European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia

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PURPOSE : Communication on the activities of the European Monitoring Centre ("the Centre") on Racism and Xenophobia, and proposals to amend Council Regulation 1035/97/EC. CONTENT : Regulation 1035/97 establishing the requires the Commission to produce a progress report on the Centre's activities, together with proposals, if appropriate, to modify or extend its tasks, taking into account, in particular, the development of Community powers in the field of racism and xenophobia. The Commission organised an external evaluation of the Centre in order to provide an independent view of the efficiency of the Centre in relation to the objectives set out in the Regulation and the efficiency of the human and financial resources used to attain those objectives. The external evaluation was completed in July 2002. This following Communication takes account of the findings of the external evaluation and of the various stakeholders who have reacted to the evaluation. The framework used for the evaluation of the Monitoring Centre was based on five key issues: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, utility and sustainability. The following points emerge: - the evaluators recommend that the work programme concentrates more on the primary objective of data collection and analysis and have suggested other areas where less emphasis should be placed. They note that the Monitoring Centre will only succeed in achieving its primary objective with the co-operation of a number of partners including Member State governments, NGOs and others. - the Centre is taking steps to ensure it is well run. The various management arrangements examined by the evaluators - financial control, business planning, personnel management, etc - appeared to be appropriate or to be in the process of being revised. Changes may be necessary to the Board structure to bring about more effective decision-making - particularly in the light of EU enlargement. The evaluators found the wider question of value for money difficult to assess at this stage, because the Monitoring Centre had not yet produced major outputs in respect of its primary role to achieve comparable data. Evaluators conclude that, given the delays in establishing the Monitoring Centre and the relatively modest amounts allocated to its primary role in the first three years, the Centre cannot be said to have demonstrated value for money for the EUR million it had committed until the end of 2001. They noted, however, evidence of a change in priorities in 2001 which may mean that the Monitoring Centre will begin to deliver outputs that reflect the substantial funding it has and continues to receive; - the evaluators conclude that it is too early to say if the Monitoring Centre is effective in achieving its general objectives. The main outputs of the Centre are still being worked on and the effectiveness of the provision of comparable information cannot be measured until it is provided. However, the evaluators note that it is important that the Centre bears in mind the need to provide added value at a Community level - it should not just carry out functions which could be carried out by a Member State. Thus, the provision of Member State data which is not comparable is not enough - the Community value added lies in providing comparability, so that conclusions can be drawn between the effectiveness of different policies and practices incombating racism. A similar point can be made for other Monitoring Centre activities. This was a point which was strongly supported by Member States authorities in the consultations carried out by the Commission. - the evaluators note that the Monitoring Centre's objectives are considered important by its target groups but that further attention needs to be given to how the outputs meet the needs of stakeholders. - with regard to a sustainable contribution, the Commission's own consultations with the Member States suggest that the Centre has still to establish a solid profile in the field. The Commission feels that the evaluation report's conclusion that the Centre has not demonstrated value for money for the EUR 13 million it committed up to the end of 2001 is particularly disturbing. However, the period covered by the evaluation ended in December 2001. The Secretariat of the Centre has begun to address a number of the questions which fall within its own responsibilities. In addition, the Management Board of the Centre has transmitted its own views on restructuring the management. The Commission concludes that the overall picture of the performance of the Centre is mixed. The Centre has made considerable progress in establishing from scratch an organisation which has the facilities it needs to

perform its work. It has established a network of information providers in all Member States which tries to strike a balance between independence and objectivity. It has developed links to other organisations in the field (Council of Europe, OSCE) which are beginning to bear fruit. But it is clear that, in terms of its outputs so far, improvements in quality and value are still necessary, particularly as regards the objectivity and comparability of data. Monitoring racism in the EU is an extremely complex issue, surrounded by social, cultural and political sensitivities which make it extremely difficult for a new Agency to become immediately effective. But it is essential that the Centre meets this challenge and the Commission is committed to supporting the Centre in its efforts. The Commission believes that the Centre needs to concentrate on its role as the data collection body foreseen by the Regulation, and that it should give less weight to establishing a profile as a campaigning organisation, which has caused some confusion as to its objectives. In this context, the Management Board has requested, in its consultations with the Commission, that the objectives and task of the Centre should be clarified and presented in a more logical fashion. The proposal to recast the Regulation: The Commission proposes to sharpen the focus of the Regulation on co-operation between the Centre and national authorities to ensure that maximum value is obtained from the EU's investment. Fighting racism is a shared responsibility and it is right that the Regulation should reflect that fact. To ensure added value at a European level, the Centre needs to align its priorities with those of the Member States and the EU institutions. The Commission welcomes the emphasis given by the Centre in its Annual Report for 2001 to problems of racial discrimination in employment, which fits well with ongoing work in the context of the Employment Strategy. The Centre should broaden its work to other areas, in particular those dealt with by the SocialInclusion Strategy. The Commission proposes that the Regulation should better reflect the need for the Monitoring Centre to focus on priority action areas. Finally, the Commission proposes that the Regulation should be recast to remove those parts which are irrelevant and to amend others in the light of the experience of how the Centre has operated so far. The amendments proposed fall into the following categories: - those intended to support the Centre's objective of helping the EC and the Member States when they take measures against the various aspects of racism and xenophobia, in particular by promoting closer co-operation; - those intended to strengthen the Centre's focus on the collection of data and in particular to underline the importance of working towards comparability between the Member States, where the greatest added value of the Centre lies; - those intended to adapt the governance of the Centre to the demands placed on it, including in the light of enlargement; - those intended to provide greater clarity over the Centre's objectives, with a more logical presentation of the tasks designed to meet them, while leaving the Centre greater flexibility in how it organises its activities; - those intended to adapt the fields within which the Centre operates to the developments in competence of the Community following the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, including action taken in the field of racism under Article 13 TEC; - those which codify the amendments to the Regulation already adopted by the Council in the light of the entry into force of the new Financial Regulation; - those intended to resolve a limited number of legal and other uncertainties which have arisen during the application of the original Regulation. The changes proposed will have no impact on the overall budget of the Centre. They may require a review of the allocation of financial and human resources between different activities, with a greater emphasis, for example, on data collection activities and on cooperation with the Member States and the Community institutions. This coincides entirely with the findings and recommendations of the external evaluators. FINANCIAL STATEMENT: - Budget headings: B5-8090 and B5-8091 European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (Subsidy under Titles 1 and 2 and Subsidy under Title 3); - Expenditure: 12-month period (EUR 6.5 million); current financial year (EUR 6.5 million) and following financial year EUR 7.8 million. The Commission's original proposal for the Centre, made in 1996, foresaw a recurrent budget of between EUR 6m and EUR 7m (1996 prices) and a staff size of around 25 posts. In the light of enlargement of the Union and the attention which will need to be paid to the situation in the new Member States, and in the light of the experience of collecting data in the existing Member States, the Commission considers that this was a slightly conservative estimate. It is therefore proposing a total figure for commitments of EUR 7.8m for 2004, with gradual increases to take account of indexation and further small developments in capacity, in particular related to the need to strengthen the analytical resources of the Centre. The Budget for 2004 is based on a staff complement of 12 staff in grade A, 13 in grade B and 9 in grade C. The budget for operational expenditure is EUR 3.8 m.