

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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A PRELIMINARY COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

FOR

CONSUMER INFORMATION AND PROTECTION

(Amended draft presented by the Commission to the Council pursuant to the second paragraph of Article 149 of the EEC Treaty)

6 May 1974

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INTRODUCTION

1. The aim to strengthen and coordinate action for consumer protection within the Community, which was declared by the Heads of State and Government at the Summit Conference in Paris in October 1972 expresses a manifest and widely felt need. The debate in the European Parliament of 20 September 1972,<sup>1</sup> which emphasized the need for a coherent and effective consumer policy, subsequent interventions by the Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, work already done in this field by the Communities and by various international organizations, particularly the Council of Europe and OECD bear witness to such a need. While a measure of consumer protection has been implicit in much of the work of the Community, this has not always been seen to be so by consumers themselves. The time has now come to make this concern better known and to implement a Community policy in this field which by regrouping, strengthening and drawing together a number of fields of action in the Communities in the interest of consumers, stresses their involvement in improving the quality of life.
2. The enlargement of the Community favours the development of new ideas in the consumer field which, together with the many developments which have taken place in all Member States, point the way to a new deal for the consumer, and ways to find a better balance in the protection of his interests.
3. The consumer is no longer seen merely as a purchaser of goods or services for personal or group purposes but also as a person concerned as such with the wider facets of society. Consumer interests may be summed up by a statement of four basic rights:

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No 153, September 1972, P. 24-33

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- the right to protection, particularly of health, safety and economic interests;
  - the right of redress;
  - the right to information and education;
  - the right of representation (the right to be consulted, represented and to participate in decisions of consumer concern).
4. These rights should be given effect by action within the framework of specific Community policies such as the economic, common agricultural, social, environment, transport and energy policies among others, all of which affect the lives of consumers, whose views must be taken into account, as well as by action designed specifically for their benefit. These two kinds of activities combine within the context of a policy of improvement in the quality of conditions of life in the Community.
5. This paper defines the objectives and general principles of a consumer policy. It also sets out a certain number of priority actions to be taken during the coming years. In such a large and developing field, it seemed preferable to limit the work in this first phase, it being understood that projects might be completed and new initiatives taken upon proposals made by the Commission in the light of the programme's progress.

## I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

### A. THE CONSUMER AND THE ECONOMY

6. The position of the consumer has not been maintained as set out by Adam Smith when he wrote in "The Wealth of Nations" in 1776: "... the interest of the producer ought to be attended to only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer". Since that day, economic conditions have been transformed under the impact of technological and scientific development, a complete change in production and distribution methods and increased government intervention in a wide area of economic life. As a result, the role of the consumer has become less effective despite his importance as a basic factor in the market place.

7. The concept of consumer protection is comparatively recent, and has developed primarily in response to the perplexities and frustrations arising from the very abundance of choices offered by way of goods and services and their complexity on an ever-widening market. While such a market offers certain advantages, the consumer has "been confronted by a vastly greater range of goods, more complex and designed to meet a great variety of specific uses; produced in anticipation of demand rather than in response to it."<sup>1</sup>

The consumer is therefore no longer able to play his proper role as a balancing factor prescribed by economic theory.

The theory of supply and demand is based on the supposition that there is a certain balance between the economic strength of the supplier (producer/wholesaler/retailer) and that of the buyer. The tendency has been for that balance to become weighted in favour of the supplier as market conditions have changed. The discovery of new materials, the introduction of new methods of manufacture, the development of means of communication, the widening of markets, changed methods of retailing - all these factors have had the effect of increasing the production, supply and demand of an immense variety of goods and services. The result is that the consumer, from being usually a selective individual purchaser in a small market place or a local shop, has become merely an element in a mass market, the target of solicitation and pressure by strongly organized groups of production and distribution. Today, the producer has a greater opportunity to select his market than the consumer has to select his supplier. Mergers, cartels and certain self-imposed restrictions on competition have also created imbalances.

8. Trade practices, contractual terms, the whole field of credit trading, from hire-purchase to credit cards, and the very concept of competition itself have also developed. For example, matters which were once regarded in many countries solely in terms of unfair competition as between manufacturers (such as misleading advertising) are now looked upon also as an aspect of fair trading as between producers and consumers. Such an

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<sup>1</sup> Report on Consumer Policy in member countries (of OECD) - OECD, Paris 1972.

evolution has added to the imbalances mentioned above and brought a greater need for consumers and governments to take action in providing better information for the consumer as to his rights and protection against abuses which might arise from ever-changing commercial practices.

9. The power of consumers has expanded considerably. Studies have been made on price policies and comparisons, and investigations carried out on the quality of goods by way of comparative tests. There have been studies on rationalising work in the home and calls for a greater participation by consumers in decision-making. There has been increased demand for better information to equip the consumer to utilize his resources to best advantage and to influence pricing, product development and market trends.
10. As the consumer came to see himself as an individual with very little bargaining power, it was inevitable that consumers should begin to group together in organizations, to protect their interests and to spur governments into action on behalf of consumers as a whole.

#### B. THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND CONSUMERS

11. The preamble to the Treaty of Rome gives one of the basic aims of the European Community as "the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their peoples". This aim is elaborated in Article 2 of the Treaty which includes among the tasks of the Community "harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increase in stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of living". To achieve this aim the Community has already taken a number of steps in accordance with the form and means provided by the Treaty.
12. The consumer is referred to in Article 39 of the Treaty, for after setting out objectives of the common agricultural policy as being to guarantee the security of supply and the stabilisation of markets, a specific requirement is "to ensure supplies to consumers at reasonable prices".

13. Within the rules of competition, Article 85(3) requires the provision to consumers of "a fair share" of resulting benefits as one of the criteria for permitting certain agreements between undertakings and concerted practice and Article 86 gives as an example of improper practices "the limitation of production, markets or technical development to the prejudice of consumers".
14. Annex I of this paper contains a note of the most important action undertaken so far by the Community on behalf of consumers and Annex II a selection of directives with a consumer interest which have been passed by the Council. Although the differing economic interests and diverse policies of the Member States must often result in a compromise in arriving at a general policy for the Community, it can be seen that considerable progress has already been made in recent years regarding consumer protection and information.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF A COMMUNITY CONSUMER POLICY

15. The objectives of a Community consumer policy should be to secure for the consumer:
- (i) effective protection against:
    - . health and safety risks arising from the marketing of certain goods or the provision of certain services,
    - . damage to his economic interests resulting from defective goods or unfair trade practices;
  - (ii) redress and assistance;
  - (iii) the satisfaction of his real needs at the best prices, particularly by:
    - . obtaining acceptable quality in goods and services,
    - . avoiding waste (both by discouraging unnecessary packaging and by encouraging standards of quality which lead to reasonable durability of goods and the use of materials which can be recycled),
    - . the development of an economic policy which takes his interests fully into account, with particular reference to prices;
  - (iv) the requisite means to reach the above objectives, particularly:
    - . adequate information,
    - . education,
    - . consultation and participation in decisions which concern him.

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1. Consumer Protection

A. Protection in terms of health and safety

16. Action leading to the achievement of this objective should rest on the following:

(a) Principles

- (i) Goods and services provided for consumers should be such that when used in a normal and reasonable way they are not likely to be injurious to the health or safety of consumers.
- (ii) When certain categories of goods and services are primarily intended for particular categories of consumers, such as children, who are likely to use them in other than a normal manner, such goods and services should be provided in such a way that there is no risk to health and safety, even when used abnormally.
- (iii) In general, any risk of danger which might arise from an unusual but rational use of a product should be clearly indicated in an appropriate manner.
- (iv) The manufacturers of goods and the providers of services should be liable for injury caused by defective products and services supplied by them.
- (v) Appropriate Community measures should be taken to ensure the safety of goods and services. Special measures may be necessary with regard to particular products or services.
- (vi) Community standards should be set and enforced so as to eliminate or reduce, as far as possible, any inherent risk of danger in the content of goods and the containers thereof, their handling and use.
- (vii) There should be quick and simple procedures for withdrawal from the market of goods and services whose use has been proved to constitute a danger to the health and safety of consumers, or which may, when used in a normal and reasonable way, constitute such a danger.

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- (viii) Substances which may form part of or be added to foodstuffs should be defined and their use regulated by reference to clear and precise positive lists. Such lists should be based on simple principles which do not inhibit innovation.
- (ix) Prototypes of machines, apparatus and electrical and electronic equipment which may constitute a safety hazard, either in themselves or by their use, should be checked by an appropriate public or non-public body before being declared fit for use by the public.
- (x) Foodstuffs should not be detrimentally affected by packaging and other materials with which they come into contact.
- (xi) Certain categories of new products which may prejudicially affect the health or safety of consumers should be submitted for prior authorisation according to procedures agreed within the Community.

(b) Priorities

17. The Community is actively pursuing policies of standardization and harmonization of measures in the agricultural and industrial fields. The following are some of the products which have been and continue to be of concern to consumers:
- (i) Foodstuffs - their composition, preservation, description, and so on;
  - (ii) Animal foods;
  - (iii) Fertilisers, pesticides and insecticides for agricultural use;
  - (iv) Pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and detergents;
  - (v) Household utensils and appliances;
  - (vi) Textiles;
  - (vii) Toys;
  - (viii) Cars and other consumer durables.

(c) Methods

18. The action necessary in this field for the Community will be:

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- to continue and accelerate harmonization of specifications for foodstuffs and their composition. Priority will be given to the following:
  - . Additives and contaminants (including preservatives, colourants, antioxidants, emulsifiers, stabilisers and flavourings)
  - . Dietetic foods
  - . Pesticide and other residues
  - . Irradiated foods
  
- to prescribe safety criteria for products which include substances that may have inherent toxic, inflammable, explosive or corrosive properties. Priority will be given to the following:
  - . Materials in contact with foodstuffs
  - . Toxicity of detergents
  - . Pesticides
  - . Paints and varnishes
  
- to continue to study the results of ongoing research into the many substances which may affect the health or safety of consumers, particularly those used in connection with the matters set out in the two preceding paragraphs and, if necessary, to take steps to coordinate and encourage such research;
  
- to encourage the widening application of systems of authorization of new products used in the manufacture of food, pharmaceutical and chemical products before their sale is permitted, after taking into account in particular those matters covered by the operation of harmonization of law, the removal of technical barriers to trade and environmental policies.

B. Protection against damage to the economic interests of the consumer

19. This kind of protection is best achieved through legislative and regulatory measures, where appropriate, harmonised at Community level or taken directly at that level, stemming from the principles set out below, which have already been largely enunciated in the Council of Europe's consumer protection charter.

(a) Principles

20. (i) Every individual purchaser of goods and services should be protected against the abuse of power of the seller, in particular against one-sided standard contracts, the exclusion of essential legal rights in contracts, demand for payment of unsolicited goods and high-pressure selling methods which do not allow consumers to make reasonable assessments of the terms of sale.
- (ii) The consumer should be protected against damage to his economic interests caused by defective goods.
- (iii) The promotion of goods and services, including financial services, should not mislead, either directly or indirectly, the person to whom they are offered or by whom they have been requested.
- (iv) No form of advertising - visual and audio - should mislead the potential buyer of the product or service. An advertiser in any media should be required to justify, by appropriate procedures, the validity of claims made in an advertisement.
- (v) Detailed information provided on labels at the point of sale or in advertisements should be accurate and adequate. This includes information on the nature, composition, quantity, performance, availability, quality, price and antecedent characteristics of goods and services.
- (vi) The consumer has the right to reasonable after-sales service for consumer durable goods.
- (vii) The steps taken by the Community of an economic nature should take account of and strengthen the interests of consumers.

(b) Priorities

21. (i) To harmonize, by way of directive(s) the conditions of consumer credit, including those relating to hire-purchase. The studies made by the services of the Commission and the pattern of legislation in the Member States and in other

parts of the world, show that the consumer needs more help in this field. Credit facilities have become increasingly available while the conditions under which those facilities are granted have come under increasing criticism for their one-sidedness (against the consumer), their obscurity, their harshness and their tendency to burden consumers with a greater weight of credit than they can or should carry. Accordingly, legislative or regulatory action should be taken to obtain a better balance between lender and borrower.

22.

Method

The Commission will present a draft directive on the basis of studies already carried out by its own services and by national administrations.

23.

(ii) To protect the consumer by appropriate measures directed against false or misleading advertising:

(a) by laying down criteria for judging the extent to which advertisements may be considered to be deceptive, misleading or unfair to consumers in any other way;

(b) by taking steps to prevent exploitation of the consumer by false, misleading or unfair advertising, for example by requiring advertisers to justify the validity of claims made by them;

(c) by seeking methods to end quickly deceptive and unfair advertising campaigns.

Methods

24.

The Commission:

- will build upon the work done and information compiled by the Council of Europe, OECD and other bodies and complete such work, where necessary by specific studies;

- will proceed with and supplement the work being done in connection with the harmonization of the laws on unfair competition;

- will make the appropriate proposals to the Council;

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- will cooperate with Member States in elaborating a system for the effective implementation, within the Common Market, of the proposed measures.

25. (iii) To regulate commercial practices which may be deceptive in themselves or lead to abuse of power of the vendor, such as:

- sales contracts,
- conditions in guarantees, particularly for consumer durables,
- door-to-door sales,
- premium offers,
- unsolicited goods,
- statements made on labels and packaging.

The various commercial practices are already dealt with in some national legislation and regulations. It will be necessary to seek their harmonization by way of directives or other appropriate measures so as to provide consumers throughout the Community with the necessary legal and economic protection.

26. Methods

- To collate the measures already taken by the Member States and coordinate studies now being made.
- To present draft directives and any other appropriate proposals to the Council.

27. (iv) To harmonize the law of product liability by introducing at Community level standards which meet the requirements of better protection for consumers against the risks of defective goods.

Method

28. The Commission will present a draft directive to the Council on the basis of studies already carried out.

29. (v) To improve the range and quality of services rendered to consumers: The term "service" covers a very wide area, from after-sales and repair which goes with the supply of goods to public services (e.g. hospitals, energy) and including that collection of services necessary for daily life, such as credit, insurance, cleaning, catering, transport, tourism and so on.

30. Improvement of the range of services provided for consumers should be primarily secured by the removal of unnecessary restrictions on the freedom to provide services.
31. Guaranteeing the quality of such services may, perhaps, be improved in several ways, as, for instance:
- by regulating commercial practices relating to sales (see iii above);
  - by greater transparency (provided in particular by more information) of the organization and nature of the services rendered, so as to give to consumers in the Community as a whole the benefit of progress made within any Member State;
  - by laying down qualifications and the degree of knowledge necessary to follow certain professions. Such requirements could be inserted in the regulations and directives relating to the right of establishment;
  - by the recognition and extended use of voluntary professional codes of practice;
  - by better information for consumers;
  - by appropriate procedures for complaints and redress.
32. In this complex and, for the most part, little researched field, there is great scope for consideration and action on the part of the Community. (A recent study of the Nordic Committee on Consumer Matters could provide a good basis.) The Commission will carry out an exhaustive study on this question in cooperation, if necessary, with other interested international organizations. It will report on the conclusions of this study before the 31 December 1975, accompanied, where necessary, with the appropriate proposals.

## 2. Redress and assistance

### (a) Objectives

33. To ensure that consumers are provided with all necessary assistance regarding complaints and advice in respect of damage suffered through the purchase or use of goods or services, and to provide the means of redress for such damage.

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(b) Principles

34. Consumers should have the right to proper redress for damage suffered through the purchase or use of a product or service by means of swift, effective and inexpensive procedures. Appropriate procedures should be available to enable him to exercise this right.

(c) Methods

35. (i) To study, in cooperation with national consumer bodies and the Consumers' Consultative Committee, and building in particular upon the results of work already carried out in this field by international organizations:
- (a) Systems of assistance and advice already in use in the Member States.
  - (b) Systems of redress, arbitration and amicable settlements of disputes in use in the Member States including the use of business sponsored mechanisms.
  - (c) The legislation of Member States relating to protection of consumers in the courts, particularly the various means of recourse and procedures.
  - (d) Systems and laws mentioned above as applied in certain third countries.
- (ii) To publish papers synthesising and comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the different systems, procedures and documentation relating to consumer assistance and to advice, redress and legal recourse.
- (iii) To present appropriate proposals for improving the existing systems or putting them to the best use.
- (iv) To study the feasibility of a European system of communicating the results of actions for redress and legal recourse relating to products sold on a large scale in all or several of Member States.

3. Consumer satisfaction

36. To enable consumers to obtain satisfaction of their real needs at the best prices, the following must be taken into account:

..../....

(1) Consumer information

(a) Principles

37. The purchaser of goods and services should have the right to information sufficient to:
- provide him with knowledge of the quality and quantity of the goods and services offered;
  - enable him to use a product or service safely and to his full satisfaction;
  - enable him to make a rational choice between competing products and services;
  - obtain redress for any damage resulting from the product or service received.

(b) Priorities

38. (i) Action relating to labelling
- to formulate general principles which should apply in the preparation of all specific regulations or directives which have a consumer connotation;
  - to lay down rules for the labelling of products whose specifications are harmonized at Community level. These rules should provide that all labelling must be clear, easily readable and unambiguous;
  - insofar as foodstuffs are concerned, to state in particular the nature and composition of the product, its weight or volume, the identity of the person selling it or being otherwise responsible and if necessary, the requirements for satisfactory conservation. Variations on these points would be subjects of study for non-food products, with additional items such as unit pricing and unit weight being covered to both;
  - to lay down rules for information relating to services, starting with after-service and repair of industrial products which may come within the first indent of this paragraph.

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(ii) Action relating to comparative tests.

39. Comparative testing of products is another source of information. These tests may be carried out by state financed organizations, private bodies or a mixture of the two. The subject has been studied by OECD<sup>1</sup> and within the Commission and much will be gained by a coordinated exchange of information.
40. Appropriate contact will be made by the Commission with those organizations which carry out comparative tests so as to study ways in which the greatest possible objectivity may be obtained in the results of such tests, particularly by standardization of test methods. Such objectivity is necessary to sustain the credibility of the testing bodies themselves and to assure manufacturers some guarantee that their products are not subjected to defamatory or ill-founded criticism.

(iii) Study of consumer behaviour

41. To establish an integrated policy on consumer information and education, more needs to be known about consumer behaviour and attitudes. The Commission already conducts a continuing consumer survey concerning the economic situation of the Community. It will extend such surveys to other subjects in cooperation with the Member States, consumer organizations and other bodies so as to learn more about the needs and behaviour of consumers within the Community.
42. (iv) To inform consumers in simple terms of measures taken at national and Community level which may directly or indirectly affect their interests.
43. For the Commission, such action will comprise in particular:  
- setting out the categories of consumer information which are most needed within the Community in terms of the supply of goods and services and preparing basic documentation therefrom;

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<sup>1</sup>"Labelling and comparative tests - OECD - PARIS - 1972".



- providing an increasing amount and range of information on consumer matters being dealt with by the Community and in explaining to consumers in clear and simple terms the effect of the measures taken;
- accelerating and expanding the production and dissemination of informative material on consumer questions and cooperating closely with Member States and consumer and other organizations in this regard;
- using fully the resources of mass media communication through whatever channels may be provided and encouraging the coordination of TV, press, radio, cinema and other presentation of programmes and articles on consumer topics;
- publishing an annual report on steps taken by the Community and the Member States in the consumer interest, whether by way of legislation, information, consultation or coordination.

(2) Consumer Education

(a) Principle

44. Education facilities should be made available to children and adults so as to enable them to act as informed consumers, capable of making a proper choice of those goods and services most likely to satisfy their real needs at lowest cost, both individually and collectively.

(b) Action

(i) Provision of consumer education

45. Much study has been given to the problem of consumer education by working parties of the Council of Europe and certain specific programmes are being developed by the International Organization of Consumers Unions. In order to supplement the advance of consumer education by guidance and advice at Community level, additional studies will need to be made by the Commission in cooperation with the Member States and consumer organizations.

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46. The object of such studies will be to set up methods and provide material for the encouragement, through scholastic curricula, of greater consumer education in schools, universities and other educational establishments.

(ii) Training the educators

47. The provision of instruction for those who instruct others is another necessary task upon which there are a number of ideas, as for instance, the setting up of centres in the Member States at which instruction of this kind can be provided for lecturers, demonstrators and officials, the exchange of ideas, programmes, staff and students, between such centres, or the establishment of an international centre to which nationals of all countries can go. The Commission is prepared to play a coordinating role in this regard.

(iii) Wide spread of information.

48. Under its general information policy, the Commission will encourage the organization of seminars, colloquia and exhibitions on themes of interest to consumers, in cooperation with national administrations, and bodies concerned with consumer questions.

The publication of the Annual Report referred to in para. 43 will also provide an opportunity to further consumer education.

(3) Community action in the field of economic policy affecting consumers

49. Among the economic activities by which the Community may help consumers to satisfy their real needs at the lowest cost are, in particular, the fixing of agricultural prices, the execution of the competition policy, the harmonization of laws (particularly fiscal law) and other short and medium term policies. Whenever the Community wishes to publicize the operation of any of these policies, particularly regarding the application of Articles 39, 85 and 86 of the Treaty, it is essential that consumers should be provided with sufficient information to evaluate actions taken in implementation of these policies.

50. In addition, consumers should be informed of measures taken within the Community regarding prices at both national and Community levels, as for instance:

- regulatory action on price increases,
- regulatory action on price differential practices,
- action on commercial structures,
- action on the harmonization of TVA systems,
- action on the removal of exchange barriers.

Such information will be supplied by the Commission, particularly in the periodical report mentioned in para. 43.

51. The Commission should continue to carry out surveys of retail prices, so as to inform the public on the range of current prices and, through use of the Consumers' Consultative Committee, to enable consumer protection and information bodies to participate in the operation of those economic activities which come within the competence of the Community.

#### 4. Consultation, representation and participation

##### (a) Objective

52. To encourage the consultation, representation and, where appropriate, participation of consumers in the mechanisms and institutions responsible for the preparation of decisions which concern them.

##### (b) Principles

53. Consumers should have the right to be consulted and represented in the preparation of decisions which concern them. They should be able to participate in the preparation of these decisions which are of primary interest for them.

##### (c) Action

54. The action of the Commission in this field will be to:

- (i) engage in a comparative study of the different types of consultation, representation and participation of consumers at present in use in the Member States;

- (ii) help consumer organizations to study certain projects of particular concern to consumers, to make known their views and to coordinate their efforts to obtain consumer representation wherever it is necessary;
- (iii) develop the activities of the Consumers' Consultative Committee
  - by giving it additional material assistance,
  - by enabling it to give advice in sufficient time on proposals made by the Commission on matters affecting consumers,
  - by arranging meetings between this Committee, manufacturers and distributors so as to discuss specific matters of common interest;
- (iv) promote the exchange of information between Member States (specially within the group of government experts set up in 1973) concerning the most appropriate way to provide consumers with the means of representation and participation.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION

- 55. In implementing its programme, the Commission will take full account of studies already carried out by the Member States, consumer organizations and international bodies.
- 56. The group of government experts of the Member States referred to in para. 51(iv) above, which was created to help draw up this programme will be called upon by the Commission in future to consider the ways in which coordination of consumer matters may be carried through and specific parts of the programme carried out.
- 57. This paper may therefore be regarded as the first stage of a more comprehensive programme which might need to be developed at a later date. The aim is to complete this phase within four years. The Commission reserves the right to examine other proposals in due course or, in the light of circumstances, to present further proposals.

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#### IV. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

58. Concern for the consumer and the realisation of the need for action in the fields set out in the foregoing sections of this paper are recognized facts in most parts of the world. With increasing international cooperation and attention to consumer matters of all kinds, a wide range of such problems within individual states are being studied and solved at international level.
59. Collaboration between the institutions of the Community and other international organizations at European or world level<sup>1</sup> will enable the Community to benefit from work already done by these organizations. The importance of such collaboration cannot be over-stressed.

#### CONCLUSION

60. The pursuit of this consumer programme marks a new phase in the development of the Community and further recognition of its social consciousness. The coordination of hitherto fragmented efforts, and the injection of a fresh impetus in the interests of all consumers will call for energetic action on the part of all Community institutions. This should not be lacking for so worthwhile an objective.

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<sup>1</sup>The international bodies with which collaboration will be maintained are, among others, the following: United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization; Food and Agriculture Organization and Codex Alimentarius; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Council of Europe; Nordic Committee on Consumer Matters; International Standards Organization and International Electrotechnical Commission; European Committee for Standardization and European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization.

ACTION TAKEN SO FAR BY THE COMMUNITY  
ON BEHALF OF CONSUMERS

The development of the European Economic Community and the establishment of a customs union have enabled considerable progress to be made on behalf of consumers, although the results may not always have been easily seen. Progress has been made in the following directions:

(a) Widened choice of supplies

Consumer choice has also been enlarged through a more diversified and steadier supply of food brought about by the free movement of agricultural and food products. In other sectors, too, there has been a widening of the range of goods upon the market.

(b) Competition policy and prices

The enforcement of Articles 85 and 86 of the Treaty of Rome has helped to maintain effective competition throughout the common market and has exercised some restraint on the level of prices.

(c) Harmonization of regulations governing products

A number of directives, examples of which are set out in Annex II, have incorporated some measure of consumer interest, particularly with regard to health and safety, in the agricultural and industrial product sectors.

(d) Consumer information and representation

Information disseminated by the information services of the Commission has been supplemented by a number of policy statements issued by the Contact Committee of Consumers during its existence between 1962 and 1972.

The Commission has now established the Environment and Consumer Protection Service with a separate division for consumer information and protection. The gap left by the disappearance of the former Contact Committee has been filled by the setting up by the Commission of a Consumers' Consultative Committee (Decision of 25 September 1973), which met for the first time on 19 November 1973.

There are also a number of other consultative committees upon which consumers, together with producers and other interests are represented, particularly in the agricultural and customs sectors.

A SELECTION OF DIRECTIVES WITH A CONSUMER INTEREST  
WHICH HAVE BEEN PASSED BY THE COUNCIL

FOODSTUFFS

1. Authorized colourants:

Approximation of Regulations 23.10.62 (OJ 115/62)  
as amended by OJ 178/65, OJ 263/67, L 309/68, L 157/70

2. Authorized preservatives:

- (a) Approximation of laws 5.11.63 (OJ 12/64)  
as amended by OJ 222/65, OJ 233/65, OJ 148/67,  
OJ L 309/68, OJ L 157/70, OJ L 2/72, OJ L 298/72
- (b) Purity criteria 26.1.65 (OJ 22/65)  
as amended by OJ 148/67  
(Revision OJ 126 of 12.7.65)
- (c) Use and control measures for the qualitative and  
quantitative analysis of preservatives for the  
surface and internal treatment of fruit  
Approximation of laws 27 June 67 (OJ 148/67).

3. Authorized antioxidants in foodstuffs:

13 July 1970 (OJ L 157/70)

4. Cocoa and chocolate products:

Approximation of laws 24.7.73 (OJ 228/73)

5. Sugar

Approximation of laws 11.12.73 (OJ L 356/73)

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VETERINARY DIRECTIVES

1. Animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine

26.6.64 (OJ 121/64)

as amended by OJ 192/66, OJ L 157/70, OJ L 179/71, OJ L 38/72, OJ L 298/72, OJ 172/73

2. Health problems affecting trade in fresh poultry meat

15.2.71 (OJ L 55/71)

3. Health problems affecting intra-Community fresh meat trade

26.6.64 (OJ 121/64)

as amended by OJ 192/66 and OJ L 256/69, OJ L 239/70

ANIMAL NUTRITION

1. Introduction of Community sampling and analysis methods for the official control of feedingstuffs

20.7.70 (OJ L 170/70)

as amended by OJ L 171/72

2. Additives in feedingstuffs

23.11.70 (OJ L 270/70)

as amended by OJ 124/73

3. Undesirable substances and products in feedingstuffs

17.12.73 (OJ L 38 of 11.2.74)

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HEALTH PROTECTION

1. Proprietary medicinal products

Approximation of laws 26.1.65 (OJ 22/65)  
as amended by OJ 14/66

2. Classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances

(a) Approximation of laws 27.6.67 (OJ 196/67)  
as amended by OJ L 59/70, L 74/71, 167/73

(b) Classification, packaging and labelling of  
dangerous preparations (solvents) 4.6.73 (OJ 189/73)

TEXTILES

1. Textile names

Approximation of laws 26.7.71 (OJ L 185/71)

2. Quantitative analysis of binary textile fibre mixtures

Approximation of laws 17.7.72 (OJ L 173/72)

3. Quantitative analysis of ternary fibre mixtures

Approximation of laws 26.2.73 (OJ 83/73)

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

Detergents

1. Detergents

Approximation of laws, 22/11/73 (OJ L 347/73)

2. Methods to test the biodegradability of anionic surfactants

Approximation of laws 22/11/73 (OJ L 347/73)

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Crystal Glass

Description and labelling of crystal glass.  
15.12.69 (OJ L 326/69)

Non-automatic weighing machines

Approximation of laws 19.11.73 (OJ No L 335/73)

Electrical equipment for use within certain voltage limits

Harmonization of laws: 19.2.73 (OJ 77/73)

MOTOR VEHICLES AND THEIR USE

1. Measures against air pollution by gases from positive -ignition engines of motor vehicles

Approximation of laws 20.3.70 (OJ L 76/70)

2. Liquid fuel tanks and rear protection devices for motor vehicles and their trailers

Approximation of laws 20.3.70 (OJ L 76/70)

3. Steering equipment for motor vehicles and their trailers

Approximation of laws 8.6.70 (OJ L 133/70)

4. Type-approval of motor vehicles and their trailers

Approximation of laws 6.2.70 (OJ L 42/70)

5. Permissible sound level and exhaust system of motor vehicles

Approximation of laws 6.2.70 (OJ L 42/70)

6. Braking devices for certain categories of motor vehicles and their trailers

Approximation of laws 26.7.71 (OJ L 202/71)

7. Insurance against civil liability re. the use of motor vehicles and the obligation to insure against such liability (OJ L 103/72)

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8. Measures to be adopted against air pollution by exhaust gases from controlled ignition engines - 20.3.70 (OJ L 76/70)
9. Audible warning systems of motor vehicles - 27.7.70 (OJ L 176/70)
10. Doors of motor vehicles - 27.7.70 (OJ L 176/70)
11. Rear-view mirrors of motor vehicles - 1.3.71 (OJ L 68/71)
12. Measures against pollutant emissions from diesel engines 2.8.72 (OJ L 190/72)
13. Interior arrangement of motor vehicles - 17.12.73 (OJ L 38/74)
14. Technical Protective device against unauthorised use of a motor vehicle - 17.12.73 (OJ L 38/74)

MATERIAL MEASURES OF LENGTH

- A            Approximation of laws 19 November 1973 (OJ L 335/73)

ENLARGEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

Amendment of certain directives following the Community's enlargement 19 November 1973 (OJ L 326/73).

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