

3.4 Proper certification of country of origin and European quality controls can help to bring to Community cotton production the added value sought by all European initiatives in the field. However, as the EU is a net importer of cotton, controls on imports need to be improved and strengthened. Cotton should therefore be included in the list of products eligible for information and promotion measures, although this will not in itself provide a solution for the sector.

3.5 The EESC supports all the Commission's proposals designed to improve the quality of cotton. In recent years the sector has made great environmental progress by supporting integrated production systems, agri-environmental aid and eco-friendly production. There has been an increase in integrated production systems in Spain, accompanied by application of environmental measures. In 2008 Greece will adopt a law

governing integrated production systems. The new regime must provide incentives for such initiatives.

3.6 The EU should help its cotton sector to adapt to using new technological innovations.

3.7 The EU is a net importer of cotton; Community cotton production only accounts for 2 % of the cotton consumed in the world, and is a long way from the major cotton producing countries (USA, China, India, etc.). As a result, the EU is not involved in setting international prices for this raw material, and Community support for cotton producers does not distort competition. The Commission should therefore defend the European cotton sector when this is called into question in multilateral forums such as the World Trade Organisation.

Brussels, 14 February 2008.

The President  
of the European Economic and Social Committee  
Dimitris DIMITRIADIS

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**Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms (Recast)**

COM(2007) 736 final — 2007/0259 (COD)

(2008/C 162/18)

On 10 January 2008 the Council decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 175 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the

*Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms (Recast)*

Since the Committee unreservedly endorses the contents of the proposal and has already set out its views on the subject in its earlier opinions CESE 1235/1988, adopted on 24 November 1988 <sup>(1)</sup>, and CESE 887/1996, adopted on 10 July 1996 <sup>(2)</sup>, it decided, at its 442nd plenary session, held on 13 and 14 February 2008 (meeting of 13 February), by 133 votes to 2 with 3 abstentions to issue an opinion endorsing the proposal and to refer to the position it had taken in the above-mentioned documents.

Brussels, 13 February 2008.

The President  
of the European Economic and Social Committee  
Dimitris DIMITRIADIS

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<sup>(1)</sup> Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the proposal for a Council Directive on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms — COM(1988) 160 final (OJ C 23 of 30.1.1989, p. 45).

<sup>(2)</sup> Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 90/219/EEC on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms — COM(1995) 640 final (OJ C 295 of 7.10.1996, p. 52).