

COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÉENNES

SECRETARIAT GÉNÉRAL

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TEXTE E

COMPTE-RENDU DU COLLOQUE DES SERVICES DE LA COMMISSION AVEC
DES REPRÉSENTANTS D'ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES (ONG)
SPÉCIALISÉES DANS LA COOPÉRATION AU DÉVELOPPEMENT

(Bruxelles, du 7 au 9 janvier 1976)

(Note établie par la Direction générale du Développement et diffusée,
pour information à la demande de M. CHEYSSON)

destinataires : MM. les Membres de la Commission
MM. les Directeurs généraux

26 January 1976.

RECORD OF THE SEMINAR BETWEEN COMMISSION STAFF AND
REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
(NGOs) SPECIALIZING IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
(Brussels, 7 - 9 January 1976)

I. INTRODUCTION

A second seminar was held in Brussels on 7 - 9 January 1976 between Commission staff and some forty representatives of NGOs, invited individually on the basis of their experience and the representative nature of their organization. The seminar, which was also attended by UN and UNDP representatives and other observers, was organized by the Directorates-General for Development (VIII) and Information (X), with the participation of the Directorates-General for External Relations (I), Agriculture (VI) and Budgets (XIX).

This seminar follows on from the one held in June 1975 which had improved both sides' knowledge of each other's development activities and had offered prospects for collaboration.

This second seminar which brought together most of the NGO representatives who had attended the first one, produced very positive results as regards the various topics discussed¹.

¹ See list of participants in Annex I.

II. PROCEEDINGS

1. Coordination between NGOs

The NGO representatives took advantage of the seminar to improve their contacts with one another. While respecting the particular features of their respective organizations the representatives made progress as regards internal coordination at both national and Community level.

They set up a Liaison Committee to facilitate contacts among themselves and with the Commission. The Committee is made up of highly experienced representatives from a number of Member States and from NGO groups of various kinds :

Chairman	:	Mr. T. KERSTIENS	Netherlands
Emergency aid	:	Mr. H. L. KIRKLEY	United Kingdom
Food aid	:	Mr. V. MOLLERUP	Denmark
Education of public opinion	:	Mr. P. BURNS	United Kingdom
(enlarged to include	:	Mr. P. FARINE	Ireland
		Mr. McKEOWN	Ireland
		Mr. SCHIØLER	Denmark
	and	Mr. VAN DEN BRINK	Netherlands

for work relating to the future seminar on education of public opinion)

Co-financing	:	Mr. A. VAN ISTENDAEL	Belgium
		Mr. U. KOCH	Germany
Voluntary assistance	:	Mr. R. KENNEDY	Ireland
Secretariat	:	Mr. E. QUERIN	Belgium

The Liaison Committee intends to hold its first meeting in Brussels in March 1976.

2. Co-financing

As a result of the June 1975 seminar, the Commission had proposed that an appropriation be entered in the 1976 Community budget enabling the Commission to provide aid for cooperation schemes in developing countries carried out by NGOs.

The proposal was accepted and for the first year the volume of the appropriation, obtained thanks to the support of the European Parliament, was fixed at 2 500 000 u.a. This second seminar was therefore of special importance and one of the things discussed with the NGO representatives were the terms of co-financing. A very wide consensus was reached on preliminary draft 'General Conditions of co-financing' prepared by the Commission; the NGO representatives proposed several written amendments for the consideration of the Commission, which will examine them and incorporate them in the text if they prove compatible with Community rules.

The NGO representatives expressed their satisfaction at the earmarking of the budget appropriation in question. As soon as the final text of the 'General Conditions' to be adopted by the Commission became known, a number of NGOs would be able to present to the Commission projects suitable for co-financing.

It was understood that the Commission and the NGO representatives would give due publicity to this text through their respective channels and, in particular, bring it to the knowledge of interested NGOs which were not represented at the seminar.

3. Educating public opinion in development matters

The NGO representatives pointed out that they attached as much importance to this issue as to the co-financing of development projects since these were parallel activities. They adopted among themselves a resolution to this effect which they presented to the Commission (see Annex II). The main aims of the NGOs in this field were as follows :

- (i) participation by the NGOs in the process whereby the Community arrives at its views and decisions regarding development policy. To this effect they wanted virtually continuous contacts with the Commission, access to Commission documents - other than mere information - before decisions were taken and a dialogue with Commission through regular meetings.
- (ii) extension of this education to cover all matters relating to development and to the relations between developing and industrialized countries under the new economic order. The participation of the NGOs implied access to working papers and contacts with the various Commission Directorates concerned, and also with political, business and social circles in the Community, including in particular trade unions, firms, etc. Against this background the education of public opinion in the Member States should acquire a European dimension.
- (iii) Co-financing with the Commission of educational projects which were more comprehensive in scope than was currently the case in their collaboration with DG X. The Community's budget for 1977 should reflect this aspect by extending the scope for co-financing education schemes and increasing the budget appropriations earmarked for that purpose.

In order to consolidate these aims, the NGO representatives emphasized the following needs :

- (i) for the immediate future, they should be kept informed of and involved in the preparatory work for UNCTAD IV; to this end regular contact and briefings should be organised for them by the Commission; the main documents relating thereto should be put at their disposal and the question of their participation should be considered, together with that of the presence on the spot of specialised journalists;
- (ii) a special seminar should be held on the education of the public opinion in development matters; it could be held in Brussels next June, and its main theme would be : 'Towards a fairer and more balanced economic order : implications for Europe'.

The Commission indicated that it would consider the NGOs approach to these matters in more detail in the coming months, making a distinction between proposals involving additional budgetary funds and those which could be achieved in the shorter term.

4. Sale at a reduced price of skimmed-milk powder in public storage for delivery to developing countries.

At earlier meetings the NGOs had asked the Commission to facilitate the sale of the above product at a reduced price.

They noted with great interest Regulation (No. 3193/75 of 5 December 1975) adopted by the Commission on this matter (OJ L 316 of 6 December 1975).

The Regulation exempts the NGOs concerned, for quantities of less than 90 t, from the need to furnish security and to certify that the Government of the recipient developing country will not re-export the product.

5. Food aid

The NGOs adopted among themselves a resolution expressing their deep regret that the Council had not accepted the Commission's proposals to increase Community food aid in 1976 (see Annex III).

They stressed just how important this form of aid was and suggested that the Community programme should include other products too, such as fish.

In response to certain apprehensions expressed by the NGO representatives, the Commission gave details of the Community's food aid policy: it aimed to satisfy the needs of the developing countries and was not, therefore, bound up with the existence of European farm product surpluses. The Community's annual food aid programme had achieved a continuity in recent years which they had not shown before and quantities could be purchased on the Community market if they were not available in intervention stocks. Moreover, the necessary precautions were taken to ensure that the developing countries' agricultural production was not disrupted and agricultural projects there were financed mainly by the proceeds from the sale by the recipient Governments of the food aid on the local markets.

Lastly the NGO representatives noted that there were sometimes opportunities for cooperating in these Community schemes (e.g. schemes in the context of Community aid granted directly to the recipient countries, emergency action).

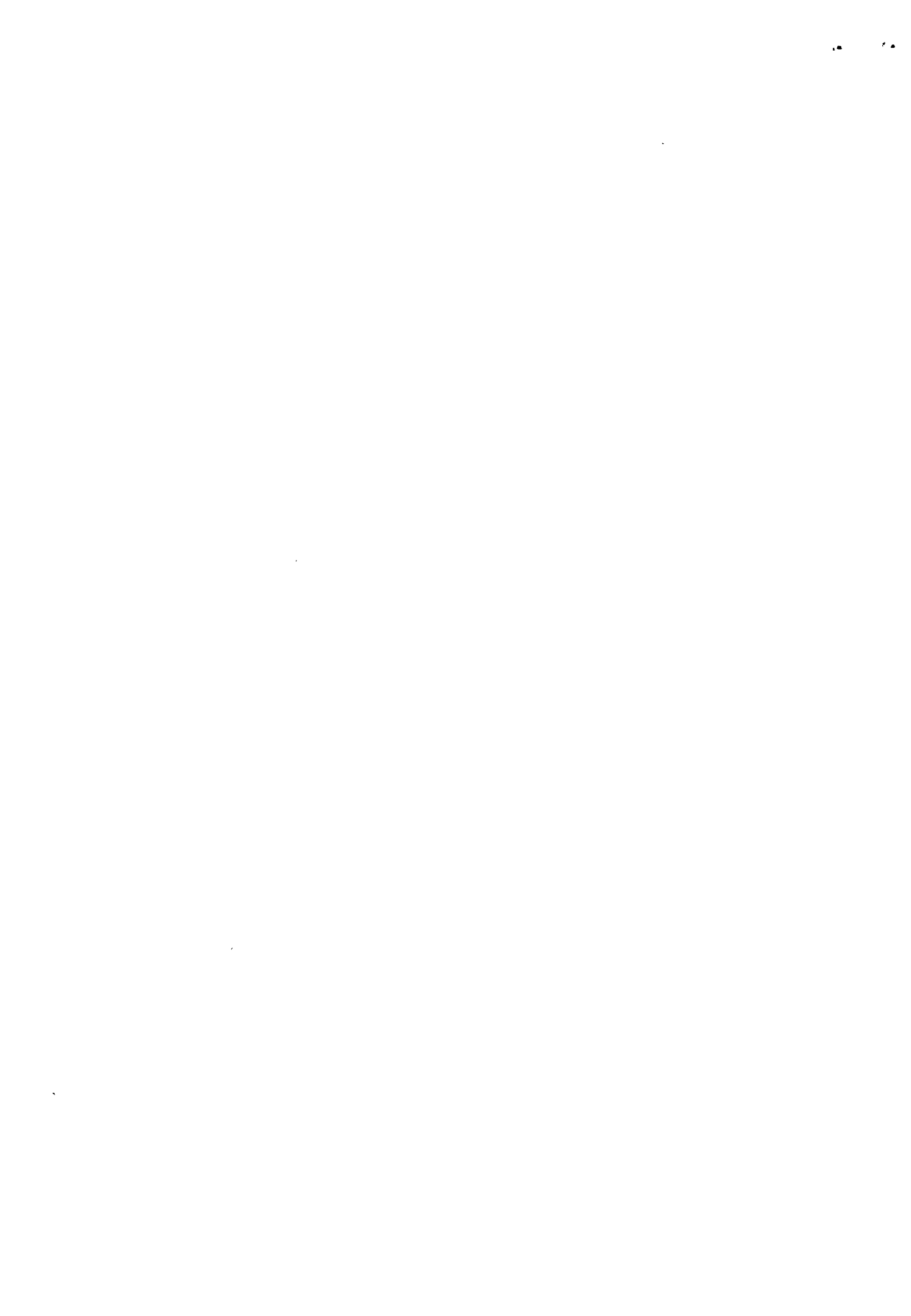
III. CONCLUSION

The second seminar confirmed that the NGOs and the Commission were interested in cooperating on development matters.

Henceforth this cooperation would be set on a practical basis in the areas referred to above. As regards cofinancing in particular, the NGOs concerned would be able to put forward development projects for the developing countries as soon as they were apprised of the 'General conditions of cofinancing', which the Commission would adopt without delay.

The Commission would consider the NGO proposals on the education of public opinion - which went much further than the cooperation already established with the Commission's information departments - in the next few months, in particular the proposals for organising a seminar focussing on this question and for earmarking specific funds for cofinancing in the Community budget.

Lastly, the Liaison Committee set up by the NGOs was likely to further improve mutual understanding and to promote contacts among the NGOs themselves and between them and the Commission. The Commission would endeavour to facilitate the Committee's work and to act as a "contact point" as requested by the NGOs.



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Resolution on the education of public opinion in development matters,
adopted by the NGO representatives at the Seminar with Commission
staff held in Brussels from 7 to 9 January 1976

1. That Common Market NGOs consider education and public opinion forming in the EEC to be an integral part of their work on behalf of the Third World. This principle is already recognised by Member States.
2. That the funding of educational and public opinion forming projects, therefore, should be an integral part of the co-financing scheme proposed by the services of the Commission.
3. That, hence, the Community's 1977 budget should reflect this element and permit ONGs to submit educational and public opinion forming projects for financial assistance.
4. To that end budget proposals for 1977 should be increased accordingly, whether from the co-financing proposals or from other Directorates General.
5. Meanwhile NGOs will submit to the Commission sample, costed current educational and public opinion forming projects to guide the Commission in drawing up their budget proposals.

Resolution on food aid adopted by the NGO representatives
at the Seminar with Commission staff held in Brussels
from 7 to 9 January 1976

1. NGOs wish to register as strongly as possible their indignation that the EEC food surpluses have not all been used to save the lives of fellow human beings in the Third World who, through no fault of their own have been, and are, short of food, or without food.

 2. NGOs call upon the Council of the EEC therefore to urgently find effective ways of transferring EEC food resources to where they are needed in the Third World and NGOs undertake to play their full rôle in effecting those transfers.
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