

Thursday 18 December 1997

9. Commission's work programme for 1998

B4-1027, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1031 and 1032/97

Resolution on implementation of the legislative programme and other activities for 1997 and on the Commission's work programme for 1998

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the interinstitutional agreement on democracy, transparency and subsidiarity of 25 October 1993 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission concerning transparency in the decision-making process of the Union's institutions ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the Code of Conduct agreed on 15 March 1995 between the European Parliament and the Commission ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission report on implementation of the Commission's programme for 1997 (SEC(97)1854),
 - having regard to the Commission's work programme for 1998 (COM(97)0517) and the new legislative initiatives (SEC(97)1852),
 - having regard to the declaration made on 22 October 1997 by Mr Santer, President of the Commission, and to the debate on that declaration as well as to the debate of 17 December 1997 devoted to the same subject,
- A. whereas the annual legislative programme constitutes an indispensable interinstitutional instrument for programming and coordinating the Union's activities in a transparent and efficient way and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, and whereas the Council must also be involved in it,
- B. whereas the legislative programme is an interinstitutional programme, which must be assessed on the basis of the priorities laid down by the institutions concerned,

1. Giving new impetus to interinstitutional cooperation as regards the legislative programme

1. Deplores the fact that, like the 1996 programme, the 1997 programme has only been partially implemented, given in particular that, of the 16 new legislative proposals promised by the Commission, Parliament had received no more than seven by the end of November; emphasizes that the assessment of the 1997 programme remains a dead letter in so far as the Commission has failed to give practical form to the proposals it announced but did not actually submit; expects a detailed explanation as to why proposals announced in 1997 but not yet submitted are now no longer even included in the 1998 legislative programme (notably most of the legislative proposals provided for in the Action Plan for the Single Market); notes, further, that Parliament has had referred to it 40 procedures and 14 strategic documents which did not appear either in the 1997 legislative programme or in the programme for 1996;

2. Deplores the fact that 197 issues are currently pending before the Council awaiting a final decision and that 88 are awaiting a common position without Parliament having been informed in all cases of the reason for the deadlock and without the Commission having made use of its right of initiative to break the deadlock;

3. Reiterates its call for the list of actions envisaged for 1998 to contain information on the legal bases of the proposals, a timetable for their submission and any other information required for the interinstitutional coordination of work; asks, on grounds of transparency, for the new legislative initiatives to be submitted to Parliament at the same time as the adaptations or technical amendments to existing legislation, and for the latter to be given the status of official Commission documents;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 329, 6.12.1993, p. 132.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 89, 10.4.1995, p. 69.

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4. Calls on the Commission to draw up a list of legislative proposals under way and currently pending before the Council, indicating those which should be withdrawn and those which should be replaced by new proposals; calls on the Commission to ensure that any withdrawal of proposals is done in agreement with the European Parliament and that Parliament is officially informed in each case of the intended withdrawal; points out, in this context, that several parliamentary committees have given the Commission information as to the proposals to be withdrawn or replaced;
5. Notes the increasing number of strategic documents (communications, Green Papers, etc.) submitted by the Commission, which rose from nine in 1990 to 104 in 1996, notes, further, that it had already received 57 such documents by the end of the first half of 1997; is concerned that many such strategic documents are too wordy, insufficiently geared towards results and are rarely followed by legislative proposals; rejects on principle the withdrawal of legislative proposals already submitted and their replacement by strategic documents;
6. Calls on the Commission to anticipate the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam and take the necessary steps to ensure that the reforms adopted may be implemented as soon as ratification has taken place; in this context, expects in particular the proposal on the revision of the committee decision of 13 July 1987 which was announced by President Santer for early June 1998, a proposal on the alteration of the legal bases of the pending proposals, which must be submitted in good time for Parliament to be able to adopt its position thereon before the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam, and the proposal on access to documents provided for in Article 191a of the EC Treaty, a proposal which must also determine the boundary between legislative and executive activity;
7. Is concerned at the fact that most of the proposals for codification submitted by the Commission are not yet adopted and calls on the Commission to undertake a detailed and quantified assessment as regards codification and simplification;
8. Calls for the extension of the SLIM project to other areas such as the environment, free movement of and social security for migrant workers, health and safety at work, and public procurement;
9. Recalls that the Commission is obliged to take action on requests from Parliament for legislative initiatives in accordance with Article 138b of the EC Treaty and calls on the Commission to submit proposals as soon as possible based on the requests addressed to it (resolutions of 4 May 1994 on fire safety in hotels ⁽¹⁾, 20 April 1994 on preventing and remedying environmental damage ⁽²⁾, 17 April 1996 on the European health card ⁽³⁾, and 30 January 1997 on the European Union's forestry strategy ⁽⁴⁾);
10. Concludes that interinstitutional cooperation as regards legislative planning is simply not working and that the Commission, which has the right to propose legislation, is not honouring its own commitments; proposes, henceforth, the regular assessment — on the basis of a written document — of the implementation of the legislative programme involving meetings between representatives of the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament;

II. The work programme for 1998

11. Defines its political priorities as follows and calls for the legislative programme for 1998 to be applied and supplemented by the measures outlined below;
12. Hopes that, following the statement made on 19 November 1997 by Mr Oreja, Member of the Commission, the report setting out proposals for a comprehensive reform of the Treaties will be submitted in good time, i.e. before the European Council meeting in December 1998;
13. Regrets that the Commission's stated commitment to the principle of mainstreaming is not explicitly reiterated in the context of its general political priorities for 1998;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 205, 25.7.1994, p. 163.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 128, 9.5.1994, p.165.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 141, 13.5.1996, p.104.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 55, 24.2.1997, p. 22.

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Employment, growth, the strengthening of cohesion and EMU

14. Reaffirms that the fight against unemployment remains a priority political objective; calls for the procedures laid down in the Treaty of Amsterdam concerning the establishment of economic and employment guidelines to be conducted in parallel, in order to ensure better coordination between macroeconomic and structural measures; endorses the guidelines for employment approved by the extraordinary meeting of the European Council held in Luxembourg on 20/21 November 1997;
15. Calls on the Commission and Council to reach agreement with the European Parliament on the issue of the legal basis involved in the budgetary procedure, with particular regard to all the elements of European action in the field of employment;
16. Calls on the Commission to submit revised proposals for combating social exclusion in the light of the new legal bases provided by the Treaty of Amsterdam; encourages the Commission to find a legal solution to including the elderly and the disabled by means of this new legal basis;
17. Regrets that no reference is made in the 1998 work programme to the long-awaited proposal for legislation concerning the entitlement of a divorced or separated woman to share her former husband's pension rights;
18. Regrets that no reference is made in the 1998 work programme to the long-awaited proposal for an amendment to Council Directive 86/613/EEC on the application of the principle of equal treatment of self-employed men and women;
19. Calls on the Commission to submit a proposal for a Directive on sexual harassment at work, should the social partners fail to reach agreement within the framework of the Social Protocol;
20. Calls on the Commission to develop legal instruments to ensure that the existing discrimination affecting atypical forms of employment is progressively abolished;
21. Calls on the Council and the Commission to implement all the recommendations set out in the report of the Veil Group on the free movement of workers;
22. Calls for the annual economic report and the broad economic guidelines to be restructured and reformulated so that they become effective instruments for coordinating the economic policies of the Member States; calls on the Commission to draw up proposals for secondary legislation based on Article 103(5) of the Treaty so as to strengthen the role of the European Parliament in the policy coordination process;
23. Reminds the Commission of its undertaking to involve Parliament to the greatest possible extent when dealing with the proposals for the reform of the Structural Funds, announced for March 1998 in connection with Agenda 2000, including pre-accession instruments;
24. Supports the Commission's plans for a proposal for a Directive on direct taxation on savings; stresses that the Code of Conduct should be regarded as no more than an initial step towards harmonization in the area of company taxation; supports more employment-friendly taxation, in particular through a shift from labour to other sources of taxation; in this context calls for the introduction of a special form of VAT on labour-intensive services which are not subject to cross-border competition;
25. Calls on the Commission to use all the means available to it — including new legislative proposals, where appropriate — to ensure that consumers are protected during the transition to the single currency;
26. Regrets the absence of any proposal for a new system of own resources;
27. Asks for proposals to promote better judicial cooperation concerning protection of the financial interests of the Community;
28. Asks the Commission to present a proposal to establish the full independence of UCLAF on the basis of an interinstitutional agreement;

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Agriculture, fisheries, environment, transport, research and energy

29. Calls upon the Commission to present all the reforms of the different common market organizations as outlined in Agenda 2000 and to ensure a coherent approach to all sectors including Mediterranean products; recalls that the objectives of cohesion, the quality and safety of agricultural products as well as better integration of environmental elements into production methods are still the foundations of future agricultural policy;
30. Calls on the Commission to propose, by way of legislation, the fixing of fundamental principles and criteria for upper limits for and modulation of aids for farmers;
31. Calls on the Commission to submit proposals in the area of rural development based on the conclusions of the Cork Conference, taking into account the diversity of the rural regions in the Union and the multipurpose role of agriculture;
32. Calls on the Commission to take into consideration, in the context of the reform of the Structural Funds, the need to safeguard the horizontal nature of the funds for fisheries in order to avoid imbalances between regions dependent upon fishing; calls on the Commission to submit innovative legislative proposals for the fisheries sector, taking account of regional characteristics and the need to safeguard employment as well as maintain the ecological balance;
33. Calls on the Commission to review the fisheries agreements concluded with developing countries in order to provide them with genuine cooperation instruments;
34. Reiterates the need for environmental policy, public health policy and consumer protection policy to be further integrated with other policy areas; stresses in particular the connection between environmental protection and job creation, a connection which the Commission should exploit to the full;
35. Asks the Commission to submit all outstanding proposals in the context of the process for the review of environment policy agreed within the framework of the accession to the EU of Austria, Sweden and Finland with a view to achieving higher environmental standards;
36. Calls on the Commission to submit proposals for a reduction in the use of pesticides and biocides, as promised in the Fifth Environmental Action Programme of 1992, to ban the most dangerous ones and to speed up the assessment of existing chemicals on the EU market;
37. Calls for a communication to be drawn up on a review of the EU's chemicals policy;
38. Calls for more precise proposals, following the Commission's communication on environmental taxes, levies and charges in the single market and its White Paper on the implementation of the polluter-pays principle, so that national and regional initiatives in the field of environmental levies may be made compatible with the rules of the single market and European environmental policy;
39. Calls on the Commission and the Council to pursue their work on the proposed Directive on rational planning in the gas and electricity distribution sectors;
40. Calls on the Commission to submit legislative proposals in the wake of its communication on noise;
41. Calls on the Commission to submit a Directive on food hygiene and legislation on food claims; notes with satisfaction the measures taken to improve food safety which are in line with the recommendations made by the European Parliament's Committee of Inquiry into BSE;
42. Reminds the Commission that it should always use the leeway it has available as regards the application of the appropriate legal bases in the field of public health in such a way that the European Parliament is involved to the greatest possible extent;
43. Calls on the Commission to submit a proposal for a Directive on the protection of soils against contamination and on sustainable soil use;

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44. Calls on the Commission to submit legislative proposals in the wake of its action plan on access to justice and on simplified methods of settling consumer disputes;

45. Welcomes the commitment to submit proposals on working and rest time in the excluded transport sectors and hopes that definite results can be achieved as quickly as possible, in consultation with the social partners, in the interest of the health and safety of workers and in the general interest, and calls on the Commission to submit a series of measures designed to complete the single market in the field of transport;

46. Calls for the proposal concerning public service obligations in rail and road transport (point 25 of the 'new legislative initiatives') not to lead to the disintegration of public service in the local passenger transport sector;

47. Calls for follow-up proposals to be drawn up on the internalization of external costs (fair and efficient pricing) and, in connection with this request, for progress to be achieved on the issue of Alpine transit;

48. Calls on the Commission to implement a European tourism policy, to adopt specific measures and to break the deadlock affecting the Philoxenia Programme;

A People's Europe

49. Calls on the Commission to proceed with its proposals for three draft Directives on the free movement of persons on which Parliament adopted opinions as long ago as 23 October 1996 (1);

50. Calls on the Commission to anticipate the implementation of Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (action to combat discrimination) and to submit legislative proposals designed to prevent and to combat racist acts and revisionist arguments;

51. Urges the Commission to submit specific proposals on the practical implementation of the new title on an area of freedom, security and justice, particularly in fields which may overlap (e.g. visa: Council Regulation, Schengen regime and Treaty provisions), and to establish clear priorities concerning the fight against all forms of organized crime, the drugs trade, illegal immigration, the trade in human beings, in particular children, and money-laundering;

52. Calls for a proposal for a Directive on the insolvency of undertakings operating in several Member States;

53. Calls again on the Commission to submit draft legislative instruments on the legal structure and on the funding of political parties at European level;

The Union's presence in the world — asserting a position and a role

54. Reiterates its call on the Commission to make active use of its right to propose legislation and to submit to the Council proposals for joint actions as provided for in Article J.8(3) (new Article 22(1)), of the Treaty on European Union; calls on the Commission to ensure greater consistency between measures taken in the commercial, economic and development fields;

55. To this end, calls upon the Commission to ensure in particular that:

- instruments to achieve genuine partnership and sustainable development are introduced into the new agreements with the ACP States in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Parliament;
- a legal basis covering action to promote human rights in third countries with which the Union has concluded international agreements is defined so as to give more body to the means by which human rights clauses in those agreements are upheld;

56. Calls on the Commission, when submitting its forthcoming legislative proposals in the fields of culture, education and youth, to take account of the achievements of the existing programmes in these fields;

(1) OJ C 347, 18.11.1996, pp. 58, 60 and 62.

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57. Calls on the Commission to submit at an early date proposals concerning the creation of the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit advocated in the Treaty of Amsterdam and to put in place the Humanitarian Crisis Analysis Monitoring Centre;

58. Asks the Commission, in the context of its activities in the Middle East, to contribute more to projects such as 'People to People' and '2020/Peace Industry' as instruments for the promotion of peace in the region;

59. Asks the Commission to contribute actively and financially to the establishment of a permanent international criminal court and to support regional initiatives in this regard;

60. Welcomes the impetus given by the Commission to relations with Latin America and Asia and praises the preparatory work carried out with a view to the organization of a European Union-Latin America Summit;

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61. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the European Council, the Council, the parliaments of the Member States, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

10. Olives and olive oil

A4-0374/97

Resolution on the Note to the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament on the olive and olive oil sector (including economic, cultural, regional, social and environmental aspects), the current common market organization, the need for a reform and the alternatives envisaged — Options Paper (COM(97)0057 — C4-0096/97)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission's note to the Council and Parliament, COM(97)0057 — C4-0096/97,
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 October 1996 on the reform of the COM in olive oil (¹),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the opinions of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment, the Committee on Regional Policy and the Committee on Budgetary Control (A4-0374/97),
- A. whereas the COM in olive oil has operated efficiently, allowing the olive sector to tackle competition from other vegetable oils and fats which enjoy a high level of support and to develop external markets, and has not given rise to surpluses; whereas in oil-producing regions it has played a dual role as a marketing policy and as a way of stimulating rural development; whereas, however, a thoroughgoing reform of the common organization of the market in olive oil is needed as a matter of the utmost urgency for the fundamental reason that in the previous four marketing years at least there has been a serious crisis affecting the main mechanisms for determining the quantities of olive oil produced by each individual country and that every year there is a serious risk that the Commission may refuse payment of Community aid, leading to a permanent and indiscriminate reduction in the income guarantees for olive growers and the possibility of serious repercussions for all those working in the European olive and olive oil sector,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 347, 18.11.1996, p. 465.