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EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES - CUSTOMS CLASSIFICATION  
OF CERTAIN COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

Communication from the Chairman of the Panel

The following communication, dated 15 October 1997, addressed to the Dispute Settlement Body, is circulated in accordance with Article 12.9 of the DSU.

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Article 12.8 of the DSU stipulates that the period in which a panel shall conduct its examination, from the date that the composition and terms of reference of the panel have been agreed upon until the date the final report is issued to the parties shall, as a general rule, not exceed six months.

Article 12.9 of the DSU states that when a panel considers that it cannot issue its report within six months, it shall inform the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) in writing of the reasons for the delay together with an estimate of the period within which it will issue its report.

The panel on "European Communities - Customs classification of certain computer equipment" was established by the DSB on 25 February 1997 and the parties agreed on its composition and terms of reference on 18 April 1997. However, it will not be possible for the Panel to complete its work in six months due to the parties wish to use the maximum time periods prescribed in Appendix 3 of the DSU.

The Panel expects to complete its work before mid-December 1997.