

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a Council Decision amending Decision 90/424/EEC on expenditure in the veterinary field'

(2001/C 116/26)

On 2 October 2000 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 37 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the above-mentioned proposal.

On 17 October 2000 the Bureau of the Economic and Social Committee asked the Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment to prepare the Committee's work on the subject.

At its 377th plenary session on 29 and 30 November 2000 (meeting of 30 November) the Economic and Social Committee, in view of the tight deadline, appointed Mr Jaschick as rapporteur-general and adopted the following opinion unanimously.

1. Introduction

1.1. This Commission proposal seeks to amend Decision 90/424/EEC on expenditure in the veterinary field.

1.2. From 1 January 2000 the actions defined in Decision 90/424/EEC have been financed by the Guarantee Section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). The proposal aims to clearly indicate the arrangements to be applied as regards the management of expenditure in the veterinary field. The Regulatory Committee Procedure will be used and the system of direct management by the Commission of the Community's financial contribution to veterinary measures will continue to apply.

2. General comments

2.1. The Economic and Social Committee welcomes this proposal for a Council decision.

2.2. The Committee notes that the Commission responded promptly when it became clear that the new procedure for Community co-financing of specific veterinary measures and programmes for eradicating and monitoring animal diseases was unsuitable.

2.3. The ESC shares the view that the specific requirements for veterinary expenditure and the frequent need for emergency measures are incompatible with the mechanisms relating to the paying agencies of the EAGGF Guarantee section. It is therefore necessary to amend Decision 90/424/EEC and make it more precise.

2.4. In view of the BSE monitoring programme — the risk of disease has by no means been eliminated — and in the context of specific veterinary measures and programmes, e.g. to eradicate and combat rabies and swine fever, this proposal for a decision from the Commission is very timely.

Brussels, 30 November 2000.

The President
of the Economic and Social Committee
Göke FRERICH