Basic information

1997/2260(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Competitiveness of the European textile and clothing industry, plan of action **Subject** 3.40.10 Textile and clothing industry, leathers 3.40.14 Industrial competitiveness	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	RIBEIRO Sérgio (GUE/NGL)	16/12/1997

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
RELA External Economic Relations	FERRER Concepció (PPE)	22/01/1998
REGI Regional Policy	MORETTI Luigi (NI)	04/02/1998
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Industry	2091	1998-05-07
Industry	2133	1998-11-16

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
29/10/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0454	Summary
03/12/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
07/05/1998	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		

26/05/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
26/05/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0224/1998	
14/07/1998	Debate in Parliament		
14/07/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
21/09/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		
16/11/1998	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2260(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ECON/4/09467

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0224/1998 OJ C 210 06.07.1998, p. 0008	26/05/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0417/1998 OJ C 292 21.09.1998, p. 0018-0032	14/07/1998	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)0454	29/10/1997	Summary
Follow-up document	SEC(1999)0701	05/05/1999	
Follow-up document	SEC(2000)1531	19/09/2000	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0645/1998 OJ C 214 10.07.1998, p. 0095	29/04/1998	

Competitiveness of the European textile and clothing industry, plan of action

1997/2260(COS) - 29/10/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE : proposing a plan of action to increase the competitiveness of the European textile and clothing industry. SUBSTANCE : In 1996, at current prices, production levels fell by 5.4% in the case of textiles and by 4.4% in the case of clothing from 1990. As a result, over the same period over 600 000 jobs were lost, 100 000 of them in 1996. The serious problems of restructuring and modernization of the European industry and the increasingly common practice of delocalization have prompted the Commission to propose a programme of action seeking to increase the competitiveness of the European textile/clothing sector. The programme consists of general strategy to meet the needs of the sector itself (the two sides of industry in collaboration with the national and Community authorities) and is scheduled over a four-year period (1997-2000). It is focused on 4 major lines of action : - employment and training: measures have been drawn up seeking to reduce the burden of tax and social security charges in this sector and with regard to the reduction/reorganization of working hours in order to restimulate employment in this sector. Concerning training, measures are being envisaged to provide the new qualifications now required of the workforce: - development and dissemination of new products, procedures and equipment: action is expected mainly in the field of new information technologies together with initiatives concerning electronic commerce. RTD is also necessary involving research into the use of new materials; - the functioning of the internal market: a number of initiatives are envisaged seeking in particular to achieve better industrial cooperation between Community companies and promote market access and protect intellectual and commercial property. A proposal concerning state aid is currently under consideration (as part of a multisectoral framework project in the Member States). Measures are also being envisaged across the board to harmonize legislation in the Member States with regard to azo dyes and pentachlorophenols (revision of Directive 76/769/EEC). At regional level measures are being envisaged under the second stage of the ADAPT programme; - access to third country markets: in this field it is necessary to promote access for European companies to third country markets and to ensure that existing trade policy rules and instruments are respected. In order to promote exports, the Commission proposes a programme of coordination and textile/clothing industry representation in third countries. The Commission is currently examining those aspects of the 'social label' concerning products from third countries and in particular the transparency, reliability and compatibility of these products with the rules of international trade. It is considering the possibility of proposing a code of conduct among European firms and consumers so as to achieve greater awareness of the issues involved throughout the sector.

Competitiveness of the European textile and clothing industry, plan of action

1997/2260(COS) - 14/07/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Sergio RIBEIRO (GUE/NGL, P) on the competitiveness of the European textile and clothing industry Parliament pointed out first that this sector employed about 2.25 million workers, of whom 75% were women, in 120 000 undertakings. Between 1990 and 1996 this sector lost 600 000 jobs and almost 800 000 jobs were expected to disappear in the next few years. Considering, therefore, that a plan of action was needed, it advocated the implementation of a consistent measure and considered that the plan proposed by the Commission for the European textile and clothing industry was inadequate (lack of cohesion and specific commitments, etc.). It therefore called on the Commission to submit a new plan of action which placed particular emphasis on: - promoting innovation and the use of new technologies in the sector, including information technologies and electronic commerce; - strengthening the interaction between all the chains of the industry from fibre producers to machine manufacturers and from textile and apparel producers to retail distributors; - implementing a broad programme of training specific to the textile sector with emphasis on SMUs and on regions where there is a heavy concentration of the textile industry; - fostering the greening of the sector with immediate action to phase out the use of the most problematic materials at EU level. It stressed that modernisation of the textile and clothing industry in Europe must include promoting regional diversification, conversion of production capacities, training for employees and well-focused support for environment-friendly products and production methods along the whole production line. It also called on the Commission to come forward shortly with a report on child labour in this sector within the EU and in third countries and on measures which could be effective in the fight against it. It was also necessary to promote employment in this sector, especially by strengthening aid to SMUs, by reducing working time and strengthening vocational training. It stressed the need, however, to take action against illegal employment and to improve the situation of home workers. At the same time it called on the Commission to monitor more effectively the outward processing arrangements in order to combat the counterfeiting of products with designations of Community origin. It also called on the Commission to retain as from 1 January 1998 the rule concerning raw materials of Community origin in respect of products placed on the market under these arrangements. It also called on the Commission to bring forward the deadlines for investigation of the antidumping procedures and the procedures applicable to goods with false trademarks so as to ensure that the disputes could be settled within a reasonable time. With regard to third countries, Parliament stressed the need to stimulate access to third-country markets in order to boost competitiveness and called for Community actions to promote SME exports. It called for action against unfair practices by certain third countries which continued wrongfully to protect access to their markets. It also called for the strengthening of measures to combat falsifications and fraud in the preferential customs regimes applying to developing countries as regards the rules for establishing the genuineness of certificate of product origin. In this connection it called on the Commission to step up its efforts with a view to harmonising and simplifying the documentation for preferential rules of origin. It also asked the Commission to assess the RETEX programme and to take the necessary measures to ensure its proper implementation in the Member States. In this context it deplored the cessation of this programme with effect from 1999, as proposed in the reform of the funds in relation to Agenda 2000. Lastly it called for the European Textile and Clothing Observatory to continue its activities.