Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on:

— **the 'Proposal for a Council Directive on the extension of Council Directive 94/45/EC of 22 September 1994, on the establishment of a European Works Council or a procedure in Community-scale undertakings and Community-scale groups of undertakings for the purposes of informing and consulting employees, to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland', and**

— **the 'Proposal for a Council Directive extending Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996, on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC, to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'**

(98/C 19/12)

On 7 October 1997, the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 100 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the above-mentioned proposals.

The Section for Social Family, Educational and Cultural Affairs, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 17 October 1997. The rapporteur working without a study group was Miss Maddocks.

At its 349th plenary session (meeting of 29 October 1997), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 107 votes to four, with eight abstentions.

The Economic and Social Committee played an active role in the launching and promotion of the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers. It has consistently argued that the Charter and Social Protocol Agreement should be incorporated in the Treaty and apply to all Member States. It therefore welcomes wholeheartedly the United Kingdom's decision to accede to these social provisions, and it supports the European Council agreement in Amsterdam to incorporate the concept of fundamental social rights in the new Treaty. The Committee consequently endorses the two Commission proposals to extend the existing Directive in question to the UK.

Brussels, 29 October 1997.

The President
of the Economic and Social Committee
Tom JENKINS