

EU

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 ac-

count 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.

