

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES - MEASURES AFFECTING ASBESTOS
AND PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASBESTOS**

Communication from the Chairman of the Panel

The following communication, dated 22 September 1999 and addressed to the Dispute Settlement Body, is circulated in accordance with Article 12.9 of the DSU.

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. Pursuant to Article 12.9 of the DSU, when a panel considers that it cannot issue its report within six months, it shall inform the 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 – Measures Affecting Asbestos and Products Containing Asbestos" was established by the DSB on 25 November 1998, and its composition and terms of reference were determined on 29 March 1999. I wish to inform you that the Panel has not been able to complete its work within the six months provided for in the DSU. The complex nature of the matter and the need to seek technical and scientific expertise pursuant to Article 13 of the DSU are responsible for this delay.

The Panel intends to finalize its work by March 2000.
