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ORAL QUESTION (0-18/82)

with debate, pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure
by Mr BEUMER

on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education,
Information and Sport

to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject: European Foundation

- (a) On 29 March 1982 the Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the Community signed the Agreement establishing the European Foundation - recommended by Mr TINDEMANS in his report on European Union - thereby implementing the agreement reached in principle at the European Council of December 1977.
- (b) The European Foundation is based on an inter-governmental agreement between the Member States of the Community contrary to the European Parliament's opinion expressed in its resolution of 18 April 1978 (Doc. 575/77) calling for Article 235 of the Treaty to be taken as the legal basis.
- (c) Since the legal basis of the Foundation makes it an instrument of inter-governmental cooperation, the Community institutions are prevented from exercising the powers and responsibilities laid down in the Treaties.

- (d) According to the terms of the Agreement, the Foundation's financial resources are provided primarily by a contribution from the Community, in addition to which it may receive contributions from charitable, public or private bodies.
- (e) The Community is required to appoint to the Foundation's decision-making body, the Council, ten members in addition to the twenty members designated by the Member States, while the remaining ten members are co-opted.

In view of this:

1. What appropriations does the Commission intend to enter in its 1983 draft preliminary budget for the Foundation?
2. Does the Commission consider that the requirement on Parliament to approve the necessary funds to allow this Foundation to operate can be reconciled with the fact that it is not able to exercise political control over the Foundation's plans or programme?
3. In the Commission's view, which body should nominate the ten members that the Community is required to appoint to the Foundation's Council and does it not consider that, while this task falls to the Commission, it should consult Parliament in advance and be bound by its opinion?
4. As the activities of the Foundation are supposed to complement those of other institutions and bodies, to what extent can the Commission as 'guardian of the Treaties' ensure that there is no duplication with the activities currently being carried out by the Community and the Council of Europe (youth exchanges, language learning, etc.)?
5. Since the Foundation may also take direct action at its own initiative, does the Commission not consider that this may prevent the Community, and the European Parliament in particular, from taking any initiatives in the field of cultural cooperation leaving this entirely in the hands of the Foundation?
6. Finally, does not the Commission consider that there is a real danger that the European Foundation may eventually become a privileged body directly empowered either to take or to propose action to the Member States, thereby curtailing the responsibilities already vested in the Community and preventing their extension to new sectors?