Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation on substances that deplete the ozone layer as regards the base year for the allocation of quotas of hydrochlorofluorocarbons'

(2000/C 367/09)

On 28 July 2000 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 175 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the above-mentioned proposal.

The Economic and Social Committee decided to appoint Mr Sergio Colombo as rapporteur-general with the task of preparing the Committee's work on the subject.

At its 375th plenary session held on 20 and 21 September 2000 (meeting of 20 September), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 64 votes with 3 abstentions.

1. The Commission proposal

1.1. This proposal seeks to amend the recently adopted Regulation on substances that deplete the ozone layer [1] on one specific point. It aims at modifying the date currently contained in the new Regulation for determining the allocation of quotas of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs): it is proposed to base this on the most recent and representative (i.e. 1999) data rather than on 1996 figures. This modification will not lead to an increase in the total amount of HCFCs that can be imported and will therefore not entail any negative consequences for the environment. According to the Commission, maintenance of the 1996 base year could be considered arbitrary and might result in a breach of the principles of non-discrimination.

[1] This Regulation, the publication of which in the OJ is still awaited, will replace Regulation (EC) No 3093/94.

2. General comments

2.1. The Committee approves the Commission proposal.

Brussels, 20 September 2000.

The President

of the Economic and Social Committee

Beatrice RANGONI MACHIAVELLI