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ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL: THE BULLETIN OF ENTERPRISE POLICY

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EURO



Trade and the GATS negotiations



**Employment and trade on the agenda
of the Helsinki Conference**

Readers' letters...



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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At its meeting, the Committee on Commerce and Distribution focused primarily on the challenges presented by the opening of the next round of negotiations on international trade, and in particular trade in services. File of the month reports on the outcome of this meeting.

File of the month also analyses the results of the Helsinki Conference on employment and commerce.

The organisation chart of the new Directorate-General for Enterprise is also given.

Euro-info is a concise information bulletin for SMEs and the craft sector.

It is sent to those who put in a written request. Euro-info is published 10 times a year.

The information contained in this bulletin can be reproduced, provided the source is mentioned. This publication, which is purposely written in a journalistic style, does not reproduce legal texts faithfully. Those texts should be referred to directly. The content of the current Euro-info is purely informative. **Responsible for editing: Ranieri Bombassei - Director Enterprise Directorate-General, with the contribution of Gian Piero Paganini.**

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FILE OF THE MONTH

1 THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND DISTRIBUTION (CCD) IS EXAMINING ISSUES OF CONCERN TO COMMERCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCUSSIONS ON THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN SERVICES (GATS)

INFORMATION



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A working party of the Committee on Commerce and Distribution (CCD) held a meeting to examine the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). A representative of the Directorate-General responsible for external trade gave an overview of the next millennium round in relation to services. It was emphasised that the GATS covered not only cross-border services (such as transport), but also services purchased in one country for use in another, service companies setting up establishments abroad and the services provided between various parts of companies situated in different countries.

The members of the working party proposed Mr Schillert as rapporteur and contact person for the External Relations DG negotiators, to allow rapid consultation during the GATS negotiations.

The delegates raised the following points:

- the negotiations should grant greater recognition to the importance of traders, particularly in their role as inventors, as opposed to the importance of the manufacturing sector;
- it would be logical to consider rules governing electronic commerce in the general framework of the GATS for commerce, and not as a separate question;
- the importance of the GATS negotiations for European mail order firms is likely to increase sharply as these firms follow the example of their American competitors and expand their activities to remote continents; the liberalisation of postal services will accelerate this process;
- the representations made by economic activity groups are often interpreted as defensive, whereas in fact they likewise are interested in broadening their sector of activities;

- substantial work is needed to harmonise phytosanitary regulations;
- the existence of the block extension, which is inherently a question of competition policy, should be considered in the context of GATS.

The Commission agreed to take account of these comments.

A Commission representative responsible for Community policy explained about access to Japanese markets and a spokesperson of the Foreign Trade Association presented papers on imports and anti-dumping.

2 EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCE AT THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE

INFORMATION



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The Distributive Trades Unit of the Enterprise DG was represented at a conference entitled 'Employment and commerce', organised in Helsinki by the Commercial Employers' Association of Finland and the Finnish Union of Employees. Andrew Pearce, deputy head of the unit, presented a paper which dealt mainly with the background and contents of the White Paper on commerce and the proposed follow-up, particularly the forthcoming information campaign on commerce.

This was the first time a joint conference had been organised by the employers and trade unions of the distributive trades and, according to several speakers, it was the direct result of the publication of the Commission White Paper on commerce. About 100 persons took part, including the Director-General of the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

A number of speakers confirmed that Finland shared the view often expressed during the preparation of the White Paper, namely that the importance of the distributive trades was underestimated and that measures should be taken to remedy this.

The information campaign on commerce, planned for the first quarter of 2000, was designed to publicise the results of Commission action to support distributive trade and, in so doing, to assist the sector to raise its own profile vis-à-vis decision-makers at national, regional and local level.

THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENTERPRISE IN THE NEW COMMISSION

Editor's note

A new Enterprise Directorate General has been created, with effect from 1st January 2000, by merging the old directorates-general for industry, SMEs, and the innovation directorate previously attached to the Information Society DG. It will bring out a new newsletter, and Euro Info will not appear again in its current form until June, when the new Directorate General's missions and activities will be presented to you in a special issue.

3 DIRECTOR-GENERAL, FABIO COLASANTI



Euro-Info is pleased to announce the Commission's appointment of Fabio Colasanti as Director-General of the new Enterprise DG from 1 January 2000.

Curriculum vitae

Name:	Fabio Colasanti
Nationality:	Italian
Education:	PhD in Economics and Commerce, University of Rome. College of Europe, Bruges

Work experience

October 1977	After passing an open competition, economist in the DG for Economic and Monetary Affairs, where he stayed, working in the economics field, until 1984.
1985-1987	Member of the Commission Spokesman's Group with responsibilities for: economic and monetary affairs, regional policy, credit and investment and SME policy.
1988-1995	Head of the Economic Forecasts Unit then the Macro-economic Policy Analysis Unit of DG II — Economic and Financial Affairs.
1996-1999	Director of Directorate B (Resources) of DG XIX — Budget. In this period he was particularly involved in the preparation of the report on own resources (October 1998) and the discussions on Agenda 2000 until their conclusion in Berlin.
June 1999	Appointed Deputy Head of Cabinet in the Cabinet of the President of the Commission, Romano Prodi.
January 2000	Director-General of the Enterprise Directorate-General.



DG ENTERPRISE

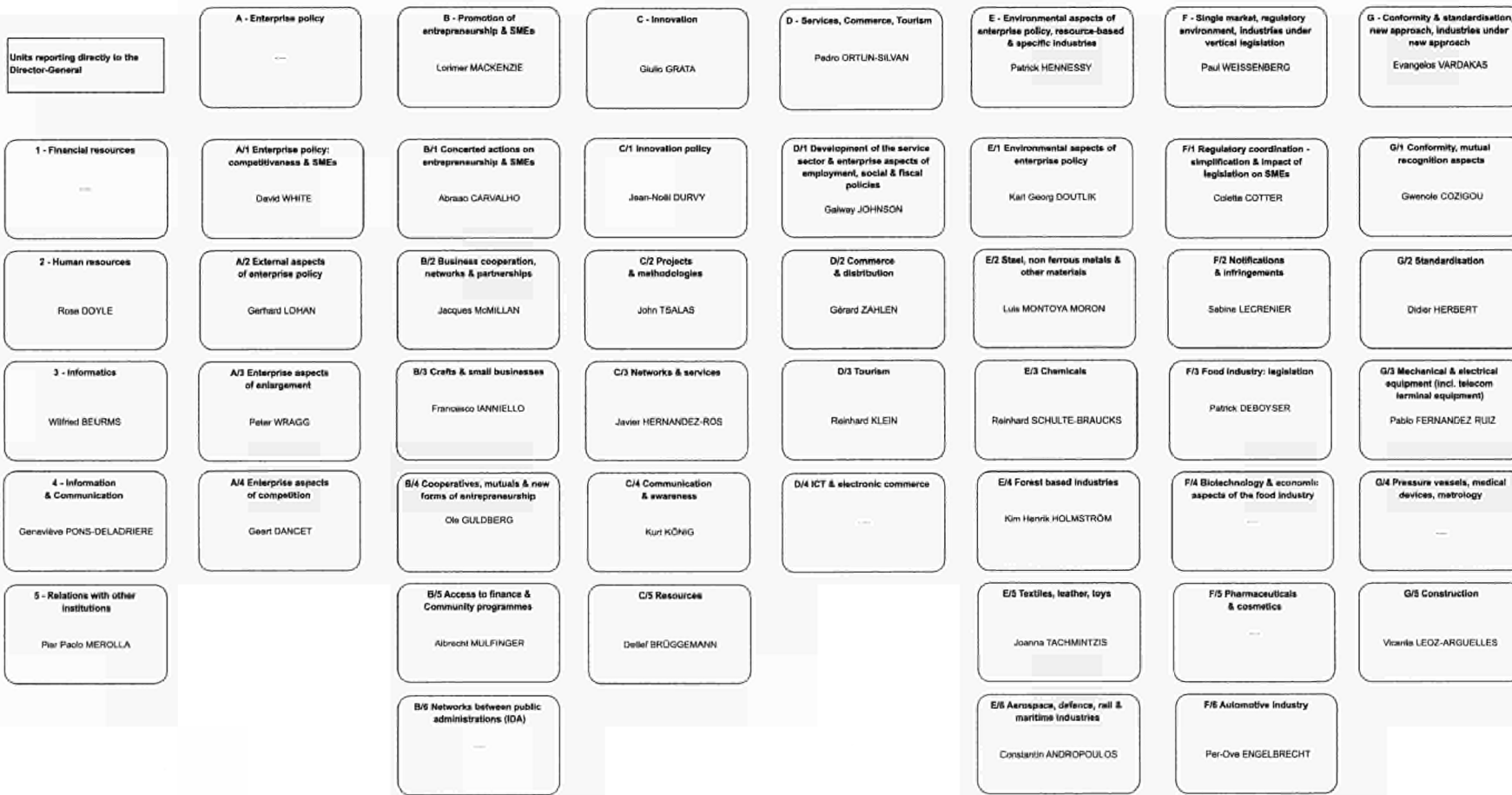
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1049 Brussels

Director General
Fabio COLASANTI

Deputy Director General
.....

Deputy Director General
Jörn KECK

ORGANISATION CHART



SOCIAL ECONOMY

4 PLENARY MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR COOPERATIVES, MUTUALS, ASSOCIATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

INFORMATION



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The Consultative Committee for Cooperatives, Mutuals, Associations and Foundations met in Brussels on 15 November 1999. In September 1999, it had approved a reference document on 'The social economy and the development of the European Union' by written procedure. The new organisation of the Commission and its impact on the CMAF sector were explained to the Committee members, who went on to adopt a declaration on this question, addressed to Mr Liikanen, Member of the Commission.

The committee then had an exchange of views on the events planned for the next three presidencies of the Union, i.e. in Oporto in March–April next, in Paris in the second half of 2000 and in Sweden in May 2001 with the seventh Conference on the Social Economy.

This was followed by progress reports and follow-up discussions on the White Papers on cooperative entrepreneurship in the Europe of 2000 and on the potential of mutual societies in the Europe of tomorrow.

The members of the committee also examined the progress of work on the follow-up document to the communication on promoting the role of associations and foundations in Europe, and also the draft Commission communication on the Commission and NGOs: building a stronger partnership.

proximity of the Land Brandenburg to central Europe and the wishes of the former Member of the Commission responsible for regional policy, Monica Wulf-Mathies, it was possible to organise a Phare partnership, in parallel with the Europartnership, attended by more than 100 small and medium-sized host enterprises from the Baltic countries and Poland.

Like the previous events, Europartnership Brandenburg attracted substantial interest among SMEs. About 1 700 enterprises travelled to meet more than 400 host enterprises of the three German Länder Brandenburg, Berlin and Thuringia and more than 100 host enterprises of the Phare partnership. Since the unification of Germany, many efforts have been made to invest in these regions, particularly to promote SMEs. The organisers estimate that there were more than 1 700 contacts between enterprises during the two-day event.

Strong participation by central and eastern Europe

The large majority of SMEs came from the European Union, but the presence of almost 400 enterprises from central and eastern Europe is worthy of mention. The geographical proximity of Potsdam to these countries obviously contributed to this strong attendance, but the parallel organisation of a Phare partnership is probably the main explanation.

The Phare partnership, financed entirely from the Phare budget, was the second event of this kind following a very successful first version on the occasion of the Europartnership in Vienna in May. The Phare partnership is organised on the same model as the Europartnership, the only difference being that it is reserved for the host enterprises of central and eastern Europe. The host enterprises are presented in a separate catalogue so that the visiting enterprises can establish the contacts which interest them. Six countries from eastern Europe participated in the Phare partnership in Vienna (Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania). In Potsdam, it was the turn of the three Baltic countries and Poland to be the stars of this parallel event.

As in Vienna, the Phare partnership was greatly appreciated by the enterprises of the applicant countries. This event afforded them an opportunity for an effective and concrete encounter with SMEs, particularly from the European Union. Owing to a lack of financial resources, they would never have been in a position to organise such meetings themselves.

According to Liliana Deac, the National Adviser for Romania, the Phare partnership provides 'important support to Romanian enterprises'. Indeed she confirmed that 'the Phare partnership provides a unique opportunity for Phare enterprises to establish contact with the SMEs of other European countries, which they could never have done on their own. We are aware of many contacts made between our enterprises and the other European enterprises during these two days'.

TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

5 EUROPARTNERSHIP IN POTSDAM 'EAST-WEST GATEWAY'

INFORMATION



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'East-West Gateway' was the special topic of the 21st Europartnership, organised in Potsdam at the end of Europartnership October. Owing to the geographical

All the national advisers of the central and eastern European countries are convinced of the positive benefits of the Phare partnerships and express the hope that other events of this nature will be organised in future, either in parallel with the Europartnerships or separately. However, at present, we have no information on plans for the future organisation of other Phare partnerships.

Visit from the new Commissioner

Our new Commissioner, Mr Erkki Liikanen, visited a Europartnership for the first time, making the speech at the hand-over ceremony. At each Europartnership, it is customary for the current organiser to wish good luck to the next organiser, in this case Europartnership Denmark 2000.

In his speech, Mr Liikanen pointed out that events such as the Europartnership helped to meet the needs of SMEs and that, during his visit, he had met many enterprises that had welcomed the real possibility of concluding agreements during such encounters.

The next Europartnership will take place in Aalborg in Denmark on 8 and 9 June 2000.

The conference, which was attended by more than 500 people, focused on support services for business, a need created in particular by the rise in importance of electronic commerce and by the important changes in the business environment in Europe, such as the euro and enlargement.

Summing up the conference, Mr Guy Crauser, Enterprise DG, drew a certain number of conclusions:

- **European business must adjust to two new dimensions, i.e. the enlarged internal market and globalisation.**

While 70 % of enterprises said that they were not afraid of enlargement, this positive approach was accompanied by a definite need for external advice. Thus, 87 % thought that they would need assistance in accessing the new markets in an enlarged Community (1).

The setting-up of 44 new EICs in the CEECs would make it possible to establish links between the EU and the applicant countries. The EICs were the bodies best placed and best equipped to respond to these needs and to iron out the difficulties for enterprises

- **Enterprises needed to diversify and increase their competitiveness.**

This meant a greater need for support services for SMEs, which have to invest in the knowledge-based economy and content management.

The Internet is unlikely, in the foreseeable future, to eliminate enterprises' need for direct support by human networks, such as the Euro Info Centre network.

As shown in the study on 'Support services for enterprises' (2), the tools of the information society constitute a revolution in terms of products affecting how enterprises work and communicate, but do not remove the need for a local human service.

EURO INFO CENTRES

6 1999 CONFERENCE OF THE EURO INFO CENTRES

INFORMATION



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In the age of the information society, the work of the 1999 Conference of the Euro Info Centres (14-16 October 1999 in Rhodes) underlined the importance of personalised support services and direct contacts with business.

(1) Survey conducted by EOS-Gallup on behalf of the Enterprise DG of the European Commission and presented at the 1999 Conference of Euro Info Centres.

(2) Study conducted by Optem on behalf of the Enterprise DG of the European Commission and presented at the 1999 Euro Info Centre Conference in Rhodes.

- **Enterprises require support services which are accessible, independent and clearly defined in the context of the trend towards a knowledge-based society, beyond the information society.**

For this reason the support services must provide knowledge. State (or semi-State) support services must operate according to the rules of the market by adjusting to enterprises' requirements.

As a result, the Euro Info Centre network must increasingly assume the role of providing assistance.

Such a support service must be presented to enterprises in the most coherent possible manner, which in turn means that the Euro Info Centre network must form the core of the other Commission networks, so as to provide clear and transparent services.

- **This means combining efforts and identifying the levels of specialisation and complementarity of the various Community networks.**

The Commission initiative to promote cooperation between all these networks is timely.

Such cooperation, based on the need for each network to focus on its principal role, should extend to local level and eventually include cooperation with non-Community networks.

- **The Euro Info Centres should act as an anchor among the networks, an objective which is now being achieved.**

The Euro Info Centre network extends across the entire territory of the European Economic Area and the countries of central and eastern Europe. The proximity of the Euro Info Centres to enterprises as a result of this substantial geographical coverage is a significant added value for the EICs, which provide permanent and structured contact with enterprises on the ground. This also allows the Euro Info Centres and the Commission to ensure effective feedback of information concerning the needs and problems of enterprises.

This feedback should make it possible to influence, and where necessary redirect, Community policies at the initiation or revision stage. Likewise, it can play a role in verifying the implementation of Community legislation.

- **In the near future, this 'direct' flow of information will be facilitated with the introduction of a feedback mechanism as part of the project 'Dialogue with business'.**

This joint project of the Internal Market DG and the Enterprise DG, in which the Euro Info Centres are actively involved, was designed as a further means for the Commission to improve the functioning of the internal market for the benefit of business.



NEWS

7 RECOMMENDED SITES

I N F O R M A T I O N

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- <http://www.e-gateway.net> — E-gateway is an information site for SMEs that wish to learn about electronic commerce. In particular, it offers an electronic bulletin board and a database of the products and enterprises linked to this sector. This project has the backing of the Enterprise DG.
- <http://www.ebsummit.org> — The site of the 'European Business Summit' Conference which will be held in Brussels from 9 to 11 June 2000. The central topic of the conference is innovation.

NEW TITLES

8 NEW PUBLICATIONS

I N F O R M A T I O N

**Carla CIGNINI**

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E-mail: Carla.Cignini@cec.eu.int**— Report from the Commission on concerted action with the Member States in the field of enterprise policy**

Ref.: COM/1999/569 final — 09.11.1999

Languages: 11 EU languages

The full text of the report in the 11 languages is available on the website of the Enterprise DG at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg23/gen_policy/concerted_action/concerted_action.html

Since 1995, the Commission has been assisting the Member States to work together to define and exchange best practice in wide areas of business policy: simplifying the business environment, introducing

effective business support measures, improving the visibility of the services provided and their use by business. The method used involved organising a series of forums and seminars to illustrate the situations of enterprises at different stages of their development: on start-up, during development and on transfer to new owners.

— Action plan to promote entrepreneurship and competitiveness

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 1999, 19 p.

Ref.: Catalogue No CT-22-99-547-**-C

Available languages: DE, EN, FR

The brochure is available in the 11 languages on the Enterprise DG website at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg23/gen_policy/response_to_best/response_to_best.html

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LETTERS PAGE

9 READERS' QUESTIONS

I N F O R M A T I O N

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**1) What is the address of 'Dialogue with business'?
What does the site contain?**

The address is <http://europa.eu.int/business>

The site is free and is translated into 11 languages.

What does it contain?**1) An overview, with search facility for topics linked to the European Union.**

You can learn about Community policies which affect your business. You can search any European subject either alphabetically, by topic or by simply entering a term on the website and on several European servers.

2) Links to practical information of general interest to business.

Gives a complete guide to trade fairs, a business directory listing 500 000 companies, on-line newspapers (including the 'Rapid' press service of the Commission), a new machine translation service and many other services of general interest to business (travel, weather, news).

3) Detailed information on Community policies and the single market rules which apply to business.

Information on new Commission initiatives, access to preparatory documents such as Green and White

Papers, search for Community legislation, case-law and national implementing measures.

4) Detailed information and personalised advice on key issues.

This includes information, free of charge, on the procedures for granting patents or registered trademarks, on the certification of products, on Community funding programmes and on the rules and practices applicable to tenders (including access, free of charge, to TED (Tenders Electronic Daily)). The detailed information on the key issues are supplemented by free professional advice provided by specialised groups from the Euro Info Centres (EIC).

5) Free access to a wide range of advisory services.

- You can access your nearest Euro Info Centre (network of 230 Euro Info Centres in the European Union) to obtain advice on European issues which concern your business in the single market.
- You may seek assistance, free of charge, from the business contact points in each Member State if you encounter problems with the national authorities when trying to do business in the European single market.
- You can request the assistance of the Advisory Service on individuals' rights to solve a problem relating to the rights of individuals (e.g. employees and their families) to live, work and provide services in the European Union.
- You can obtain general information about the European Union and send questions to the Europa mail box.
- For questions about the euro, choose one of the national information and advice services.
- You can also place your comments in a suggestion box, which will help the Commission to improve this website.

2) 'Dialogue with business' is a gateway to information and advice on the single market intended for companies.

A small booklet is available on request.

A simple tool to be kept available on your desktop, if you cannot answer questions such as:

- *How can I do business in another Member State?*
- *Where can I certify my product for export?*
- *How can I benefit from European Union funding programmes?*
- *How can I tender for public contracts?*
- *Do I need a registered trademark for my product?*



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