

Consumer protection: indication of prices of products offered to consumers

1995/0148(COD) - 20/12/1995 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

Consumer protection through the supply of accurate information on prices of goods offered for retail sale to consumers is governed by Directive 79/581/EEC, as amended by Directive 88/315/EEC, and by Directive 88/314/EEC. The ESC's point of departure in drawing up this Opinion was the conviction that the interests of all those involved in the market are better served when conditions of transparency and proper operation prevail. Moreover, such conditions provide equal protection for both the consumer and healthy competition. The ESC accepts the breaking of the link between the obligation to indicate the unit price and the existence of "ranges". For the transitional period when the single Community currency is being introduced, the ESC proposes that three prices be indicated for each product: a) the selling price in the national currency; b) the selling price in the single currency; c) the unit price in the single currency. The ESC proposes as a practical, uniform approach the listing of each item according to its Common Customs Tariff number (NIMEXE). The ESC calls upon the Commission to ensure that the two-year period of adaptation to the new Directive runs from the date of its publication and not as from 7 June 1995. It also asks the Commission to take measures to oblige the Member States to transpose the Directive into their national laws within six months of the date of its publication. The ESC proposes that three reports (instead of two) be drawn up on the implementation of the Directive, with the active participation of the ESC itself: the first one year, the second two years and the third four years after the date of publication of the Directive.