

Joint statement on the consultation of the social partners in the context of the Social Protocol

(28 January 1994)

1. As the union and employers' organizations constituting the Joint Committee on Maritime Transport, the CSTCE and ECSA welcome their recognition as social partners in the communication on the application of the Social Protocol. It is to be further welcomed that the Commission has undertaken that they will be consulted on all social policy proposals which could affect the interests of their members.

2. Notwithstanding this general support, the Committee suggests that the six-week deadline for the two Protocol consultation phases proposed in the communication is unnecessarily rigid and does not allow sufficient time for genuine consultation of the respective union and employer membership to take place. A more flexible approach by the Commission is consequently advocated.

3. To facilitate the envisaged consultation of the social partners, the continued existence and development of the Joint Com-

mittee is crucial. This is especially so as the EC statutes constituting the Committee enable a wide range of matters to be discussed which have a bearing on the industry, not only those which can be classified as being in the social field.

4. The Joint Committee acknowledges that, in consultation with the Commission and Council, the Protocol and communication are inter alia designed to enhance the role of the social partners in the consultative and legislative process. The structure created represents a delicate balance between interests and the Joint Committee opposes any proposal from the European Parliament to disturb this arrangement by taking on any power of veto of Council decisions. In the Joint Committee's view, the ability of the social partners to reach agreement between themselves would be seriously undermined by such an arrangement.

