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REPORT

on the proposal for a Council regulation on the harmonisation of Gross National Income at market prices
(COM(2002) 558 – C5-0515/2002 – 2002/0245(CNS))

Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

Rapporteur: Astrid Lulling

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
majority of the votes cast
- **I Cooperation procedure (first reading)
majority of the votes cast
- **II Cooperation procedure (second reading)
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position
majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend
the common position*
- *** Assent procedure
*majority of Parliament's component Members except in cases
covered by Articles 105, 107, 161 and 300 of the EC Treaty and
Article 7 of the EU Treaty*
- ***I Codecision procedure (first reading)
majority of the votes cast
- ***II Codecision procedure (second reading)
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position
majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend
the common position*
- ***III Codecision procedure (third reading)
majority of the votes cast, to approve the joint text

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the Commission)

Amendments to a legislative text

In amendments by Parliament, amended text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. Highlighting in *normal italics* is an indication for the relevant departments showing parts of the legislative text for which a correction is proposed, to assist preparation of the final text (for instance, obvious errors or omissions in a given language version). These suggested corrections are subject to the agreement of the departments concerned.

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 31 October 2002 the Council consulted Parliament, pursuant to Article 269 of the EC Treaty and Article 173 of the Euratom Treaty, on the proposal for a Council regulation on the harmonisation of Gross National Income at market prices (COM(2002) 558 - 2002/0245(CNS)).

At the sitting of 7 November 2002 the President of Parliament announced that he had referred this proposal to the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs as the committee responsible and the Committee on Budgets for its opinion (C5-0515/2002).

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs appointed Astrid Lulling rapporteur at its meeting of 27 November 2002.

It considered the Commission proposal and draft report at its meetings of 21 January and 19 February 2003.

At the last meeting it adopted the draft legislative resolution by 39 votes to 0, with 1 abstention.

The following were present for the vote: Christa Randzio-Plath, chairwoman; José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Philippe A.R. Herzog and John Purvis, vice-chairmen; Astrid Lulling, rapporteur; Generoso Andria, Pervenche Berès, Hans Blokland, Armonia Bordes, Jean-Louis Bourlanges (for Brice Hortefeux), Renato Brunetta, Hans Udo Bullmann, Manuel António dos Santos (for a full member to be nominated), Jonathan Evans, Ingo Friedrich, Carles-Alfred Gasòliba i Böhm, Robert Goebbels, Lisbeth Grönfeldt Bergman, Mary Honeyball, Christopher Huhne, Othmar Karas, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Christoph Werner Konrad, Wilfried Kuckelkorn (for Helena Torres Marques), Werner Langen (for Ioannis Marinos), David W. Martin, Hans-Peter Mayer, Fernando Pérez Royo, Mikko Pesälä (for Karin Riis-Jørgensen), Alexander Radwan, Bernhard Rapkay, Herman Schmid (for Ioannis Patakis), Olle Schmidt, Peter William Skinner, Charles Tannock (for Mónica Ridruejo), Bruno Trentin, Ieke van den Burg (for Giorgos Katiforis), Theresa Villiers, Hélène Flautre (for Alain Lipietz pursuant to Rule 153(2)), Jean Lambert (for Miquel Mayol i Raynal pursuant to Rule 153 (2)).

The Committee on Budgets decided on 12 November 2002 not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 19 February 2003.

DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

European Parliament legislative resolution on the proposal for a Council regulation on the harmonisation of Gross National Income at market prices (COM(2002) 558 – C5-0515/2002 – 2002/0245(CNS))

(Consultation procedure)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2002) 558¹),
 - having regard to Articles 269 of the EU Treaty and 173 of the Euratom Treaty, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament (C5-0515/2002),
 - having regard to Rule 67 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (A5-0040/2003),
1. Approves the Commission proposal;
 2. Calls on the Council to notify Parliament if it intends to depart from the text approved by Parliament;
 3. Asks the Council to consult Parliament again if it intends to amend the Commission proposal substantially;
 4. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and Commission.

¹ OJ C not yet published.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Commission proposal for a regulation (COM(2002) 558 final) simply seeks to redefine the legal framework for the activities of Eurostat, with a view to enhancing the comparability, reliability and exhaustiveness of the Member States' GNP data, even though the title of the regulation, with its reference to 'the harmonisation of Gross National Income at market prices' might suggest that this is a major or new initiative.

It was decided as far back as 2000 that, with effect from the 2002 budget year, the new European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA 95, replacing ESA 79) would be applied in calculating GNP, which would henceforth be known as GNI. The proposal adapts the text to take account of these changes.

The calculation methods, the Member States' obligations to forward information, and the cooperation between the Member States and the Commission on verification and improvement work, remain practically unchanged.

Two questions, however, still remain open.

1. The Commission and Council are still at loggerheads on the date at which the Member States must supply figures to Eurostat for the aggregate GNI. Hitherto, the deadline was 30 September. The Commission proposed 15 September of each year. On 19 December 2002 the Council agreed by a majority vote that the date should be 22 September. Your rapporteur did consider tabling an amendment to that effect. However, she came to the conclusion that this would not be worth while, given that Parliament is only able to give its opinion. In any case your rapporteur has the impression that the Commission has already found a reason for not insisting on 15 September: the only argument in favour of that date relates to verification by the Court of Auditors.

2. On the matter of commitology, the Commission sought to transform the old GNP committee (which now becomes the GNI committee) into a mere advisory committee, whereas the GNP committee was a regulatory committee comprising representatives of the Member States and chaired by the Commission representative.

The Commission text reduces the Member States' influence to a purely advisory role, since if the regulatory committee procedure were adopted, the Commission would be forced to find a qualified majority for its planned measures. Accordingly, the Council, at its meeting of 19 December 2002, opted for the regulatory as opposed to the consultation procedure for the GNI committee.

Your rapporteur considered the possibility of proposing the management committee procedure, but decided that it would not justify the effort involved.

In the light of these considerations, your rapporteur did not deem it useful to make any amendments to the Commission proposal.