



*European Economic and Social Committee*

**NAT/164**  
**Marketing of seed**

Brussels, 11 December 2002

## **OPINION**

of the European Economic and Social Committee

on the

**Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directives 66/401/EEC on the marketing of fodder plant seed, 66/402/EEC on the marketing of cereal seed, 68/193/EEC on the marketing of material for the vegetative propagation of the vine, 92/33/EEC on the marketing of vegetable propagating and planting material, other than seed, 92/34/EEC on the marketing of propagating and planting material of fruit plants, 98/56/EC on the marketing of propagating material of ornamental plants, 2002/54/EC on the marketing of beet seed, 2002/55/EC on the marketing of vegetable seed, 2002/56/EC on the marketing of seed potatoes and 2002/57/EC on the marketing of seed of oil and fibre plants as regards Community comparative tests and trials**

**COM(2002) 523 final - 2002/0232 (CNS)**

On 9 October 2002 the Council decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 37 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the

*Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directives 66/401/EEC on the marketing of fodder plant seed, 66/402/EEC on the marketing of cereal seed, 68/193/EEC on the marketing of material for the vegetative propagation of the vine, 92/33/EEC on the marketing of vegetable propagating and planting material, other than seed, 92/34/EEC on the marketing of propagating and planting material of fruit plants, 98/56/EC on the marketing of propagating material of ornamental plants, 2002/54/EC on the marketing of beet seed, 2002/55/EC on the marketing of vegetable seed, 2002/56/EC on the marketing of seed potatoes and 2002/57/EC on the marketing of seed of oil and fibre plants as regards Community comparative tests and trials*  
COM(2002) 523 fin - 2002/0232 (CNS).

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 14 November 2002. The rapporteur was **Mr Bedoni**.

At its 395th plenary session on 11-12 December 2002 (meeting of 11 December 2002), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion with 92 votes in favour and 4 abstentions.

## 1. **Gist of the Commission proposal**

1.1 For the past 25 years, Community comparative tests and trials have been carried out for agricultural crops such as cereals, potatoes, fodder and oil and fibre plants on the basis of the relevant legislation.

1.2 In recent years, this process has taken on greater dimensions as new legislation on the marketing of propagating material for fruit, vegetables and ornamental plants has laid down, inter alia, detailed rules for Community comparative tests and trials.

1.3 This *a posteriori* control system for seed and propagating material marketed in the Community is recognised by Member States as a very important tool for the harmonisation of marketing.

1.4 The above tests and trials are funded by a Community financial contribution. The aim of the Commission proposal, in the interests of transparency, is to establish a clear legal basis for this financial contribution and to make provisions for Community financial measures for carrying out Community comparative tests and trials, which involve compulsory Community budget expenditure.

## 2. General comments

2.1 Comparative tests and trials for *a posteriori* control of seed samples and propagating material, to check that they meet standards, are extremely important in the European Union context. Satisfactory results in the cultivation of cereals, potatoes, fodder, oil and fibre plants, etc. depend to a large extent on the quality and health of the materials used.

2.2 Furthermore, these tests and trials effectively harmonise control methods for seed and propagating material, which is extremely important both to secure their free movement within the Community and to provide European buyers with the certainty that the seed and propagating material they are buying is healthy and of a high quality.

## 3. Specific comments

3.1 The Committee fully supports the Commission's intention to establish a clear legal basis for the Community's financial contribution to the abovementioned comparative tests and trials.

3.2 The Committee especially welcomes the objective of greater transparency and certainty and would stress the fact that the Member States themselves view the *a posteriori* control system to be a highly important tool for the harmonisation of marketing procedures.

## 4. Conclusion

4.1 The Committee welcomes the Commission's proposal to amend the ten directives concerned with a view to establishing a clear legal basis for the Community's financial contribution to comparative tests and trials on seed and propagating material.

Brussels, 11 December 2002.

The President  
of the  
European Economic and Social Committee

The Secretary-General  
of the  
European Economic and Social Committee

**Roger Briesch**

**Patrick Venturini**