

European Parliament

information series

the sittings

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SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1975 – 1976

Sittings held in Luxembourg

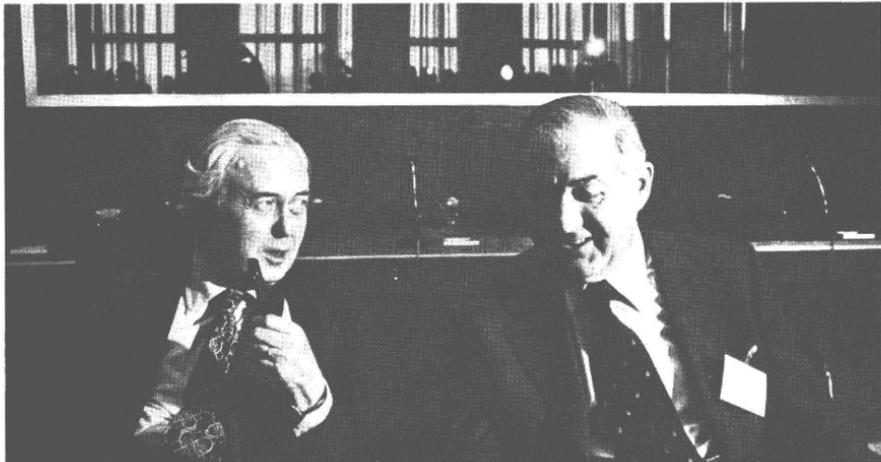
Monday, 5 April to Friday, 9 April 1976

Direct Elections :what we need now is a decision

It would be disingenuous to suggest that the European Parliament really expected the heads of state to take a final decision on direct elections here in Luxembourg on 1 and 2 April. Indeed, all the pointers were to a sort of political



Demonstration in support of direct elections



Mr Harold Wilson and Mr James Callaghan in Luxembourg for the European Council meeting on 1 and 2 April.

goalless draw. But this did not make the actual failure of the summit any less galling. It still took some believing.

On Monday this week, Parliament sought an immediate meeting with the Council to urge the Foreign Ministers to finalise a decision as soon as possible. After all, as Mr Michael Stewart said, all they had to do was tie up a few loose ends.

The main loose end, of course, is the number of Members. The broad view of the House, expressed, for example, by Sir Peter Kirk, is that this should be somewhere between 300 and 400. Its official view is that 355 would give the best balance between over-representing the smaller states and under-representing the larger ones. But Parliament has made it quite clear that there is room for compromise here. Even so, the suggestion by Mr Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of France, that the short answer would be to keep the number at 198 took some swallowing. Although some of the other heads of state are said to have sympathised with the suggestion, strongly opposed by Italy and the United Kingdom, there was no hint that any of their fellow countrymen in the House shared their views. The main objection is the size of constituencies that would result. If Germany continues to return only 36 Members, this would mean constituencies of some 1.7 million people. Obviously, a compromise has to be



Gaston Thorn: 'I have asked all governments to try and settle this issue of direct elections by 3 May.'

reached between having constituencies which are unmanageably big on the one hand and an unmanageably large number of Members on the other hand. The majority view in Parliament is that this would be somewhere between 300 and 400. But, as Sir Peter Kirk pointed out: 'We could argue about formulas until the cows come home; what we need now is a decision.'

It is still possible, of course, that the July summit will produce a decision, although, as Lord Gladwyn said, the prospects do not seem exactly bright. As Mr Tom Normanton said: 'We cannot afford another failure.' Otherwise, to use his words, you might just as well write 'European Community RIP'.

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Gaston Thorn still hopeful despite summit setback

Mr Gaston Thorn, Luxembourg Prime Minister and President of the Council, was described by a German newspaper as having enough political charm to smooth away any difficulties, or so Mr Ludwig Fellermaier (Ge, S) told the House in

Wednesday's debate on the results of the summit conference. He thought the compliment fully justified because Mr Thorn had succeeded in presenting even the 'miserable result' of the summit in a fairly hopeful light.

Indeed, what Mr Thorn was at pains to stress was that the nine Heads of State are still as committed to direct elections, to Economic and Monetary Union and to dealing with unemployment as they have ever been. The nine governments were being urged to make a decision on direct elections possible for when the foreign ministers meet on 3 May. And the second tripartite conference of Community, unions and management, to be held in June, would be having another go at unemployment. But, Mr Thorn conceded, the goal of a single currency for the whole of Europe remained a distant one. It would probably take a generation to achieve.

Mr Thorn then set the European Council meeting of 1 and 2 April in a broader perspective. The European Council, he said, had not lived up to expectations. It had not become the booster the Community needed. He thought it regrettable that some heads of state should have been so surprised to find that decisions were expected of them. He hoped, now that the general public had made its feelings known, everyone would realise that the Nine could not go on meeting like this without arousing legitimate hopes that decisions could be taken on vital issues. In the end, though, saving the Community was everyone's business.



President Georges Spénale arriving for talks with Council. On his left is Secretary-General Hans Nord; on his right is his chef de cabinet René Bruch.



Sir Peter Kirk: 'We can talk about formulas for direct elections till the cows come home; what we need now is a decision.'

Mr Thorn was followed by Mr Willem Haferkamp, Vice-President of the Commission, who repeated what he has said so many times in the European Parliament: dovetailing economic policies is the only answer. The European Council had confirmed its commitment, but the crux was to go on from commitment to action.

Then came the spokesmen for the political Groups: Mr Michael Stewart (Br) for the Socialists, Mr Alfred Bertrand (Be) for the Christian Democrats, Mr Cornelis Berkhouwer (Nl) for the Liberals, Mr Christian de la Malène (Fr) for the European Progressive Democrats, Mr Tom Normanton (Br) for the European Conservatives and Mr Fazio Fabbrini (It) for the Communists. And it was perhaps hardly surprising they should take a pretty poor view of the summit.

Mr Stewart wondered if the heads of state had been held back by the feeling they could not carry the peoples of Europe along with them. 'If that is what they think, that is what they should have said; they should have spelt out the challenge to everyone in Europe who has been talking and hoping for a united

Europe and said: these are the things you must do, these are the ideas you must entertain, these are the steps forward you must be prepared to urge on your governments if the heads of government are to be able to recognise progress.'

Mr Bertrand contrasted people's enthusiasm for Europe with the Community's failure to solve problems and Mr Berkhouwer quoted the New York Herald Tribune: 'There was no joy in Luxembourg last weekend following the humiliation of the European Economic Community's newest institution, the European Council, over its failure to agree on practically anything. The failure, the wasted time, should cause some meditation, not just on the future of the Council but on the deeper problem: what hope is there for a Europe if even the government leaders can't do anything for it?'

Mr de la Malène thought the answer was for the Community to hang on to what it has achieved and go for a big enough budget to get things moving again and arouse hopes.

Mr Normanton thought the economic strength of the Community was continually being eroded, wasted, squandered, and he was particularly struck by the effects this is having on industry. He asked if key industries (aircraft manufacturing, shipbuilding, computers) were 'to continue to be based on the concept of the market being the state in which their factories and companies are based? Not a single sector of high technology industry can ever in future expect to be able to go it alone, except to poverty and bankruptcy'.

Mr Fabbrini said quite frankly that his group had not been surprised by the summit's failure. The Communists had always taken Community leaders to task for their utter lack of political resolve.

This substantially was the tone of the debate, although many more Members took part: Mr Arie van der Hek (Du, S), Mr Martin Bangemann (Ge, L), Mr Michael Yeats (Ir, EPD), Mr Hugh Dykes (Br, EC), Mrs Marie-Thérèse Goutmann (Fr, CA), Mr Valerio de Sanctis (It, Ind), Mrs Clara Kruckow (Da, L), Mr Ludwig Fellermaier (Ge, S), Mr Schelto Patijn (Du, S), Lord Gladwyn (Br, L), Sir Peter Kirk (Br, EC) and Mr Giovanni Boano (It, CD).

The impression was of a Parliament urging the European Council on for every reasonable reason and feeling baffled to see heads of state hesitating for reasons that still seem something of a mystery.



President and group leaders in talks with Council: (l. to r.) Jean Durieux, Georges Spénale, Ludwig Fellermaier, Christian de la Malène, Alfred Bertrand and Sir Peter Kirk.

Perhaps the worst aspect, as Mr Yeats said, was the false hopes the summit engendered. And despite Mr Thorn's reassurance, there is, as Mr Dykes pointed out, 'still no concerted Council commitment to alleviate the rate of unemployment'. Mr Patijn thought the European Council had blundered in regarding the Luxembourg summit as being no more than a routine meeting. An error of psychology. Referring to the number of Members the directly-elected Parliament is to have, Mr Patijn thought it meaningless to speak of 'representation' when your constituency has 1.2 million people in it. And this would be the result of keeping the membership at 198.

Lord Gladwyn suggested one way round the problem might be to keep 198 and add 198 substitutes, but only, he added, in the event of a complete deadlock. 'For heaven's sake,' replied Sir Peter Kirk, 'do not let us complicate the matter now. It is bad enough that the French Government has produced a new scheme at the last moment, but if we are going to try and elaborate on that scheme, God knows where we will all end up. We know, and I think the Council knows, roughly what we want, namely a Parliament of somewhere between 300 and 400 Members with no Member State receiving fewer seats than it has at the moment, but, with one qualification, with the greatest possible degree of proportional representation.'

After Mr Thorn had replied to the debate, a motion was tabled urging the Council to base its final decision on direct elections on Parliament's own proposals and calling for consultations to this end. The motion was agreed to.

(See Postscript – Direct Elections: the options)

Guido Brunner argues it is better to integrate USSR in world economy

Replying to questions about the Community's relations with COMECON and the Soviet Union, Commissioner Guido Brunner argued what is basically the Kissinger case, i.e. that the West has a lot to gain from coming to terms with the East. But he made it quite clear that we should turn Russia's interest in the Community to our advantage.

Mr Hugh Dykes (Br, EC) agreed. Russia had made real capital out of separate deals with each of the Nine. The Community needed to act as one, particularly in dealing with such forms of commercial cheating as undercutting rates on shipping lines. He added that Russia still seems loth to provide proof that it is no longer a threat to Western security.



(l. to r.) Mr Gabriel Kaspereit, Mr Hugh Dykes and Mr Egon Klepsch give a press conference to explain their views on relations with Comecon and the Soviet Union.



Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody: 'Malta is an island unique in the Mediterranean area for its stability, for the progressive ways in which it is seeking to deal with the very real economic problems it has at the present time.'

For the Council, Mr Albert Berchem told the House that Parliament would be kept informed of developments in talks with COMECON.

Among the other speakers, Mr Lucien Radoux (Be) Socialist spokesman, was for pushing détente, Mr Friedrich Burgbacher (Ge), Christian Democrat spokesman, was for détente with realism, and Lord Gladwyn (Br, L) for a quid for every quo, as it were. 'One-sided concessions are not only useless, they are positively dangerous,' he said. Mr Tom Normanton (Br, EC) was, if possible, even more sceptical. Russian trade policy is simply another aspect of its foreign policy. And in its response, particularly by making such costly concessions as cheap interest rates, 'the West is digging its own political grave,' he said.

Euro-Arab dialogue's success depends on secure frontiers

On Wednesday, evening, Parliament agreed to a motion arguing that the success of the Euro-Arab dialogue depends on a solution being found to the political

problems which will permit an effective contribution to peace, allowing all the States of the Middle East – including the State of Israel – to live within secure frontiers recognised by all parties. Parliament hopes that, in the context of the Euro-Arab dialogue, particular attention will be paid to the principle of non-discrimination and that actual or threatened boycott measures will not be tolerated, and called upon the European Community bodies engaged in the Euro-Arab dialogue to ensure that the principles and content of the common commercial policy of the European Communities and the existing ‘formulations’ of a common overall Mediterranean policy are not watered down but, rather, strengthened.

More scope for cooperation with Malta

In Valetta on 5 December 1970, Malta signed an agreement with the Community of the Six to phase out trade barriers as between the two parties. On 25 September 1974, the European Community and Malta began talks on taking this agreement a stage further. The new deal proposed by the Commission includes concessions on farm products, financial aid of 26m u.a. over five years and EC help with industrialisation, marketing and technology. The agreement was signed in Brussels on 4 March 1976.

Parliament, which had been kept informed of progress during the talks, agreed to a motion recording its approval.

AGRICULTURE

Community must be able to run a fish catch quota system

Parliament was asked for its opinion on a Commission proposal to give Community endorsement to fish catch quotas agreed under international conventions. As Mr Mark Hughes (Br, S), rapporteur, pointed out, there was every reason for the House to approve the proposal and he put down a motion to this effect. The proposal has nothing to do with catch quotas as such but only with the legal status of quotas agreed under the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Convention and the International Convention for the North-East Atlantic Fisheries. At the same time, Mr Hughes’s motion made quite clear ‘that a Community system for the administration of fish catch quotas must be implemented in the near future’.

After a brief debate, in which Mr Niels Anker Kofoed (Da, L), Mr Kai Nyborg (Da, EPD), Mr James Scott-Hopkins (Br, EC), Mr John Prescott (Br, S) and Mrs Winifred Ewing (Br, Ind) took part and to which Commissioner Petrus Lardinois replied, the motion was agreed to.

Mr Scott-Hopkins, incidentally, hoped the Commission would get a move on and do some rapid thinking to bring forward a system of administration for fish catch quotas. Mr Prescott made it clear that 'while approving this proposal, we are not accepting the principles it reflects but only agreeing to a temporary solution until the major problem has been dealt with, both in the Law of the Sea Conference and through the renegotiation of the Treaty'. Mrs Ewing, on the other hand, although as concerned as the other speakers to get catch quotas sorted out, was also disturbed by the implications for international law of the Luxembourg Court of Justice ruling on which the proposal was based.

EC aims at New York Law of the Sea Conference

Mr James Gibbons (Ir, EPD) asked the Council if the Nine had a common line for the Law of the Sea Conference, if it thought the twelve mile limit should be rigidly applied in all Member States, how catch quotas would be given out within the two hundred mile limit and if it favoured negotiating the withdrawal of third country fishing fleets from the EC's two hundred mile area. He put the same question to the Commission.

Mr Gibbons's questions were prompted by a Commission memorandum opting for the idea of a 'two hundred mile economic zone'. Mr Albert Berchem, for the Council, said the Nine had still not come to any agreed position and Mr Guido Brunner, for the Commission, was equally cautious, especially in view of the stickiness of the negotiations the EC has to conduct in New York. But both agreed the Community must be of one mind. Mr Brunner added: 'There are three points to consider: what are the fish stocks in what may be the Community waters, how can we keep up fish stock levels and what can be done to increase fish stocks.' A technical committee was working on the answers for the Community.

If the upshot of the Conference is a two hundred mile economic zone, he added, we must strike a balance within the Community. This will mean quotas.

Mr John Prescott (Br, S) agreed with Mr Brunner's basic point: 'The real issue facing all nations is how to conserve the fish upon which our fishing industry

depends.' But he had doubts about the twelve mile economic zone. 'In Britain, the industry requires at least one million tons of fish. That is not available in the twelve mile area. But if the principle is that we are to have an economic zone sufficient to meet that demand of one million tons, then we are faced with a question of negotiation. The question is whether the zone is to be fifty miles, one hundred miles or two hundred miles.'

Mr Prescott added: 'There is sufficient fish in our waters. The Community only takes 4.7 million tons out of a possible total of 6 million. The question is how we renegotiate the fishing areas between the nations within the Community waters.'

Mr James Scott-Hopkins (Br, EC) agreed with Mr Prescott that a twelve mile area would not be enough for Britain which catches and consumes as much fish as the rest of the Community put together. Mr Scott-Hopkins was curious to know what replies Mr Thorn had to a questionnaire sent to the nine governments about fishing policy.

Mr James Spicer (Br, EC) argued on the same lines as Mr Scott-Hopkins and Mr Prescott. 'Whether we have an interest in the deepsea or in the inshore fishing industry, we all accept that the time has come for a radical reappraisal of the fishing policy of the Community. The first step in that appraisal must be taken now, at the Law of the Sea Conference, when we shall all agree, I am quite certain, on the establishment of a two hundred mile exclusive zone for the Community.'

Mrs Winifred Ewing (Br, Ind) agreed with her colleagues. The fishing industry feels absolutely let down by the proposed twelve mile limit. 'I think it may well come to a confrontation.'

Mr Gibbons felt equally strongly about the twelve mile exclusive fishing zone for coastal states which the Irish fishermen had rejected out of hand. 'Their demand for a fifty mile exclusive fishing zone, a demand which I earnestly support, is justified.'

Mr Gibbons argued that 'our fishing industry is one of the few means, in fact, I believe it to be the only means, of creating employment and halting emigration. But to do this, we need a guaranteed supply of raw materials in the form of fish'. Mr Gibbons also stressed the need for strict control over the reckless fishing that is now taking place, particularly by foreign trawlers poaching along the Irish coast.

Soya bean storage premium proposal rejected

One of the key features of the 1976 farm price review was a proposal to help get rid of the surplus of skimmed milk powder by using it in feedingstuffs for animals. 400,000 tons are involved and the period covered is up to 31 October 1976, though the Council may extend it if the milk powder has not been substantially used up by then.

This may hit importers of protein produces such as soya beans, meal, lucerne or clover. So the Commission is proposing a storage premium as an offset. But, in fact, as Mr Lucien Martens (Be, CD) told the House, it will only affect 250,000 tons of protein products, out of a total of some 13 to 14 million tons the Community uses – made up of its own production and its imports – every year. So it is, he argues, pretty pointless. He put down a motion asking the House to reject the proposal. After a brief debate, the motion was agreed to.

Among those speaking, Mr Albert Liogier (Fr, EPD) said it could hardly be claimed that using 400,000 tons of EC skimmed milk in fodders was going to affect exporting countries. Mr James Scott-Hopkins (Br, EC) thought it was absolutely lunatic. Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody (Br, S) said: 'What we are talking about today is a policy of such manifest absurdity that there was total agreement in the Committee on Agriculture to reject the proposal.'

SOCIAL SITUATION

Patrick Hillery: EC had 5.5m jobless and an inflation rate of 12 per cent in 1975

Making his annual report on the social situation to Parliament this week, Dr Patrick Hillery, Vice-President of the Commission, pointed to a jobless total of 5.5 million (to which add workers on short time) and an inflation rate of 12 per cent to 13 per cent as the worst features of the Community's social record in 1975. Against which, he added, there had been improvements such as legislation to make the 40-hour week a legal minimum and four weeks holiday with pay general practice. He described how both the Community and the Member States had acted to cope with the social crisis stressing how, but for the Community, it could have been even worse. He looked to the June tripartite conference between unions, management, the nine governments and EC institutions to focus on getting employment up again while maintaining stability. 'In concluding,' he said, 'may I call again for a full-hearted commitment to what I call the slow

Patrick Hillery: 'May I call again for a full-hearted commitment to what I call the slow miracle ... a healing process which will emerge from the complex of effort and shared responsibility in which we are engaged.'



miracle. This is a healing process which I believe will emerge from that complex of effort and shared responsibility in which we are already engaged and in which the Commission has greatly appreciated the support of this Parliament. Every debate helps us to move from the widening consensus to deepening commitment. I believe that within the current consensus attention is now focusing as much on the need for actual job creation as on a return to growth. This is an important development in which I would like to see the Community acting as a catalyst.'

Complaint about Council's refusal to release EC social budget text

As Mrs Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Br, EC) said: 'It seems to me little short of astounding that this afternoon we should be solemnly debating the guidelines for the second European Social Budget when we have not yet had the good fortune to receive the first European Social Budget.'

'Now as long ago as 1970, the Council of Ministers did agree that a Social Budget should be compiled for the Community. And they did so, Mr President, for reasons that were just as valid then as they are today, namely, that accurate comparative statistics are absolutely indispensable if we are to formulate policies for improving the social security systems of the Community. Without such data, we are groping in the dark, we are founding our city on sand. We do not know how much is paid to different classes of claimants or under what conditions. We do not know the effect of the varying tax systems on the actual benefit which people take home with them, nor how this compares with the take-home pay of people in full health and employment. We do not know, nor can we even guess, which systems deal best with problems which are common to the whole Community.'

The reason the first social budget (or comparative analysis of the Nine social systems) was never released is believed to be because it was rather unflattering to the Member State that came bottom of the league. Now a new formula has been worked out to give a less unflattering photo. Mr Kristian Albertsen (Da, S), rapporteur for the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education, put down a motion asking to see the (revised!) first text and endorsing the Commission's proposal to get an overall picture of past and future trends in social expenditure and how it is financed in the Member States. The motion was agreed to.

As Mrs Kellett-Bowman, quoting Churchill, said: 'Give us the tools and we will finish the job. Give us the tools of proper information and data and we will begin the job of providing a better life for all our citizens.'

No room for wishful thinking about unemployment

Dr Hillery told Parliament, in reply to a question from Mr Kai Nyborg (Da, EPD), that the jobless total had fallen by 400,000 in the first three months of 1976. But the economic upturn will take time before it has any real impact on unemployment, he said. There is the slack of short-time labour to be used up first. The 1976 December figure is still likely to be 4.5 million.

Dr Hillery summed up his views as follows:

'Whatever our pet theories or favourite scheme, particularly at a time when recession seems to be bottoming out, I feel that a sound basis on which to sum

up is to repeat the warning I gave to this House against wishful thinking in the deepening gloom last October. If I may quote, Mr President, from the sitting of 14 October: 'The Commission does not intend to fall prey to such wishful thinking in any policy area. The pain and hardship of the unemployed must strengthen the determination of everybody with a contribution to make at whatever level and everybody with a responsibility to fulfil, to take up a position on these employment issues. It is not easy to arrange and the adjustment period could be long and difficult. Whatever our differences along the way, we should make it clear that Parliament, Council, Commission, national governments and social partners are all on the same side. Such a united front is not an option – it is an obligation. Consultation and participation are not empty slogans. They are essential instruments, sharing what we have now so that we may be ready for the future. This has now become the key to what the Commission envisages as an alliance for full employment and stability. That alliance has to be made a reality by political commitment. For that the Community must look forward to the tripartite Conference.'

Among the speakers in the debate, Mr Thomas Nolan (Ir, EPD) welcomed what the Community was doing on unemployment and added that thought could usefully be given to a retirement at sixty option. Ultimately though, he thought, responsibility for the social sector rested with national governments. Mr Tom Normanton said: 'It is the harmonisation of standards, of training, of qualifications, of expertise, scientific and technological, which I believe in the long run will provide the biggest single impetus and make the biggest single contribution to the long-term solution of this scourge of mankind (unemployment) and of the peoples of Europe in particular.'

ENERGY

Oil from coal not an economic proposition

Mr Friedrich Burgbacher (Ge, CD), rapporteur for the Committee on Energy and Research, told the House of a study carried out by Professor Pichler of Karlsruhe on the production of liquid fuels from coal. This shows that when the price ratio of coal to liquid fuels was around 1:12, it was an economic proposition, but now that the price ratio of hard coal: petroleum petrol in Germany is about 1:1, it is not. Mr Burgbacher added, however, that a measure of scepticism was called for here. Mr Tom Ellis (Br, S) agreed with him. With energy demand rising and oil stocks falling, the relative attractions of different fuels could change. Short-term



Friedrich Burgbacher: 'People do not realise the uses coal can be put to.'

market responses in the energy field must be reconciled with long-term demands, he stressed.

EDUCATION

Call for an EC policy on education

'If we are ever to get the idea of the European Community firmly rooted in the minds and hearts of our people, we really must begin in our schools. Learning about the Community should become as natural as learning about geography or maths. But at present very little attention is being paid to this vital aspect, and very little help and advice is being given to our schools and teachers.'

Mrs Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Br, EC) was speaking to a question from Mr Michael Yeats (Ir, EPD) seeking clarification about the Council's plan to draw up an action programme on education.

In reply, Mr Albert Berchem, President of the Council, said it would be giving priority to better facilities for educating nationals from other Member States, dovetailing the nine educational systems, collating educational statistics, promoting cooperation in higher education, pushing the teaching of foreign languages and trying to ensure equality of opportunity at every educational level.

Mr Yeats welcomed the action programme but with some degree of restraint. 'It is really more in the nature of a study programme. There is very little action and a good deal of study.'

OTHER BUSINESS

French franc leaves the EC snake

Several Socialist Members asked the Commission what it thought of France's withdrawal from the EC currency snake. Mr Willem Haferkamp, Vice-President of the Commission, replied that a greater measure of agreement was needed on interlocking our nine economies.

EC transit traffic through Austria and Switzerland

Mr Pierre Giraud (Fr, S), rapporteur for the Committee on Regional Policy, Regional Planning and Transport, put down a motion calling for much more comprehensive arrangements between the Community and Austria and Switzerland, particularly regarding the routing of motorways, smoothing out hold-ups in transalpine rail traffic and avoiding border delays between Austria and Italy. The motion called on the EC to join Austria in preparing measures to be adopted when the Rhine-Main-Danube canal is opened in a few years' time. The motion was agreed to.

Tighter control over expenditure of EC job training centre

Mr Erwin Lange (Ge, S) put down a motion calling substantially for tighter control over the budget of the European Centre for the development of vocational training and to the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions. This was agreed to.

Protecting people's privacy

Leaders of five of Parliament's political groups (Socialists, Christian Democrats, Liberals, European Progressive Democrats and Communists) put down a motion calling on the Commission to ensure that the collecting of data as a basis for EC legislation is brought to a conclusion under its authority. The motion called on the Legal Affairs Committee to report on EC activities designed to safeguard the rights of the individual in the face of technical progress in automatic data processing. Sir Derek Walker Smith (Br, EC) informed the House that the European Conservative Group also welcomed the motion, as did Mr Guido Brunner for the Commission. It was agreed to.

Protecting the environment

Several Christian Democrat Members expressed concern about possible delays in carrying through the programme for protecting the environment agreed on 22 November 1973. Replying for the Council, Mr Albert Berchem said the measures planned would be taken within the time limits stated.

Mr Thomas Ellis (Br, S) added: 'It would not be fair to say that no progress has been made or even that only slow progress has been made in implementing the action programme. One set of lead standards has already been adopted, it appears that a modus vivendi has been reached on the bathing-water and the wood-pulp pollution directives. Already there are regulations in force on the lead content in food. Proposals on paints and ceramics are nearly ready to go to the Council, and other draft instruments on toys and on enamel are being developed.

'In addition to the adoption of legislation, the Community has begun and expanded a programme of environmental research in the fields of both direct and indirect action. As for the urban environment, other proposals are coming forward, as we have heard, on reducing sulphurous emissions from fuel oils and on sulphur-dioxide levels in urban atmospheres. Finally, the Articles of Association for the European Foundation on Living and Working Conditions have been agreed, and I understand this is to be set up in Dublin this year. In passing, it would be interesting to hear how far precisely the project has got off the ground and whether the ultimate responsibility rests with the Council or the Commission.

'Progress, then, has been achieved. I suppose one can say that, in general, the Council has been most effective in dealing with toxic rather than merely undesirable hazards.'

Having said which, Mr Ellis suggested it might be worthwhile re-thinking what matters must properly come within the scope of the Community in achieving its objectives.

Parliament's accounts for 1975

Mr Erwin Lange (Ge, S), chairman of the Committee on Budgets, put down a motion recording the state of Parliament's draft annual accounts for 1975. This was agreed to. Parliament's expenditure in 1975 was 39,688,435.78 units of account.

Coal and Steel Community audit for 1974

Mr Erwin Lange (Ge, S) put down a sixteen-point motion on the report of the European Coal and Steel Community for 1974. This was agreed to.

Sugar for UNRWA

A motion put down by Miss Colette Flesch (Lu, L) approving a Commission proposal to deliver 6,153 tons of sugar to UNRWA in each of the years 1975-76, 1976-77 and 1977-78, pursuant to the convention with that agency, was agreed to without debate.

International fund for agricultural development

Miss Colette Flesch (Lu, L) tabled a motion strongly criticising the Council for failing to contribute to the international fund for agricultural development and urging it to do so not later than next month. The motion was agreed to.

Skimmed milk powder for developing countries

Sir Geoffrey de Freitas (Br, S) put down a motion approving a Commission proposal to make 55,000 tons of skimmed milk powder available as part of the 1976 food aid programme. His motion added that the amount ought to be 200,000 tons. Commissioner Claude Cheysson told the House that requests for

food aid in the form of milk powder amounting to 200,000 tons had come in from twenty-nine countries and five international organisations. The Council had, in fact, agreed to this figure but appeared to be wobbling. Hence the need for pressure. Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, Lord St. Oswald and Mr Willie Hamilton also drew attention to the need for care in the distribution and handling of skimmed milk powder. The motion was agreed to.

EC staff regulations

Miss Colette Flesch put down a motion approving a Commission regulation affecting EC staff but adding a clause covering research staff to the effect that the special rules applicable to them shall be applicable to them only. The new regulations, incidentally, irons out salary discrepancies. The motion was agreed to.

Wines from Cyprus

Mr Jan de Koning (Du, CD) put down a motion approving a Commission proposal to open a tariff quota of 250,000 hectolitres of wines from Cyprus. It was agreed to. 196,300 hl. will go to the United Kingdom, with duty cuts of 52 per cent to 60 per cent.

Trade with Faroes

Mr Manfred Schmidt (Ge, S) put down a motion approving a Commission proposal on customs rules for products imported from the Faroes. It was agreed to.

QUESTION TIME

Mum on terrorists

With determined caginess, Mr Gaston Thorn scotched a discussion on Community action against terrorists, while nevertheless hinting that great things were going on behind the scenes. He was replying to a question from Mr Michael Yeats (Ir, EPD) who wanted to know when the meeting of Interior Ministers

promised at the Rome Summit would take place. Neither the date nor the agenda had been fixed, said Mr Thorn, but he could say that 'there had been talks'; and even, off the record, that 'there had been progress'. But the affair, he added, did not lend itself, at this point, to public debate. 'I will go as far as to say that it would be definitely preferable if the terrorists themselves knew the effects of our common action before your Parliament.'

Redundant diplomats?

Why is it, asked Mr Alexander Fletcher (Br, EC), that in these Community days the nine Member States still have seventy-two ambassadors and nearly six hundred other senior diplomats appointed to each others' capitals, to say nothing of the two hundred and thirty similar appointments in Brussels? Were they not duplicating work now handled by the Community's institutions? Oh, no, replied Mr Thorn, the embassies now had to employ additional economists, precisely because economic links were now stronger. This logic did not impress Lord Gladwyn (Br, L). Surely 'the greater coordination there is in economic affairs, the less work for individual embassies'? And Mr Ludwig Fellermaier (Ge, S) wanted to know, as well, why the nine Member States could not set up a single embassy between them in such new countries as Angola and Guinea-Bissau. But if you did that, replied Mr Thorn, those countries would feel cheated: they wanted just as many embassies as their next door neighbours.

Mahomet and the mountain

The speculation about the future seat of the European Parliament grows even more intense. Mr Willie Hamilton (Br, S), chairman of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Petitions, had tabled a resolution advocating that in 1977 Parliament should abandon Strasbourg altogether, with the exception of its 'constituent sitting' (i.e. annual general meeting) in March, and hold the remainder in Luxembourg, except, 'as an earnest of its future intentions', for one sitting in Brussels. At Question Time on Wednesday, however, Mr Tam Dalyell (Br, S) hinted at a different possibility. Who owned the Berlaymont building in Brussels (the Commission's headquarters), how much rent did the Commission pay, and what notice did it have to give? The annual rent to the Belgian Government, replied Commissioner Borschette, was 252,200,524 Belgian francs (about 3,360,000 pounds), and the Commission could leave the Berlaymont at a year's notice 'and start the migration'.

Bribery in high places

The recent revelations in the United States about bribery by certain multinational companies is causing upheaval and controversy in several countries, and also within the European Parliament. It was Mr John Prescott (Br, S) who put the cat among the pigeons, asking Commissioner Scarascia Mugnozza about payments to the German Christian Democrats by Lockheeds, and possible consequent contraventions of the Community's Competition laws. It was deplorable, replied the Commissioner, to accuse any one party because 'all parties are probably involved in situations of this kind'. There were immediate protests, and Mr Fazio Fabbrini (It, CA) was quick to assert that the Italian Communists, at least, were not involved in such scandals. The House became even more lively, however, when the Commissioner again deplored the attack 'on my party'. President Spénale, from the chair, intervened to tell the Commissioner that 'in the position you occupy, like me, you do not have a party'. Mr Scarascia Mugnozza refused to withdraw. 'I am independent of Member States,' he declared, 'but there is no question of my renouncing my political beliefs.' It was Lord Gladwyn (Br, L) who eventually pointed out that, unless the Council of Ministers rapidly agreed on a common Community policy for the aircraft industry, the European market would be taken over by the Americans 'whether they indulge in bribery or not'.

Action taken on Parliament's advice

Mr Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza, Vice-President of the Commission, said that the Commission had amended two of its proposals further to motions agreed to in the House in March. The first concerned the setting up of an institute for economic analysis and research (rapporteur: Sir Brandon Rhys Williams) where all Parliament's amendments had been accepted. The Commission had also accepted Parliament's amendments to its mayonnaise proposals (rapporteur: Mr James Spicer).

Notes

Welcome to a Swiss delegation

President Spénale welcomed, on behalf of Parliament, Mr Etter, President of the National Council, Mr Wenk, President of the Federal Council, Mr Kohler, former President of the National Council and Mr Pfister, Secretary-General of the Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation, who had taken their seats in the official gallery.

Appointment of a member of the European Parliament

President Spénale announced that the National Assembly of the French Republic had appointed Mr André Guerlain member of the European Parliament to replace Mr Francis Leenhardt who had resigned.

The President welcomed Mr Guerlain on behalf of Parliament.

Presentation of petitions

President Spénale announced that he had received from Mr John Campbell a petition on a uniform procedure in all Member States for the elections by direct universal suffrage of the European Parliament. President Spénale announced that he had also received from Mr Bartels and others a petition on a migratory birds clause.

Telegram to the Spanish authorities

President Spénale sent the following telegram to the Spanish authorities: 'Further to the arrest of Marcelino Camacho and Antonio Garcia-Trevijano, I would ask you to convey to your government my very deep concern and that of the European Parliament at a time when we have been looking forward to a liberal trend in the political situation in Spain, with the hope, in the longer term, of seeing a rapprochement between your country and the European Community. We shall welcome with feelings of great relief any measure taken to quieten our concern.'

Summing up

At its sittings of 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 April 1976, Members of the European Parliament put down 5 questions for debate with the Council and 5 questions for debate with the Commission. At Question Time, 1 question was addressed to the Conference of Foreign Ministers, 8 questions were addressed to the Council and 12 questions were addressed to the Commission. 14 reports were considered and Parliament considered 20 opinions. The House sat for 4hrs.5mins. on Monday, 5hrs.40mins. on Tuesday, 7hrs.10mins. on Wednesday, 6hrs. on Thursday and 1hr.35mins on Friday, making a total of 24hrs.30mins.

REFERENCES

Subject	Eurl. Parl. Doc. No.	Comm. Doc. No.	Date of Debate
Promotion of coal liquefaction	407/75	—	5/4
Protocol on the EEC-Malta Association Agreement	8/76 16/76	—	5/4
Regulation on catch quotas in the fisheries sector	28/76	14/76	5/4
Private storage of protein products	35/76	539/75	5/4
Community transit traffic through Austria and Switzerland	500/75	—	6/4
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training	18/76	353/75	6/4
Action to combat unemployment	29/76	—	6/4
European Social Budget	38/76	480/75	6/4
Question Time	39/76	—	7/4
France's withdrawal from the currency snake	33/76	—	7/4
Present state of the Euro-Arab dialogue ...	20/76	—	7/4
Protection of the rights of the individual in connection with data processing	46/76	—	8/4
Relations with COMECON	25/76 24/76	—	8/4
Relations between the EC and the Soviet Union	27/76 22/76	—	8/4
Action programme in the field of education	548/75 491/75	—	8/4

Environment programme of the European Communities	30/76	—	8/4
Conference on the Law of the Sea	31/76	—	8/4
	26/76	—	8/4
Accounts of the European Parliament for 1975	19/76	—	9/4
Report of the ECSC Auditor for 1974	195/75	—	9/4
	550/75	—	9/4
Regulation on the supply of sugar to UNRWA	43/76	42/76	9/4
International Fund for Agricultural Development	50/76	—	9/4
Regulation on the supply of skimmed milk powder	23/76	4/76	9/4
Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities	37/76	391/75	9/4
Tariff quota for certain wines	34/76	499/75	9/4
Regulation on the customs procedure applicable to certain products of the Faroe Islands	36/76	3/76	

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this text to denote nationality and political allegiance: CD Christian Democrat, S Socialist, L Liberal and Allies, EC European Conservative, EPD European Progressive Democrat, CA Communist and Allies, Ind Non-Attached Independent Members, Be Belgian, Br British, Da Danish, Du Dutch, Fr French, Ir Irish, It Italian, Lu Luxembourg, EC European Community.

DIRECT ELECTIONS: THE OPINIONS

Table showing the implications of the various proposals made as to the membership of a future directly elected European Parliament

Country	Population 000	per cent of total	Present Member- ship	per cent of total	Size of Constit- uencies	EP Con- vention	per cent of total	Size of Constit- uencies
Luxembourg	357	138	6	3.0	59,500	6	1.7	59,500
Ireland	3,086	1.196	10	5.0	308,600	13	3.6	237,385
Denmark	5,045	1.956	10	5.0	504,500	17	4.8	296,765
Belgium	9,772	3.790	14	7.1	698,000	23	6.5	424,870
Netherlands	13,545	5.253	14	7.1	975,500	27	7.6	501,667
TOTAL	31,805	12.335	54	27.2		86	25.2	
AVERAGE					588,981			369,825
France	52,507	20.364	36	18.2	1,458,528	65	18.3	807,800
Italy	55,413	21.491	36	18.2	1,539,250	66	18.6	839,591
United Kingdom	56,056	21.741	36	18.2	1,557,111	67	18.9	836,657
Germany	62,054	24.067	36	18.2	1,723,722	71	20.0	874,000
TOTAL	226,030	87.664	144	72.8		269	74.8	
GRAND TOTAL	257,835	100.0	198	100.0		355	100.0	
AVERAGE					1,569,653			840,260
OVERALL AVERAGE					1,302,197			726,296

Country	Irish	per cent of total	Size of Constitu- encies	French	per cent of total	Size of Constitu- encies	Italian	per cent of total	Size of Constitu- encies
Luxembourg	9	2.3	39,667	3	1.0	119,000	6	1.6	59,500
Ireland	18	4.7	171,444	6	2.1	514,333	16	4.4	192,875
Denmark	20	5.2	252,250	8	2.8	630,625	18	5.0	280,277
Belgium	26	6.8	375,846	13	4.6	751,692	22	6.1	444,182
Netherlands	30	7.8	451,500	17	6.0	796,765	26	7.2	520,962
TOTAL	103	26.8		47	16.5		88	24.3	
AVERAGE			308,786			676,702			361,420
France	68	17.7	772,161	55	19.4	954,672	64	17.7	820,422
Italy	69	18.0	803,087	58	20.4	955,397	67	18.6	827,059
United Kingdom	70	18.2	800,780	59	20.8	950,017	68	18.8	824,352
Germany	74	19.3	838,567	65	22.9	954,676	74	20.5	838,568
TOTAL	281	73.2		237	83.5		273	75.6	
GRAND TOTAL	384	100.0		284	100.0		361	100.0	
AVERAGE			804,377			953,713			827,949
OVERALL AVERAGE			671,445			1,087,911			714,224

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