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244th Plenary Session

The Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities held its 244th Plenary Session in the Committee building, Brussels, on 25 and 26 February 1987. The Committee Chairman, Mr Fons Margot, presided.

The Session was attended by Mr Jacques Delors, President of the Commission of the European Communities, who presented his paper setting out what had to be done to secure the success of the Single European Act and expressed the hope that the Committee would issue a comprehensive Opinion on this matter and so help to ensure cohesion.

Excerpts from Mr Delors' address

Mr Delors said that the paper hinged on three simple concepts: firstly, the Commission was calling on governments to implement the Single Act and nothing but the Single Act. This set six inter-linked goals: achievement of a large internal market; a drive for greater unity within the European Communities; consolidation of Community R&D policy; strengthening of the EMS; the introduction of a social dimension and joint action on the environment. The Commission took a medium-term (5-6 years) perspective, with a series of targets for the years ahead. Most governments closed their minds to the inter-relationship between the decisions they took at Community level and their actions on the national economic front. This extremely serious state of affairs had to be rectified.

The paper itself focused on four key problems whose solution would restore the Community's much-needed room for manoeuvre. These were:

- (i) adjustment to the changed international situation in which the CAP now operated: here the three underlying principles were: greater scope for market mechanisms; closer attention to rural development and family farms; a firmer stand in relations with non-member countries;
- (ii) Community policies with a tangible economic impact. Community action was needed in the technology, transport and telecommunications' sectors. The Commission had also proposed reforms in 'structural' policies;



Mr Margot, Chairman of the ESC (on the right) welcomes Mr Jacques Delors, Chairman of the Commission, on his arrival at the Committee's Plenary Session.

- (iii) new financial machinery, 'equipping the Community with adequate, guaranteed and stable resources;
- (iv) lastly, the need for proper budgetary discipline, enlisting the joint efforts of the European Parliament, the EC Commission and the Council of Ministers.

In conclusion, Mr Delors repeated that the Community had an appointment to keep — with itself. To this end, the Commission would be persistent and impress on the Heads of Governments what they had to do to secure the success of the Single Act. The aim was to create the common economic area which was a *sine qua non* for European Union.

Summary of the debate

Mr Staedelin (France), on behalf of the Workers' Group, noted with some bitterness that the trade union movement had given its support to the completion of the internal market and to measures which would boost economic growth at the expense of workers' purchasing power. But the *quid pro quo*, a drop in unemployment and the introduction of a genuine social policy, was still not forthcoming.

Mr Romoli (Italy — Employers) expressed his concern at the obstacles which the Council was putting in the way of funding for the framework programme for technological research and development.

Mr Kazasis (Greece — Employers) stressed the importance for the southern regions of the Community of an integrated approach to the implementation of the internal market. A straightforward transfer of resources would not be sufficient in order to remedy any adverse repercussions.

Mr Meyer-Horn (Germany — Employers) proposed that the ECU be introduced as a European currency to encourage a common stance *vis-à-vis* the United States and Japan. This should be done with the cooperation of the Central Banks of the Member States.

Mr Geuenich (Germany — Workers) commented that several sectors of industry had benefited from growth without this having a noticeable effect on unemployment. Community-level measures to combat unemployment, e.g. by shorter working time, needed to be stepped up. The Commission was proposing subsidies for small farms but nothing comparable for industries such as steel where jobs were under threat.

Mr Strauss (United Kingdom — Various Interests) argued that the Commission should not introduce a stringent prices' policy under the CAP, but rather opt for a more cautious policy linked to production controls at farm level.

Mr Hancock (United Kingdom — Employers) called for tight control of the CAP and realistic policies to achieve an effective result. There was no escaping the proposals for the dairy sector. Taxing vegetable oils was not the answer. Otherwise the same problems would arise again next year.

Mr Dunet (France — Workers) wanted all shades of trade union opinion to be represented on the various bodies involved in the social dialogue.

Mrs Robinson (United Kingdom — Various Interests) felt that it would be difficult to persuade national parliaments to approve an increase in the Community budget if the Community could not convince them of its own budgetary discipline. It was necessary to modernize the monitoring system and evaluate the objectives achieved in relation to expenditure.

Mr Wick (Germany — Employers) stated that the proposed changes in the CAP, the sacrifices demanded of farmers, and the dismantlement of the MCAs, were unacceptable.

Mr Vercellino (Italy — Workers) deplored the fatalistic approach of some speakers and stressed that the Commission programme provided for a considerable shift from EAGGF to the other structural funds. Vigorous action was still needed to create jobs and combat unemployment, currently at 11% of the workforce. An internal market without a well-balanced labour market was meaningless.

As far as agriculture was concerned, Mr Emo Capodilista (Italy — Farmers) questioned the attitude of some governments towards the import of substitute products and referred to the Community's disputes with the USA over such matters as exports of spaghetti, subsidies for the Airbus, etc. The Community did not want a trade war, but the surpluses in meat and oils and fats presented dangers. An overall Commission proposal on these subjects was needed.

Mr Burnel (France — Various Interests) said that unemployment was not inevitable. Work should be shared fairly. The current level of youth unemployment called democracy into question. Given the demographic situation, it was essential for the Community to revive family policy. Otherwise, the Community's population would age.

Mr Pearson (Ireland — Employers) welcomed the transfer of some of the EAGGF funds to the Regional Fund and the Social Fund to tackle unemployment in the outlying areas of the Community. The youth training programme of the Social Fund was very important in areas with growing populations, which would provide the workers of the future.

Mr Haas (Germany — Various Interests) pointed out that the transport policy, neglected for years, should be put into effect. In order to promote cohesion among the Member States, the aspects warranting harmonization should be grouped together.

Mr Kaaris (Denmark — Employers) welcomed the opening-up of public contracts to genuine competition. He hoped that other sectors would follow suit. The Commission should work to overcome the barriers to market liberalization created by the Member States.

Reply by Mr Jacques Delors

Mr Jacques Delors said that he refused to build Europe with words. 'I could easily have said things that everyone would agree with. Europe is the biggest cemetery in the world of unadopted resolutions. I balk at this. There is a question of method. I have tried to trigger a discussion between the 12 Member States on the basis of a document which they have signed, the Single Act. A strategy of gradualism would have been possible but I felt that the Member States had given Community issues a low priority, that they did not see the link between what was happening within their frontiers and their economic policy. I have taken the risk of spelling things out clearly. Otherwise there can be no advance. This document is what the Member States have put their signatures to. I have spoken to you of this major rendez-vous. For the moment, we have shouldered our responsibilities. They wanted to be 12 countries, now they are. It is essential to be consistent and choose between a customs union and a genuine Community.

OPINIONS ADOPTED

1. COMMON RAIL POLICY (Own-initiative Opinion)

Stocktaking and prospects for a common rail policy

Background

In July 1986, the Section for Transport and Communications adopted an Information Report on stocktaking and prospects for a Community rail policy (CES 348/86 final and CES 348/86 final appendices). The report was presented at the Plenary Session of September 1986.

The Own-initiative Opinion is based on this report. The importance of the subject, the need to formulate and apply a Community rail policy, the quality of the Information Report and the value of the proposals

made in it are all arguments which militated in favour of drawing up an Own-initiative Opinion.

Conclusions of the Information report of the Transport Section

The Information report shows that rail transport (whether passenger or goods transport), far from being confined to fossilized services which merely reflect its past, has major potential for providing high-quality, highly competitive services: high-speed travel, suburban services in large cities, heavy goods trains, more efficient wagon routeing, express block trains operating between rail-road transshipment terminals are a few of the main examples of what can be achieved. Public opinion appreciates the railways' very high safety standards, the relatively little damage they do to the environment (space saving, absence of pollution), their low energy consumption, and the fact that they can provide high-speed and high-capacity mass transport.

The time has thus come to formulate an overall Community rail policy, with special emphasis on a coherent multi-annual infrastructure investment plan to fill the development gaps which are particularly acute in some regions of the Community.

This policy could be based on:

- (i) existing regulations, as long as they are applied in their entirety and not in a fragmentary way;
- (ii) implementation of the proposals in the Commission's document COM(83) 764 of January 1984 (though calculation of the cost of using infrastructures must be supplemented by calculation of external social costs);
- (iii) the harmonization of certain social provisions governing working conditions;
- (iv) compliance with the regulations laid down for each mode of transport, as regards both technical standards and working conditions;
- (v) formulation of an indicative programme which would include a timetable for coordinated implementation of the various economic, technical and social measures which need to be taken — in the context of liberalization and harmonization — for the different modes of transport.

Within the context of such harmonization, the Twelve Railways Group — which accepts the principles of a market economy and free choice for the customer — should for its part step up international cooperation and study new formulas for consortia, which involve giving much greater priority to marketing ideas in decisions on international

services, and the pooling in some markets sectors of revenue and expenditure or other similar arrangements.

Railways would then be better able to provide their customers and the community in general with high-quality, widely used services which pay their way.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

Stressing the important role which railways will have to play as a connecting link in the implementation by 1992 of the internal market of the European Community, the Economic and Social Committee, called upon the Commission and the Council to implement a common rail policy. Expressing its regret at the lack of a global and coherent transport policy in the Community which defines the role the railways are expected to play and the failure of previous efforts by Community bodies in rail policy to produce results in practice, the Committee called for immediate action. Its opinion, urged the implementation without delay of existing regulations and the adoption of Commission proposals.

The Opinion adopted by 49 votes in favour and 20 abstentions, demands that fair and equal terms of competition between the different means of transport in the Community should be secured. A Community rail policy should *inter alia* aim for the modernization of existing Community rail infrastructure, encourage greater cooperation in research and development on a Community basis, extend higher speed links for passengers between the main centres of population and industry and encourage railway undertakings to develop combined road/rail transport.

The Committee considers that the principal responsibility for successful railway transport in the Community rests with the undertakings themselves through managerial, technical and commercial cooperation. However, it is convinced that the time has now come to formulate an overall Community rail policy. This policy should be based on:

- (i) a coherent multi-annual infrastructure investment plan;
- (ii) existing regulations, as long as they are applied in their entirety and not in a fragmentary way;
- (iii) adoption of Commission proposals which already exist, particularly concerning the financial relationship between railway undertakings and the State and the treatment of infrastructure costs;

¹ CES 202/87.

- however, these proposals have to be supplemented by some aspects such as calculation of external social costs;
- (iv) the harmonization of certain social provisions governing working conditions between the different modes of transport;
 - (v) as regards the extent of liberalization and harmonization, the establishment of an outline programme setting out a well co-ordinated timetable for the introduction of the relevant rules and regulations (economic, technical and social) for the different modes of transport.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Transport and Communications, chaired by Mr Delourme (Belgium — Workers). The Co-Rapporteurs were Mr Bleser (Luxembourg — Workers) and Mr Haas (Germany — Various Interests).

2. PUBLIC HEALTH (Information report)

Gist of the Information report⁽¹⁾

The European Community should coordinate and step up its efforts with regards to AIDS information and provide funds for research to fight the disease.

This one of the many recommendations contained in this report.

It coincides with the emergence of a Community health policy and the completion of the internal market envisaged in the Single Act for 1992. The cross-frontier character of facts such as AIDS, Chernobyl's example of radioactive accidents, transports of dangerous substances, etc. shows the urgency of a single European health policy. The report also proposes the creation of new professions which combine medical with environmental and technical expertise, a European health card as a Community-wide model for every European citizen with his or her personal details, medical forms in all languages, a one-number telephone system for emergency calls throughout the Community and a European Charter of the Rights of Patients.

The report is divided into three parts:

- (i) The first one deals with patients in the Community and their relationship with health services and organizations. Authorization of drugs must be contingent on proof that they are safe when used in accordance with instructions. Cross-border action at Community

⁽¹⁾ CES 539/86 fin.

level in the event of disasters should be improved. The recent nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the USSR highlights the necessity of developing international cooperation procedures to deal with major disasters not only between EEC Member States but on a broader world scale. The Community should devise an effective integrated system for monitoring nuclear plant safety based on very strict European radiation standards.

- (ii) The second part takes account of the new technologies such as biotechnology and genetic engineering and information systems applied to the health sector.
- (iii) The third part is more concerned with the way to achieve an infrastructure in order to enable all citizens to lead a healthy life; the prerequisites include not only an efficient health care system but more effective information, training and preventive programmes and health promotion measures.

Finally, the Committee reminds the Community of its responsibilities, especially in the light of recent events and calls for epidemiological research, stricter common safety standards and monitoring systems which must be backed up by effective procedures for carrying out checks in all relevant areas.

This report was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mr Jaschick (Germany — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mrs Heuser (Germany — Various Interests).

The Assembly decided to send this report to the Council and the Commission.

3. FOURTH PROGRAMME OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH RESEARCH

Proposal for a Council Regulation relating to a research and development coordination programme of the European Economic Community in the field of medical and health research (1987-89) (COM(86) 549 final)

Gist of the Commission document

The proposal relates to a fourth programme for the coordination of medical and health research covering the period 1987—89. Since the first coordination programme, which embraced three concerted actions,

there has been a considerable expansion. Over 70 concerted actions are to be coordinated in the period up to 1989.

The fourth programme covers the further development, reorientation or termination of ongoing projects and the starting of new projects that have already been prepared as well as promotion of the joint use of health resources. Coordination efforts are to be substantially expanded, by including two new research targets of critical importance, namely cancer research, and research into AIDS.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion adopted unanimously the ESC endorses the proposed coordination programme.

It has the following suggestions to make:

- (i) greater efforts should be made to publicize the results of the research programmes;
- (ii) half of the available funds should be devoted to cancer epidemiology;
- (iii) two further areas of study, namely 'therapy-induced secondary cancers' and 'cancer and psychological factors' should be included;
- (iv) as regards AIDS, social and behavioural research should be promoted and support should be given to studies on the spread of the infection, the latent period between infection and appearance of the disease and the factors contributing to the appearance of AIDS after infection.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mr Jaschick (Germany — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mrs Heuser (Germany — Various Interests).

4. CANCER

Europe against cancer programme: Proposal for a plan of action 1987-89 including a Draft Council Decision concerning the information of the public and the training of members of the health professions (COM(86) 717 final)

¹ CES 200/87.

Gist of the Commission proposal

The document describes the 75 actions designed to combat cancer in 1987-89. The proposals are based on the conclusions of a committee of leading cancer experts set up by the Commission.

Action is planned in the following areas:

- (a) cancer prevention:
 - (i) campaign against tobacco,
 - (ii) improvement in nutrition,
 - (iii) protection against carcinogenic agents,
 - (iv) systematic screening and early diagnosis,
 - (v) European code against cancer;
- (b) information and health education of the general public;
- (c) training of the health professions (the Commission proposes a Council decision on this point and on point (2));
- (d) cancer research.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion, adopted by a large majority with 2 votes against and 6 abstentions, the Committee welcomes the action programme on the prevention of cancer. It notes that the demands voiced in its Opinion of 27 February 1986 (CES 233/86 — OJ C 101 of 28 April 1986, p. 26) have been met and that the problems of basic research, preventive measures and treatment have been tackled within an overall European strategy and an action programme. The Committee notes that the Commission has also taken on board ideas put forward in earlier ESC Opinions on occupational cancers, occupational medicine and asbestos.

The Committee notes with deep regret that the Commission has not taken up its proposals on alcohol. Information campaigns on recommended foods and warnings against excessive alcohol consumption are not enough in view of the proven link between excessive alcohol consumption and the increased risk of cancer.

Although it regards as appropriate a campaign to inform people and raise public awareness of the risks associated with the use of tobacco products, the Committee wishes to highlight the adverse socio-economic effects which would follow from rapid, indiscriminate

¹ CES 204/87.

implementation of the measures proposed by the Commission to reduce the growing, processing and distribution of tobacco. Considering the concern expressed on this even by the Commission itself, the Committee would advise the greatest caution and prior consultation with operators in the sector before any measures are adopted, in order to ensure that at all events the measures are consistent and spread over a long enough period. The Committee is for instance opposed to a ban on duty-free sales of tobacco at airports etc. Such a ban is only possible after excise duties have been harmonized.

Precisely because it welcomes the proposed preventive measures and expects them to have a positive effect, the Committee warns against hopes raised too high by the proposed programme.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mr Jaschick (Germany — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mrs Heuser (Germany — Various Interests).

5. PROTECTION OF THE RHINE

Proposal for a Council Decision on a supplement, in respect of mercury originating in sectors other than the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry, to Annex IV to the Convention for the Protection of the Rhine against chemical pollution.

Commission Communication to the Council on the recommendation by the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution on the monitoring of mercury discharges by sectors other than the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry (COM(86) 710 final)

Gist of the Commission document

On 25 July 1977 the Council decided to sign the Convention for the Protection of the Rhine against Chemical Pollution (77/586/EEC). For the purposes of applying this Convention, the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine drafted the following documents in accordance with Articles 3, 4, 5 and 14 of the Convention:

(i) a proposal intended as a supplement to Annex IV of the Convention,

and

(ii) a recommendation on the monitoring of mercury discharges by sectors other than the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry.

The proposal, which will come into force after unanimous acceptance by the contracting parties to the Convention, and the recommendation concern mercury discharges into the Rhine by sectors other than the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry.

The proposal and the recommendation are in practice compatible with the Directive of 8 March 1984 (No 84/156/EEC — OJ L 74 of 17 March 1984, p. 49 *et seq.*) on limit values and quality objectives for mercury discharges for sectors other than the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry. Article 4 of Directive 84/156/EEC requires the Member States to set up specific programmes to reduce mercury discharges from a variety of sources. This requirement will remain in force under the new proposals.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion adopted by a large majority with 2 votes against and 6 abstentions, the Committee welcomes the Commission proposal. The Committee wonders whether it would be feasible to shorten by agreement with the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, the 10-year notice period for the introduction of more stringent limit values.

The Committee would be interested to know whether the joint monitoring of emission standards by authorities and producers operates satisfactorily.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, chaired by Mr Jaschick (Germany — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr van Dam (Netherlands — Employers).

6. TEDIS

Proposal for a Council Regulation introducing the preparatory phase of a Community programme on trade electronic data interchange systems (Tedis) (COM(86) 662 final)

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Tedis programme aims to:

- (i) avoid the proliferation of watertight trade electronic data interchange systems with the inevitable widespread incompatibility;

¹ CES 203/87.

- (ii) encourage the design and setting up of trade electronic data systems meeting users' requirements;
- (iii) stimulate the capability of the European IT equipment and services industry to meet users' demands.

The Tedis programme is in two phases: the preparatory phase and the pilot project phase. The regulation in question only covers the preparatory phase, which concentrates on activities and studies designed to establish and promote the prerequisites for development of trade electronic data interchange. An appropriation of 6 million ECU has been assigned for this purpose.

The modern economy relies increasingly on the exchange of trade data or information between business partners. A large volume of data is exchanged in this way. The speed, reliability and relevance of the flows of information exchanged are increasingly affecting the competitiveness of both large and small firms.

Taking transport alone, it seems that the cost of conventional documents and transport delays caused by the production and inspection of these documents make up 10 to 15% of the final transport cost.

In recent years a few private efforts to establish EDI have been made in Europe. Although the usefulness of these spontaneous ventures should not be underestimated, it is clear that duplication is frequent and costly, the approaches and solutions found for similar problems differ widely and sometimes lead to conflicting national or international positions on the general approach and on the solving of transverse problems, i.e. those common to all EDI systems.

The Community coordination urgently desired by current or potential users of trade electronic data interchange is therefore necessary in order to:

- (i) avoid the emergence of a number of incompatible national approaches;
- (ii) restrict the implementation of hermetic systems that cannot communicate with each other;
- (iii) prevent or limit the danger of the European IT market becoming fragmented as a result of the diversity of the systems and approaches adopted;
- (iv) help to promote market unity and the achievement of the necessary economies of scale.

In response to the current requirements of the business world, electronic data interchange (EDI) offers substantial advantages and opportunities. These include abolition of the work of re-encoding data, improve-

ments to customer service, better stock management and the speeding-up of the sale/invoicing/payment cycle.

It has been estimated that the costs resulting from paperwork, errors, data redundancy, excessive stockholding, waiting time in offices, factories and customs posts could account for up to 10% of the cost of the exported finished product.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

By a large majority with 6 abstentions the Committee has adopted an Opinion which gives its basic support to the proposal. In particular the Committee stresses the need for an even greater willingness on the part of national postal authorities to participate intensively in the development of Community-wide services.

The Committee thinks that it is very important to coordinate the individual Member States' work.

The alerting of potential users is very important in creating acceptance of the wide-scale introduction of EDI.

One problem which is of fundamental importance for the expansion and use of Community-wide services and which must be solved for EDI is the wide array of Community languages. This problem represents a serious competitive disadvantage for the Community *vis-à-vis* the comparable US and Japanese economies. The Committee is therefore particularly pleased to note that the use of machine translation programmes is to be studied during the preparatory phase.

Finally, the Committee points out that it is necessary to give detailed consideration to the special problems of less-favoured regions not only in the STAR programme but also in the preparatory phase of Tedis.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mr Kazazis (Greece — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Nierhaus (Germany — Workers).

¹ CES 196/87.

7. CUSTOMS DUTY

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) 950/68 on the Common Customs Tariff and Regulation (EEC) 918/83 setting up a Community system of reliefs from customs duty (COM(86) 466 final)

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Common Customs Tariff (Council Regulation (EEC) 950/68 of 28 June 1968) provides for application of a 10% customs duty on imported goods sent in small consignments to private individuals or contained in passengers' personal luggage, provided that such imports are not of a commercial nature and the total value of such goods does not exceed 115 ECU per consignment or per traveller.

The rules governing relief from customs duty are set out in Council Regulation (EEC) 918/83 of 28 March 1983.

In the case of goods contained in passengers' personal luggage this 10% duty applies only to the fraction of the value exceeding that which may be admitted duty-free (45 ECU). In contrast, it applies to all goods in small consignments sent to private individuals where their total value exceeds 45 ECU.

The aim is to change this situation which means that no relief whatsoever is given on small consignments over a value of 45 ECU.

At the same time the Commission grasps the opportunity to reactivate its proposal of 16 November 1984 — which the Committee endorsed in December 1984 but which has so far not been adopted by the Council — to raise the ceiling for imposition of the flat-rate duty. It is therefore proposing that the ceiling laid down in Regulation No 950/68 be increased from 115 ECU to 200 ECU. The ceiling laid down in Regulation No 918/83 for relief in respect of goods sent in small consignments or contained in passengers' personal luggage would be increased from 45 ECU to 100 ECU.

In addition, Articles 137 and 138 of Regulation (EEC) No 918/83 would be altered to entrench permanently certain provisional and optional provisions allowing for duty-free admission of apparatus used in medical research, diagnosis and treatment.

A number of 'technical' and formal updates to Regulation No 918/83 are also proposed.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

In its Opinion adopted unanimously, the Committee endorses the proposal particularly with the People's Europe in mind. It notes however that the new limits and ceilings are fixed without any provisions as to the criteria used to calculate the value of the goods in question.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, chaired by Mr Kazazis (Greece — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Broicher (Germany — Employers).

8. INTER-REGIONAL AIR SERVICES

Proposal for a Council Directive amending for the second time Council Directive 83/416/EEC concerning the authorization of scheduled inter-regional air services for the transport of passengers, mail and cargo between Member States (COM(86) 424 final)

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Council Directive of 25 July 1983 concerning the authorization of scheduled inter-regional air services for the transport of passengers, mail and cargo between Member States (83/416/EEC)² governs the introduction of air services between Categories 2 and/or 3 airports open to international scheduled air services. So far, this directive has had only a limited impact. Just 13 new air services have been* introduced: DK/UK: Billund-Southend and Stauning-Aberdeen; F/IRL: Quimper-Cork; Morlaix-Cork; D/NL: Hamburg-Rotterdam; D/B: Hamburg-Antwerp; D/UK: Hamburg-Manchester; D/I: Munich-Verona; D/F: Nuremberg-Nice; IRL/F: Cork-Rennes; NL/D: Rotterdam-Hamburg; NL/UK: Rotterdam-Liverpool; NL/DK: Rotterdam-Billund; UK/D: Birmingham-Stuttgart. The aircraft used to have less than the permitted maximum of 70 seats and less than 30 tonnes take-off weight. Stage lengths are longer than 400 km (250 miles), or less in cases where the air journey represents a considerable time saving over land or sea transport because of the existence of natural barriers such as seas or mountains. The airlines involved are small.

¹ CES 197/87.

² OJ L 237 of 26 August 1983, p. 19.

The new proposal relaxes the present rules; Community authorization is to be extended to international air services to and from (though not between) Category 1 airports (normally the major international airports in each country). The minimum stage length of 400 km has been abolished, but the capacity ceiling of 70 seats has not (as yet).

As well as this extension of scope, the Member States' grounds for refusing authorization have been curtailed: economically or technically unsound services can still be refused. The general principle is still that inter-regional services should start in the home country of the applicant airline. But one important change is that an airline may operate services between two or more Member States which are not its home country (fifth freedom traffic).

So, for the time being smaller airlines will still be barred from operating direct services between Category 1 airports. But it seems likely that feeder traffic to the large international Category 1 airports will help regional development and give a new fillip to jobs.

Inter-regional air services (small aircraft, small airlines) are still not allowed between the following Category 1 airports: Brussels, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Munich, Palma, Madrid, Malaga, Las Palmas, Athens, Thessaloniki, Paris (Charles de Gaulle and Orly), Dublin, Rome, Milan (Linate and Malpensa), Amsterdam, Lisbon, Faro, London (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) and Luton.

Under certain conditions access to regional air routes is even permitted when such routes are already served by other airlines.

With this proposal the Commission rounds off a package of suggested measures for civil aviation covering fares, capacity and competition on intra-EEC mainline routes, which are currently being discussed by the Council of Ministers.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

While welcoming the Commission's proposals to ease competition among airlines for inter-regional transport, the Economic and Social Committee would like these proposals to go further.

In an Opinion adopted unanimously less 2 abstentions the Committee supports the aims of the proposed amendment to the Directive. In its view, the extension of inter-regional air services, as part of the air transport network within the Community, will be of particular benefit

¹ CES 198/87.

for the development of industry and employment in the various regions of the Community. In this connection, it should be remembered that the ESC, in its Opinion on the first Directive on inter-regional air services, adopted in October 1981, had also endorsed the aims of the Commission proposal.

A further aim should be to provide a framework for the expansion of inter-regional air transport services based on sound economic principles and at the same time enhancing the viability of European air transport. The Committee stresses that the general aims of air transport policy as a whole, and in particular the interests of workers in the sector and of the travelling public, must be given due weight in any decision on inter-regional air links, air safety is another matter of supreme importance.

Within the above framework, the Committee has the following detailed comments to make on the Commission's proposal:

- (i) The Committee recalls that its Opinion of October 1981 recommended that no limit on seating capacity should be imposed. As regards the Commission's proposal to maintain a limit, the Committee believes that aircraft capacity must take account, on the one hand, of real traffic demand and, on the other, the need to avoid undue disruption of existing major trunk routes.
- (ii) The Committee endorses the Commission's proposal that the present Directive be extended to cover inter-regional air services which use Category 1 airports; however, it has reservations about the merging of Categories 2 and 3.
- (iii) The Committee advocates maintaining Article 6 (1)(c) of the Directive, under which a State affected can refuse to authorize an inter-regional air service if, *inter alia*, 'the traffic covered by the air service applied for is already satisfactorily catered for both as to quality and as to quantity by existing direct air services between the two airports concerned'. However, this provision should be redrafted to give special weight to the needs of users and operators in terms of frequency, choice, quantity and quality of the services provided.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Transport and Communications, chaired by Mr Delourme (Belgium — Workers). The Rapporteur was Mr Kenna (Ireland — Employers).

9. CHAPTER III — EURATOM TREATY

Draft proposal for a Council Decision on a Community system of rapid exchange of information in cases of unusually high levels of radioactivity or of a nuclear accident (COM(86) 434 final)

Background and gist of the Commission document

In June 1986 the Commission presented a Framework Communication on the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident¹ which committed it to a thorough review of the public and occupational health protection measures taken by the Community under Chapter III of the Euratom Treaty. This commitment found concrete expression in another communication presented by the Commission in August 1986.²

At the end of its review the Commission concludes that 'more rapid decision-making is needed to ensure that basic standards keep pace with technical progress and to close gaps in the protection of public health'.

The Commission also considers that 'it is in the overriding interest of the Community and each of the Member States make to every effort to apply the provisions of Chapter III of the Euratom Treaty and improve the protection of the health of citizens and the environment'.

These conclusions prompt the Commission to present proposals for future Community action.

Among these proposals, the Commission stresses the urgency of introducing a rapid information system. Chernobyl highlighted the Community's inability to take coordinated action in response to a major accident.

In the first instance, the Commission aims to set up rapid procedures for the exchange of information within the Community whenever there is a sudden rise in radiation levels or a nuclear accident. This rapid information system must be compatible with the provisions of the international convention on rapid notification of nuclear accidents, drawn up and adopted by the IAEA, which came into force at the end of October.

A proposal for a decision will be forwarded to the Council after referral to the Economic and Social Committee, and others, in accordance with the Euratom Treaty. The text of this draft proposal appears in Annex 1

¹ COM(86) 327 final of 12 June 1986.

² COM(86) 434 final of 20 August 1986.

to the Commission communication on 'The development of Community measures for the application of Chapter III of the Euratom Treaty — health and safety'.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

Unanimously, less one abstention the Committee approves the introduction of a Community system for the rapid exchange of information in cases of unusually high levels of radioactivity or of a nuclear accident.

The Chernobyl nuclear accident has revealed the inadequacy of existing Community procedures and arrangements, with information emanating from the Member States being uncoordinated, varying in presentation and often being piecemeal in character.

This situation has resulted in the reliability itself of the information being called into question. It has also demonstrated the Community's inability to coordinate its response to a major accident.

The Committee accordingly considers that the introduction of a Community system of rapid exchange of information is likely to restore public confidence, which is of vital importance.

The Committee also considers that the implementation of such a system is only a first step. It then goes on to list a number of areas in which discussions should be held and, if necessary initiatives or decisions taken.

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Energy, Nuclear Questions and Research, chaired by Mr Romoli (Italy — Employers). The Rapporteur was Mr Saiu (France — Workers).

10. WINE MARKET

Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) amending the Regulation on the common organization of the market in wine (COM(86) 460 final)

Gist of the Commission proposal

The Commission notes that Spanish national legislation which has applied since the wine-growing law of 1970, requires a minimum natural alcoholic strength of 9% vol. for all wine-growing areas apart from certain exceptions. If Spain can allow these exceptions in the northern

¹ CES 201/87.

part of its territory, the Commission considers that the rest of Spain should be classified as zone C III b. Spain could thus be classified into wine-growing zones until the end of the 1989/90 wine year, at which time several of the provisions of the Community wine legislation are due to be re-examined.

Of the oenological practices and processes authorized for the Community as a whole, a certain number are rarely or never used in one or more Member State. In order to encourage the production of wines of a natural character derived from the intrinsic nature of the grapes used, the Member States should be authorized to ban or restrict the use of certain oenological practices in the preparation of wine on their territory. This power to act can be given to the Member States only on condition that the measures which they adopt do not prejudice either consumer protection in the Member States or the normal pattern of intra-Community trade.

Gist of the Committee Opinion¹

The Committee adopted unanimously its Opinion on the subject.

It feels that to find a solution for the Spanish problems between now and 1990, one should aim at a pragmatic formula which:

- (i) cannot in any way prejudge the later demarcation of wine-growing zones for the Community as a whole, scheduled for 1990, above all as regards the setting of zone boundaries;
- (ii) does not upset current Spanish production practices; and
- (iii) does not treat Spanish wine producers less favourably than those in the rest of the Community.

The Section approves without reservation the proposed amendment to Article 15(2) in the basic regulation (Article 1(2) in the present proposal).

This Opinion was drawn up in the light of the work produced by the Section for Agriculture, chaired by Mr Lopez de la Puerta (Spain — Various Interests). The Rapporteur was Mr Yverneau (France — Various Interests).

¹ CES 199/87.

External relations

The Chairman's activities

The Chairman, Mr Margot, and two Committee members, Mr Jenkins and Mr Neto Da Silva, took part in the meeting of the ACP/EEC Joint Committee held at Arusha (Tanzania) from 30 January to 6 February 1987.

On 11 February Mr Margot had a meeting in Brussels with HE Ambassador Korosee, Head of the Yugoslav Mission to the EC. Mr Graziosi, Director-General in the ESC Secretariat, also took part in this meeting.

The same day, Mr Margot took part in a debate organized by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) in Brussels on 'The role of the two sides of industry in vocational training'.

On 22 February, Mr Margot, accompanied by Mr Laval, an administrator in the ESC Secretariat, took part in the closing session of the Congress of the Confederation of Portuguese Farmers (CAP) in Lisbon.

Other activities

A member of the Committee, Mr Roseingrave, took part in the conference on 'Concessions Card for Older People' organized by Eurolinkage in Madrid on 28 and 29 January 1987.

Two Committee members, Mr Romoli and Mr Roseingrave, assisted by the Head of the ESC Press Division, Mr Barry-Braunthal, gave a press conference in Dublin on 30 January 1987 on the Opinion dealing with the R&D framework programme.

The Secretary-General, Mr Louet, delivered an address on a European theme to the French Union Nationale des Associations de Formation et d'Information Mutualistes Agricoles (national union of farmers' friendly society training and information associations) in the course of its meeting of 5-6 February 1987. Mr Emo Capodilista and Mr Lopez de la Puerta took part in the related Round Table discussion.

The ESC/EFTA contact group met in Brussels on 10 February 1987 to prepare for the next meeting, which will be held in Basel on 1 and 2 April. The group members are Mr Briganti, Mr Curlis and Mr Kaaris for the ESC, and Mr Bransten, Mr Sprant and Mr Zeller for the EFTA.

Three Committee members, Mr Clavel, Mr Delhomenie and Mr Poeton, accompanied by Mr van de Graaf, took part in the meeting held in Nairobi by the Centre for Industrial Development. This meeting (17 to 19 February 1987) dealt with the subject of regional industrial cooperation for East Africa — export marketing of ACP manufactured products.

Mr Kenna, a Committee member and the Rapporteur for the Opinion on inter-regional air services, gave a press conference on this Opinion at the Committee building in Brussels on 25 February 1987.

New consultations

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

Communication from the Commission to the Council on the elimination of distortions of competition of a fiscal nature in the transport of goods by road: study of vehicle taxes, fuel taxes and road tolls (COM(86) 750 final/2)

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 83/182/EEC on tax exemptions within the Community for certain means of transport temporarily imported into one Member State from another (COM(87) 14 final)

Proposal for a Council Directive amending for the third time Directive 83/181/EEC determining the scope of Article 14(1)(d) of Directive 77/388/EEC as regards exemption from value-added tax on the final importation of certain goods (COM(87) 21 final)

Proposal for a Council Directive on the coordination of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the compulsory winding-up of direct insurance undertakings (COM(86) 768 final)

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 70/156/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the type-approval of motor vehicles and their trailers (COM(87) 26 final)

Proposal for a Council Decision concerning a Community programme to create and develop business and innovation centres and their network (COM(86) 785 final)

- (a) **Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) extending Regulation (EEC) No 1707/86 on the conditions governing imports of agricultural products originating in third countries following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station;**
- (b) **Communication from the Commission to the Council on a permanent system for establishing limits for the radioactive contamination of drinking water and agricultural products in the case of a nuclear accident plus a Proposal, based on Article 31 of the Euratom Treaty laying down maximum permitted radioactivity levels for agricultural**

products and drinking water following a nuclear accident' (COM(87) 28 final)

- '(a) Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the coordinated introduction of public pan-European digital mobile communications in the Community;**
- (b) Proposal for a Council Directive on the frequency bands to be made available for the coordinated introduction of public pan-European digital mobile communications in the Community' (COM(87) 35 final)**

Commission Communication to the Council on adult training in firms (COM(86) 780 final)

Proposal for a Council Decision concerning the extension of the period of validity of the Council Decision 85/214/EEC of 26 March 1985 and the Council Decision 86/23/EEC of 4 February 1986 (COM(87) 59 final)

Proposal for a Council Directive on health problems affecting the production and the placing on the market of egg products (COM(87) 46 final)

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 80/215/EEC on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in meat products (COM(87) 51 final)

Proposal for a Council Directive amending several Directives concerning the approximation of the laws of the Member States where there is provision for publication of attestations and certificates (COM(87) 44 final)

Provisional future work programme

April 1987 Plenary Session

Opinions upon consultation

- Protection of workers (COM(86) 296 final)
- Misleading products (COM(86) 499 final)
- SME action programme (COM(86) 445 final)
- Introduction of common border posts (COM(86) 524 final)
- Tax exemption for permanent imports of personal property (COM(86) 584 final)
- Credit institutions' own funds (COM(86) 169 final/2)
- Distinctive marking (COM(86) 653 final)
- Road haulage (COM(86) 611 final)
- Science and technology R&D (COM(86) 550 final)
- Farm prices
- Jams (COM(86) 613 final)

Subsequent Plenary Sessions

Opinions upon consultation

- Dangerous chemicals (COM(86) 362 final)
- Fourth environment programme (COM(86) 485 final)
- Toy safety (COM(86) 541 final)
- Environment action (COM(86) 729 final)
- Good laboratory practice (COM(86) 698 final)
- Disclosure requirements — company branches (COM(86) 397 final)
- Publication of accounting documents (COM(86) 396 final)
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