Waste: control of shipments of waste within, into and out of the EC (amend. Regul. 259/93/EEC)

1995/0107(SYN) - 25/10/1995 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The ESC fully agreed that it was necessary to control the shipment of waste within and outside the Community, and to avoid the uncontrolled export of hazardous waste to countries that lacked the requisite instruments for detecting and neutralising the hazards. The ESC therefore approved in principle the objective of the proposal for a regulation. It feared, however, that this objective could only be achieved by revising the entire body of legislation on the matter. In particular, it was concerned at the differing interpretations that surround the classification of hazardous waste, and reiterated the view of its 1991 Opinion that the total export ban should apply to hazardous waste alone. The conventions, regulations and decisions of the different bodies (European Union, OECD, Basel Convention) were not mutually consistent. The ESC feared that their discrepancies, shortcomings and overlaps could be exploited improperly or give an active stimulus to ‘waste exports’. The ESC also considered that the proposed regulation should be more flexible and give consideration to waste for recycling, given that the recovery of reusable materials from waste was, in principle, economically and ecologically sound. However, the existing Regulation and the proposal (Decision II/12 of the Basel Convention) indiscriminately restricted the recovery of recycling materials, when this should only be prohibited in the case of hazardous waste or of waste that was exported for recovery without sufficient guarantees that recovery would actually be effected. Indeed, strict controls should be exercised on waste for recycling in the country of origin, together with controls on its processing in the country of destination.