Precautionary Principle

At the European Council in Nice, from 7–10 December 2000, EU Heads of State and Government adopted, among other things, a Resolution on the precautionary principle, recalling that this principle is included in various international texts, *inter alia*, the 1992 Rio Declaration.

The Council considers that the precautionary principle applies to the policies and actions of the Community and its Member States and concerns action by public authorities both at the level of the Community institutions and at that of Member States. Further, that such authorities should endeavour to have that principle fully recognised by the relevant international fora.

In the Resolution the Council considers that World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules do basically allow account to be taken of the precautionary principle, and believes that under international law the Community and the Member States are entitled to establish the level of protection they consider appropriate in risk management.

The Resolution recalls that the EC Treaty provides that Community action must aim at a high level of protection in human health, for consumers and the environment, and that these objectives must be integrated into all the EU’s policies and action. The Council therefore considers that use should be made of the precautionary principle where the possibility of harmful effects on health or the environment has been identified and preliminary scientific evaluation, based on the available data, proves inconclusive for assessing the level of risk.

Greece: Fines for Uncontrolled Waste Dumping

In a ruling from the European Court of Justice on 4 July 2000, Greece was ordered to pay a fine of Euro 20,000 per day for failing to end the uncontrolled dumping of waste near Hania on the island of Crete, as ordered in a first judgement handed down in 1992.

On 20 November 2000, 139 days after the judgement, the Commission reported that Greece had still not paid a single Euro. Nor had Athens responded to two letters demanding payment corresponding to the fine for July, August, September and October.

Caroline Jackson, a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from the United Kingdom, called for a clear statement from the Commission that payment will be due until the day the problem is resolved and not only until a plan has been drawn up on how to solve it. She received assurances from the Commission that this would be the case.

Minerva Malliori, a Greek MEP and a member of the ruling party in Greece, assured the MEPs that her Government would pay the sum for the first three months by the end of the year and that action will be taken to end the current waste management situation in Crete within the same time-frame.

So far, we have been unable to learn whether Greece has indeed taken any of the actions promised.

REFERENCES TO OTHER TOPICS

**OECD: Seoul Conference on Sustainable Development**

Over the coming decades, most of the world’s population growth and much of its economic growth will take place in developing countries. Achieving sustainable development both in these countries and at a global level will depend heavily on technological development and innovation and the widespread diffusion and application of clean technologies. However, numerous barriers stand in the way of international scientific and technological cooperation.

To address the issues facing both developed and developing countries in these areas, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Korean Ministry of Science and Technology organised a conference on "International Scientific and Technological Cooperation for Sustainable Development" in Seoul on 15–16 November, 2000.

Participants discussed ways to promote and facilitate international cooperation in the development and diffusion of environmental technologies and in particular cleaner technologies, between developed and developing countries. The aim was to identify barriers impeding effective cooperation and proposed recom-