

for southern European Union countries, where rest periods are far shorter than in the northern countries. One solution might be use 'periods of activity' rather than predetermined time-bands for all the Member States, which would mean removing the reference to the indicator for the L_{evening} period. Furthermore, the definition of an 'average meteorological year' might complicate compiling (and subsequently updating) noise maps

within the deadlines set. On the other hand, the Committee fully agrees with the inclusion of noise indicators for special cases.

3.5. Annex V: reword the fourth indent as follows: 'limit values in agglomerations according to Article 5'.

Brussels, 29 November 2000.

The President
of the Economic and Social Committee
Göke FRERICHS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a Council Regulation on information provision and promotion for agricultural products on the internal market'

(2001/C 116/11)

On 26 September 2000 the Commission decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 37 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the above-mentioned proposal.

The Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 15 November 2000. The rapporteur was Mr Espuny Moyano.

At its 377th plenary session (meeting of 29 November 2000), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 110 votes in favour and two abstentions.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Commission proposal sets out to harmonise and simplify the way the various current Community promotion schemes on the internal market are governed, by means of a single, 'across the board' instrument.

1.2. Following the approach taken to promoting agricultural products outside the EU, the Commission believes that the aim of the instrument must be information provision and promotion of a generic character, focusing on the intrinsic features of European products in order to upgrade their image in the eyes of consumers.

1.3. In this respect, the Commission considers that Community promotion measures must be complementary with those undertaken in the Member States by companies or national or regional authorities, and should bring added value to classic marketing and branded advertising activities.

1.4. The Commission proposes to periodically choose, using the management committee procedure, the themes and sectors that are to be the subject of information provision and promotion.

1.4.1. Under these arrangements, the management committee will lay down guidelines by sector and establish the selection criteria.

1.5. On the basis of calls for proposals organised by the Member States, the trade and inter-trade organisations will submit programmes which the Member States will refer to the Commission to ensure conformity with Community rules and the relevant specification. The final selection will then be made by the Member States.

1.6. The Commission proposes an indirect management system in which the Member States will be responsible for surveillance and payments.

1.7. It is proposed that financing be jointly provided by the Community, the Member States and the trade and inter-trade organisations, so that all the players involved assume their responsibilities.

1.7.1. It is proposed that the Community's contribution should not exceed 50 % of the actual cost of action, except for impact assessments of completed information and promotion measures, which will be fully funded by the Community.

1.7.2. Member State contribution is, in general, to be 20 % of the actual cost of actions. The rest is to be financed by trade or inter-trade organisations.

1.7.3. However, the Commission believes that financing for information measures on the Community's Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) schemes, and for those on organic production and labelling, should be restricted to the Member States and the Community.

2. General comments

2.1. This promotional initiative, which the ESC welcomes in general terms, complements the promotional tool adopted in 1999 towards countries outside the EU⁽¹⁾ and helps meet the objective of promoting a European food and agricultural model based on diversity, quality and safety, both within the European Union and throughout the rest of the world. The ESC does, however, have reservations concerning the procedures proposed by the Commission.

2.1.1. The ESC regrets that this objective is not spelled out sufficiently clearly in the proposal: the priority aims of promotion within the single market must be to disseminate the European agricultural and food model based on multifunctionality and on the concepts set out earlier, and to boost consumer confidence in farm and food products.

2.1.2. The image of European products in the eyes of EU consumers must be improved, and they must be made aware of the efforts under way to guarantee them a wide range of typical products and high standards in terms of quality, food safety and compliance with animal welfare regulations.

2.1.3. The ESC therefore shares the Commission's aim to make more information available at Community level on the intrinsic characteristics of food and agricultural products, such as quality, hygiene, nutritional value, food safety, labelling, traceability, organic or integrated methods of production, Community PDO/, PGI/ TSG systems, quality wine produced in a specified region, table wines and spirits with geographical indication.

2.1.4. The ESC also supports extending the potential benefit of Community promotional action on the internal market to other food and agricultural products.

2.2. For the European Union to fully benefit from a Community system for promoting European products on its internal market, this system must complement and be coordinated with initiatives by businesses, organisations and national authorities in their respective Member States.

2.2.1. As with promotion in countries outside the EU, a Community system for promoting food and agricultural products on the internal market must be based on the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity.

2.2.2. The ESC therefore welcomes the Commission's comprehensive and coherent approach to harmonising the many Community systems for promotion on the internal market and replacing them with a single framework for financing and managing promotion.

2.3. The ESC stresses the importance of co-financing promotional actions. This will allow resources to be pooled and enable all the interested parties to be involved and share responsibility, thus making promotional actions as efficient as possible and making the best use of financial resources. It must, however, emphasise the importance of the 20 % co-financing by the Member State. However, in certain cases, it should be possible to be flexible about the co-financing.

2.4. From the three-fold perspective of subsidiarity, complementarity and co-financing, the trade organisations and national authorities must work in an active and coordinated manner with the Commission in designing, selecting, managing and assessing Community actions for promotion on the internal market.

2.4.1. As in the case of promotion in third countries, the ESC regrets that the Commission has not made more of the implications and benefits of subsidiarity, complementarity and co-financing for promotional management.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 169, 16.6.1999.

2.4.2. More specifically, it regrets the extreme complexity of the proposed procedure and the inadequate involvement of economic actors.

2.5. Finally, the ESC considers that the proposed instrument must be given sufficient resources if it is to meet the ambitious objective of improving the image of European products in the eyes of consumers and defending the European food and agricultural model within the EU itself.

2.5.1. The importance of adequate financial resources is underscored by the fact that this policy aims both to increase promotion internally and externally and to widen the range of products being promoted.

2.5.2. The ESC

- is disappointed that the budget proposed by the Commission is, however, clearly insufficient;
- expresses its concern that the expected budget increase for promotion in countries outside the EU will lead to a drop in resources intended for promotion within the EU;
- is worried, finally, that the insufficient budget may give rise to major tensions between sectors and products.

3. Specific comments

3.1. Information and promotion measures must not be brand-oriented (Article 1(2)); this must not, however, result in generic actions forming part of broader national or private promotional campaigns with brand-oriented elements being automatically denied the benefits of Community promotion. This is essential if Community action is to be effective, and complementary to national and private initiatives.

3.2. The measures eligible for Community promotion under Article 2(a) include public relations work, promotion and advertising designed to draw attention to the advantages of Community products in animal welfare terms. The selection criterion for sectors and products set out in Article 3(a) should therefore also mention this concern for animal welfare.

3.3. In view of the joint financing approach proposed by the Commission, it is essential to harness the experience and active involvement of private organisations in decisions

concerning the list of eligible themes and products (Article 4) and in drawing up the guidelines for information and promotion programmes (Article 5). To this end, the ESC proposes the following:

3.3.1. mandatory rather than optional consultation of the Standing Group on Agricultural Product Promotion of the Advisory Committee on Quality and Health in Agricultural Production with regard to the three-yearly establishment of the list of eligible themes and products (Article 4(2));

3.3.2. mandatory consultation of the standing group before drafting the guidelines for information and promotion programmes (Article 5(1)).

3.4. The Committee believes mandatory collaboration between trade organisations and implementing bodies, as stipulated by Article 6(2), to be unnecessary, further complicating an already complex selection procedure. Implementation of such programmes by the organisations themselves should not be ruled out, provided they can display experience in the field and provide appropriate guarantees of proper execution.

3.5. Lastly, the ESC notes that the planned Community resources are far less than those presently earmarked for this purpose. It considers these resources to be clearly insufficient to achieve the final objectives of promotion on the single market, particularly since it is planned to extend promotion to all products. The low budget might explain the Explanatory Memorandum's vagueness about the real objectives of the Community action.

3.5.1. In order to prevent conflicts with external promotion activities and between sectors or products, the Committee calls upon the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council to take the necessary steps to provide the instrument with suitable resources.

4. Final recommendations

4.1. Safeguarding the European agricultural model and boosting consumer confidence in Community farm and food products are among the priorities set by Common Agricultural Policy reform under Agenda 2000. Upgrading the image of European produce in consumers' eyes through Community information and promotion initiatives on the single market must be the clearly signalled aim of this initiative.

4.2. If the benefits of Community-level promotion are to be maximised, it is crucial that all the players — trade and inter-trade organisations, Commission, Member States — work together in a complementary, coordinated way. Against this

backdrop, private sector involvement and experience are essential. This must be reflected in the design, formulation and implementation of programmes, especially in order to avoid red tape.

4.3. Resources for promotion on the single market must match the ambitions. Inadequate resources will not only limit the effectiveness of the instrument, but will also generate unnecessary tensions between eligible sectors and products.

Brussels, 29 November 2000.

The President
of the Economic and Social Committee
Göke FRERICHS

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the animal-health requirements applicable to non-commercial movement of pet animals'

(2001/C 116/12)

On 10 October 2000 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Articles 37 and 152(4)(b) of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the above-mentioned proposal.

The Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 15 November 2000. The rapporteur was Mr Leif E. Nielsen.

At its 377th plenary session of 29 and 30 November 2000 (meeting of 29 November) the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 110 votes to one with one abstention.

1. Introduction

1.1. Fears of rabies and other diseases transmitted by household pets have prompted certain Member States to introduce restrictions on the non-commercial movement of dogs, cats and other pets from other Member States and third countries. The Commission's proposal harmonises the common rules governing external protection and limits internal restrictions. A number of the diseases concerned solely affect animal health while others ('zoonoses', and especially rabies) also impact on human beings. Hence the Commission's view is that harmonisation should be implemented under the common decisionmaking procedure.

1.2. The rabies situation in the EU has radically improved as a result of oral vaccination of foxes in regions where rabies is endemic. Sweden and the United Kingdom have therefore done away with their earlier quarantine arrangements and introduced less restrictive provisions. The cases of rabies that

have been recorded in the EU primarily relate to animals from regions in non-EU countries where rabies is endemic. The proposal provides for more stringent control on entry from third countries and is based on the opinions of several groups of experts, including the Scientific Veterinary Committee.

1.3. Under the proposal, dogs and cats moving between the Member States or from specified third countries and territories which can, in line with a regional approach, be assimilated to the Community (Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, the Vatican, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands), must be accompanied by their owners or a natural person who has responsibility for them during travel. Animals must be identified by a tattoo or transponder and be accompanied by a rabies vaccination certificate; except in the case of first vaccination, such vaccination must have been carried out less than one year beforehand with an inactivated vaccine complying with WHO standards.