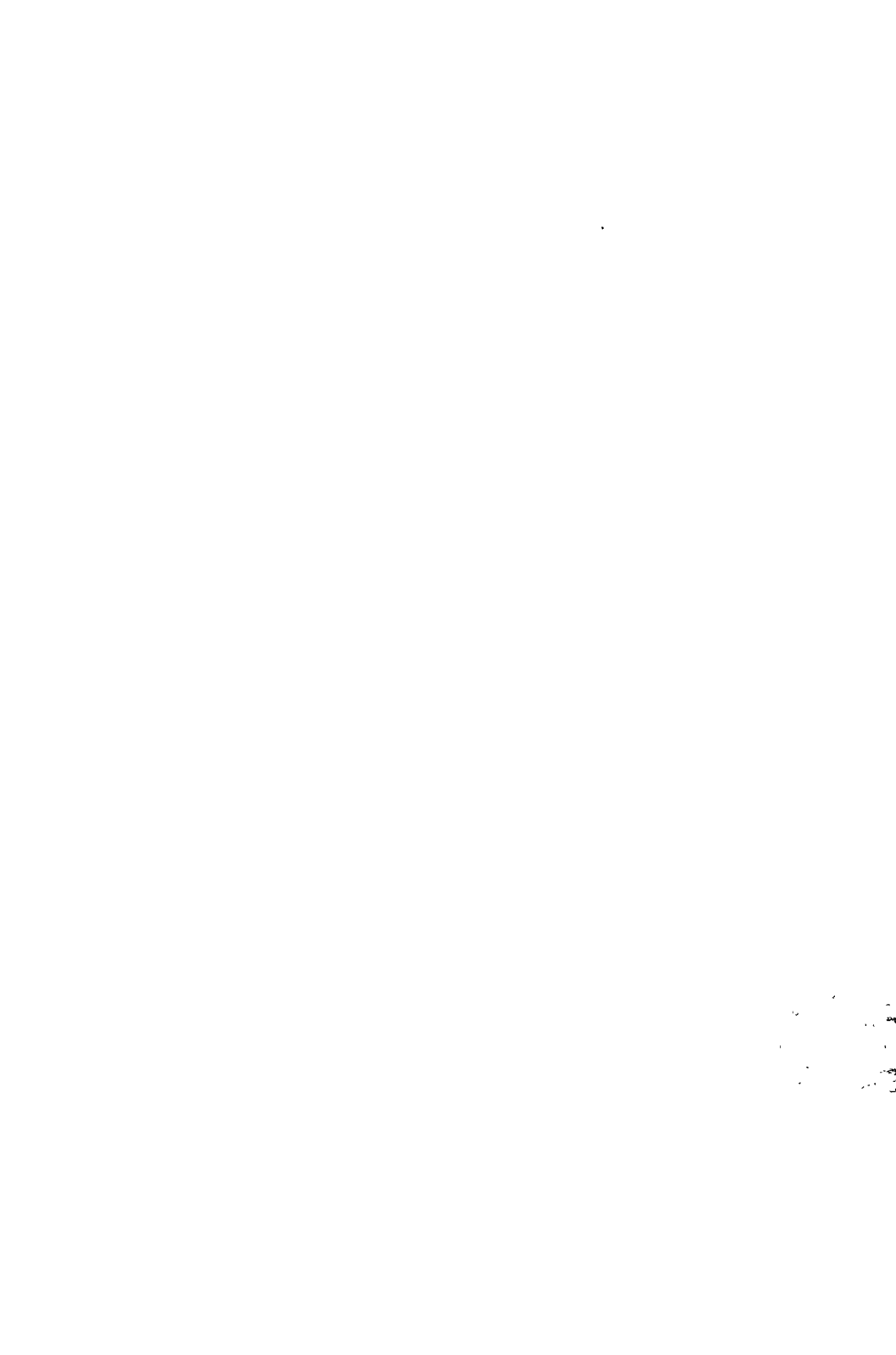
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

# BULLETIN



**Brussels - N. 1/1980**

*CES:1*



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## **175th PLENARY SESSION**

The 175th Plenary Session of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities was held at Committee headquarters, Brussels, on 30 and 31 January 1980 under the chairmanship of the Committee Chairman, Mr VANNI.

The Session was attended by Mr F. PANDOLFI, Italian Treasury Minister and President-in-Office of the Council.

### **Chairman's speech**

In his opening speech, Mr VANNI stated that the Report of the Three Wise Men and the statement by the President-in-Office of the Council, Mr RUFFINI, had expressed the wish to see the Economic and Social Committee play a more important part among the Community institutions.

The Bureau had already drawn up some proposals on the subject, which might be submitted to the Plenary Session in March.

The Chairman said he had had contacts with the various representative European organizations. He stressed the importance for the Committee of maintaining the best possible relations with organizations that represent the overall views of European interest groups.

The initiative undertaken to bring the economic and social circles of the CAP countries into closer association with the Community would be intensified in May with the second meeting between the economic and social representatives of the ACP countries under the auspices of the ACP-EEC Joint Committee. The large Committee delegation to this meeting would have the opportunity to prepare the Committee's contribution in the coming months.

The Bureau had also decided to organize a conference on the problems of Community enlargement on the basis of the Committee's Opinion of July 1979. This idea had been warmly received by the governmental and economic and social circles of Greece, Portugal and Spain. The Council and the Commission were also in favour of the idea.

The Committee would thus provide the economic and social representatives of the Community, Greece, Spain and Portugal with a unique opportunity to meet and exchange views.

## **ADOPTION OF OPINIONS**

### **1. ENERGY SAVING**

*«Communication from the Commission to the Council on New Lines of Action by the European Community in the Field of Energy Saving, and a Draft Resolution of the Council».*

#### **Gist of the Proposal**

This proposal, made a few days after the St. Geours Report, attempts to set basic objectives for energy policy over the coming decade with a view to reducing the correlation between economy growth and energy consumption. It invites the Commission to work towards targets for vehicle fuel consumption, standards for energy consumption for heat generation, etc.

The proposal includes an outline basic programme for saving energy recommended to every Member State of the European Community. This basic programme covers :

- a) Pricing practices, especially the impact of taxation, cost functions, and the need for publicity regarding energy costs.
- b) Specific measures to encourage the rational use of energy. These cover the home, industry, commerce and transport. Reference is also made to efficient energy production, information programmes regarding energy saving, and the need for further R & D.

## **Gist of the Opinion**

In this Opinion \*, which was adopted unanimously, the Economic and Social Committee calls on the Member States to show genuine Community solidarity by adopting a basic energy-saving programme. The Committee feels that such a programme requires the backing of Community citizens if increases in Community energy consumption are to be curtailed.

The Committee feels that the issue must be analyzed against the background of Community economic and social policy. It regrets that Community solidarity has been undermined by the deepening energy crisis.

Since there is little prospect of an international solution, and given the energy problem facing the Member States, the ESC calls for adoption of a genuine common policy on energy which will underpin economic and social development.

The Committee makes a number of other points :

- it is vital that the Member States honour their undertaking to implement similar, consistent energy conservation programmes;
- given the different energy consumption patterns in the Member States and the inadequacy of statistics in this area, the Commission should (a) undertake detailed comparative research into the effectiveness of national energy-conservation programmes and (b) should encourage the Member States to take the necessary action and to arouse public interest in the matter and ensure public discussion;
- the intention to cut the economic growth/energy consumption ratio to 1:0.7 is a bench mark and not a positive objective since it is impossible to determine the actual ratio in the individual Member States and sectors, or to use it to achieve the desired objective;
- price hikes should be phased and sufficiently balanced to

(\* ) Opinion n° CES 89/80

- avoid fuelling inflation; they must be accompanied by a policy of conserving energy and promoting the development of alternative energy sources;
- special measures - including mobilization of the funds needed for the requisite investment - will have to be taken to secure energy savings of 15 - 30 % in industry, domestic heating, etc.

*This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Energy and Nuclear Questions under the chairmanship of Mr HATRY - Belgium - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr ROMOLI - Italy - Employers.*

## **2. POVERTY**

*«Proposal for a Council Decision concerning an Interim Programme to Combat Poverty».*

### **Gist of the Commission document**

With this proposal for a Council Decision concerning an interim programme to combat poverty, the Commission is stressing the need and desirability to launch an **interim** programme, concentrating upon a small number of aspects where there is a strong possibility of making some progress.

Although the programme of pilot schemes and studies to combat poverty will not be funded beyond the 1979 budget, Community action to combat poverty cannot be considered as complete, given that the subject remains a major preoccupation in all the Member States.

In order to span the period between the end of the programme, 1 December 1980 (distinction must be made between the commitment of the budget, which must be carried out before 1 December 1979 and the end of the programme which is not until 1 December 1980), and the application of the Council's conclusions, for which the earliest date will be the second half of 1982, the Commission is now submitting this new draft Council decision defining proposals for the interim period for the purpose of continuing research and action to combat poverty.



It is, therefore, proposed to use the results gathered from the programme of pilot schemes and studies as a whole to concentrate efforts on a small number of fields or aspects where there is a strong possibility of improving the situation during an interim period, whilst awaiting the final report on the whole programme, including the national reports.

For background information : In its Decision 75/458/EEC of 22 July 1975 concerning a programme of pilot schemes and studies to combat poverty, as amended by Decision 77/779/EEC, the Council had empowered the Commission to promote or provide financial assistance for pilot schemes which test and develop new methods of helping persons beset by or threatened with poverty in the Community, and to promote, carry out or provide financial assistance for pilot studies to improve understanding of the nature, causes, scope and mechanics of poverty in the Community, within the limits of the relevant appropriations entered in the budgets of the Communities.

The Commission has submitted a second report on the satisfactory progress of activities in this field (Doc.COM(79) 537 final) and will submit upon completion of the programme or by 30 June 1981 at the latest, a final report.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion**

In its Opinion \*, adopted unanimously, the Committee agrees wholeheartedly with the Commission's proposal and wishes to undertake an in-depth examination of the Commission's report on pilot schemes and studies to combat poverty (Doc.COM(79) 537 final).

*The Economic and Social Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Social Questions under the chairmanship of Mr HOUTHUYS - Belgium - Workers. The Rapporteur was Mr CARROLL - Ireland - Workers.*

(\*) Opinion N° CES 84/80

### **3. CONSUMER CREDIT**

***«Proposal for a Council Directive Relating to the Approximation of the Laws, Regulations and Administrative Provisions of the Member States concerning Consumer Credit».***

#### **Gist of the proposal for a directive**

The Commission's proposal forms part of the programme of consumer protection adopted in 1975, one of whose priorities was action on consumer credit.

There is considerable variation from one Member State to another in the laws governing consumer credit, which hinders the establishment of a common credit market. The Commission's proposal aims to harmonize these laws in order to encourage such a market and also to protect consumers from possible abuses.

To achieve this objective, the proposal recommends that :

- the consumer should be given at least the minimum of information needed to make a rational selection from among the offers of credit made. He should therefore, know in advance, not only the rate of interest, but also the other costs attached to the loan and the period for which the credit is available;
- credit agreements should be in writing with the relevant particulars spelled out so that the consumer is perfectly aware of the commitments he must keep;
- credit organizations must either be licensed or subject to inspection by the competent authorities, or a body must be set up in each Member State to receive consumers' complaints about credit agreements;
- in the event of a link between the creditor and the supplier, both parties should be responsible for supplying goods or services which accord with the agreement entered into with the consumer. If this is not done, the creditor and the supplier should be jointly liable for reimbursing the consumer for the total amount expended;

- in the event that the creditor assigns his rights to a third party, the consumer's position must be safeguarded and the original credit agreement observed;
- consumers should be free to terminate credit agreements before the date specified. In such cases, they should be entitled to a refund.

The Directive prohibits the consumer from waiving his rights by means of a term in the contract.

Therefore, any term designed to modify these rights would be ineffective. Moreover, the Directive is intended to raise the degree of consumer protection to a certain minimum level for all credit transactions. However, the Member States may introduce a higher level of protection in keeping with their obligations under the Treaty of Rome.

### **Gist of the Committee Opinion**

In its Opinion \*, adopted by 69 votes to 11, and 23 abstentions, the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities is calling for measures which will secure genuine free access for all without discrimination to consumer credit and a better guarantee of consumer rights. The Committee acknowledges that the availability of consumer credit has enabled consumers in the Community to raise their standard of living.

The ESC agrees with the Commission's finding that the consumer should be fully protected and that fair competition between credit establishments should be maintained.

The Committee stresses the following points :

- All canvassing should be banned except where the consumer has had the benefit of a cooling-off period;
- The ESC strongly urges that the creditor should no longer be able to repossess the goods where the consumer has paid one quarter of the credit price;

(\* ) Opinion N° CES 85/80

- where the agreement is not carried out the consumer should be able to sue the supplier and, if necessary, the creditor where there has been knowing cooperation between the supplier and the creditor. After all as far as the consumer is concerned, the acquisition of the relevant goods or services and the associated credit agreement constitute one and the same transaction;
- discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality or marital status must be abolished so as to make credit available to all;
- the existence of data banks containing customer files threaten individual privacy;
- consumers in serious social difficulties should be permitted to suspend repayment.

Lastly, the Committee emphasizes that promissory notes and bills of exchange should be banned, as the Commission proposes. With both these instruments, the debtor is obliged to pay the creditor whether or not the creditor carries out the agreement.

*This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs under the chairmanship of Miss ROBERTS - United Kingdom - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr RAMAEKERS - Belgium - Various Interests.*

#### **4. WEIGHTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ROAD VEHICLES**

*«Proposal for a Council Directive on the Weights and Certain Other Characteristics (Not including dimensions) of Road Vehicles Used for the Carriage of Goods».*

##### **Gist of the Proposal**

This proposal amends the weights part of the Commission proposal on weights and dimensions made in 1971 which was agreed in principle by the six Member States in 1972, before the

enlargement of the Community, but was never formally adopted. The dimensions part of the original Draft Directive is still on the Council table and has been excluded from this proposal.

In december 1975, after continuing difficulties with the weights aspect of the Draft Directive presented in 1971, the Council invited the Committee of Permanent Representatives, with the assistance of the Commission, to develop a practical solution to the problem of vehicle weights and dimensions in the Community.

The Commission presented the main points of a recommended new approach in a working paper to the Council in December 1976 and was invited to prepare proposals for legislation.

The new proposal for a Council Directive on vehicle weights and other technical characteristics has been developed from the Commission's working paper after consultations with hauliers, motor manufacturers, environmentalists and other interested groups.

### **New approach adopted**

Rather than attempting to harmonize the technical characteristics of the entire vehicle fleet, this proposal aims to define the characteristics of certain vehicles, which could be used in any Member State and allowed to circulate freely in the Community, in particular, the heavier combinations commonly used in international traffic. National legislation would be adjusted to permit the use of these vehicles, but existing national vehicle types could continue to be used under the same conditions as at present.

At recent Council meetings, Member Governments have emphasized the need to :

- keep down transport costs and conserve scarce energy resources,
- minimize damage to the infrastructure and the environment,

- Improve the methods for controlling and supervising road vehicle traffic,
- create the conditions for a more homogeneous market for commercial vehicles in the Community.

The main difficulty is to find a balance between operating economy and protection of the infrastructure acceptable to all Member States. The Commission believes that this proposal offers a practical solution to this problem, will facilitate the control of commercial vehicle traffic in the Community and will provide a basis for the growth of a common market for commercial vehicle manufacturers.

### **Environmental and safety aspects stressed**

The Commission also considers that vehicles authorized by this proposal must be required to conform with the most recent Community legislation on essential environmental and safety matters, in particular noise, emissions, braking and steering. A Community Directive adopted in 1976 requires annual roadworthiness tests for goods vehicles over three and a half tons and this should ensure that these higher standards will be maintained during the lifetime of vehicles.

The proposal would also allow Member States to exclude the heavier vehicles from unsuitable routes from environmentally sensitive areas such as the centres of old towns and to make special conditions for the carriage of dangerous goods.

The maximum Gross Vehicle Weight proposed is 44 tonnes on 6 axles and the general maximum axle weight is 10 tonnes, with 11 tonnes permitted on the single motor axle of an articulated vehicle or road train to provide more satisfactory adhesion, braking and stability.

Two axle rigid and three-axle articulated vehicles are not included in the proposal, because a change in the existing regulations could result in levels of road damage unacceptable to several Member States. Passenger vehicles are also excluded.

## **Gist of the Committee Opinion**

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion \* by 70 votes to 17 with 12 abstentions. It reaffirmed its view that the overriding objectives of any Community transport policy must be to fix a maximum weight for commercial vehicles, to protect the environment and to improve road safety and working conditions.

While approving the Commission's proposals in this field the Committee argues that even stricter measures are needed.

The Committee considers that a compromise is possible despite the considerable divergence between national standards and the numerous interests to be reconciled. It therefore urges that a maximum weight of 40 tonnes be laid down for commercial vehicles (with no axle exceeding 11 tonnes). Such a measure would limit the damage to the infrastructure and the environment, curb energy consumption and take account of the economic situation of other modes of transports.

There is still one problem as regards the transport of 400 foot containers which require a total weight of 44 to 45 tonnes. The Committee would like the Commission when implementing the proposal to look into the possibility of waiving the Community rules on strictly limited journeys.

Transitional arrangements should be made to allow lorry fleets to be adapted and to improve road infrastructures.

Turning to the social aspects of transport policy, the Committee would like to see the Council act quickly on the question of the cab and bunk equipment of vehicles of over 3.5 tonnes, in accordance with the unanimous Opinion adopted in March 1978 by the Joint Consultative Transport Committee.

To improve the protection of the environment and road safety, it is also essential that new vehicles comply with Community legislation on noise, air pollution by vehicle exhaust gases, brakes and steering.

(\* ) Opinion N° CES 87/80

*This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Transport and Communications under the chairmanship of Mrs WEBER - Germany Workers. The Rapporteur was Mr BONETY - France - Workers.*

## **5. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

*«Proposal for a Fifth Council Directive on the Harmonization of Provisions Laid Down by Law, Regulation or Administrative Action relating to the Rules governing Turnover Tax and Excise Duty applicable to International Travel».*

### **Gist of the proposed Directive**

The aim of the Commission's proposal is to increase the intra-Community tax-free allowances so that consumers should be given the opportunity to purchase where they want to in the Community; to propose amendments to the temporary derogations granted to the Kingdom of Denmark and to Ireland in view of the changes in the economic situation in these countries; and finally to take account of the new provisions on alcohol tables.

### **Gist of the Committee's Opinion**

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion \* unanimously.

It approves the principle behind the Commission's proposal but regrets that the need to change the allowances has not led to the amounts being increased in a way in keeping with the growth of the Community market; this in view of the fact that the psychological importance of such measures is considerable, while the economic risks involved are negligible.

*The Economic and Social Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services under the chairmanship of Mr van CAMPEN - Netherlands - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr MARVIER -France - Various Interests.*

(\*) Opinion N° CES 83/80



## **6. OWN-ACCOUNT TRANSPORT**

*«Proposal for a Council Directive on Own-Account Carriage of Goods by Road between Member States»*

### **Gist of the Commission's Proposal**

The aim of the proposal is to extend to the whole of the Community a situation which already applies to most traffic between Member States and which is commensurate with the Common Transport Policy's goal of satisfying the economy's transport requirements in the best conditions. In other words, the user has to be free to choose the means and form of transport which best meet his interests and the special nature of his requirements, and he also has to be entitled to conduct his own transport operations in his own vehicles.

With this end in mind, it is proposed in particular that a common definition of own-account transport and of the means to be used to facilitate the monitoring thereof should be introduced.

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion \* by 33 votes to 30 with 9 abstentions.

### **Gist of the Opinion**

The Committee feels that the Commission proposal is fully consistent with the basic objectives of the EEC Treaty, that it coincides with certain dictates of general interest in the economic, social and energy fields, and corresponds to the interests of consumers.

The Committee considers that the possibility of hiring for at least one year, including leasing, as already provided for in many liberalized bilateral links, is particularly indispensable for own-account carriage. It is all the more worthy of support if existing commercial situations are not to be disturbed and the risk avoided of a more restrictive approach being adopted to the basic aim of integration between the Member States of the European Community.

(\*) Opinion N° CES 86/80

***The Economic and Social Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Transport and Communications under the chairmanship of Mrs WEBER - Germany - Workers. The Rapporteur was Mr HATRY - Belgium - Employers.***

## **7. COLOURING MATTERS IN FOOD**

***«Proposal for a Council Directive Amending for the Seventh Time the Council 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».***

### **Gist of the Commission document**

This proposal amends the basic Directive of 1962 by banning certain substances and permitting the use of certain other substances only on a temporary basis and subject to the conditions set out in Annex II.

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion \* by 43 votes in favour, 16 against, and 6 abstentions.

It approves the Commission's proposal that Yellow 2 G be removed from the list of approved colouring matters. The Committee also approves the proposed authorization of carrageenon under certain conditions.

As regards gum arabic, the Committee points to the fact that a Directive on refreshing drinks is expected in the near future, and it draws attention to the need to investigate the possible allergenic properties of additives and the possibility of using alternative products. In view of these considerations the Committee feels that the question of the authorization of gum arabic should remain under review.

(\* ) Opinion N° CES 88/80

As regards the inclusion of Brilliant Blue FCF in the Community's list of approved colouring matters, the Committee first held a long discussion on the various toxicological assessments and then voted by 38 to 26, with 6 abstentions, to support the **standpoint adopted by the Scientific Committee for Food**, namely that this colouring matter is toxicologically acceptable.

The Committee also recommends that the Commission take effective action on the bans proposed by the Scientific Committee on a number of other colouring matters.

The Economic and Social Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs under the chairmanship of Miss ROBERTS - United Kingdom - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr DE GRAVE - Belgium - Workers.

## **8. COLOURING MATTERS IN MEDICINES**

*«Proposal for a Council Directive Amending Council Directive 78/25/EEC on the Approximation of the Laws of the Member States relating to the Colouring Matters which may be Added to Medicinal Products».*

### **Gist of the Draft Directive**

The aim of the Directive is to remove the distinction between colouring matters for mass and surface colouring and colouring matters for surface colouring only in respect of colouring matters used in medicinal products.

This distinction applies to colouring matters used in food but it would not appear to be justified in the case of medicinal products as they have to undergo numerous tests before marketing authorization is granted.

## **Gist of the Opinion**

In its Opinion \*, adopted unanimously, the Committee approves the Draft Directive and draws attention to the need to reconsider authorization of the use of colouring matters in medicines in view of the possible effects on certain patients.

*The Economic and Social Committee based its Opinion on material prepared by its Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs under the chairmanship of Miss ROBERTS - United Kingdom - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mrs HEUSER - Germany - Various Interests.*

## **9. BINARY TEXTILE FIBRE MIXTURES**

«Proposal for a Council Directive amending Annex II (2) to Directive 72/276/EEC on the Approximation of the Laws of the Member States relating to Certain Methods for the Quantitative Analysis of Binary Textile Fibre Mixtures».

### **Gist of the Commission Proposal**

In order to remove technical barriers to trade and provide consumers with essential information on textiles, Council Directive 71/307/EEC of 26 July 1971 makes provision for the mandatory labelling of the quantitative and qualitative fibre composition of textile products. The Committee gave its Opinion on this proposal on 29 October 1969 (OJ N° C 10 of 27 January 1970).

As compliance with this general obligation is monitored by means of analysis, it is essential that the methods of analysing the various mixtures on the market be harmonized.

An initial Council Directive (72/276/EEC) contains in an Annex harmonized methods of analysis for 13 binary mixtures.

The list of methods laid down in the above-mentioned Directive is not, however, exhaustive and must gradually be supplemented by harmonized methods of analysis for other textile products consisting of binary mixtures that are on the market.

(\*) Opinion N° CES 81/80

This Directive is therefore a first addition to Directive 72/276/EEC. Its Annex contains methods of analysis for two important products that have recently appeared on the market : products composed of binary mixtures containing polypropylene fibres and chlorofibres.

These methods have been prepared on the basis of ISO methods Nos. 15 and 16 (International Standard ISO 1833, 1977, Second Edition) after numerous interlaboratory tests.

### **Gist of the Opinion**

In its unanimous Opinion \*, the Committee approves the proposal because it guarantees not only consumer information but also freedom of movement for the products in question, since the methods of analysis and the assessment of the results would be comparable throughout the Community.

The Committee based its Opinion on material supplied by its Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services under the chairmanship of Mr van CAMPEN - Netherlands - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr LEO - Netherlands - Employers.

## **10. R & D MANAGEMENT STUDY**

*«Organisation and Management of Community R & D».*

### **Background to the Study**

The objective of this study was to examine the decision-making and management procedures which are currently used for Community-sponsored and development activity and, where possible, to suggest improvements to these procedures. The study also presents a summary of the position in each of the Member States, but the whole of the study relates only to R & D funded by the public sector. A distinction is drawn between «basic» and «applied» research : although public authorities have a duty to advance the basic research that extends the frontiers of human knowledge, most of the R & D sponsored by the Community falls into the category of «applied» research»,

(\*) Opinion N° CES 82/80

and it is this area with which this study is primarily concerned.

### **Gist of the Study**

In its unanimously approved Study \*, the Economic and Social Committee recommended a coherent and vigorous policy in the field of research and development throughout the Community. This Study, which the Committee drew up on its own initiative, examines the decision-making and management procedures which are currently used for Community sponsored research and development activity and suggests improvements to these procedures. It also presents a summary of the position in each of the Member States, but the whole of the Study relates only to R & D funded by the public sector. The Committee proposes budgetary and project planning at Community level, a simplified administration structure at the Commission and the avoidance of excessive numbers of advisory bodies. Research workers, user industries and interested economic and social groupings should be represented on advisory bodies, alongside government representatives. It recommends the dissemination of research findings on a Community-wide basis, the strengthening of evaluation procedures and the designing of Community systems to ensure the speedy application of research.

*This Study was based on material prepared by the Section for Energy and Nuclear Questions under the chairmanship of Mr HATRY - Belgium - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr RENAUD - France - Employers.*

(\*) Study N° CES 91/80

## II

### EXTERNAL RELATIONS

#### STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN ON COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

In the period since the 174th Plenary Session, the Chairman of the Committee, Mr Raffaele VANNI, has represented the Committee on the following occasions :

##### **Meetings with the Italian Presidency of the Council**

At the meeting at the end of December with His Excellency. Mr PLAJA, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the European Communities, Mr VANNI was able to get an overall view of the main objectives of the Italian Presidency of the Council (first half of 1980) and to plan some talks with members of this Presidency. The Committee Chairman was received in turn by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Community (Social Affairs), Mr Vincenzo SCOTTI, and the Under-Secretary of State, Mr Giuseppe ZAMBERLETTI, representing the President of the Council of Ministers of the Community (General Affairs), Mr Attilio RUFFINI.

The Committee Chairman thanked the Italian Presidency of the Council for making the upgrading of the Economic and Social Committee one of its objectives and expressed his desire for closer relations between the Council and the Committee, along the lines indicated in the Report by the Three Wise Men.

The Italian Presidency expressed its willingness to cooperate in the aim of upgrading the Committee in accordance with the role assigned to it by the Treaty.

Mr VANNI invited the Italian Presidency to attend a future Plenary Session of the Committee.

- **Visit of the Head of Spain's diplomatic mission to the Communities**

His Excellency Mr BASSOLS, the Head of Spain's diplomatic mission to the European Communities, returned the visit paid by the Committee Chairman last October. Mr VANNI asked His Excellency to convey his sincere thanks to the Spanish Government for its interest in the proposal that the Committee should organize a conference on the problems of enlargement and for its offer of collaboration to promote the initiative.

- **Talks with representatives of the European organisations**

At the meetings planned with representatives of the European organizations of the various economic and social interest groups, the Committee Chairman met with :

- The President of the Union of Industries of the European Community (UNICE), Mr PROVOST.
- The President of the Committee of Family Organisations in the European Communities (COFACE), Mr GILLES.
- The President of the Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the EEC (COPA), Mr HEEREMAN, and the Vice-President, Mr LANE.

In addition to the specific problems discussed at the meetings, the Chairman expressed the Committee's thanks to the representatives of UNICE, COFACE, COPA and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) for their judicious support of the Committee's work. They in turn expressed great interest in the Committee's activity.

Meetings are planned in the first week in February with the President of the ETUC, Mr KOK, and the President of the European Centre for Public Enterprises (CEEP), Mr ROGISSART.



### III

## NEW REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS

During the months of December/January the Council requested the Committee to deliver Opinions on :

- « Proposal for a Council Decision introducing a Community system for the rapid exchange of information on dangers arising from the use of consumer products»  
(Doc. COM(79) 725 final).
- « Proposal for a Council Directive on the protection of workers from harmful exposure to metallic lead and its ionic compounds at work»  
(Doc. COM(79) 699 final/final 2).
- « Proposal for a Council Directive concerning the harmonization of income tax provisions with respect to freedom of movement for workers within the Community»  
(Doc. COM(79) 737 final).
- « The role of the Community in the development of transport infrastructure»  
(Doc. COM(79) 550 final).
- « Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) N° 1119/78 laying down special measures for peas and field beans used in the feeding of animals»  
(Doc. COM(79) 724 final).
- « Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) N° 337/79 on the common organization of the market in wine»  
(Doc. COM(79) 653 final).

- « **Proposal for a Council Directive amending for the second time Directive 75/726/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning fruit juices and certain similar products»  
(Doc. COM(79) 740 final).**
  - « **Proposal for a Council Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to rear-view mirrors for two- or three-wheeled motor vehicles.  
(Doc. COM(79) 772 final).**
  - « **Two proposals for Council Directives on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the fuel consumption of motor vehicles and to the engine power of motor vehicles respectively»  
(Doc. COM(79) 781 final).**
  - « **Proposal for a Council Directive (EEC) on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to **roll-over protective structures (ROPS)** for certain construction plant»**
- and on the
- « **Proposal for a Council Directive (EEC) on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to **falling-object protective structures (FOPS)** for certain construction plant»  
(Doc. COM(79) 786 final).**

## **IV**

### **PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF FUTURE WORK**

#### **FEBRUARY 1980 PLENARY SESSION**

##### **Opinions requested by the Institutions**

- Insurance contracts
- Credit insurance
- Improvement of the CAP
- Wine market

##### **Initiative Opinions**

- Use of medicines
- Structural aspects of growth

#### **MARCH 1980 PLENARY SESSION**

##### **Opinions requested by the Institutions**

- Roll-over protection for construction equipment
- Noise levels of construction equipment
- Rear-view mirrors for 2 or 3-wheeled vehicles
- Dangerous substances
- Dangers of using consumer products
- Industrial trucks
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- Right of residence

##### **Study**

- Regional policy - integrated operation in Lorraine

## **LATER PLENARY SESSIONS**

### **Opinions requested by the Institutions**

- Peas and field beans
- Fruit juices and similar products
- Development of transport infrastructures
- Air transports
- Radiation protection
- Income taxation with respect to freedom of movement for workers within the Community
- Working hours
- Worker protection : lead
- Legal expenses insurance
- Public supply contracts
- Development of the social situation in 1979

### **Own-Initiative Opinions**

- Competition policy
- Regional development programme
- Working conditions : international standards
- Investment guarantees : developing countries
- Economic situation mid 1980

### **Studies**

- Genetic engineering
- Coherence of external policies

## V

### MEMBERS' NEWS

#### **Resignations**

Mr François GUILLAUME, Mr Jack MacGOUGAN and Mr Wolfgang HIPP have resigned as members of the Economic and Social Committee.

#### **Appointments**

The E.C. Council appointed Mr Heribert SCHARRENBROICH (Germany) a member of the Economic and Social Committee in place of Mr HOFFMANN, who has resigned.

The E.C. Council appointed Mr W. WAGEMANS (Netherlands) a member of the Economic and Social Committee in place of the late Mr HUBREGTSE.

The E.C. Council appointed Mr Paul BROICHER (Germany) member of the Economic and Social Committee in place of Mr HIPP who has resigned. As a tribute to his long years of service, the Chairman awarded Mr HIPP the Committee medal.

Handel 1/80

## EF's forslag til produktansvar

Efter at Europa-Parlamentet og Det økonomiske og sociale udvalg har udtalt sig om EF-Kommissionens forslag om tilnærmelse af medlemsstaternes regler om produktansvar, har Kommissionen nu fremsat sit endelige forslag for Ministerrådet.

De regler, EF-Kommissionen har foreslået, gør producenten af en vare fuldt ud ansvarlig for den skade, hans vare måtte forvoldte. Det gælder både ved død, personskade eller materiel skade, der medfører økonomiske tab for brugeren.

Producenten er også ansvarlig, selv om hans produkt opfylder de tekniske og videnskabelige normer, der måtte være gældende, da han fremskaffede sit produkt.

## Le Monde

6.2.1980

TRANSPORTS

● *Pes de poids lourds de plus de 40 tonnes. — Le comité économique et social des Communautés européennes a de nouveau affirmé que « la politique des transports, pour devenir communautaire, doit se donner comme objectifs prioritaires: la fixation d'un poids maximum pour les véhicules utilitaires, la protection de l'environnement, ainsi que l'amélioration de la sécurité routière et des conditions de travail. » Il réclame « en attendant qu'un poids maximum de 40 tonnes (aucun essai ne pouvant dépasser 11 tonnes) soit fixé pour les véhicules utilitaires. » A son avis, « sans telle mesure permettra de limiter la détérioration des infrastructures routières et de l'environnement, contredira la consommation d'énergie et prendra en considération la situation économique des autres moyens de transport. »*

## Messaggio d'Oggi 17.1.1980

### ENERGIA

Per una vera politica comunitaria

Nella sua ultima sessione plenaria, il Comitato economico e sociale (C.E.S.) ha denunciato la mancanza di coordinamento delle politiche energetiche dei vari Stati membri. La Comunità dovrebbe limitare le sue importazioni energetiche al 50% del proprio consumo. Secondo il C.E.S. il pubblico va meglio informato sulle conseguenze che la crisi può avere sul livello di vita, affinché sia poi più disposto ad accettare le misure che si dimostrano necessarie. Ha pure sottolineato la neces-

sià di maggiori sforzi nel campo dello stoccaggio di residui radioattivi, di uno sviluppo di nuove fonti di energia e di un vero dialogo con i paesi produttori di petrolio.

Il Comitato economico e sociale della Comunità è una istituzione consultiva composta da 144 membri che rappresenta i datori di lavoro, i sindacati e numerosi gruppi di interesse, come gli agricoltori e i consumatori.

Prevenire i dirottamenti di uranio arricchito

Da quando la maggior parte di paesi europei ha deciso di ricorrere sempre

più all'energia nucleare, si rende sempre più indispensabile l'organizzazione di due tipi di protezione: quella dei lavoratori del nucleare e della popolazione in generale contro i rischi di radioattività, e quella delle materie nucleari contro i rischi di furto, dirottamento, ecc.

Questo secondo tipo di pericolo da due anni costituisce l'oggetto di negoziati per la firma di una Convenzione internazionale. Nel 1980 il Commissario europeo per l'Energia Guido Brunner firmerà la Convenzione a nome della Comunità.

Lloyds List 1.2.1980

## EEC committee for 40-ton maximum

By Martin Whitfield, Road Transport Correspondent

THE EEC economic and social committee yesterday rejected the European Commission's proposal for a maximum lorry weight of 44 tons.

Instead the committee decided to press the Council of Ministers for a 40 tons maximum as the top weight for a "European lorry."

The reasons presented by the committee's transport group for the 40 tons limit were given as the need to protect the environment, the effect that heavy lorries might

have on road damage, and the detrimental effect on European railways.

In addition the committee was concerned that existing lorry fleets should be gradually adapted, and the further studies of the impact on heavy lorries should be carried out.

Despite the reduction and widely stated "compromise" nature of the committee's action the 40 tons limit would be a dramatic increase for Britain and Ireland, where a 32 ton limit now exists.

Syndicats 5.1.80

## Vers une amélioration des structures et du fonctionnement du Comité économique et social des Communautés

Au cours de la dernière session du Comité économique et social des Communautés, le président, M.R. Vanni, a proposé une série de réformes visant à améliorer le fonctionnement interne du Comité, ainsi que « l'efficacité et la transparence de ses travaux ».

Pour cela, le Comité a décidé à l'unanimité, de constituer une Commission du règlement intérieur.

Le président considère que trois mesures importantes s'imposent :

— assurer la « transparence » des avis du Comité : les groupes de ses « catégories

de conseillers représentatives d'intérêts reconnus au sein du Comité » devraient avoir la possibilité de faire des déclarations de vote qui seraient annexées aux avis ;

— souligner l'importance du droit d'initiative dont dispose le Comité ; il devrait prendre des positions ponctuelles d'impulsion et d'incitation sur les instances de décision ;

— admettre le recours à un assistant « au niveau du groupe d'étude » pour le conseiller qui le jugerait utile.

Les présidents des divers groupes se sont montrés décidés à collaborer avec le président Vanni pour réaliser son initiative.

Tipperary Star  
15.12.79

## Regional Fund Inadequate Says Committee

A Vice-President of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Community, Mr Tommie Roseingrave told a Dublin Press conference this week that the five per cent non-quota section of the European Regional Development Fund was "quite inadequate".

Mr Roseingrave also called for the greater involvement of local authorities and voluntary bodies in the formation and development of regional policy and development project applications. The Economic and Social Committee, he said, urged national governments to hold systematic and far-ranging consultations at grass roots level before submitting applications for aid to the European Regional Fund.

Two other members of the Economic and Social Committee, the President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Mr Jack Curran, and Mr Gordon Pearson of the Federated Union of Employers, were with Mr Roseingrave at the Press Conference. The National Understanding provides for the creation of 25,000 jobs per year and that target must have Community support through the Regional Fund, said Mr Curran.





**PUBLICATIONS OBTAINABLE FROM THE ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

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**Periodical**

- Bulletin (monthly publication)

**General Documentation**

- The Economic and Social Committee (leaflet) (January 1975)
- The Economic and Social Committee (April 1979) (A descriptive brochure) 16 p.
- Annual Report (1977) 70 p. (1976) 80 p.
- Directory (January 1979) (List of Members) 41 p.
- The Right of initiative of the Economic and Social Committee (October 1977) 124 p.
- 20th Anniversary of the Economic and Social Committee (May 1978) 19 p.

**Opinions and Studies**

- Agricultural Structures Policy (November 1979) (Opinion)±90 p.
- Enlargement of the European Community Greece-Spain-Portugal (September 1979) (Study) 75 p.
- The Community's Relations with Spain (June 1979) (Study) 112 p.
- Community Shipping Policy Flaws of Convenience (April 1979) (Opinion) 170 p.
- Employee Participation and Company Structure (September 1978) (Opinion) 116 p.
- Youth Unemployment — Education and Training (November 1978) (5 Opinions) 97 p.
- The Stage reached in aligning labour legislation in the European Community (June 1978) (Documentation) 60 p.
- Employment in Agriculture (Study) (June 1978) 135 p.
- Monetary Disorder (Opinion) (June 1978) 98 p.
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Community Context (April 1978) (Opinion) 29 p.
- Industrial Change and Employment (November 1977) (Opinion) 98 p.
- EEC's Transport Problems with East European Countries (December 1977) (Opinion) 164 p.
- Community Nuclear Safety Code (July 1977) (Study) 50 p.
- Regional Development - Unemployment and Inflation (June 1977) (Opinion) 130 p.
- Research and Development (November 1976) (Study) 35 p.
- Systems of education and vocational training (August 1976) (Study) 114 p.
- Regional Policy (March 1976) (Opinion) 11 p.
- European Union (July 1975) (Opinion) 33 p.
- Progress Report on the Common Agricultural Policy (February 1975) (Study) 52 p.
- The Situation of Small and Medium-sized Undertakings in the European Community (March 1975) (Study) 69 p.

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