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160th PLENARY SESSION

The 160th Plenary Session of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities was held in Brussels on 20 and 21 June 1978 with the Committee's Chairman Mr Basil de FERRANTI, presiding.

The highlight of the Session was the attendance of the Commission's President Mr Roy JENKINS, for the discussions on the economic situation and the development of the social situation in 1977. In his speech Mr JENKINS said that :

In the generally rather pessimistic atmosphere created by our present economic difficulties in the Community, it is reassuring to see that the representatives of the various economic and social interests at work in the Community far from sinking into sullen apathy, are making their contribution to the search for means of getting out of the crisis.

The Commission has always kept you fully informed of its ideas its hopes and its plans. I place great emphasis myself on the need to consult your Committee on the various economic and monetary proposals that the Commission has put forward in recent months.

When I relaunched the debate on economic and monetary union in Florence last year I was optimistic but not excessively so. I did not expect to be able to see substantial progress only eight months later. It is still not time for taking stock fully in this area. All we

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can do is take note of a few important facts, and draw a few conclusions from what has happened in the meantime while seeing that there is no weakening of the impulse we have given.

But there are two facts which condition my analysis of what has happened in the meantime

- first, the monetary integration of Europe is being discussed again; it has now a central place in the debate;
- secondly, it is implicitly agreed that the economic policies that will have to be applied if our economies are to get moving must be discussed jointly in a Community context, there is no national answer in these fields.

The Commission has I believe led the way in these two developments.

I believe we can reasonably claim to have caught a moment at which debate on the one hand and events on the other can if the political will is there as the economic need is be brought together to achieve a significant breakthrough.

As you know the Commission has put forward a plan for the stage-by-stage attainment of economic and monetary union and your Committee has given a detailed opinion on it.

But a political design of this nature not only requires a method and a frame of reference - provided in this case by our paper on Economic and Monetary Union - but must also be geared to seize hold of the powerful underlying trends towards change.

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Mr Roy JENKINS (right). President of the Commission of the European Communities. and Mr Basil de FERRANTI (left) Chairman of the Economic and Social Committee. at the June Plenary Session.

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At Copenhagen the Heads of Government gave a new impetus to the idea of working towards a European currency stabilization area.

The revival of the idea of a European currency area is only just beginning. But the various circles concerned have already been working on various hypotheses most of them centred around three points - reinforcing monetary cohesion around the existing snake mechanisms setting monetary objectives to be observed by non-snake countries which for economic reasons cannot join the snake in the immediate future and the gradual introduction of the EUA as a means of payment between operators, notably between central banks, which could provide an opportunity for further development in the role and intervention powers of the European Monetary Co-operation Fund.

But our efforts will be vain if we do not at the same time get down to work on the fundamental changes that must be made in our economies. The Commission agrees with the view so often expressed by your Committee that we are living at a time when substantial changes are going to have to be made both in our productive structures and in our patterns of consumption particularly where energy and raw materials are concerned.

But the problem of energy and the need to adjust our patterns of consumption is but one indication among others that the industrialized world in general and Europe in particular will never be the same again that systems of production themselves must adapt to the changing dimension of the international division of

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labour. The Commission must draw the economic and political conclusions from an analysis which is now gaining widespread acceptance. If we are to enter a new period of growth itself a source of social equilibrium and progress we must begin by developing our creative resources. To meet the new requirements of our citizens while at the same time placing our future development on a healthy footing we must devote adequate resources to developing manufacturing or service industries with a high growth potential. Here again the Commission would like your Committee's support for an analytical survey which it has just completed as a basis for future Council work; then with your help there will be hope for a way out of our present difficulties'.

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Opinions adopted

1. PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Present Economic Situation in the Community

Background to the Committee's Opinion

The Committee has for some time given a second or mid-year Report and Opinion to the Council on the Economic Situation in the Community some six months after its regular Opinion on the Commission's Annual Report.

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The Report and Opinion are timed to precede by a few weeks the Commission's proposals on Member States' public budgets for the following year.

In preparing the Opinion the Committee has before it the Commission's Communication to the Council on the adjustment of the economic policy guidelines for 1978 - the substance of the October Annual report.

It has decided this time as an innovation and on a trial basis to include in the Opinion and Report the findings of a study of the economic situation in one particular Member State - in this first instance, Denmark. This was due to the increasing awareness in the Committee that Community-level economic strategy and short-term guidelines cannot be formulated without taking into account the economic and social issues facing each of the national authorities in the Member States.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion by 47 votes in favour and 28 abstentions.

It quickly concludes that the Commission's autumn 1977 predictions of a 4-4½% increase in the Community's GDP will not be achieved in 1978 and that unemployment will remain at a level that is "economically wasteful and socially demoralizing". There is therefore scope for further action to stimulate demand - and thus create employment - without jeopardizing the achievements of targets for the reduction of inflation.

Possibly with the experience of having looked at the individual economic situation of one particular Member State, Denmark, the Committee states that the nature and degree of expansionary measures to be taken must differ from one Member State to another in view of the differing situations in each country. Expansionary economic policies must be socially oriented too: tax reductions, for instance, must be applied whilst paying due regard to the necessity of achieving a fair balance between the needs of the lower-paid to the need to maintain sufficient incentives for effort and responsibility.

Labour market policy measures are needed since in the short term investment and other expansionary policies will not absorb existing levels of unemployment. The Committee emphasizes the urgency of expanding training schemes - especially in order to improve occupational mobility. Work-sharing measures have an important role to play in alleviating grave unemployment problems. But such measures must be forward-looking.

The Opinion deals too, with the various roles of the Community Institutions in achieving an expansion of activity and employment - effective concertation of policies being a prerequisite for any real progress towards EMU. It lays stress here, on the Community's role in furthering the trade relationships already established with the developing countries through the Lomé Convention, etc.

Summarizing the conclusions of its close-up look at the Danish Economic Situation in the context of a Community economic policy, the Opinion points to the problem of Denmark's balance of payments situation, which is proving to be a powerful constraint on any policies

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envisaged to expand demand and to improve the employment situation - in line with current Community thinking. The Opinion does show, however that membership of the Community can be of direct assistance to a Member State in solving its economic problems. If through closer coordination of economic policies at Community level, Denmark could be assured of a high level of demand in certain other Community countries, it could plan a more expansionist strategy.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Economic and Financial Questions under the chairmanship of Mr MARGOT - Belgium - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr CLARK - UK - Employers.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL SITUATION IN 1977

Development of the Social Situation in the Community in 1977.

Gist of the Commission's proposal

As in previous years the Commission asked the Committee to base its Opinion on the relevant Commission report.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion by a large majority (57 votes in favour, none against and 3 abstentions).

It stresses that social and economic development go hand-in-hand and urges the Commission to draw the logical conclusions with regard to its practice of issuing separate reports on the economic and social situations.

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The Committee emphasizes the following points .

- the need for a Community approach to employment and investment promotion measures
- the need for increasingly closer correlation between employment objectives and financial aid for companies plans for industrial development restructuring and reconversion programmes for agriculture and food production and the growth of the service industries
- the need to revamp, adapt and better coordinate Community social policy instruments to enable them to cope with their new tasks (aims and resources of the European Social Fund, new Social Action Programme etc.);
- the importance of closer consultation between both sides of industry and the Community authorities in hammering out a social and economic strategy which will initiate and sustain inflation-free recovery throughout the Community, promote full and better employment and improve the quality of life;
- the Copenhagen Council's guidelines on job-creation and work-sharing;
- measures to improve the labour market situation Community level coordination, clamp down on illegal labour practices, up-grading manual labour, more suitable training for young people;
- the Commission must make a timely assessment of employment trends in the Nine play its part in mobilizing

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all Community policies towards full and better employment and in coordinating national and Community employment policies:

- The role of the Tripartite Conferences and the Standing Committee on Employment as genuine consultative bodies in which the guidelines for a new social policy can be worked out.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Social Questions under the chairmanship of Mr HOUTHUYS - Belgium - Workers. The Rapporteur was Mr PIGA - Italy - Various Interests.

3. INTERNATIONAL MONETARY DISORDER (own-initiative Opinion)

The Community's approach to the present International Monetary Disorder

Background

During the last quarter of 1977, the international monetary situation worsened. In particular, there were fluctuations in exchange rates and a steep drop in the value of the US dollar. In the longer term, such developments are bound to hit the still-ailing Community economy, and affect its ability to provide jobs. An increase in oil prices may indeed be precipitated.

Such currency instability is extremely detrimental to orderly international trade relations: it has undermined counter-inflation and counter-unemployment measures taken in the Community and elsewhere; and it has encouraged the protectionism which is already affecting international trade and is even threatening to spread to intra-Community trade. Moreover, the sharp fluctuations in exchange rates are robbing GATT negotiations on the removal of customs duties of their purpose.

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The aim of this Opinion is to delve into such questions as to how these difficulties can best be tackled - through internal Community policies or through a fundamental shift in international monetary policy ?

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion by a large majority (73 votes in favour and 3 abstentions).

In order to minimize the harmful effects of the present international monetary disorder and achieve its principal task of reducing the exchange rate fluctuations between Member States' currencies, the Community must increase the resources authority and area of responsibility of the European Monetary Cooperation Fund (EMCF). The Committee believes that the EMCF should act as a kind of IMF at Community level.

The Committee sees the immediate role of the EMCF as acting in defence of Community currency par values by multilateralizing swap agreements and intervening on the European exchange market with currency of SDR credit lines. It believes that the EMCF's activities should be supervised by the Council of Ministers, who would draw up regulations for the EMCF and the national monetary authorities to observe regarding changes in exchange rates, conditions for granting credits, and interest rate policy. The Committee goes so far as to propose that the EMCF would grant credits by a qualified majority in the light of the economic situation in the applicant Member State.

It comes to these conclusions after briefly surveying the world and the Community's present international monetary situation, the effects and dangers if the present situation were to continue and after establishing the aims of a policy for a return to normal.

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The two major difficulties the Committee's Opinion attempts to surmount are the absence of any international monetary authority capable of applying sanctions for undisciplined behaviour and the lack of any monetary reference standard. The proposal is not only that the EMCF be re-enforced, but that within the EEC the alignment and coordination of economic policies become a reality, the decision-making procedures of the Community's institutions (Monetary Committee, Committee of Central Bank Governors, etc.) be sharpened and that the use of the European Unit of Account (EUA) as money of account for intra-Community business transactions be encouraged.

The Community must continue in its endeavours to achieve complete Economic and Monetary Union, despite failures and setbacks. The Committee for its part will continue its work in this field to determine the requirements for the creation of a common currency which can help restore equilibrium to the international monetary system.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Economic and Financial Questions under the chairmanship of Mr MARGOT - Belgium - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr CHARPENTIE - France - Various Interests.

4. PREPACKAGED LIQUIDS

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 75/106/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making-up by volume of certain pre-packaged liquids.

Gist of the Commission's Proposal

The proposal has two purposes :

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- firstly, it aims to standardize the area of application of Directive 75/106/EEC and of Directive 76/211/EEC of 20 January 1976 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making-up by mass or volume of certain prepackaged products (OJ No L 46 of 21 February 1977). These Directives were adopted pursuant to Council Directive 71/316/EEC of 26 July 1971 relating to measuring instruments and methods of metrological control (OJ No L 202 of 5 September 1971);
- secondly, at the Council's request, it aims to give the consumer greater protection by further reducing for a given product the number of packaging sizes that are too close to one another and are likely to confuse the consumer. The criteria adopted are based on a thorough examination of commercial trends in this area.

It also allows for an additional transitional period in order to avoid excessive disruptions in the industries concerned.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion by 18 votes in favour, 12 against and 8 abstentions.

It welcomes the Commission's proposal and is as anxious as the Council and the Commission to see a reduction in the number of definitively allowed volumes listed in Annex III to Directive No. 75/106/EEC. A reduction is particularly welcomed where values are very close to one another.

This reduction will afford the consumer better (if not optimum) protection the reason being that the new rules will make for greater clarity in the choice of volumes of certain liquids and may in addition lead to cost savings.

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The Committee also accepts the Commission's proposal for a transitional period for certain volumes and products since it feels this will facilitate approximation in a number of Member States. However it believes that, once the decision as to the 'definitively allowed' volumes has been made the consumer would be better protected if the other volumes were dropped as soon as possible. The Committee therefore believes that the proposed transitional periods should be the maximum allowed and that they should be shortened if necessary.

It is stressed that the standardization of volumes is essential but will not by itself ensure the transparency of the markets which also pose the question of unit-pricing informative labelling etc.

The Committee is also in favour of total approximation after the proposed transitional period which might be shortened.

Finally, it believes that the question of volumes should be reviewed at regular intervals with the aim of greater rationalization.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Industry, Commerce Crafts and Services under the chairmanship of Mr HEMMER - Luxembourg - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr RAMAEKERS - Belgium - Various Interests.

5. STORES

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the Customs Procedure applicable to the Store of Vessels Aircraft and International Trains.

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Gist of the Commission's Proposal

This proposal regulates the duty-free arrangements for products consumed on board aircraft, vessels and international trains. The objectives are to ensure that Community means of transport enjoy the same conditions of competition as those enjoyed by the means of transport of non-Member countries making the same journeys and to put an end to certain abuses which the Commission feels encourage smuggling. It is the Community budget which suffers from these abuses, since the products in question are mainly agricultural products which are avoiding the levies imposed.

The Commission's proposal would limit the duty free privileges to vessels carrying out international sea transport in-shore fishing vessels and vessels used for life-saving and assistance at sea. Pleasure vessels would be excluded from the privileges.

Similarly the duty-free privileges would apply only to products to be consumed on board aircraft on international flights. Private aircraft would be excluded.

Lastly, the Commission proposes arrangements for the supply of stores for international trains restaurant cars, Pullman cars, sleeping cars and similar cars on fast trains and international express trains. Such arrangements already exist at national level.

The duty-free privileges would apply to catering supplies, fuels lubricants and other oils for technical use and sundry stores.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously.

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In general it approves the Commission's aim to introduce common rules on stores. It is desirable that the international transport operations of the Member States should be able to continue to benefit from the traditional customs concessions and compete with similar transport operations carried out by non-Member States. It is, however, important that the terms of competition among the Member States themselves should be harmonized and this should embrace the fixing of the exempt quantities. Precise rules of application are needed to avoid differences in interpretation of the proposed Regulation.

The Committee would like the Member States to undertake to apply the tax exemptions in accordance with rules identical to those governing the customs exemptions.

It also has a number of specific comments to make on the Commission's text.

This Opinion was prepared by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services under the chairmanship of Mr HEMMER - Luxembourg - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr MARVIER - France - Various Interests.

6. EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND - YOUNG PEOPLE

Proposal for a Council Regulation concerning the creation of a new European Social Fund Aid in Favour of Young People.

Gist of the Commission document

In its policy to fight youth unemployment the Commission has drawn up new proposals for European Social Fund aid to promote the employment of young people. Such aid is to apply to regions where young people are faced with high unemployment rates. The amount of aid is to be increased by 10% where measures are implemented in Greenland, the French overseas Department Ireland.

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Northern Ireland and the Mezzogiorno. The number of young people who should benefit is estimated at around 150,000.

The intervention takes two forms :

- Recruitment premiums are to be given as an incentive to undertakings to increase their labour force. The incentive to recruit may take the form of premiums paid directly to employers, or it may be in the form of a reduction in employers' social security contributions. The premium is usually granted for a limited period of six months for every additional worker recruited.
- Subsidies for programmes involving the recruitment of young people for newly created jobs in the context of activities or services in the public interest is the second form of intervention. This assistance from the European Social fund shall be calculated on the basis of a wage allowance not exceeding the sum of 60 EUA per person per week for a maximum of twelve months.

The aid will be granted under either Article 4 (intervention - young people) or Article 5 of Decision 71/66/EEC (OJ No. L 28 of 4 February 1971, p. 15), as amended by Decision 77/801/EEC (OJ No. L 337 of 27 December 1977 p. 8).

Both types of subsidies cover a broad range of job creation measures.

The Commission hopes that assistance approved under the new aid measures will provide sufficient incentive and at the same time will contribute to a more equitable distribution of the financial burden between promoters and public authorities, who do not all have the same means to develop their programmes.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion by 41 votes in favour with 12 abstentions.

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The Committee has continually urged that the European Social Fund support vocational training programmes for young people out of work and has supported the idea of incentives to recruit young people for newly created jobs. With a number of reservations, it supports the proposal of the Commission for Community aids and underlines the urgency and speed with which these new aids/interventions should be applied. It supports in particular the Commission efforts to help young people in economically and socially deprived regions.

However, the Committee is of the view that the new aid measures in favour of young people can only be short-term measures and can only be a partial solution to the problem of youth unemployment. It is paramount that policies in the area of education, training and employment are coordinated at every level. The Committee feels strongly that actions to be undertaken in the future should be long term in view of the deep-rooted causes of youth unemployment. Short-term measures should be supplemented by the promotion of effective continuing educational and vocational guidance measures as well as provision of continuing education and training opportunities.

It is also of the view that the second set of measures (subsidies for programmes involving recruitment of young people for newly created jobs in the context of activities or services in the public interest) are more positive than the first set in that they represent new job-creating measures. The first set of measures recruitment premiums are, in the opinion of the Committee artificial measures which do not secure a stable job for the young worker.

The Committee also would like to see a reference made within the draft regulation which demonstrates a willingness to seek a balance between male and female participation.

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The Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Social Questions under the chairmanship of Mr HOUTHUYS - Belgium - Workers. The Rapporteur was Mr LAVAL - France - Workers.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Draft Resolution of the Council of the European Communities on a Community Action Programme on Safety and Health at Work

Content of the proposed programme

The Social Action Programme, which was adopted by the Council in its Resolution of 21 January 1974, listed among its priorities the formulation of a programme on safety and health at work.

The programme, which has now been laid before the Council, seeks to improve protection against occupational accidents and disease by stepping up prevention health monitoring and elimination of hazards in the workplace

Its general objectives are as follows :

- greater safety in working methods and organization by applying safety principles,
- greater knowledge for the purposes of identifying and evaluating hazards and perfecting prevention and monitoring techniques;
- encouragement of safety-conscious behaviour by workers

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The programme contains six practical lines of work and research :

- incorporation of safety aspects into the various stages of design, production and operation;
- determination of exposure limits for specific pollutants and harmful substances;
- more extensive monitoring of workers' safety and health;
- accident and disease aetiology and assessment of hazards;
- coordination and promotion of research on occupational safety and health;
- education to develop safety consciousness.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously and endorses the objectives of the Programme and the six multidisciplinary project areas.

The right instruments need to be found to put the ideas of the Programme into effect. These instruments must build on existing knowledge and experience, and provide yardsticks and a flow of information making it possible to take action on declarations of intent (which are sometimes little more than lipservice) and ensure that

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human suffering and tragedy is no longer an accepted part of "labour costs". The general principle underlying such efforts is to make the mechanized work environment and the general environment outside, fit for human beings.

The Committee's Opinion first comments on the general scope and approach of the proposed programme and in particular the new approach to prevention.

Thorough knowledge of the causes of accidents and disease is singled out for treatment among other important aspects of the Programme.

Finally, the Committee comments and makes recommendations on each of the six project areas.

The Opinion was drafted by the Section for Social Questions under the chairmanship of Mr HOUTHUYS - Belgium - Workers. The Rapporteur was Mr EBOLI - Italy - Various Interests.

8. POLLUTION OF GROUND WATER

Proposal for a Council Directive on the Protection of Groundwater against Pollution Caused by Certain Dangerous Substances

Content of the draft Directive

The Directive, part of the Community's Environment Programme, limits direct or indirect discharges of particular substances listed in the Appendix into groundwater.

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Discharges of domestic effluent from isolated dwellings, effluents from normal farming activities, and effluents from the titanium dioxide industry or containing radioactive substances are exempt because they either come under special rules, or in the Commission's opinion do not, as in the case of domestic effluents, represent a major pollution risk.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously.

It approves the Directive, but recommends that some of the definitions, particularly in Article 1 be improved so that a uniform terminology is used.

It considers that some of the substances in List II (especially selenium and cyanide) are more dangerous than many of those in List I, and that therefore they should be transferred to List I.

The Committee also considers that it would be more realistic to specify concentration limits in both lists of substances, for there would seem to be little point in banning discharges of substances at concentrations lower than their natural concentrations in water.

It accepts from the exemptions for discharges of domestic effluents isolated dwellings and effluents from normal farming activities, provided it is spelt out that they must not pose any risk for the quality of groundwater.

The Opinion was drafted by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs under the chairmanship of Mr ROSEINGRAVE - Ireland - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr van CAMPEN - Netherlands - Employers.

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9. POLLUTION CONTROL COST EVALUATION

Draft Council Recommendation to the Member States regarding Methods of Evaluating the Cost of Pollution Control to Industry

Gist of the Draft Recommendation

The Commission is proposing, as part and parcel of the Environmental Action Programme, that methods for evaluating the cost of pollution control in industry should be defined.

The performance of cost evaluation studies should be based on a common methodology so that the results obtained can be compared to a certain degree.

Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously and is gratified to see that the Commission is seeking to achieve greater comparability of the cost of pollution control to industry in the various Member States.

A better understanding in this area could also facilitate harmonization of legislation. Costs are, however, merely one aspect of the entire environmental problem. Anti-pollution measures also entail advantages insofar as they improve the environment. Although such advantages are frequently impossible to quantify in cash terms, they are of considerable importance and constitute the ultimate objective of environmental policy. In addition, measures taken by industry to protect the environment often save money.

While acknowledging the importance of the data which may be provided, the Committee notes that the effectiveness of the Recommendation depends on the collaboration of the Member States. The discretionary nature

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of a response might be more positively influenced by prescribing a time schedule and an order of priorities of sectors to be surveyed in accordance with the Recommendation.

The Committee is concerned with the competitive position of industrial production in the Community. This can be adversely affected by decisions to impose further cost burdens on selected industrial sectors and by rigid application of local pollution control regulations. It therefore trusts that the Community will persevere in its efforts to achieve a higher degree of international co-operation in pollution control.

The Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs under the chairmanship of Mr ROSEINGRAVE - Ireland - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr van CAMPEN - Netherlands - Employers.

10. NOISE EMITTED BY COMPRESSORS

Proposal for a Council Directive on the Limitation of the Noise Emitted by Compressors.

Gist of the Commission Proposal

The proposed Directive is part of the process of implementing the outline Directive on construction plant and equipment forwarded by the Commission to the Council on 20 Decemebr 1974 and is a supplement to the Directive submitted by the Commission in 1975 aimed at limiting the noise level of pneumatic drills.

The purpose of the proposed Directive is to reduce the noise emitted by compressors and allow these tools to circulate freely. It classifies compressors in four categories according to their air flow. These categories are based on both the service characteristics and on the methods of noise suppression for compressors but account is also take of the cost considerations for each of the classes.

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Gist of the Opinion

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously and welcomes the Commission's proposal. The proposed reduction of compressors' noise levels in two stages is considered by the Committee to be acceptable, for it will allow manufacturers enough time to make the necessary technical adjustments.

Since the reduction of compressors' noise levels has a direct bearing on working conditions and the improvement of the environment, the Committee agrees with the Commission that there should be "total harmonization".

In its specific comments, it considers that the classes and the sound power levels selected by the Commission represent a compromise between economic and environmental protection requirements. But it would like the date on which the definitive limits enter into force to be extended. This date could be at least five years after the date of the Directive's adoption so that allowance could be made for the results of the Directive's first few years in force.

This Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services under the chairmanship of Mr HEMMER - Luxembourg - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr MARVIER - France - Various Interests.

11. MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN TAXATION

Proposal for a Council Directive amending the Directive 77/799/EEC concerning Mutual Assistance by the Competent Authorities of the Member States in the field of Direct Taxation.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously.

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It welcomes the fact that the Commission is now proposing that the provisions of its earlier directive on mutual assistance by the tax authorities of Member States to combat tax evasion and avoidance in the field of direct taxation, now also apply to value added tax - a suggestion the Committee gave in its Opinion on the Commission's Proposal (OJ No. 56 dated 7.3.77).

The Committee reiterates some of the general principles on which it then said such mutual assistance should be based, this applying equally to the problems to be encountered in the field of VAT.

The Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Economic and Financial Questions under the chairmanship of Mr MARGOT - Belgium - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr MILLER - United Kingdom - Employers.

12. VAT - 9th DIRECTIVE

Proposal for a Ninth Council Directive on the harmonization of the laws of the Member States relating to turnover taxes - Derogation from Article 1 of the Council's 6th VAT Directive of 17 May 1977, allowing the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands to give effect to the provisions of the Directive not later than 1 January 1979

The Commission's Proposal

The Council's 6th Directive on VAT of May 1977 lays down that Member States should have implemented its provisions by 1 January 1978 at the latest. This Directive was to have enabled the Community to have its "own resources" by assigning to the Community a given percentage of the revenue of the value-added tax, levied nationally on a uniform basis.

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The scope of the Directive is so wide as to encompass a very large number of national regulations, and only two Member States have so far affected the necessary adaptations of these national regulations in time to comply with the time-limit set in the Directive.

The 9th Directive meets the request of the remaining seven Member States to postpone the entry into force of the provisions of the 6th Directive for a maximum of 12 months. Such a postponement will not prejudice any effects of those provisions of the 6th Directive on VAT which do not require the adoption of national measures of implementation where such effects arise between 1 January 1978 and the date of the notification of the 8th Directive.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously.

The Committee notes the proposal and expresses its regret that only two Member States have respected the time limit set, and trusts that no further postponement will be necessary.

The Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Economic and Financial Questions under the chairmanship of Mr MARGOT - Belgium - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr PEYROMARUE--DEBORD--BROCA - France - Employers.

13. WINE (MARKET ORGANIZATION CHANGES)

Proposal for a Council Regulation Establishing a European Joint-Trade Table Wine Organization

Proposal for a Council Regulation Amending Regulation (EEC) No 816/70 Laying Down Additional Provisions for the Common Organization of the Market in Wine.

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Gist of the draft regulation

Following the Council Decisions of early May, the Commission withdrew the abovementioned draft Regulations with the exception of Article 6 of the draft Regulation amending Regulation No. 816/70.

Article 6 contains a number of technical provisions. The most important innovation is the proposal to limit Community intervention to R1 and R2 wines with an alcoholic strength of at least 10° and to raise the minimum alcoholic strength of southern table wines from 9° to 9.5°.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously and endorsed the 0.5° increase proposed by the Commission. It should however be made clear that the figure of 9.5° applied to total alcoholic strength, of which a minimum of 9° must be actual alcoholic strength.

Removing all possibilities of supporting table wine of less than 10° strength would endanger market equilibrium. Support for table wines with a strength of 9.5° or more should be allowed.

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The Opinion was based on material prepared by the Section for Agriculture under the chairmanship of Mr EMO - Italy - Various Interests. The Rapporteur was Mr GUILLAUME - France - Various Interests.

14. SAFETY IN SHIPPING

Proposal for a Council Directive concerning the Ratification of Conventions on Safety in Shipping.

Gist of the Commission Proposal

The Commission concludes that the ineffectiveness of international action is less the result of unsuitable solutions than of lack of effective application of existing international agreements. It advocates the ratification of the conventions already concluded within the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) by those Member States which have not yet done so.

Opinion of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion unanimously, welcoming the Commission's proposal to make Member States ratify or accede to certain Conventions and Protocols on safety in shipping as soon as possible. It believes this to be the first step towards improving safety at sea.

The Opinion was based on material prepared by Mr HOFFMANN - Rapporteur-General - Germany - Workers.

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15. COMMUNITY RELATIONS WITH GREECE

Study of the Committee on

Relations of the Community with Greece.

Gist of the Study

After having carried out a protracted study of Portugal, the Section for External Relations embarked on a study of Greece in view of its application to become a member of the Community.

Meetings took place between the Rapporteur and the Greek authorities and trade and professional circles in September 1977. On 14 September 1977 an ESC delegation travelled to the Salonika International Fair where they were guests of honour at a formal meeting which attracted a great deal of notice. In addition, the Section's Study Group on Greece had searching discussions with the Greek authorities and the principal trade and professional organizations during a visit to Salonika and Athens on 17-23 March 1978.

The findings made in these discussions are set out in the Study. They underscore the enthusiasm shown by all groups approached to the idea of Greece becoming a member of the Community.

On top of this, the Section's Study, which is substantial provides statistics on the population and economy of Greece. In this connection the Section notes that there has been a considerable falling-off in inflation during the last year. Unemployment is remarkably low, although the figure of 3-4% registered unemployed hides underemployment in agriculture and unemployment amongst young people.

The Section paid particular attention to industry, agriculture, shipping, fishing and tourism. Whilst each of these sectors is not without its particular difficulties, on the whole the Greek economy is relatively healthy.

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As regards the prospect of Greece joining the Community, the Section draws attention to the structural reforms which will be necessary, reforms which will require an input of capital and technology from the Community. In parallel, Greece's entry is likely to have an adverse effect on certain sensitive industries and certain "Mediterranean" farm products in the Community.

Finally, the submission of this Study takes place on the eve of the inauguration of a Greek Economic and Social Council.

Action of the Committee

The Economic and Social Committee adopted the Study with no dissenting votes and 3 abstentions.

The ESC is all in favour of supporting economic development and social progress in Greece. It would like to promote the progressive and harmonious integration of the Greek economy into that of the Community so that Greek accession can be carried out under the best conditions possible. To bring this about it is prepared to put its experience and its contacts in most economic and social fields at the disposal of those working towards rapprochement.

the Committee is pleased that an Economic and Social Council is shortly to be set up in Greece. This will encourage a dialogue between the two sides of industry in a country where such a process is still in its infancy. The Committee is prepared to collaborate with its Greek opposite number and provide it with any help necessary.

Considerable investments will be necessary to bring about the development and economic and industrial re-structuring of Greece, and most of these will come from abroad. The importing of Community capital and technology, which will be given a fillip by EEC membership, could have a considerable impact on integration.

.../...

The same applies to collaboration in its most diverse forms between Greek and Community firms (agreements, holdings, subsidiaries, mergers, etc.). It would therefore be useful to organize systematic documentation and information on the opportunities and conditions in this area (statistics, regulations, prospects, etc.).

To promote inter-firm collaboration, it would also help things along if the Communities could start operating in Greece right now an liaison closely with the Community delegation in Athens.

Where the changes in the Greek economy which will be necessary for its progressive integration into the Community economy are likely to require considerable imports of investment and technology from the Member States and thus be an additional burden on the Greek balance of payments, the Community should provide timely and adequate financial aid to assist Greece.

Finally, to guide and co-ordinate these collaboration programmes; it would be a good idea to set up a permanent Greece-EEC contact group including representatives of government and the two sides of industry in the two camps.

The Study was based on material prepared by its Section for External Relations under the chairmanship of Mr CARSTENS - Denmark - Employers. The Rapporteur was Mr DE RIDDER - Belgium - Various Interests.

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II

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Visit to Madrid by Study Group on Spain, Section for External Relations

Members of the Study Group set up to consider Spain's entry into the European Community visited Madrid on 5, 6 and 7 June. The Committee delegation met Mr CALVO SOTELO, the Minister responsible for Spanish entry negotiations. Meetings were also organized with representatives of employer and trade union organizations.

ESC President visits Dublin

Mr Basil de FERRANTI, President of the Economic and Social Committee, paid an official visit to Dublin on 22 and 23 June. He was accompanied by one of the vice-Presidents, Mr Mathias BERNS. The party was received by the President of Ireland, Dr Patrick HILLERY, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Michael O'KENNEDY. Meetings were held with the Irish Congress of Trade Union and the Confederation of Irish Industry, as also with the major farming organizations.

A visit was also arranged to the Irish National Economic and Social Council.

Section for Regional Development of the ESC visits North West Ireland

The Section for Regional Development of the Economic and Social Committee, accompanied by the Committee's President, Mr de FERRANTI, visited the Londonderry/Donegal area on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on 26 and 27 June. It then held a meeting chaired by the Section President, Mr A. LAVAL (France) in Londonderry to finalize its

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recommendations arising from its Cross-Border Communications Study.

The needs of the area have been examined in some detail and, in the Report to be submitted to the Committee's plenary session on 11 and 12 July, the EEC Commission will be advised to concentrate regional aid fund allocations on specific projects. The objective is to use European funds to improve the economic infrastructure, thus leading to increased investment and employment in one of the most hardpressed of the EEC regions.

Bearing in mind the dangers of an unrealistic approach, the Committee already sent a study group to the area last March headed by Lord HAMILTON, a member of the Committee, in order to involve local people concerned at the planning stage.

During their visit the delegation met Mr David ANDREWS, the Irish Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Rt. Hon Don CONCANNON Minister of State (UK) at the Northern Ireland Office.

ESC Director-General in Madrid

Mr LOUET, Director-General at the Economic and Social Committee, visited Madrid on 26 and 27 June to lecture to participants attending a course of studies on the European Communities at the Ecole Diplomatique in Madrid.

He also had talks with Government representatives, particularly from the Ministry of Labour.

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The ESC represented at International Transport Seminar

The President of the ESC, Mr Basil de FERRANTI, participated at an International Seminar on the Future of Goods Transport in Europe. This Seminar, held on 27-29 June 1978 in Paris, was organized under the sponsorship of the Transport and Handling Liaison Committee by AFT CESTRAL under the patronage of the European Commission, the European Conference of the Ministers of Transport and the Economic and Social Committee, and with the assistance of national and international transport corporate bodies. Its aims were to promote development of goods transport within and outside the Community; analyse the trend of European policies in the light of latest developments which have affected transport economy and running of enterprises; give professional circles a better idea of aims, concerns and workings of European institutions. Mr HOFFMANN, Chairman of the Committee's Section for Transport and Communications, chaired one of the Seminars Working Sessions.

The ESC represented at the ceremony marking the setting up of the Greek Economic and Social Council

A Greek Economic and Social Policy Council was officially set up in Athens on 27 June in the presence of the Prime Minister, Mr C. CARAMANLIS, several members of the Greek Government, the ambassadors of Member States of the Community and other public figures. The Council, which is a body similar to the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities, is composed of 50 members (13 representatives of workers, 13 representatives of the farming community, 19 representatives of employers and representatives of the professions and 5 experts. Its Chairman is the Minister for Coordination. The Council has a purely consultative function and its job is (a) to examine the various social and economic problems submitted to it by the Government, (b) to make proposals and (c) to deliver Opinions.

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The Economic and Social Committee, which was represented at this ceremony by Mr VAN DE GRAAF, had sent a message which was read out at the beginning of the meeting by its Chairman, Mr MITSOTAKIS, Minister for Coordination.

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III

NEW REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS

In June, the Council asked the Committee to deliver Opinions on the following :

- Proposal for a Council Decision modifying the Council Decision 74/642 adopting a research and training programme for the European Atomic Energy Community on plutonium recycling in light-water reactors.
- Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No. 1191/69 on action by Member States concerning the obligations inherent in the concept of a public service in transport by rail, road and inland waterway and Regulation (EEC) No. 1107/70 on the granting of aids for transport by rail, road and inland waterway.
- Proposal for a Specific Council Directive on the overall migration limit for the constituents of plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs.
- Proposal for a Directive (Euratom) of the Council amending the Directive of 1 June 1976 laying down the revised Basic Safety Standards for the health protection of the general public and workers against the dangers of ionizing radiation.

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PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF FUTURE WORK

July 1978 Plenary Session

Opinions requested by Institutions

- Mediterranean Agriculture
- Product Liability
- Intra-Community Trade in Coal
- Plutonium Recycling
- Protection Against Dangers From Ionizing Rays
- Safety of Sea Transport

Own-initiative Opinions

- Lomé Convention
- Forestry

Studies

- Spain
- Tax Harmonization
- State-Trading Nations

Information Report

- Londonderry/Donegal : Regional Development

Subsequent Sessions

Opinions requested by Institutions

- Monitoring of Maritime Waters
- Lamb and Mutton
- Protection of Workers in the Event of Employers' Insolvency
- Misleading Advertising
- Joint Stock Companies
- Annual Report on Economic Situation
- Liner Code (Additional Opinion)

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Opinions requested by Institutions (cont'd.)

- Decommissioning of Nuclear Power Stations
- Thermal Water reactors
- Rail Transport
- Action in the Cultural Sphere
- Plastic Wrapping Materials for Foodstuffs

Own-initiative Opinions

- Flags of Convenience
- Use of Medicines
- Frontier Workers

Studies

- R & D Management
- Influence of Regional Authorities
- Judicial Protection of Consumers
- Dangers of Using Asbestos

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ABC - 7 JUN 1978

INTENSA ACTIVIDAD EN EL PROCESO DE AMPLIACION DE LA C. E. E.

LOS EMPRESARIOS ESPAÑOLES, CON LA MISION DEL COMITE ECONOMICO Y SOCIAL

«El camino para la integración de España en la Comunidad Económica Europea va a ser largo y penoso», ha manifestado el presidente de la Comisión Económica de la C. E. O. E., Bernardo López Majano, al finalizar su reunión de trabajo con los expertos del Comité Económico y Social de la C. E. E., que llegaron el lunes a España con el fin de establecer contactos con la Administración, con las Centrales patronales, con los sindicatos y con zonas de la producción agrícola nacional, de cara al inicio de las conversaciones y negociaciones para la integración de España en la Comunidad.

INFORMACIONES

EL COMITE ECONOMICO DE LA C.E.E., CON LA PATRONAL Y LAS SINDICALES

7.6.78

España podrá ingresar pronto, pero no a cualquier precio

MADRID, 7 (INFORMACIONES).

NO sólo no existe postposición del caso de España respecto de los otros dos candidatos, sino que puede hablarse incluso de preferencia ante el ingreso en la C.E.E., si bien éste no se hará a cualquier precio, sino negociando muy duramente las condiciones», ha declarado ayer el portavoz empresarial de la C.E.O.E., don Bernardo Lopez Majano, al final de la reunión que las comisiones económica e internacional de la patronal española han mantenido con el comité económico y social de la C.E.E. en su visita a España.

Entre los puntos más largamente discutidos en la reunión de ayer, el señor López Majano destacó la postura exigente del empresario español en favor de la libre circulación de los trabajadores después de la ampliación, ya que existe en

ron que el proyecto de ley de acción sindical lesiona los intereses de los trabajadores.

Por falta de tiempo para su estudio, la delegación comunitaria entregó a los representantes sindicales un cuestionario sobre datos téc-

LA LIBRE BELGIQUE 5.6.78

C.E.E.

La restructuration de la construction navale

Le Comité économique et social des Communautés européennes estime que face à la crise que subit actuellement la construction navale, la Communauté devrait tendre au maintien de capacités de production qui soient en relation avec l'importance de ses échanges par voie maritime et favoriser la construction de navires d'une technologie avancée. En outre, il faudrait traiter avec le maximum de rigueur le problème des navires qui ne répondent pas aux normes internationales de sécurité et de conditions de vie et de travail des équipages et, le cas échéant, leur interdire l'accès des ports communautaires.

Le Comité considère en outre que si une politique communautaire appropriée n'est pas rapidement mise en œuvre, la construction navale de la C.E.E. risque de disparaître. Pour ce qui est des problèmes sociaux, il souhaite que dans la mesure où une réduction des effectifs est inévitable, le reclassement du personnel vers d'autres secteurs soit prioritaire.

GO' TO £40m BORDER AREA PLAN

BY OUR LONDONDERRY STAFF

TOP LEVEL EEC OFFICIALS today approved the big cross-border communications study carried out in the Londonderry-Donegal area, a project aimed at improving communications between the two areas at a cost of more than £40m.

The thumbs up was given at a meeting in Londonderry of the Regional Development section of the EEC's Economic and Social Committee, one of the Community's top policy-making bodies.

It opens the door for EEC grant aid for capital schemes to improve roads, freight facilities, road passenger traffic, port development, air transport and postal and telecommunication services.

The decision, which has to be ratified by the Council of Ministers in Brussels next month—it seems certain to get approval — means that EEC aid to the tune of more than £20m will be made available for a variety of development schemes, some already in the planning stage. The rest of the money will come from the British and Eire Governments.

Welcomed

The Regional Development section recommended that funds should be provided immediately—a move which will be welcomed by local authorities in the area concerned.

Those authorities have been pressing for the completion of the work in a much shorter period of time than the eight to 10 years suggested in the study report.

The 25-strong section, representing all nine members of the Community, approved the study in private session, a decision taken after an extensive tour of the areas and consideration of a detailed information report on the proposals.

Europas Steuerbeamte gegen USt-Richtlinien

Steuerdschungel würde noch undurchdringlicher

HANDELSBLATT, Montag, 5. 6. 1978

Mit 28 gegen 16 Stimmen bei 28 Enthaltungen hat der WSA schließlich die Prozeder-dorf-Stellungnahme mit dem Zusatz verabschiedet, daß die Kommission, falls sie sich über die grundsätzlich ablehnende Haltung des WSA hinwegsetzt, wenigstens die von der WSA-Minderheit vorgebrachten Anmerkun-

kungen zur Verbesserung ihres Entwurfs berücksichtigen solle. Diese betreffen vor allem den Versteigerer. Demnach soll der Versteigerer, soweit er als Bevollmächtigter oder als Vermittler tätig wird, und keine Lieferung ausführt, nur für seine Kommission zur Zahlung der Mehrwertsteuer herangezogen werden.

Wenn andererseits eine in den Verkauf

The Scotsman
7.6.78

Joint action forecast on inflation

By MAURICE BAGGOTT,
Our Industrial Correspondent

A major EEC committee, the economic and social committee, are now convinced that joint European action is necessary, including some measure of monetary union, for Western Europe to combat its chronic unemployment problem.

The committee's chairman, Mr Basil de Ferranti, deputy chairman of Ferranti Ltd., hammered home the pan-European approach yesterday to a meeting of Scottish businessmen and trade unionists organised by the Scottish Council (Development and Industry).

Mr de Ferranti predicted that the forthcoming summit of the EEC in Bremen next month could see some remarkable developments in a joint assault on the twin problems of unemployment and inflation.

ARBEID geschil en overleg

Sociaal Europees comité voor de deeltijdse arbeid

deeltijdse arbeid geen alternatief mag zijn voor een beleid dat gericht is op de uitbreiding van de werkgelegenheid.

Het economisch en sociaal comité van de Europese Gemeenschap bracht een gunstig advies uit over de invoering van de deeltijdse arbeid. Het comité onderstreept echter dat de deeltijdse arbeid op een vrijwillige basis moet worden mogelijk gemaakt, terwijl abnormaal hoge kosten voor ondernemingen en gemeenschap moeten worden vermeden. Aanbevolen wordt tevens dat werknemers, die kiezen voor de deeltijdse arbeid eenzelfde bescherming genieten als de arbeidskrachten die volle dagtaken uitoefenen.

Het Europees comité onderstreept dat de deeltijdse arbeid voldoet aan de wensen en behoeften van belangrijke doelgroepen.

Wel wordt onderstreept dat de

EEC head in Dublin for development talks

THE chairman of the European Economic and Social Committee, Mr Basil de Ferranti, has spent the last two days in Dublin discussing economic and social development with Government Ministers and officials, and with representatives of industry, commerce, employers' organisations and trade unions.

Discussions centred on economic and social development in the EEC, the development problems of the Irish economy, the need for an active EEC regional policy and the impact of proposed European legislation on industry in Ireland. Special attention was paid to European policy for the development of small and medium-sized industries.

Mr de Ferranti and one of his two vice-presidents, Mr Mathias Berns, met Mr O'Kennedy, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Dr O'Donoghue, the Minister for Economic Planning, on Thursday and they were received by President Hillery yesterday.

Among the topics discussed with the Ministers was last week's Green Paper, but at a press conference in the Commission's Dublin office yesterday they were reluctant to comment on it and said it was a national

matter. Mr de Ferranti said that among the many things which had to be looked at in the fight to reduce unemployment was currency instability, co-operation for economic growth, and the entry of new States. The ideas of one member State were propagated quickly in others, Mr de Ferranti said, and there were aspects of the Green Paper which would set many people thinking.

Tomorrow the committee's section for regional development, some 30 or 40 persons, will visit the Derry/Donegal area to consider the report on cross-Border development. After meeting in the Guildhall in Derry on Tuesday which will approve the £40 million plan, the report will be discussed by the whole economic and social committee in Brussels and will then go to the council.

One of its recommendations is that the tele-communications service in Donegal be radically improved. The visit, which will include meetings with Strabane District Council and Donegal county councillors, is intended mainly to lend support to the furtherance of the report's proposals.



Mr Basil de Ferranti, president of the EEC Social and Economic Committee, with President Hillery at Aras an Uachtarain yesterday.—(Photograph: Paddy Whelan)

PUBLICATIONS OBTAINABLE FROM THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Periodical

- Bulletin (monthly publication)

General Documentation

- The Economic and Social Committee (leaflet) (January 1975)
- The Economic and Social Committee (April) 1975) (A descriptive brochure) 16 p.
- Annual Report (1977) 70 p. (1976) 80 p.
- Directory (January 1978) (List of members) 42 p.
- The Right of initiative of the Economic and Social Committee (October 1977) 124 p.
- 20th Anniversary of the Economic and Social Committee (May 1978) 19 p.

Opinions and Studies

- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Community Context (April 1978) (Opinion) 29 p.
- Industrial Change and Employment (November 1977) (Opinion) 98 p.
- EEC's Transport Problems with East European Countries (December 1977) (Opinion) 164 p.
- Community Nuclear Safety Code (July 1977) (Study) 50 p.
- Regional Development - Unemployment and Inflation (June 1977) (Opinion) 130 p.
- Research and Development (November 1976) (Study) 35 p.
- Systems of education and vocational training (August 1976) (Study) 114 p.
- Regional Policy (March 1976) (Opinion) 11 p.
- European Union (July 1975) (Opinion) 33 p.
- Progress Report on the Common Agricultural Policy (February 1975) (Study) 52 p.
- The Situation of Small and Medium-sized Undertakings in the European Community (March 1975) (Study) 69 p.