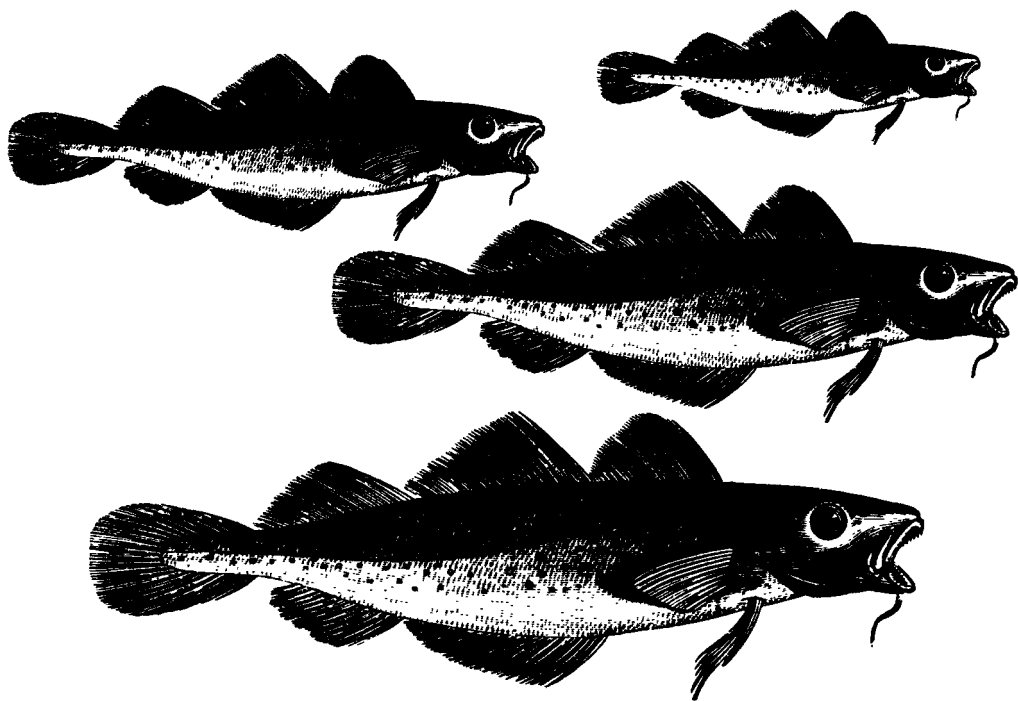


European Community

No.3

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Troubled Waters





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May 3+4 Foreign Affairs Ministers Council

May 17+18 Agriculture Ministers Council
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May 17 Finance Ministers Council

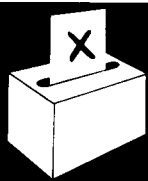
May 31+June 1 Foreign Affairs Ministers Council

May 3 Political Committee of the Foreign Ministers
(meeting in the margin of the concurrent Council in Luxembourg)

May 3-28 UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Nairobi

May 14+15 Informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg

June 22-25 State visit to the United Kingdom by the President of France



Vision and power

Excerpts from Sir Christopher Soames's speech on receiving the Schuman Prize on March 8, 1976

We are, I believe, approaching a period of fundamental choice. Is the European Community to remain at the level of a customs union with a set of limited instruments for internal economic cooperation – a common agricultural policy and a social policy and a regional policy of sorts – and with its external relations essentially organised around the common commercial policy, together with a more or less closely coordinated system of political cooperation? Or are we to proceed beyond this to a fuller conception of European Union – by which I mean a Union which provides both the transfer of resources accompanied by the strict economic disciplines which are necessary for deeper integration, and the capacity actively to influence the world scene?

Unless we advance together in unity we cannot successfully pursue our essential interests in the world outside or fulfil the international responsibilities which flow from our history, our experience, and our economic strength. And unless we can achieve a wider and more profound economic and monetary integration we cannot hope to realise the full measure of prosperity and social progress that the European vision holds out to us . . .

As in the past, so in the future, the development of common European

institutions is the key to our progress together. Above all we need a strong and confident European political authority capable of expressing the European will and able to make it effective. Here lies the importance of the European Council of the heads of government of the member States.

But, amid the ebb and flow of the tides of politics and the shifts of fortune which determine the rise and fall of national governments, there is no substitute for the existence of an accepted and established framework of legal, institutional, and powerful structures whose essential function it is to seek only to define the European interest. This was so in the Community of the Six. It is so in the Community of the Nine. And it will be even more so in a further enlarged Community. . . .

Direct elections

In this nothing will help so much as the new balance in our affairs that will flow from the holding of direct elections to the European Parliament. Of course, no one should suppose that a directly elected Parliament will overnight provide a new political authority for the European Union. Its importance lies, rather, in the renewed legitimacy it will bring to the obligation to develop a common European policy. Together with the

Commission it will take on the essential function of the constant promotion of the European interest which is neither the highest common factor nor the lowest common denominator of the various national interests.

Interests

For Europe will turn out to be a hollow Titan if we are unwilling to make some sacrifices of national interests – interests that often appear to be more immediate but which cannot outweigh the ultimate advantages of pursuing the common interest. We cannot afford the schizophrenia which wills the European end but which shies away from supplying the means, or which wants Europe to succeed but wants it only to succeed in one particular national way. Our European commitment must of course be nourished by the visible signs of its capacity to satisfy national interests. But in turn it must also be fed by its willingness to ask at every point and in relation to every problem, where lies the European interest and what can we do to promote it? . . .

At its present stage of development, the European Community is essentially a ‘civilian’ power, representing a new form of international political life . . .

So long as the nuclear balance of potential horrific destruction subsists – so long, that is, as America’s military partnership with Europe continues to be seen by the United States as being in the American interest which, I might add, in turn presupposes a generous contribution from European countries to our own defence – so long as all this endures, then we can look to our ‘civilian’ power to exert great influence. . . .

The Community of the Nine now has a gross national product which does not fall far short of that of the United States and which considerably exceeds that of the Soviet Union, or that of China or Japan. Its population is larger than that of either the United States or of the Soviet Union, and its production of many key manufactures is second to none. It is also one of the world’s chief food-growing areas. Our member States together transact some 40 per cent of the free world’s trade, fully half of which is with countries outside the Community’s borders, and they hold some 30 per cent of the world’s currency reserves. They are the source of nearly half of official development assistance to the Third World, and they provide a large proportion of the private investment and new technology by which the developing countries set such store. To many nations, both developing and developed, both within the free world economic systems and among the state-trading countries, the Community ranks among their most important markets for raw materials, for food and for industrial goods.

A common discipline

When these economic characteristics are viewed as power factors – that is, as factors that affect the Community’s role and influence in the world – they present indeed a picture of worldwide significance. They present also a picture both of formidable strength and of formidable vulnerability. . . .

The resolution of this paradox lies in our acceptance, together with our partners, of an ever-increasing measure of common multi-lateral discipline. . . .



Women in Europe

Results of a Commission poll

More flexibility in working hours is one of the main social reforms European women would like to see. This emerges from a poll organised in the nine Community countries by the Commission in May 1975, the results of which are just out.

It was the first time that such a survey had been carried out on this subject at international level. About 9,500 men and women aged 15 and over, divided into representative national samples, were questioned orally by pollsters from eight specialised institutes.

The aim was to study subjects of special interest to the Commission, including:

- the importance attached to the position of women in society;
- awareness and evaluation of changes in their position;
- opinion on opportunities for women;
- desires of men and women respectively for a reduction in the differences between their roles;
- similarities and differences in the attitude to employment;
- social reforms to which priority should be given;
- attitudes to politics and social participation;
- attitudes to the European Community.

How important?

A third of those questioned considered the problem of women's position in society very important. The great majority were well aware that the situation was changing and in principle thought this a good thing. But 19 per cent felt that the situation was changing too quickly and 28 per cent that it was not changing quickly enough.

The countries in which the problem was considered most important were France, Italy, Luxembourg, and Ireland. In Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, on the other hand, developments in legislation and attitudes have been such that the problem was not considered very important.

Opportunities

One person in three (36 per cent) felt that women had less opportunity than men to succeed in life. This view was more widespread in Ireland, Germany, and France than in Denmark, Belgium, and Italy.

The main reasons given for this relative lack of opportunity were family commitments, male attitudes, and occupational attitudes, in that order.

The main fields for discrimination were wages, promotion prospects, the possibility of finding work, and job security.

Jobs wanted

Most women wanted to practise an occupation:

80 per cent of women from a household where both partners worked;
75 per cent of women living alone;
56 per cent of women whose partner worked but who did not work themselves.

Reforms

The social reforms most desired for improving the position of women were:

flexible weekly working hours (42 per cent);
access to creches, child-minding services, and kindergartens (40 per cent);
giving women who prefer to stay at home an adequate fixed wage for their work in the house (33 per cent).

Politics

Politics is still considered a masculine field, by both men and women, but much less so by young women and among persons with a higher level of education.

On the whole:

35 per cent of those questioned felt that politics should be mainly left to men. This view was particularly widespread in Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg;

38 per cent of those questioned (42 per cent of the men and 33 per cent of the women) would have more confidence in a man than in a woman as their representative in Parliament.

The most favourable attitude towards participation of women in politics was found in countries where women had had the vote longest: Denmark, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Ireland.

Even among the younger generation fewer women than men partici-

pated in politics, but the gap depended to a large extent on the level of education.

Women were generally less favourable to the European Community and the unification of Europe than men, but the difference depended above all on the degree of education, information, and participation of the person questioned.

Age and level of education appeared to affect the attitude towards the Community in different ways depending on the country:

among the 'Six', elderly women were clearly *less* in favour than very young women;

in the three new member States, women aged 55 years and over were clearly *more* in favour than very young women.

Most of those questioned did not see any connection between the development of the Community and the development of the situation of women. But this view depended on a number of variables: the level of education, and the general attitude towards the Community in the country concerned.

Sex does not matter

The analysis also showed clearly that sex as such does not affect a person's attitude, but that the generation gap and the effect of the national culture and history are far more important. The debate on women's place in society is, in fact, only one aspect, one form of expression, of a desire for a change in society and for a better quality of life.

The survey's findings were discussed in Brussels at a colloquium on March 12 and 13, organised by the Commission and attended by some 100 women prominent in public life in the nine Community countries.



Troubled Waters

The Community and fishing limits: Michael Berendt explains

The Community of Six adopted a common fisheries policy in 1970. This established the principle that all EEC fishermen should have equal access to the waters of member States. It also introduced a market organisation with reference prices to control imports, and it encouraged the setting up of producer organisations to improve marketing.

Equal access was an important issue in the British entry negotiations, and the Treaty of Accession made special arrangements until 1982.

The whole question of international limits is under discussion at the Law of the Sea conference, which reconvened in New York from March 15 until May 7, 1976. This conference is expected to agree on 200-mile 'economic zones' within which coastal states will control fishing rights and have general jurisdiction.

As 200-mile limits are introduced, the fishing rights of Community fishermen are at risk in the new economic zones of non-member States. This will hit some countries harder than others; in 1973 West German fishermen caught 284,000 tonnes of fish in such waters – 69 per cent of their total catch. The British catch was 378,000 tonnes, accounting for 36 per cent of the total. Community fishermen as a whole caught

about a quarter of their fish there.

Extension of limits by countries like Iceland and Norway will oblige the distant-water fleets to move closer to home in their search for fish, putting increased pressure on the middle-water and inshore fisheries, at a time when fish stocks seem to be declining.

The Commission has now told the Council of Ministers how it thinks the Community should deal with these problems. It has proposed important changes to the common fisheries policy, urged effective Community action at the Law of the Sea conference and proposed opening discussions with non-member countries on questions of fishing rights.

Fish stocks

The Commission believes that any extension of limits to 200 miles should be on a Community basis, producing a Community zone within which the Community would manage its fish resources.

Because some fish stocks are in danger of exhaustion and must be built up again, the Commission proposes that an annual catch rate should be fixed for different sorts of fish to ensure the right level of production. Technical means would also be needed, such as net mesh and seasonal restrictions. The Commis-

sion would make annual proposals for these catch rates on the basis of a report from a newly-created Scientific and Technical Committee for Fishing.

Fair shares in the Community's fish resources would be achieved through catch quotas, although possible limitation of fishing capacity could be considered in the future.

The total catch quota for each type of fish would be worked out from the annual catch rate in Community waters, plus catches agreed in third country waters, less catches authorised in EEC waters for non-Community fishermen. A five per cent Community reserve 'to meet exceptional situations' would be subtracted, as well as a fixed quantity corresponding to catches within a protected 12-mile limit.

The total quotas would then be divided between the member States so that a country which accounted for, say, 40 per cent of the Community catch during a past reference period would have the right to the same proportion in the future. Any cutback for one member State would thus bear on the fishermen of all member States. A report on the fishing situation would be drawn up periodically by the Commission.

These measures, says the Commission 'could enable the Community to provide some compensation for any losses incurred in the waters of non-member countries.'

National waters

All member States should be authorised to restrict fishing in waters up to 12 miles from their coasts 'to vessels which fish traditionally in those waters and which operate from ports in that geographical coastal area.' The Treaty of

Accession already provides for similar six-mile limits around the coasts of member States until the end of 1982, with 12 miles around some coasts.

The general 12-mile restrictions would be introduced as soon as a 200-mile regime was agreed internationally. They would last indefinitely. Historic fishing rights of other member countries would then be phased out. Individual member States would lay down conservation measures and other rules within their reserved limits.

Modernisation

The fishing industry will have to adapt to changing conditions resulting from new international law, and specific Community action will be needed to help. A proposal has already been submitted for modernising inshore fishing. Other measures could be considered under regional and social policy.

Other countries

Bilateral negotiations with non-member countries will be needed to determine their fishing rights in Community waters, the rights of EEC fishermen in their waters and trade concessions for fish exports. The Commission says that such negotiations could also tackle 'any other subject which could yield balanced results.' Some countries have already approached the Community with a view to beginning negotiations.

On the assumption that 200-mile limits will be agreed in international law, the Commission proposes to initiate exploratory conversations with the main non-member countries concerned to establish the right bases for negotiations proper. It will

then submit negotiating briefs to the Council.

Law of the sea

The Commission says that the Community's competence to enact measures for the management of fish resources within its 200-mile economic zone must be fully recognised at an international level by non-member countries. The Community's competence could extend in future to such fields as pollution of the ocean and scientific marine research. It is essential that any future convention on the Law of the Sea should contain a clause enabling the Community to be a signatory.

The Community and its member States should try to agree a common negotiating text, says the Commission, so that proposals can be put to the New York session with support of all nine delegations. The Commission believes that in the conference the Community should concentrate on securing rights for its fishermen to operate to a maximum extent in member States' territorial waters. Protection of Community interests in non-member countries' waters would be best achieved through bilateral negotiations.

Norway

After EEC enlargement, Norway wished to introduce trawler-free zones off its coast but outside its territorial waters. Before Norway could take this step, she had to ascertain that the action did not warrant reconsideration by the Community of the special tariff concessions provided for Norwegian fish products in the Norway-EEC free trade agreement. These tariff concessions had been made 'subject to the maintenance of the present con-

ditions of general competition in the fisheries sector', i.e. maintenance of existing fishing limits. More than 40 per cent of Norway's fishing industry's exports are sold in the Community.

In the course of the discussions, Norway substantially reduced the proposed zones, and at the beginning of last year agreement was reached. The fish protocol of the trade agreement with Iceland has never been put into effect because of the continuing dispute over Iceland's unilateral declaration of fishing limits.

Organisation

Long-term Community policy is to encourage fishermen to group together in producer organisations which can regulate the supply of fish to market, stabilise prices and streamline their fishing operation. Owners and part-owners may join an organisation. In doing so, they commit themselves to selling all the fish which they land in the organisation's area through the organisation for three years.

If a member offers fish for sale in the area of his producer organisation and fails to get the official withdrawal price for it, it will be withdrawn from the fresh market and offered for sale for non-human consumption. In addition to the price realised, the fisherman will receive a compensation payment from the organisation, which can then reclaim from the British Intervention Board which in turn claims from the Community budget. This scheme applies to cod, haddock, whiting, plaice, saithe, herring, and red fish. Removal of some fish from the fresh market improves the price of the remainder. Fishermen from

ports where producer organisations were operating benefited appreciably from the withdrawal system in March and April 1975. Financial help is available for setting up producer organisations.

Problems

Rising costs, obsolete boats, marine pollution and the shrinking of fish stocks are making life particularly difficult for the inshore fishermen. The Commission has, therefore, put forward a proposal for restructuring this sector of the industry, helping those who wish to retire and encouraging investment in modern boats and equipment for those staying in the industry.

The proposal provides for financial aid from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (FEOGA). The total cost to FEOGA for the first five years of the programme is estimated at 118m units of account – equal to about £65m at current rates.

British coasts

The Treaty of Accession laid down a pattern of fishing limits at least until 1982. It provided for a 12-mile limit around the following British coasts:

- The Shetlands and the Orkneys.
- The north and east of Scotland, from Cape Wrath to Berwick.
- The north-east of England, from the river Coquet to Flamborough Head.
- The south-west from Lyme Regis to Hartland Point (including Lundy Island).
- County Down.

Around the remainder of British coasts a six-mile limit applies until 1982.

The measures include modernisation of fleets and of shore installations for fish preserving, processing and marketing, the development of fish-, crustacean- or mollusc-breeding, applied research on fishing and advanced training courses.

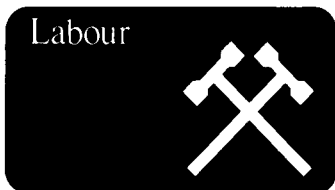
Subject to a contribution by the member State, FEOGA would provide capital grants of up to 25 per cent to producers who have been fishing for at least five years with vessels up to 24 metres, or who have been involved in breeding fish, crustaceans, or molluscs. Related research and occupational training projects may benefit from FEOGA aid provided that they are set up by an association receiving aid from FEOGA for investment projects.

Programmes

The proposed scheme, to be set up by the member States as part of a regional programme, provides for a system of annuities for fishermen aged 55 to 65 who cease fishing, and ship-breaking premiums for old vessels. The Commission estimates that during the first five years of the scheme, about 26,000 fishermen aged over 55 will be able to leave the fishing industry and that the ship-breaking premiums could be applied to 80,000 GRT.

The Commission proposes that member States should draw up multiannual regional programmes, which could include specific investment projects, such as the building of a fishing vessel, establishment of shore installation or of a fish-, crustacean- or mollusc-breeding undertaking.

These programmes would be agreed at a Community level and would form the basis for granting assistance for specific projects.



Cars for the 1980s

Robert Sheaf reports on a recent European symposium

European cars in the 1980s may have to meet Community standards of safety, noise reduction, and pollution control.

This is the aim of the European Commission and one that received firm support from a recent symposium attended by delegates representing public authorities, manufacturers, consumers, and technical experts.

The symposium made clear that the piecemeal standardisation of car design is out of date and, in practice, can sometimes lead to conflicting priorities. The human and social element must be the core of future research, and vehicle technology adapted to ensure the greater safety of drivers, occupants, and pedestrians.

The Commission's 'second phase' proposals to improve performance standards of vehicles and drivers are likely to reflect this changed approach.

Proposals must be practical, and adequate time must be allowed for manufacturers to adapt to the new thinking. The result would not be standardised cars but standardised *performance*.

Safety

Uniform standards and rules for the European Community are parti-

cularly difficult since the situation varies so much from country to country.

Mr M. Mitschke, of the Technische Hochschule Braunschweig, felt that two to three per cent only of accidents could be attributed to the deficiencies of vehicles themselves. On the whole, accidents were caused by drivers, by traffic situations, by road conditions and by bad weather. The designer should, therefore, concentrate on adapting vehicles to human beings, traffic, and bad weather to increase active road safety and reduce accidents. The Community Directive on braking devices was a first step in this direction since it placed the emphasis on vehicle behaviour, braking distance and ease of steering, in that order, to allow for drivers' shortcomings in controlling their vehicles.

Seat belts

Dr G. H. Mackay, of Birmingham University, felt that most of the indispensable design standards had already been, or were about to be, introduced in the Community. But these were just the 'first generation' of statutory provisions. The time had come, he said, to review their effectiveness and undertake an exploratory study of a second generation of standards.

During the symposium many speakers stressed the importance of keeping up a coordinated and varied research effort so that legislators would be in a position to do something more than merely rubber-stamp models already on the market.

Summing up at the end of the conference, Finn Gundelach, Member of the Commission responsible for harmonisation within the Community, noted that, whatever other differences might have emerged, it was everyone's view that the wearing of seat belts should be made compulsory.

France pioneered the cause in Europe when, in 1973, following the example set by Australia and New Zealand, legislation was introduced which made the wearing of seat belts compulsory outside towns. France is expected shortly to extend this to towns as well. Since 1973 the wearing of seat belts has been made compulsory in the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden. It will become compulsory in Britain in the autumn. Within the Community, only Italy and Ireland have not yet followed suit.

Despite the legislation, however, surveys show that the effective use of seat belts ranges from 60 per cent to 90 per cent, depending on place and time of day. The rate declines sharply after dark and, hitherto, the effective use among people involved in accidents is never higher than 80 per cent and even lower for high-speed collision at night.

To overcome this reluctance, the symposium concluded, it will be necessary to make seat belts more comfortable. Some improvements suggested were: an adjustable upper anchorage point and/or belt guides

on the back of the seat; lower anchorage points which shift with the seat; or belts which can be fastened and unfastened with one hand.

The symposium also discussed the polluting effect of exhaust fumes and engine noise on the environment. It admitted that it would be extremely difficult to introduce common emission standards. On noise, however, it was possible to note some progress. While it is too early to assess the effect of the Community Directive introduced three years ago, France has had similar legislation since the early sixties, and there noise levels fell quickly by seven to ten decibels for commercial vehicles and by six to eight decibels for private cars, although the average horse-power of commercial vehicles has risen from 150 metric h.p. to 250 metric h.p. over the last 12 years.

Re-cycling of cars?

Engines remain the noisiest part of the car and Mr J. P. Thiry, of France's Union Technique de l'Automobile, described some ideas to reduce this, such as placing engines in a sound-proof shell (which hinders cooling) or a partial adaption of this. Another approach would be to study the causes of vibration in the components of the engine block and try to reduce them.

Mr F. Sezzi, of Italy's Snamprogetti, suggested that an economical style of driving would help in reducing the consumption of energy but that also, perhaps, vehicles should be so designed as to ensure that re-cycling and separation of non-metal materials could be more easily undertaken at the end of the vehicle's life.



Dossier

Cross-channel investment

The British advertising group Benton and Bowles has bought up the capital of a leading Danish agency.

The French company Saviem, a member of the Renault group, has set up a British subsidiary, Saviem Ltd, to import and distribute industrial and commercial vehicles.

The British insurance brokers' group, Frizzell, has set up an international group called Frizzell International with British, French, German, and Italian participation.

Through its Dutch subsidiary, the British building and public works firm John Laing and Son Ltd has set up the subsidiary Laing NV in Brussels.

The British Streetley Company has bought a 35 per cent interest in two French firms: the Société Chimique Export-Import, selling chemical products, and SA Lotigie, distributors of chemical products and manufacturers of plastic tubing.

Oil boon

A loan of £16.9 million has been granted by the EIB to the Shetland Islands Council to help finance the construction of an oil tanker harbour at Sullom Voe. The Council are planning for the possibility that up to 1,000 jobs will be directly or indirectly related to the project. The scheme is designed to safeguard the

traditional industries and the community as a whole by incorporating stringent measures to ensure protection against pollution and to safeguard the Shetland environment and wildlife.

EEC-Japan Textiles Agreement

Agreement was recently reached on the text for a bilateral textiles agreement between the European Community and Japan.

Under consultation procedure established by the agreement, Japan has agreed to apply temporary export restraints for the main range of continuous synthetic fibre cloth and for cotton and discontinuous synthetic fibre cloth to the Community as a whole. Japan has also agreed to exercise restraint for five textile categories to individual member States. Finally, there are special consultation provisions for Japanese exports of discontinuous man-made fibres to the Community as a whole. Japan has made no request for Community export restraints. Japan has also accepted the phasing out of certain existing restraints by March 1977.

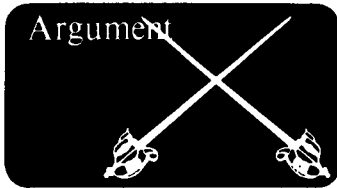
Previous agreements have been concluded with Hong Kong, Pakistan, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Macao and South Korea.

Statistic of the Month

The European Investment Bank loaned more than 1,000 million units of account (£88.5 million) in 1975, a slight increase over the 1974 figure, and its biggest annual total yet. Of this total, Britain was the second biggest beneficiary after Italy, receiving 334.5 million u.a. (£186.5 million) compared with some 150 million u.a. (£79.9 million) in 1974. The full 1975 breakdown was as follows:

Country	Number	Amount (m. u.a.)	% of grand total	% Member Countries
Ordinary operations				
Member Countries				
Belgium	1	10.8	1.1	1.2
Denmark	6	17.7	1.8	1.9
France	11	158.0	15.7	17.2
Ireland	2	37.7	3.7	4.1
Italy	26	358.8	35.6	39.1
United Kingdom	18	334.5	33.2	36.5
Total	64	917.5	91.1	100.0
Associated Countries				
Greece	7	47.2	4.7	
AASMM				
Mauritius	1	1.7	0.2	
Total	8	48.9	4.9	
Ordinary operations total				
	72	966.4	96.0	
Special operations (1)				
Turkey	3	35.0	3.5	
AASMM — OCTD				
Netherlands Antilles	1	4.4	0.4	
Guadeloupe	1	0.7	0.1	
Total	5	40.1	4.0	
Grand total	77	1,006.5	100.0	

(1) Loans on special conditions financed from the resources of member States (for Turkey) and from the European Development Fund (for the AASMM), the accounts for which are kept under the Bank's Special Section.



A Workshop Parliament

Sir Derek Walker-Smith, M.P. describes the growing political function of the European Parliament

The European Parliament, it is said, is becoming more political in its approach and in its aspirations. There is nothing surprising in that. A parliament is of its nature political, even if it is not directly elected and is called in the Treaties an assembly. But the European Parliament is subject to a dual constraint. First, the Community is by definition an economic community and its objectives as catalogued in the Treaty are economic and social. Secondly, there is the paradox of a parliament without a legislative function. These constraints circumscribe – or should in principle circumscribe – the activity of the Parliament. Are these constraints in practice being eased, and is it likely that they will be progressively relaxed?

First, we have the evidence of the Paris Communiqué of 1974. This envisaged progress “in the work of political co-operation”. This is accepted as meaning that the European Assembly must be more closely associated with the work of the Presidency (of the Council), as, for example, through replies to questions on political cooperation put to the President by its Members.

So here was a direct invitation to the Parliament to extend its political activity by means of one of the classic instruments of parliamentary activity, that of interrogation of Ministers by

Parliamentary Question. This marks a definite advance in the political role of the Parliament, and by extending Question Time from the previous single period of one hour per part-session to two periods of 1½ hours each, the Parliament has shown its wish to use the opportunities afforded it. It is still true, however, that the majority of questions are directed to the Commission on matters falling clearly within the economic sphere. It remains to be seen, too, whether the extension of Question Time should not more logically have awaited the attainment of brisker and more economic procedures. The “topicality debates” which arise out of Question Time, are as much or perhaps even more concerned with political rather than exclusively economic matters. Spain, Italy and Greece are all fairly recent examples.

The people petition

A third example of an increasing political content in the activity of the Parliament can be seen in connection with Petitions. The people who address the Petitions to the Parliament are members of the general public who petition the Parliament on political matters because they think that it is seized of them, or at any rate should be. All this is in addition to the familiar examples of

the Parliament's added powers in regard to the Community Budget and the evolution of "concertation" or conciliation procedure between Council and Parliament.

Nevertheless, in order to keep these trends in perspective, it must be remembered that the E.E.C. is an institutional structure defined by Treaty, and consequently can only be changed by an appropriate amendment of the Treaty. This being so, neither action of the Parliament nor the Communiqués of Heads of Government can of themselves expand the function and jurisdiction of Parliament.

A Workshop

Already there are procedures to prevent the work of the Parliament being submerged in technical detail, whereby draft directives on technical matters can, after examination by the appropriate Committee of the Parliament, be approved without debate in the Plenary Session on the Report of the Chairman of the Committee. Now further simplified procedures are being considered so as to leave the Parliament free to discuss broader, and in a sense more "political", matters.

I have said "in a sense" because the political content of a matter is not to be assessed simply on the basis of an inverse ratio to its economic or technical content. The European Parliament is intended as a workshop rather than a mere debating society. That is no reason why it should not include in its activity discussion on more general subjects, but not at the expense of the basic function of examining the draft legislation emanating from the Commission. Here, the Parliament serves a very useful purpose; and the evidence is that, when this work is thoroughly done, the Commission and Council will

normally, though not invariably, accept the results. The same importance does not, at any rate at present, attach to the views promulgated by the Parliament on more general subjects of a political nature. It is important, therefore, that the Parliament does not succumb to the attraction of more general debates, to the neglect of its nuts and bolts work.

That brings us finally to the question of legislation. I doubt whether many Members of the European Parliament would consider it realistic that the Parliament should be able to impose legislation on a reluctant Council, or indeed desirable that it should seek to do so; but already they have a power to influence and modify legislation through the processes of consultation; and indeed where consultation is required by the Treaty, the opinion of Parliament is already a necessary and integral part of Community legislation.

Influence counts

This is something which is already happening and being actively developed without requiring any technical addition to the powers of the Parliament. Through it the Parliament, though not in form a law-making body, can and does exercise influence on Community legislation. It can and does do it at the important stage, that is at the formative stage with representatives of the Commission sitting in and participating in the discussions of the Committee of the Parliament. In so far, therefore, as a legislative function is a prime political activity of Parliament, the European Parliament is, especially through its Committees, already and increasingly discharging it. It may be unspectacular, and indeed largely unseen, but it is an essentially political function not paralleled in British Parliamentary procedure.