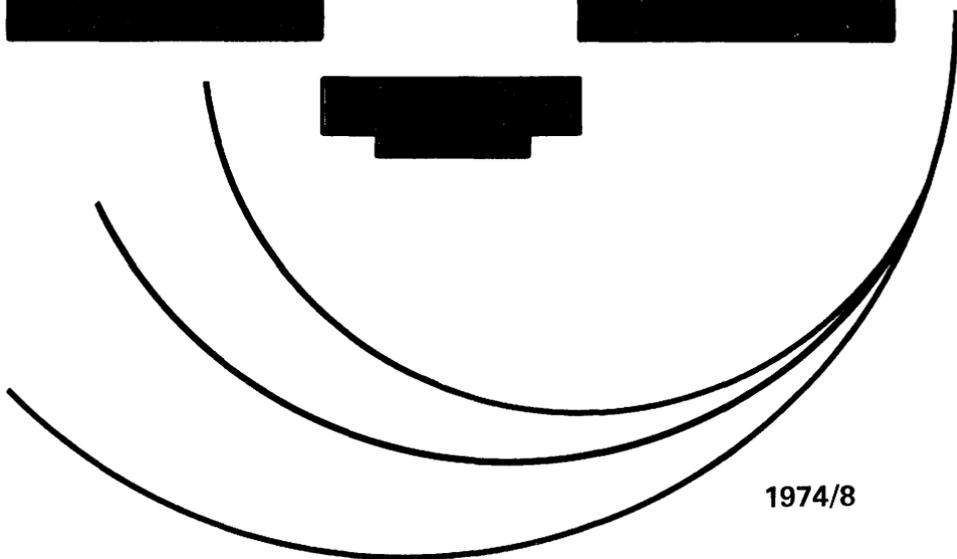


european parliament

information

PARLIAMENT IN SESSION



1974/8

Parliament in session is a summary of the sittings of the European Parliament.

A complete record of the proceedings of the House is given in the 'Debates of the European Parliament' which is published as an Annex to the Official Journal of the European Communities.

The 'Debates' and other documents may be obtained either from the Secretariat of the European Parliament (P.O. Box 1601, Luxembourg) or from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, (P.O. Box 1003, Luxembourg).

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Introduction

The European Parliament met in extraordinary session at the request of Council and Commission on 16 and 17 September and again in normal plenary session a week later on 24, 25 and 26 September 1974.

The extraordinary sitting was called to enable Parliament to deliver its opinion on the Commission's proposals to help EC farmers, particularly through an across-the-board interim price increase of 4 0/o. Mr Jean Durieux (Fr, L) had asked the Commission to consider an interim price increase in July but Mr Petrus Lardinois had not thought it possible (see 'Parliament in Session 1974/7'). The debate, which lasted twelve hours, hinged on the rate of interim price increases to press for.

Agriculture loomed large when Parliament returned to Luxembourg a week later. The news that the German Government would not accept the 5 0/o increase (agreed on ad referendum) led to an emergency debate on the Thursday morning. The resolution agreed to at the end of the debate urged the German Government to review its attitude.

Another feature of the sittings was President Ortolí's spirited defence of the Community's way of life. He completely rejected the idea that a form of loose intergovernmental cooperation could produce better results than the close institutional teamwork of a corps d'élite. He accepted the principle of summits but did not think they were the answer to every problem. In many cases majority decisions in the Council could serve as well. Indeed, he said, he would like to see a stronger Council of Ministers. He was broadly supported by all sections of the House and Lord Gladwyn in particular spoke very unenthusiastically about the spirit of pragmatism now abroad among the heads of state.

Agriculture

The first debate

The order paper for Parliament's extraordinary sitting of Monday, 16 September had only one item on it: a joint debate on a report by Mr Jan de Koning (Du, CD) on the four special measures proposed by the Commission to help farmers and on oral questions put down by Mr Lucien Martens (Be, CD) on the fall in farm incomes and by Mr James Gibbons (Ir, EPD) on the current plight of the farm community.

The Commission was proposing:

1. A 4 0/o increase in prices from 1 October 1974. The 1974/75 price proposals would be submitted in November with a view to a Council decision by 1 February 1975. There would be keener market management.
2. The ceiling on monetary compensatory amounts would be abolished and a new method of calculating MCA introduced.
3. The difference between the representative rate of the pound and market rate would be cut by 7.5 points. This would, in turn, cut MCA from 15.3 0/o to 7.8 0/o.

N.B. The consumer subsidy for butter in U.K. would be increased and Italy's import deposits would be phased out.

4. An interest subsidy rate of 6 0/o would be authorized from 1 October 1974. Special measures were envisaged to help young farmers. The Commission was also calling for a decision on less-favoured areas by 1 November 1974. The Commission was ready to propose further measures to offset farm cost increases in special cases.

Members of the European Parliament differed in their reactions to the Commission's proposals. The resolution agreed to in the early hours of the Tuesday morning called for 'an interim price increase of at least 6 0/o on average to cover the exceptional cost increase in agriculture'. But it was not supported on all sides of the House. The European Progressive Democrats described what the Commission proposed as 'too little too late'. They felt that an increase of at least 8 0/o would be more appropriate, a view supported by both the Liberals and the Communists. The advocates of a 6 0/o increase were the Christian Democrats and the European Conservatives, supported by some Socialists. The price rise to press for was the keenest issue in the debate and the division did not produce the sort of majority that Mr Christian Bonnet, President of the Council, appealed for when he himself addressed the House.

Another issue was the devaluation of the Irish green pound and its being separated from the British green pound. Here support tilted in favour of the Irish who argued that the present arrangement was prejudicial to their export trade. The point was taken up in the resolution which called for a 15.3 % devaluation in the Irish pound.

The debate brought out not only the special grievances of farmers in different regions but produced a number of suggestions for improving the Common Agricultural Policy. Mr Lardinois agreed, for example, that the situation in Ireland was untenable and, indeed, Parliament's Opinion called for a 15.3 % devaluation in the Irish pound so as to stimulate (or rather remove an unfair liability on) Irish agricultural exports. Mr Lardinois conceded that regions in France suffering from drought deserved special attention.

One of the main suggestions for reorganizing agriculture was that farmers should be given a guaranteed minimum income and their place in society recognized. As Mr Deschamps pointed out, it was significant that all the farmers' unions were demonstrating on the same day in defence of the same slogans. Some individual cases were quoted. There was a reference to Ireland's 7 million head of cattle facing a winter with fodder available for 5.5-6 million, a problem aggravated by the poor prospects for the maize and soya bean harvests in the United States. Prime beef was being sold in Ireland at extremely low prices but the same beef was being sold to the housewife at 10 times the price. So some attention focused on the distribution circuit which one French Member described as 'very sinuous'.

Replying to the various speakers Mr Petrus Lardinois said that the Commission's proposals for a 4 % increase represented a political gesture. He realized they would not solve the Community's agricultural problems, for Europe's farmers today were still suffering from the impact of the oil crisis and all the increases in costs that it had triggered off: fertilizers, pesticides, energy, bricks, fodder had increased considerably and the interest rates paid to banks were now very high. In Denmark rates of 16 % were quoted. This was particularly difficult in view of the Community's appeal in 1973 for more beef to be grown. Farmers had invested in beef and were now liable to lose confidence in the whole Common Agricultural Policy. Some members drew attention to the plight of the small farmers for whom milk was the main source of income and Mr Lardinois said that all these points would have to be borne in mind when the Commission produced its new price proposals later in the year. These would cover the cost increases.

Speaking for the Council Mr Christian Bonnet expressed the hope that the European Parliament would express its opinion by a substantial majority. Although the Community had to contend with inflation and be careful to protect consumer interests there were fewer claims being put forward that were better founded than that of Europe's farmer. As already indicated the European Parliament was divided only on how far the Community should go to help him out of his difficulties.

The second debate

When the House sat again on 24 September Mr Petrus Lardinois made a statement on the agreement on an interim price increase of 5 0/0 that was reached in the early hours of Friday, 20 September. He said he agreed with Mr Christian Bonnet that no one had won and no one had lost. The Common Agricultural Policy had been confirmed. He said that the price increase would come into effect from 1 October. Later on in reply to questions he said that the next price determination would take place in November so that the European Parliament could consider the Commission's proposals in December or January and the Council take its decisions in February 1975.

Referring specifically to sugar he said that the United Kingdom had been faced with supply problems and that it had brought these before the Council. The Commission had proposed an alternative to the long-term agreement envisaged mainly because the Community itself would be responsible for all its supplies as from 1 January 1975. The sales to the United Kingdom would be at one-third of the world price. This contrasted with the time when the world price was only one-third of that of the Community. He mentioned this to demonstrate that there was a positive side to the Common Agricultural Policy which was worth emphasizing. The CAP was a stabilizing factor in the EC's economy. There had been many demands that CAP should be overhauled but no real alternative was put forward. Mr Lardinois said that during his six years as Minister for Agriculture in the Netherlands he had a staff of 12,000 officials. Today, as the Commissioner responsible for a whole range of the CAP, he had a staff of 580 officials including his secretary and chauffeur. He wondered how many were to be found in the relevant ministries in the Member States. Then again the whole question of streamlining policy making would not necessarily mean cutting costs and it was in any case only possible in some sectors. He concluded by asking the House for its support.

Replying to questions Mr Lardinois said that the 5 0/o increase would mean differences of 0.4 or 0.5 0/o in the cost of living. It would naturally vary from one production to another. Replying to Mr Cipolla he said that the alternatives to CAP that existed would probably cost twice as much. On sugar he said that the Community was offering a five-year contract which would give assured markets to the producers and guaranteed supplies to the Community. He said that the market price for cereals would fall by 6 0/o in the United Kingdom and that if world prices rose then the British price would go up less 6 0/o. As regards the cost to the Community the EAGGF would be able to absorb the increase without a supplementary budget. It would be included in the budget coming before the House in the near future. Referring to the sugar supply situation he said that extra buying and speculation had put 400,000 more tons in the pipeline than usual but there had never been the slightest hint of a real shortage.

The third debate

It came as something of a shock to Parliament to learn on the afternoon of 25 September that the agricultural package had not received the final approval of the German Government. The House decided to debate the matter as a matter of urgency and on the following day Mr Petrus Lardinois appeared before the House again. He said that the German Government was ready to accept the measures proposed despite the difficulties they would present, especially with respect to dairy products, provided the Council's interim price increase were part of the general price increase for 1974-75. The German Government also wanted assurances from the other Member States that national measures contravening with Treaty would be phased out. It had also called for a balance sheet of the CAP to be drawn up. Mr Lardinois added that he hoped the Council would be having a meeting early the next week to discuss the situation.

Speaking for the Christian Democrat Group Mr Martens said that it was already clear that the interim increases were an advance on those for 1974-75 and in any case the balance sheet was drawn up every year. There had been a discussion of the CAP this year and any problems arising could be dealt by the existing procedure. What he wanted to know was the real reason for the German Government's attitude. He put down a motion which was endorsed by the Socialist Group, the Liberal and Allies Group, the European Conservative Group and the Group of European Progressive Democrats calling on the German Government to reconsider its attitude and requesting the Council to meet as soon as possible to tackle the issue. He said that the Government's decision

would occasion fresh anxiety among farmers and possibly lead to further demonstrations. They needed to have confidence in the institutions and this incident had undermined it. A resolution appealing to the Federal German Government to reconsider its attitude to the interim increase in agricultural prices was agreed to almost unanimously.

Forestry measures

Mr Giosuè Ligios (It, CD) submitted a report for the Committee on Agriculture on the Commission's proposal for a directive designed to promote the planting of trees. Under this financial help would be available from the EAGGF to cover a part of the cost of converting low yield farm land to forest. The directive is not designed to cover existing forest land or land not at present in agricultural use.

Mr Ligios asked the House to approve the directive subject to certain amendments concerning fire-fighting, research, forest roads and conditions for granting aid. The House did so in a motion stating that Parliament was 'aware that an increase in forest land on the territory of the Community would contribute to the protection and growth of the productivity of the soil and bring with it ecological advantages in the interests of the entire population'. Parliament added its conviction 'that measures providing incentives to forestry activity would promote economic development and employment and further the growth of the Community's forestry resources, which are at present insufficient to meet the ever-growing demand for wood'. The resolution was agreed to.

Eels

Mr David Thornley (Ir, S) submitted a report for the Committee on External Economic Relations asking the House to approve a Commission proposal on the opening, allocation and administration of an EC tariff quota for eels. Its purpose, he said, was to fill a gap in the Community's own production. A resolution approving the proposal was agreed to.

Financial compensation in respect of fishery products

Mr James Gibbons (Ir, EPD) submitted a report for the Committee on Agriculture asking the House to approve a Commission proposal on financial compensation in respect of fishery products. A resolution to this effect was agreed to.

Beef sales campaign and slaughter premiums

Mr Michele Cifarelli (It, S) submitted a report for the Committee on Agriculture on the Commission's proposals for a regulation on financing a beef and veal publicity campaign and a regulation to finance a system premiums for the ordinary marketing of certain adult bovine animals for slaughter. Mr Cifarelli's report asked the House to withhold its approval from the proposal to finance advertising designed to boost meat consumption. It pointed out that the Commission's proposals would only achieve the desired effects if they were coupled with other measures to relieve the market. An attempt should be made to stimulate beef and veal sales in third country markets under appropriate trade agreements. It urged that a continual analysis be made of measures designed to restore the balance on the market taking into account producers' incomes and customers interests. A resolution to this effect was agreed to.

The sugar market

Mr Lucien Martens (Be, CD) submitted a report for the Committee on Agriculture asking the House to approve the Commission's proposal on the common organization of the sugar market. The regulation only concerned sugar for the chemical industry. A resolution approving the proposal was agreed to.

Grading pig carcasses

Mr Cornelis Laban (Du, S) submitted a report for the Committee on Agriculture asking the House to approve the Commission's proposal for an EC scale for grading pig carcasses. A resolution to this effect was agreed to.

Cyclical policy measures in agriculture

Mr Horst Gerlach (Ge, S) submitted a report which Mr Manfred Schmidt (Ge, S) had drawn up for the Committee on Budgets on the Commission's proposal concerning cyclical policy measures in agriculture following the temporary widening of the margins of fluctuations for the currencies of some Member States. He asked the House to approve the Commission's proposal subject to certain reservations. These were that Parliament regretted it was not to be consulted on the detailed rules for regulating the system of export refunds for

trade between Member States whose currencies had depreciated in value and third countries. Parliament continued to be concerned that fluctuations in Community currency rates led to complexities in the application of Community policies and expressed the desire that the Community should proceed as soon as possible towards economic and monetary union. A resolution to this effect was agreed to.

Trade in poultrymeat

Mrs Elisabeth Orth (Ge, S) submitted a report for the Committee on Public Health and the Environment on the Commission's proposal for a directive on trade in fresh poultrymeat. The report expressed dissatisfaction with the Commission's proposal and called for a number of amendments, the purpose of which was to make consequent legislation more stringent. A motion tabled stressed that the provisions on health problems affecting trade in fresh poultrymeat should be based on the provisions of Member States with the strictest and most progressive legislation. It insisted that the evisceration of slaughtered poultry must be made compulsory throughout the Community by 1980 at the latest in order to give the consumer effective protection against infection. It urged the Commission and Council to lay down equally strict hygiene provisions for poultry slaughterhouses and cutting-up premises as those existing in similar fresh meat premises.

Mr John Brewis (Br, EC) said that from time immemorial the Christmas turkey had been sold unviscerated in the United Kingdom and as far as he knew no one had ever come to any harm from eating it. To the average member of the British public this proposal seemed utterly unnecessary. Would this not be a good case for choosing optional harmonization, he asked.

In reply, Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza, Vice-President of the Commission, said that the point at issue was the system of health inspection. He did not think that harmonization would raise any problems and he did not think that given the long period of adjustment allowed it would be possible to accept the optional harmonization system.

The resolution was then put to the vote and agreed to.

State of the Community

Parliament's sitting of 24 September opened with a statement by Mr François-Xavier Ortoli, President of the Commission, on the state of the Community. Mr Ortoli stressed the progress that had been achieved. He referred to the Council resolution on energy which was the first step towards a common policy and to the recent agreement on borrowing arrangements. There had to be a link, he said, between a common will and its practical expression. He stressed that when one Member State was in difficulties the others had to come to its support. This principle should also apply to the Community's relations with the world at large. Turning to regional policy he said that this remained a priority.

The difficulties of the EC were not the result of a faulty institutional design but were due to the way in which cooperation between governments was taking the place of the institutional *modus vivendi*. He took issue with the way Council decisions had to be taken unanimously even in the discussion of points of detail. He rejected the accusation that the Commission was an overgrown bureaucracy. He said it would be easy if the problem were as simple as that. He pointed out too that the Commission did not now go into too much detail in regulations; it had changed its approach in this matter. At a time when Europe was wondering about its future, President Ortoli said that this debate was timely. He looked forward to continuing it in October.

Speaking for the Christian Democrat Group, Mr Alfred Bertrand (Be) said that the Nine were faced with a mountain of difficulties and did not know where to start. The approach his Group favoured would be to apply the Treaties in full and then to give a detailed implementation to the decisions of the Summit meetings. He pointed out that there was not one person who had attended the Paris Summit in 1970 who was still in office today and only two of those who attended the Copenhagen Summit were still in power. If the Summits were implemented this would give the necessary continuity. On this condition his Group agreed with them even if a good dinner was one of their features. But, he said, the institutions should not be tacitly represented there but should have their full say.

Turning to the Summit plan for the end of the year he said that his Group would expect some final decision on the European Parliament's budgetary powers otherwise, he warned, the Christian Democrats would act. He thought that the Summit should be clear about Economic and Monetary Union for inflation could not be stopped without adequate machinery. He noted that it ranged

between 7 0/0 and 27 0/0 in the different Member States. His Group supported Mr Ortoli as regards the absolute need for a regional fund and for a common policy on energy. He agreed with the political secretariat idea but felt that it should fall within the framework of the Community institutions and not serve as a boost to switching the emphasis from institutional teamwork to intergovernmental cooperation. He referred to the report drawn up by the Commission in pursuance of paragraph 16 of the Paris Summit Communiqué. This had been somewhat negated by the 56 questions on this report that the Council had put.

Speaking for the Socialist Group, Mr Georges Spénale (Fr) agreed with the guidelines set out by Mr Ortoli for solving the common problems. There had been a spate of speeches on regional and social policies but it was still doubtful if one centime would be available for regional policy next year. He challenged Mr Ortoli on the question of the legislative powers for Parliament which the Commission had promised four years previously. 'Where are they now?' He asked Mr Ortoli why he was confident about Summit meetings. Was there any evidence of any major change of attitude? The Summit statements were usually perfect but it was when it came to putting them into practice that the problems seemed to arise.

Speaking for the Liberal and Allies Group, Lord Gladwyn (Br) felt all would agree with Mr Ortoli's diagnosis. The Commission was doing what it could but its powers were limited. He thought the recent criticisms of the Commission had been unjust. He too noted that the Council seemed to have given up the 1972 Summit which the European Parliament and the whole of Europe had found so encouraging for there was no prospect of a common monetary policy or of a regional policy. Indeed, there was only a very small step envisaged for energy. The Council was unwilling to go ahead towards European Union. He questioned the value of reports on direct elections and legislative powers when there was no evidence that the Council was likely to act. The great idea now seemed that the Council should work pragmatically regardless of the European Community. What, he asked, could Parliament do to influence the Ministers? He suggested that one practical, if limited, reform might be for the Council to bring its debate into the House in the event of a disagreement. This would enhance the prestige of the Parliament and might lead to results. He agreed with the idea of a debate between Parliament and Council on European Union. But he knew that the Council was not keen on this. So he felt that the emphasis should be on practical proposals.

Speaking for the European Conservative Group, Lord Bessborough (Br) said that he welcomed Mr Ortoli's speech particularly regarding the dovetailing of national

policies. He was glad to note Mr Ortoli's emphasis on the priority of regional policy and that he had undertaken to debate European Union. He rejected criticisms of the functioning of the Commission. Speaking for the European Progressive Democrats, Mr Michael Yeats (Ir) said his Group would greatly favour a further debate in October. He strongly approved Mr Ortoli's approach for it was impossible for the EC to deal with its problems without common policies. He said that the importance of CAP was obvious because it was the cornerstone of the EEC. No doubt the greatest failure of the Community had been regarding regional policy. Not even a notional sum had been entered in this year's budget. He called for a political secretariat to prepare European Union 'to organize the cooperation that reflects our common resolve'.

Speaking for the Communist and Allies Group, Mr Gerard Bordu (Fr) said that the elected parliamentarian was seeing his influence decrease in inverse proportion to the scale of the difficulties arising.

Mr Hans-August Lücker (Ge, CD) was concerned about the shift of emphasis towards the intergovernmental approach. He considered the Community institutions to be indispensable.

Mr Ludwig Fellermaier (Ge, S) took issue with the Council, deploring its attitude to the European Parliament. He agreed with President Cornelis Berkhouwer that other members of the Council as well as the President should be present at the debate in October.

Mr Pino Romualdi (It, Ind) thought that the trouble lay in the lack of political will at the Community level. The new generations did not seem to want to relay the ones that had gone before. Perhaps the time had come to rethink the Treaties of Rome.

Replying to the debate President Ortoli said that Mr Bertrand had rightly described it as a prelude. This meant, of course, that it could be continued. He had been unwilling, he said, to be drawn into the wrong debate. To debate the status of the Commission would be wrong. The real debate was what the Community was and what it could do. Turning to the question of Summits, Mr Ortoli said that it would be wrong to imagine that Summits could usefully be held on every subject that arose. This would undermine both the Summits and the Community institutions. The Summit should not be made into a fifth Community institution. He agreed with Mr Fellermaier and Mr Spénale that the EC's task was to help the third and fourth worlds. He accepted Mr Spénale's

comment on the wording he used. One should not speak of a 'transfer of power' to the Community but of a 'joint exercise' of power. As regards the promise made four years previously that proposals would be submitted on enlarging Parliament's legislative power, Mr Ortoli said that the Commission was working on it against the background of its studies into European Union. He did not think that the Commission had been relegated to a minor role. He was in favour of a Council that worked. What mattered was that the two institutions should work together.

He mentioned in passing that there were in the Commission 7,000 officials to deal with commercial policy, associations, industrial policy, competition, the Common Agricultural Policy, research, transport and information. What he regretted was that the Commission was mainly engaged in preparatory work and that it had not the power to decide the real issues. Otherwise, the relevant decisions would have been taken a long time ago.

(24 September)

TRANSPORT

Common transport policy

Mr Karl-Heinz Mursch (Ge, CD) presented a report for the Committee on Regional Policy and Transport on the Commission's communication to the Council on developing the common transport policy. The Commission's communication, sent to the Council on 15 November 1973, analyses transport today and sets out the means and ends of a common policy. Its main emphasis is on coordinating national policies and getting the common policy for transport to dovetail with other common policies, particularly regional policy. As to the policy itself, it must cover all forms of transport and it must be able to rely on regular forecasts of supply and demand so as to develop a master plan for the EC transport network.

In his report Mr Mursch described how the lack of a common policy for transport was undermining the development of the common market. He called for the immediate introduction of a common policy for road, rail and inland waterway transport. On the other hand, he approved the approach adopted by the Commission particularly regarding the two-stage timescale. He urged the Commission to submit proposals for the transitional stage without delay so that

the common transport market could become operational by 1983. The common policy, he said, must fit into the whole economic and social design of the EC and promote the free movement of persons and goods, a better balance between the regions and better working and living conditions for all.

Replying to the debate Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza, the Commissioner responsible, said that the Council of Ministers was now much closer to a final agreement on setting up a common transport system. He indicated that there would be a further Council meeting at the end of November. A detailed resolution, summing up the various points made in the report, was agreed to.

Tractors

Mr Willi Müller (Ge, S) submitted a report for the Committee on Public Health and the Environment welcoming the Commission's proposal for a directive limiting the driver-perceived noise level of tractors. This will protect the hearing of tractor drivers. A resolution to this effect was agreed to.

QUESTION TIME

Questions to the Council

1. CSCE negotiations by Mr Hans Edgar Jahn (Ge, CD)

'Can the Council confirm its opposition to the institutionalization of the conference through the creation of a permanent secretariat, in line with the position so far adopted by the Community at the CSCE negotiations?'

Mr Bernard Destremau, President of the Council, replied: 'The question put by the Honourable Member concerns the general question of possible action with regard to the CSCE. This question does not specifically concern the work of Committee 2 on economic aspects, in which the Community is taking part. The question put by the Honourable Member cannot therefore be evaluated from the economic aspect alone. Moreover, at a general level, this question is still entirely open within the Conference.'

2. *European Security Conference* by Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker (Br, EC)

'The Council asked what progress has been made in the European Security Conference?'

Mr Bernard Destremaeu replied: 'The work of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is currently being done by the three committees set up within the Conference. In accordance with the ad hoc formula agreed by the Council at its meeting on 20 September 1973, the Community is represented only on Committee 2, and the Council, consequently, can reply to the Honourable Member's question only insofar as it concerns the work of that committee.'

Speaking solely, therefore, of the activities of Committee 2, it should be noted that no concrete results have as yet emerged, in particular as regards the preparation of a draft Resolution on trade.

I hasten to add that owing to the interdependence of the activities of the three Conference committees it is practically impossible, during question time, to draw an overall picture of progress made by the Conference. The problem could be raised at talks held with the European Parliament on political cooperation.'

3. *Regional development fund* by Lord O'Hagan (Br, Ind)

'What progress has the Council made towards agreeing to set up a regional development fund?'

Mr Bernard Destremaeu replied: 'The Council has for some time been studying a series of measures to implement a Community Regional Policy. Among these measures primary mention should be made of the Commission's proposals for the setting up of a Regional Development Fund, whose task should be to supplement Member States' regional development programmes for the least-favoured regions.'

It has not yet been possible for the Council to take decisions in this connection, owing to the complexity of the problems involved. The Commission is currently reviewing the whole question in liaison with the Member States with a view to submitting a communication to the Council at the appropriate time, containing, where needful, possible solutions to the problems raised.'

Lord O'Hagan asked the President if he was aware that this Parliament is growing impatient with the delays of the Council on this subject.

Mr Destremau replied that the Council was aware of the interest the Assembly attached to this question, the importance of which was generally realized. The Council hoped that a decision could be taken as soon as possible.

Questions to the Commission

4. *Harmonization of nuclear plant safety standards* by Mr Augusto Premoli (It, L)

'In view of the expected growth in the number of nuclear power stations and the widespread public concern associated with it, does the Commission not consider it desirable to improve and extend measures to harmonize nuclear plant safety standards?'

Dr Patrick Hillery, Vice-President of the Commission, replied: 'Mr President, the Commission has already taken certain steps in connection with the technological safety problem through the implementation of organized cooperation between the various areas of interest. This includes the compilation of an inventory of national practices and the comparison and gradual alignment of methodologies, criteria, codes and applied standards. I would remind the honourable member that all these have been dealt with in the Communication to the Council on the implementation of guidelines and priority actions for a Community energy policy. The question of the safety of nuclear installations will, moreover, shortly be the subject of a further communication to the Council, which will take into account the results of work completed to date. As regards the protection of workers and civilian populations against radiation risks, I would recall that provision for such protection is ensured on a Community scale in accordance with Chapter 5 of the EAEC Treaty and, more particularly, by the basic standards included in national legislation in this field.'

5. *Financial aid to the countries of the Sahel* by Mr Pierre Deschamps (Be, CD)

'What practical activities are already being financed by the European Development Fund in the countries of the Sahel with a view to re-establishing a natural environment conducive to efficient agriculture and stock-farming, which are essential to the survival of the populations of those countries?'

Mr George Thomson, Commissioner, replied: 'Mr President, the Commission, which throughout this Sahel catastrophe has been grateful for both the support

and the pressure of the European Parliament, has continually had in mind the need for concrete activities to deal with the fundamental causes of the drought at the same time as sending urgent supplies as emergency aid.

In the years before the catastrophic deterioration in 1972 and 1973 the European Development Fund gave priority to animal and public health measures and to the development of rural water supplies and irrigation by financing 3,000 wells and borings. In the special allocations of funds which the Community has made since 1973, amounting to more than 100 million units of account in all, apart from the emergency aid, priority has been given to the restoration of roads, transport and warehousing facilities, to the building of new water plant at points where the people and herds concentrate, to the revival of agricultural production by the supply of seed and a wider use of crop facilities, to the establishment of more effective commercial networks for the distribution of the food crops and to the organization of cattle-breeding with a view to creating a well-founded and stable biological equilibrium between the herds and the capacity of the pastures.

With permission, Sir, I will deposit for the record with the report of this debate full details of these fundamental efforts to restore the means of production and establish an ecological balance.

The Commission, Sir, is glad to note that General Sangoulé Lamizana, President of Upper Volta and President of the Inter-States Permanent Committee for the fight against drought in the Sahel, has said that during the course of 1973 there has been a magnificent spirit of solidarity. He underlined, however, that 1974 is once again a year of famine. The Commission agrees with that view, and in the Commission's view the European Community still faces the moral obligation to show itself the leader by its solidarity of the international effort to reconstruct a life-giving environment for the people of the Sahel.'

6. *Cheese products* by Mr Jean Durieux (Fr, L)

'In view of the alarming situation facing producers of Gouda, Edam and Mimolette cheeses in certain countries of the Community, does the Commission not propose to fix the threshold price for cheese with a 45 % fat content at a realistic level and to extend the negative correction factor for skimmed milk powder to other dairy products and in particular to the protein content of cheese products?'

Dr Patrick Hillery replied: 'The Commission is not of the opinion that the situation faced by the producers of Gouda, Edam and Mimolette cheese in

certain countries of the Community is worrying. It is true that production of these cheeses in the Community has risen. On the other hand, market prices have, since July 1974, also increased and will probably increase further. In most of the producing member countries prices are between 12 and 20 units of account per 100 kilogrammes below the special price. Only in France market prices seem to have exceeded the threshold price of 159.05 units of account per 100 kilogrammes.

A market price above the threshold level signifies in the case where this market can be considered as representative, nothing more than a situation where for the product in question more than the target price for milk is being realized. Such a situation is not sufficient reason for increasing the threshold price for the product in question concerning the negative corrective of two units of account per 100 kilogrammes. The Commission has well been aware of the consequences of the non-application of this amount on products other than skim milk powder. This limitation applied exclusively to skim milk powder was decided by the Council of Ministers within the framework of a compromise on monetary matters.'

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Contacts between the EC and Arab countries

In an oral question put down for debate, Mr Jean Durieux (Fr, Liberal spokesman) asked the Commission what role it had been assigned in the contacts the EC Foreign Ministers had decided to establish with the Arab countries and what part it would play if negotiations were opened? Would it lead them or attend simply as an interested third party?

Mr Claude Cheysson said in reply that dialogue between the EC and the twenty countries in the Arab League represented a common approach to resolving common problems. On the other hand discussions were in progress with three of the member states of the Arab League (as with 41 other states) in the African-Caribbean-Pacific negotiations and talks were likewise going ahead with Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria under the EC's global approach to the Mediterranean; Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon were involved in the global approach too. The Commission's mandate to negotiate with the Maghreb states also covered Israel and Spain and he hoped these negotiations would be concluded at the same time. Negotiations with the other four countries in the

Middle East would probably take place in a second phase because the Commission had not yet received a mandate for this purpose. Mr Cheysson added that the framework of the 29 was not suitable for discussing energy problems or the recycling of capital. It was however still too early to say what approach would be adopted among the 29 to tackling the problems they could deal with. A general committee would be set up and the Commission would attend its meetings, the first of which was scheduled for mid-November. The various governments, he added, naturally turned to the Commission when it came to the actual substance of the dialogue between Europe and the Arab States.

Cyprus

The following oral questions to the Council were put down for debate:

Independence and freedom of Cyprus by Mr Giorgio Amendola, Mr Gustave Ansart, Mrs Tullia Caretoni Romagnoli (Italian Communists) and Mr Marcel Lemoine and Mr Gérard Bordu (French Communists)

'The military coup d'état in Cyprus and subsequent developments give rise to serious concern at the fate of the legitimate constitutional government of President Makarios and of the populations of the island and may well gravely jeopardize efforts towards détente in the Mediterranean. Does the Council not consider that it should reflect these sentiments of condemnation and alarm and express an opinion of its own on the events in Cyprus, and that it should take steps to safeguard the independence and freedom of the island?

and *Association with Cyprus* by Mr Hans Edgar Jahn, Mr Heinrich Aigner, Mr Egon Alfred Klepsch, Mr Alfred Bertrand, Mr Hans-August Lücker and Mr Willem Schuijt (German Christian Democrats) and Mr Peter Kirk (Br, EC)

- '— with reference to Article 14 of the Agreement establishing an Association between the Republic of Cyprus and the European Economic Community;
- having regard to the declaration of the President of the French Republic of 27 August 1974 to the effect that the inadequate political organization of the Europe of Nine has allowed a conflict to arise in which three Associated States are involved;

we ask the Council of the European Communities:

1. Will the Council propose a meeting of the Association Council in order to put forward solutions to the political problems threatening the implementation of the EEC-Cyprus Association Agreement?

2. Is the Council prepared to propose that the Foreign Ministers of the Nine should formulate a joint plan for a peaceful solution to the political crisis in Cyprus, which representatives of the Community could put before the Association Council?'

Mr Bernard Destremau, President of the Council, replied: 'The problems raised by recent events in Cyprus have been discussed, not within the context of the Council of the European Communities but within that of cooperation between the Member States as regards foreign policy.'

I should like to remind you that the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Nine agreed on a common line and, on 16 and 22 July 1974, published communiqués adopting a position on these events. They strongly recommended the effective application of the cease-fire and the restoration of constitutional order in Cyprus.

On 16 September, the Foreign Affairs Ministers again confirmed their support for a negotiated solution which, in my view, is the only way of settling the conflict equitably.

The Nine will, I am sure, continue their diplomatic action to this end.

The Council is, of course, well aware of the gravity of the problems that the present situation has caused for the people of Cyprus, which is why it has decided to grant emergency food aid to displaced persons in Cyprus as from 12 September 1974. This aid will be supervised by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and will consist of 3,000 metric tons of cereals, 200 metric tons of butteroil and 200 metric tons of skimmed milk powder.

Such aid is in addition to normal aid already decided upon by the Council within the framework of 1974 food aid programmes and which involve supplies of 5,000 metric tons of cereals and 250 metric tons of butteroil.'

Association with Cyprus

The following oral question to the Commission was put down for debate by Mr Hans Edgar Jahn, Mr Heinrich Aigner, Mr Egon Alfred Klepsch, Mr Alfred Bertrand, Mr Hans-August Lücker and Mr Willem Schuijt (German Christian Democrats) and Mr Peter Kirk (Br, EC)

'We ask the Commission of the European Communities:

1. Will the Commission make an immediate, comprehensive and positive response to the Cypriot Government's request in August 1974 for aid to homeless persons in Cyprus? If so, in what form and how quickly can such aid be given?
2. In view of its position on the Council of the EEC-Cyprus Association, is the Commission prepared, after consultation with the Council to enable the Community and the Cypriot Government to consider jointly the political problems affecting the implementation of the EEC-Cyprus Association Agreement and to put forward solutions?
3. Can the Commission see any other possible ways of contributing to a peaceful solution of the problems in Cyprus?

In reply Mr Finn Gundelach, Commissioner, said that the Commission was conscious of the problems confronting Cyprus where one-third of the population were refugees in their own country and the whole island was suffering from the consequences of war. He said that the partition of the island was not acceptable either politically or economically and the EC ought, under its Association, to contribute to the overcoming partition. The action of the EC so far had consisted in sending food aid through the International Red Cross Committee. This would be distributed through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. This was in addition to the regular aid to Cyprus which consisted of food supplies which were now in the course of delivery too. He reminded the House that the initiative in calling a meeting of the Association Council lay with the Government of Cyprus. This could, of course, only discuss questions which came under the Agreement of Association between Cyprus and the Community.

Relations with Greece

Mr Peter Corterier (G, S) submitted a report for the Political Affairs Committee on the Association between the EEC and Greece. His report welcomed the replacement of Greece's military regime by a civilian government and trusted that a return to democracy would contribute to the just and peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem and to the improvement of relations between Greece and Turkey. The report considered that the Association could be fully resumed after free parliamentary elections had been held in Greece.

In the ensuing debate there was general agreement that the Community should do everything in its power to provide Greece with moral and material support. At the same time several members considered that the Community should wait

until elections had been held in that country before taking further initiatives. A resolution to this effect was agreed to. It also expressed the hope that Greece would become a full member of the EC as soon as its economic development allowed it.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Tripartite Conference on employment

The following oral question to the Council was put down for debate by Mr Giorgio Amendola (It), Mr Gustave Ansart (Fr), Mrs Marie-Thérèse Goutmann (Fr) and Mr Luigi Marras (It) for the Communist and Allies Group

'The energy crisis has had disturbing consequences on the employment situation. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for instance, not only has the entry of foreign labour been stopped but the number of unemployed has doubled. Does the Council not feel it should urgently consider the proposal by the European trade union organizations for a tripartite conference between the unions, management and the Community organizations to discuss the impact of the energy crisis on the employment situation?'

Mr Bernard Destremau, President of the Council, replied: 'The Council has always attached great importance to the dialogue with the unions and management, especially on employment problems.

However, despite the efforts of the Council, it has not so far been possible to convene a social affairs conference or to arrange a resumption of the work of the Standing Committee on Employment because of the difficulties which have arisen with regard to the allocation of seats for trade union representatives.

The various parties concerned will again be contacted in order to examine which solutions can be considered for settling these problems.'

Current employment situation in the Community

The following oral question to the Commission was put down for debate by Mr Alfred Bertrand (Be, CD) for the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment

'As a result of the energy crisis, inflation and the consequent anti-inflationary measures taken by various Member States, the employment situation in the whole Community has

deteriorated, as can be seen from dismissals, especially of migrant workers, reduction of working hours, suspension of recruitment, etc. In the report it submitted to the Council on 2 May 1974, 'Employment and the energy situation - A report on the repercussions of the energy crisis on the employment situation of the Community' (SEC (74) 1358 fin.), the Commission formulated a number of conclusions and proposals which might help to keep the consequences of the energy crisis within acceptable limits.

Can the Commission state what information it can provide on the current situation and what Community measures it intends to propose to the Council to avoid aggravation of the crisis?'

Dr Patrick Hillery, Vice-President of the Commission, replied that unemployment had been rising since the beginning of the year, a trend which worsened in June, July and August. In Germany there were 500,000 unemployed or twice as many as a year earlier. The situation there was deteriorating. In Italy, the United Kingdom and Ireland it was no worse than a year ago. However, these countries have been recovering from a particularly high cyclical level of unemployment and had been expected to show at this time a considerable improvement in their situation. As I say, the current situation has not improved, even if it is not any worse. In France, the Benelux countries and Denmark the current level of unemployment is significantly higher than a year ago - 3.8 % compared with 3.4 % in Belgium, for example, or 3.1 % compared with 2.6 % in the Netherlands.'

The Commission did not intend to propose new curative measures to deal with the current situation but the recommendations made by the Commission in 'employment and the energy crisis were still valid'. These were that '(1) Member States must not export unemployment by restrictive trade policies, (2) Member States can sustain expansion despite present difficulties and should do so, (3) Member States should provide for partners in balance of payments difficulties. Since then the Commission has been actively pressing towards a framework whereby countries can borrow under a Community guarantee. And, more specifically, (4) support for the mass dismissal directives now before the Council, (5) the strengthening of national employment services to cope with increased work loads, (6) defence of migrant workers through the free circulation regulation already in existence and the migrants action programme which will be presented to the Council in December, (7) use of the resources of the Social Fund to aid redeployment arising from the energy crisis and other structural changes in employment. The objective of making the Fund more flexible to deal with current problems is being partly met with the creation of special facilities for shipbuilding, migrants, the handicapped and the energy sector.'

European occupational training centre

Mr Ferruccio Pisoni (It, CD) submitted a report for the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment approving the Commission's proposal to set up a European occupational training centre. This approval was subject to an amendment calling for appropriation of an extra 1m u.a. (bringing total expenditure for the centre to 2.2m u.a.). It is felt that the Centre will promote full and better employment. A resolution to this effect was agreed to.

ENVIRONMENT

Sea pollution from the land

Mr Augusto Premoli (It, L) submitted a report for the Committee on Public Health and the Environment on the Commission's recommendations for dealing with marine pollution. The committee urged the Council to secure EC accession to the Paris Convention for the prevention of pollution from land-based sources. It believed the Commission should be represented on the commission set up by the Paris Convention and have as many votes as there are member states signatories of the Convention.

Presenting his report Mr Premoli said 80 % of the pollution came from the land and this affected both tourism and food resources. He made the point that there were no ecological frontiers and said this was a case where the mass media could help. The European Community should subscribe to the Paris Convention. It was to be noted, however, that this did not cover the Mediterranean.

A resolution incorporating these points was agreed to.

BUDGET

Budgetary procedure under Article 203

Presenting a report on the procedure to be followed by the House in dealing with the budget now that Article 203 was coming into force, Mr Georges Spénale (Fr, S) emphasized that the text he was presenting would be of provisional application only. He expressed regret that the long awaited decisions giving Parliament greater budgetary powers had still not been forthcoming. The

only point at issue on this purely internal matter he said was that amendments affecting non-compulsory expenditure should have the support of at least 5 members or a committee or a political group. There was no disagreement in the House with respect to the procedure proposed and a resolution approving it was agreed to.

ENERGY

Energy research programme

The following oral question to the Commission was put down for debate by Mr Norbert Hougardy (Be) for the Liberal and Allies Group:

'At the European Parliament sitting of 12 July 1974, the Commission announced proposals on energy research in the Community. Can the Commission clarify its proposals on the energy research programme, and, in particular define its position on the following questions?

1. What essential energy research projects are at present being carried out in the Community?
2. What energy research projects are to be encouraged and given priority in the future?
3. What financial ceiling is necessary for energy research to produce satisfactory results?
4. What structure does the Commission contemplate for the implementation of its programme?

Mr Ralf Dahrendorf, the Commissioner responsible, replied that (1) 70m u.a. was being spent on energy research under the present four-year programme. A high priority had been given to research into plutonium and transplutonium and into reactor safety. (2) There were eight main areas for energy research: a communications network between Member States and research institutes, the rational use of energy, developing new technology for coal, gas and oil, nuclear fission, the use of hydrogen, research into new sources of energy particularly solar, geothermic, wind and tidal energy, the relation between energy development and the environment and lastly how energy could be harnessed for our present and future purposes in an acceptable way. (3) Expenditure had to be on a larger scale. The Member States spent 905m u.a. on research in 1974 and the EC some 70m u.a. or 0.1 % of the EC's GNP. This should be increased to 0.14 or 0.15 % which meant a further 500m u.a. (4) The Commission had to have a measure of independence. Mr Dahrendorf then ended on a personal note

by saying that he found the main significance of his work as a Commissioner in representing the Commission in the House where he had, he said, learned a great deal. In leaving the Commission he was not leaving Europe. He would simply be continuing his work for Europe in a different place.

Action taken on Parliament's advice

Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza, Vice-President of the Commission, told the House that the Statute for the European Company was being reconsidered in the light of Parliament's 70 amendments. The Commission accepted some 60 of these and the remainder were still being examined. He hoped that an amended proposal would be submitted to the Council early next year. Parliament had withheld its approval from the proposal to finance advertising in horticulture, considering they would be hard to implement and not very effective. The Commission had withdrawn this proposal. It had decided to amend its decision on the Euratom research and teaching programme with respect to recycling plutonium in light water reactors. Mr John Brewis (Br, EC) then asked what decision the Commission had come to on worker participation in the European company. Mr Scarascia Mugnozza replied that this point was still under consideration. A memorandum would be forwarded to Parliament before any final decision was taken.

REFERENCES

Subject	European Parliament document number	Date of debate	Commission document number
Commission proposals to help farmers	248/74	16, 17, 24 26/9	240/74
Forestry measures	169/74	24/9	6/74
Eels	198/74	25/9	127/74
Financial compensation in respect of fishery products	259/74	25/9	90/74
Beef sales campaign and slaughter premiums	262/74	25/9	218/74
The sugar market	261/74	25/9	233/74
Grading pig carcasses	256/74	25/9	255/74
Cyclical policy measures in agriculture	265/74	25/9	176/74
Trade in poultrymeat	115/74	25/9	389/73
Common transport policy	215/74	25/9	226/73
Tractors	193/74	25/9	39/74
Contacts between the EC and Arab countries	205/74	25/9	
Independence and freedom of Cyprus	243/74	26/9	
Association with Cyprus	245/74 246/74	26/9	
Relations with Greece	237/74	26/9	

Subject	European Parliament document number	Date of debate	Commission document number
Tripartite Conference on employment	207/74	26/9	
Current employment situation in EC	247/74	26/9	
European occupational training centre	231/74	25/9	70/74
Seal pollution from the land	197/74	25/9	
Budgetary procedure under Article 203 . . .	252/74	25/9	
Energy research programme	244/74	25/9	

Abbreviations

CD	Christian Democratic Group
S	Socialist Group
LA	Liberal and Allies Group
EC	European Conservative Group
EPD	European Progressive Democrat Group
CA	Communist and Allies Group
Ind	Non-attached, Independent Members
EC	European Community

Be	Belgian
Br	British
Da	Danish
Du	Dutch
Fr	French
Ge	German
Ir	Irish
It	Italian
Lu	Luxembourg

Notes

Extraordinary sittings

The extraordinary sitting of 16 September was convened under Rule 1, 4 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure:

'Exceptionally, the President may, on behalf of the enlarged Bureau, convene Parliament at the request of a majority of its current members or at the request of the Commission or the Council of the Communities.'

New Members

Mrs Peggy Fenner, Mr Hugh Dykes, Mr Ralph Howell and Mr Michael Norman Shaw (Br, EC) took their seats in the House on 16 September. They were appointed by the House of Commons on 24 July and their credentials were verified by the Bureau of the European Parliament on 5 September. They take the seats left vacant by Lord Chelwood, Mr John Hill, Sir John Peel and Mr Rafton Pounder.

By letter of 19 September the President of the Bundestag appointed Mr Alfons Bayerl to take the seat left vacant by Mr Hans-Georg Schachtschabel.

Socialist Group

Mr Georges Spénale has been elected Chairman of the Socialist Group in succession to the late Mr Francis Vals.

Petition

On 16 September the President received a petition on migrant birds from Mr Seppen, Mr Bertels, Mr Pot, Mr Rosenzweig, Mr Hofer-Kuyelman and other signatories. This was referred to the Committee on Public Health and the Environment.

Summing up

At its sitting of 16, 24, 25 and 26 September Members put down 6 questions for debate with the Council and 5 questions for debate with the Commission. At Question Time 3 were addressed to the Council and 3 to the Commission. 16 reports were considered and the European Parliament delivered 17 Opinions.

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