

European Communities

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

1980 - 1981

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4 December 1980

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## Report

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

**on the information policy of the European Community, of the  
Commission of the European Communities and of the European  
Parliament**

**Rapporteur: Mr W. SCHALL**



By letter of 21 December 1979 the President of the European Parliament authorized the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport to draw up a report on the activities of the Community as a whole and of the European Parliament in particular in the field of information.

On 30 October 1979 Mr SCHALL was appointed rapporteur.

At its meeting of 22/23 November 1979 the committee laid down certain guidelines in respect of the substance of the report to be drawn up.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 18/19 March, 22/23 April and 22 October 1980. At the final meeting the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement were unanimously adopted.

Present: Mr Pedini, chairman; Mr Hahn, vice-chairman; Mr Schall, rapporteur; Mr Arfé, Mrs Buchan, Mr Delmotte (deputizing for Mr Kavanagh), Mrs Gaiotti de Biase, Mr Harris (deputizing for Mr Curry), Mr Hutton, Mr Jalton, Mr Langes (deputizing for Mr Del Duca), Mr Patterson, Mrs Pruvot, Mr Schön (deputizing for Mr Henckens) and Mrs Viehoff.



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The Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport submits to the European Parliament the following motion resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the information policy of the European Community, of the Commission of the European Communities and of the European Parliament

The European Parliament,

- whereas it is the responsibility of all the European Community's information services to inform the public in the individual Member States in particular, and furthermore in the world in general, about the objectives, policies and activities of the European Community as a whole in a manner commensurate with its importance,
- concerned that, 23 years after the signature of the EEC Treaty, the level of information about the Community among the citizens of the Member States remains low and that neither the Commission nor the European Parliament have so far been able to carry out their duty to provide information on a scale commensurate with the importance of the European Community and its objectives,
- having regard to the Commission's Information Programme for 1980 (COM(79) 701 final), the statement by the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations on 2 October 1979 to the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport, published as PE 59.985/Ann. and the earlier reports of the committee responsible for information,
- convinced that the value of the Community's information policy lies in several distinct areas, namely:
  - in explaining the aims, structures, achievements and problems of the European Community, information policy is an integral part of the policy of the institutions, a condition for the full achievement of the specific and implicit objectives of the Treaties, frequently reaffirmed in official documents, directed towards the

- in explaining the practical decisions and activities of the Community, the information policy is an essential condition for the full exercise of the democratic rights of the citizens of the Community, both as regards the possibility of keeping a watch on Community activities and providing individuals with the ability to benefit from the measures introduced;
- in explaining the Community to those outside it, the information policy is an essential instrument in supporting and promoting major Community initiatives for peaceful development in the world, for greater integration of the economies and balanced development, for solving regional imbalances, protecting human rights and extending freedom,
- convinced that it is a basic responsibility of the Commission to inform the citizens of the Community of the long-term purposes and of the short-term policies of the Community, as well as of its own activities and proposals, but that at the same time it is the principal task of the information services of the European Parliament to make the citizens of the Member States of the European Community aware of the activities of Parliament and its Members and that because of their different responsibilities a clear distinction must be drawn between the Commission's information policy and Parliament's specific role, without thereby excluding the possibility of cooperation between the two information services where necessary,
- emphasizing the responsibilities of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport as regards the Information Services of the Parliament, and the importance of preparing, as a matter of urgency, a clear Parliament information strategy,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport (Doc. 1-596/80),

I. with regard to the Commission's information policy and information services

1. Emphasizes that the provision of information about the Community's activities must be based on a clearly defined programme established annually by the Commission and embodying coordinated and uniform guidelines of a political and practical nature bearing in mind the differing needs of the Member States, and
  - considers that such a programme should require the active participation of all the Commission's directorates-general and services and that it should represent a real commitment to the principle of increased information on behalf of the Commission;
  - notes that knowledge about Community policies is best brought home to the citizens of the Community in their homes and places of work;

- considers that more use should be made of news opportunities in the Member States, particularly at a regional level - eg. the announcement of Regional Fund grants by a Commissioner in the regions affected;
  - believes that, in general, the DGs and Services of the Commission are too unaware of and uninterested in the information dimension of their work; and invites the Commission to study and implement ways of improving this awareness, and to report to the European Parliament by June 1981;
2. Attaches great importance to the elimination of shortcomings in matters of organization, staffing and technical facilities in the implementation of the Commission's information activities;
- considers that the overall effectiveness of Directorate-General X (Information) has been weakened as regards both its staffing and its task of directing information activities by past attempts at decentralization and therefore welcomes the recent change of course in this respect;
  - notes the Commission's Information Programme for 1980 and recommends that a change be made in the section dealing with the organizational structure of the agricultural information unit in the Directorate-General for Agriculture and with youth and education information in Directorate-General XII, as they both conflict with the need to centralize the Commission's information policy;
  - submits to the Commission for consideration the proposal that the fusion of posts of Director-General of DG X and chairman of the Spokesman's Group be revoked so that a balance can be secured between these two functions; the chairman of the Spokesman's Group might be a director acting as a deputy to the Director-General of DG X (first alternative) or a newly appointed deputy might assume responsibility for the administrative and executive management of Directorate-General X as his major task (second alternative);
  - recommends that the publication services, at present subordinated to DG IX (Administration), should be reintegrated in DG X in the interests of cost-effectiveness and the more efficient production of information;

3. Emphasizes the importance in information work of radio, television and film material to reach a mass audience and feels that increased use should be made of the Commission's radio and TV studios and other technical facilities;
4. Stresses the importance to the information service of qualified staff having the necessary experience and knowledge of information and public relations work; considers in this connection that a compromise must be found between the requirements of the Staff Regulations governing recruitment procedures and the need, where appropriate, to recruit expert staff from outside the institutions; and acknowledges the value of a regular interchange of staff, for appropriate periods of time and according to a strict rota, between the Commission's headquarters in Brussels and the external information offices;
5. Stresses the prime importance of the External Information Offices in the Member States, while not underestimating the importance of those in other countries; believes that the information needs of Community citizens are such that priority must be given to the Offices in the Member States and the 1981 budget should therefore make financial and staff provisions for additional sub-offices to be set up in Member States where appropriate as well as for the expansion of the activities of the existing offices;
6. Calls on the Commission to increase the coordination between the information offices and the centre, and to ensure that the basic message to be transmitted remains the same in each Member State, even though the manner of expression and the degree of emphasis may vary from country to country; and considers that increased importance should be attached to cooperation between the central and external offices and the press and broadcasting media in all the various Member States, because the Commission's publications alone will never be able to inform the man in the street adequately and must remain limited in the main to interest groups and large organizations;
7. Considers that both periodical publications and occasional publications on particular subjects should be more accessible to the public in content and in design, while recognising the importance of technical and semi-technical publications for experts and those with specific interests; and that consequently periodicals and magazines with a wide popular appeal can best be produced by the external offices in the Member States, which are in closer touch with national and regional situations than the central information service;

8. Appreciates, among the latest developments in the Commission's information policy, the efforts made over the last three years to arouse the interest of women in Community policies and to persuade them of the need for their involvement in the process of European integration, and congratulates the Commission on the results so far obtained; emphasizes, however, the deplorable shortage of staff and funds set aside for this important activity; notes also that, although these activities have some impact on female public opinion in our countries they do not seem to influence the Commission's information policy as a whole, in particular those of its publications that are not specifically intended for women; points out, however, that 52% of the public opinion which the Commission is addressing is made up of women and that it is therefore important to take account of this fact in every document published and every speech made; requests accordingly that the women's information sector should be given the staff and appropriations necessary to carry out its task and accorded a permanent place on the establishment plan of DG X;

9. Requests the Commission to make a periodic progress report on the implementation of its annual information programme to the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport;

II. with regard to the European Parliament's information services

10. Emphasizes strongly that the most important task for the information services of the directly elected European Parliament is to inform the citizens of the European Community of the work of that Parliament and its members;

11. Notes that the organizational structure of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations must be readapted and its staff increased to enable it to react rapidly to future developments in the media, and, using modern methods of communication, fulfil the requirements of Parliament and its members;

12. Notes in particular that internal information services for members during Plenaries and other meetings are extremely inadequate, a situation which must be remedied;

13. Calls upon the Publications and Central Documentation Sector to present to the Committee, as soon as possible, a publications programme for 1981. In addition to the material already available, consideration should be given to:

- (a) supplementary background briefing material for journalists on specific issues;

- (b) a simple digest for journalists of written parliamentary questions and their answers;
- (c) a regular Bulletin on the activities and decisions of Parliament's committees and Interparliamentary delegations;
- (d) a range of short publications on the Parliament, containing, in simpler form, the material in the brochure 'The European Parliament';
- (e) a series of pamphlets describing particular aspects of Parliament's structure, powers and activities;
- (f) a set of posters or wall-charts.

Consideration should also be given to the optimum division of such a publications programme between the Central Sector and the external offices. Financial allocations should be arranged accordingly.

The Publications Sector should itself concentrate more specifically on publications, and should have at its disposal adequate staff with qualifications in publishing, journalism and graphic design;

14. Stresses the need for a constant flow of information on the work of the committees and considers that the information services in Brussels, where most of the parliamentary meetings are held and where press representatives accredited to the European Community are stationed, should be considerably reinforced to this end; the only effective means of attaining this objective is to transfer part of the information services currently located in Luxembourg, particularly the Publications Division, to Brussels; failing this, new staff will have to be recruited to cope with information on parliamentary activities in Brussels;

15. Considers it of the greatest importance that Parliament's external offices, while maintaining a clear delineation of responsibilities, should collaborate as closely as possible - ideally under one roof - with the Commission's external offices;

Furthermore:

- (a) Asks the Quaestors to examine the extent to which there should be Parliament facilities in Commission external offices outside the national capitals; and also the Commission offices in third countries, particularly the United States;
- (b) Calls, also, for a general improvement in the circulation of Working Documents and other parliamentary documents; and for an urgent investigation of more modern systems of data transfer, including direct access by the external offices to data-banks;

- (c) Asks that clear guidelines be laid down as to what information contained in internal Parliament documents (eg. the Bulletin, committee agendas, etc) can be made public;
  - (d) Requests that the external offices should have at their disposal adequate display material - posters, wall-charts, audio-visual material, etc - for distributing, in particular, to schools and colleges;
  - (e) Believes that, in the field of publications, external offices are generally in a good position to assess any local or specialist demand; and that staff and financial provision should be made to enable the offices to produce regular or occasional publications;
  - (f) Also asks for a clearer definition of the responsibilities of the external offices in the arrangements for and reception of visitors to the Parliament;
  - (g) Calls for an examination of the relationship between the external offices and:
    - i) Directorates-General other than DG III;
    - ii) the appropriate national Members of Parliament;
    - iii) the offices of the Political Groups, where these also exist at national level;
16. Welcomes the Enlarged Bureau's decision to order television equipment, and endorses the need to make Parliament's own television studio and equipment operational as soon as possible, and the need to recruit sufficient staff for this purpose;
17. Is concerned to see a rationalization of the use of infra-structural services - such as telex, documentation - to facilitate the operation of the information services;
18. Calls emphatically for an intensive expansion of reception services for visitors as a means of organizing the Community-wide exercise of the European citizens' fundamental right of access to meetings of their Parliament; general information seminars for communicators should also be organized in the Secretariat and possibly elsewhere; points out that provision must now be made in the 1981 budget for the necessary funds, staff and office space and that the Directorate-General should bring the existing system and criteria as regards access and financing into line with the new requirements; and considers the consultation, and involvement of Members in all stages of the organization and execution of any such ventures as essential to their utility and success;

19. Feels that it is essential to afford extensive support, in particular financial support, to journalists and the media, to enable newspapers and broadcasting stations with limited means to enjoy access to Parliament's places of work and thereby guarantee coverage in the regional, local or specialized press; considers it necessary to establish a balanced set of criteria which take account of national practice to ensure a fair allocation of funds;
20. Calls for the creation of a system of permanent accreditation of journalists to the European Parliament, hopes that they will form an association to facilitate relations between the mass media and the Directorate-General for Information, and calls for close cooperation with the Association of European Parliamentary Journalists and the International Press Association;
21. Calls for the setting up of a sub-committee of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport which, in conjunction with the relevant officials, would maintain a constant reappraisal of the information policy of the European Parliament and its constantly changing requirements, and which would report regularly, with proposals for change, to both the Quaestors and the Committee;

III with regard to the information services of both the Commission and the European Parliament

22. Believes that progress towards European integration will require tangible political and economic achievements at Community level and that such achievements would be encouraged, inter alia, by a Community information policy which succeeds in informing the public at large in an intelligible manner about the importance and objectives of the European Community;
23. Believes that the current level of expenditure on information is totally inadequate and that without a significant increase in appropriations and staff the information services of both the Commission and the European Parliament will be unable to fulfil their present tasks satisfactorily, let alone expand their activities so as to provide more comprehensive information about priority areas; that these present tasks should be



expanded to give a greater concentration on regional information, as a means of making the public more aware of the actual and potential impact of Community policies on everyday life; and that budgetary resources should be earmarked on a necessary and increasing scale to take account of this expansion of work;

24. Calls for two separate annual reports on the activities of the Directorates-General for Information of the Commission and Parliament to be drawn up for the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport to provide Members with a detailed summary of activities in the various sectors.
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of its committee to the Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTASSESSMENT OF AND GUIDELINES FOR THE INFORMATION POLICY  
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITYINTRODUCTION

1. On 30 October 1979 the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport decided to submit to Parliament an own-initiative report containing an assessment of the information policy of the European Community pursued hitherto and guidelines for its future. In submitting this report the committee is in the first instance exercising the European Parliament's supervisory powers over the Commission. Executive and administrative responsibility for the dissemination of information on the general development of the Community and its institutions is vested in the Commission, which is politically accountable to Parliament in respect of its activities in this sector. Secondly, the report is intended to provide a precise framework for Parliament's own information activities, identify its own particular problems and define the role of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations.

The content, arrangement of material, form and scope of the report are based on the following principles:

A clear distinction must be drawn between the Commission's information policy and Parliament's specific role in the field of information. The difference is reflected in the objectives pursued, the volume of information put out, the appropriations earmarked and the guidelines laid down for the implementation of information policy by the Commissioners and the Bureau of Parliament respectively. However, the information activities of both institutions come within the committee's terms of reference, and the own-initiative report is accordingly split into two parts: the Commission's information policy and that of the European Parliament being dealt with in separate sections.

The information services of other institutions of the European Community with specific tasks (rulings of the Court of Justice, decisions of the Council, reports of the Court of Auditors) are not examined in the report. It would, however, be desirable for the European Investment

Bank to publish, as and when the occasion arises, reports on its wide-spread regional activities for the benefit of Members (Economic and Social Committee).

2. The rapporteur sees his task as follows:

- to describe the information activities of both institutions,
- to examine the scope of their tasks in some detail,
- to review critically the relationship between the tasks to be undertaken and the appropriations earmarked for them,
- to examine the organization and staffing of the respective information services and assess their suitability,
- to describe the information methods used by each institution and to assess their scope, effectiveness, quality and cost-benefit ratio,
- to make recommendations both of a fundamental nature (conclusions) and on specific matters, and
- to propose to the decision-making bodies of the two institutions measures relating to their information policy.

3. The detailed nature of this own-initiative report may at first seem surprising. This is not a matter of chance but of choice. The justification for this approach lies in the following circumstances:

- The first direct elections to the European Parliament ushered in a new phase in the development of the European Community. For the first time, and in line with the principles of the democratic separation of powers, Members of the European Parliament are in a position to exercise their right of supervision in accordance with the will of the people, to whom they are accountable. Since we are dealing with a political sphere of such importance to the people - namely the information supplied to it on the value of the European institutions and their present and future activities - Members are under a moral obligation to acquire a detailed insight into the information policy pursued by the two institutions in order to be able to subject it to a responsible scrutiny and assessment. In view of the extreme complexity of the subject, the organization and the problems encountered, it is felt that this report ought to provide all Members with an opportunity of acquiring a full insight into the information service of each institution. This is, furthermore, clearly in the interests of the Members themselves; as elected representatives they depend on the maximum amount of information on their activities being given to the electorate.

- The information services of both institutions will also be interested in a report by this committee containing an assessment of their activities from which they will gather that the committee has reviewed the whole gamut of their complex and in many cases totally different tasks in order to avoid making a superficial judgment and to draw up recommendations which even specialists in the field will recognize as well founded.
- Finally, account must be taken of the fact that during the last six years the Commission and Parliament have radically reformed their information policies, and that the reports submitted to Parliament by the committees concerned with the Commission's information policy have been limited to resolutions accompanied by relatively brief reports.

The first report of the directly elected European Parliament on information policy provides an opportunity for constructive criticism of the information policy of the European Community (Commission and Parliament). In this way the committee is taking this opportunity not only of acquiring detailed information on previous activity in this field but also, and in particular, of formulating proposals dictated by political necessities. This fundamental report on the Community's information policy provides a unique opportunity of consolidating the awareness of information problems on the part of everyone concerned and at the same time of plotting a course for the future.

The committee regards the document therefore as a fundamental report on the implementation of the information policy of the European Community after more than twenty years' development of the information services, covering all the experience acquired and lessons learned in that period. This report will mark the end of a phase of numerous trials and experiments in the field of information. At the same time the report will highlight the common elements of the objectives pursued by the Commission and the new directly elected Parliament with a view to the future shaping and implementation of information policy.

4. In connection with the recommendations put forward in the separate sections it is as well to call attention here and now to the situation that has arisen from the different ways in which information policy has developed over the years in the two institutions. Parliament's information service has been at a disadvantage by comparison with the Commission's. This stems from the fact that for decades the citizens of Europe regarded the Commission as the symbol and embodiment of European unification and accepted it as such, whereas until the first direct elections they were only dimly aware of the European Parliament since they had not been called upon personally to elect its Members. Now that that situation no longer applies, certain

conclusions must inevitably be drawn concerning the relationship between the information policies of the two institutions. In this report the committee expressly adopts this point of view.

5. The problem of the appropriations earmarked for the tasks to be carried out by the information services runs like a red thread through the whole report. Nonetheless, the committee considers that it is outside its terms of reference to draw conclusions of a budgetary nature in this report, apart from making the general point that if the information policies of the Commission and Parliament are to be fundamentally improved, a significantly larger appropriation will be required in the future, alongside other political, organizational and cost-benefit measures, if the objectives of the information policy are to be attained and not fall prey to half-measures. With effect from the 1981 budget, it will be up to the organs concerned with drawing up the budget, in conjunction with the committee responsible for information, to implement the recommendations of this committee designed to improve cost-effectiveness.

The committee considers itself under a special obligation, after it has submitted this report, to keep a close and permanent watch on the implementation of the numerous requests, recommendations and suggestions it has made and in due course to submit follow-up reports to Parliament.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND POLICY OF THE COMMISSION OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION

Assessment and recommendations

INTRODUCTION

6. The assessment of the Commission's information policy is based on
- the working documents of the European Parliament (reports drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth and the Political Affairs Committee) on
    - . the Commission's information programme for 1974-1975 (Doc. 106/74 - PE 36.607/fin.) of 27.5.74,
    - . the information programme for 1975 and the complementary information programme for 1975 (Doc. 45/75 - PE 40.243/fin.) of 5.5.75,
    - . the interim report on the Community's information policy with regard to preparations for the first direct elections (Doc. 526/76 - PE 47.390/fin.) of 27.1.77,
    - . the report on the Community's information policy, etc. (Doc. 93/77 - PE 48.667/fin.) of 10.5.77.
  - the report of the Commission Secretariat-General on the special programme for direct elections (SEC(79) 1215/2) of 20.7.79,
  - the speech delivered to the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport by the President of the Commission, Mr Roy Jenkins, on 22.11.79 (PE 62.916 of 4.2.80),
  - the Commission's information programme for 1980 (COM(79) 701 final) of 12.12.79,
  - the information programme of the Commission Secretariat-General for January to April 1980 (SEC(80) 53) of 22.1.80,
  - the outline budgetary programme for 1980 of the Commission's Directorate-General for Information (X/368/79-F) of December 1979.

The Commission's responsibilities in the field of information

7. Subject to normal parliamentary supervision, the Commission's first task is to inform all Community citizens of the underlying principles, procedures and objectives, as well as the current activities of the Community as a whole. For this purpose it must employ the most suitable and up-to-date methods of communication. In this general informative role neither the European Parliament nor the other Community institutions can take the Commission's place.

It must be provided with the means to enable it to perform this task. The twofold objective is to disseminate information to the widest possible public and provide regular briefings for groups and individuals in a position to influence public opinion.

The Commission - again subject to Parliament's political supervision - is also responsible for information and public relations in respect of third countries. Here there can be no question of disseminating information among the ordinary citizens of these countries. Instead, national agencies and mass media have to be provided with information and literature through the local information offices acting in close conjunction with the Community delegations and the diplomatic corps of the Member States. Every assistance must be given to promote research and studies on the Community in third countries, both in the form of documentation and by establishing appropriate contacts. Public relations methods must also be used to promote understanding and support for the aims and work of the Community. The information offices are playing a role of special importance in the applicant countries. They have the job of preparing public opinion and the nation at large for membership.

8. In the following pages the committee examines, in a spirit of constructive criticism, how far the Commission's Directorate-General X - Spokesman's Group and Information - has proved and, more important, is proving equal to its task. Generally speaking, this report can do no more than stimulate further thinking on the subject. If it succeeds in mobilizing support for its criticisms among those in the Directorate-General responsible for the Commission's information policy, so that they look on its recommendations as an aid to their work, transforming the ideas suggested into future proposals and actions of their own, the report will have served its purpose.

THE COMMISSION'S INFORMATION POLICY - ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission's information services in Brussels

- Present situation and future scope -

9. Comments on the evolution of information policy

The present state of the Commission's information policy cannot be properly assessed without looking back at the way in which it has evolved over the past decades. The original, basically sound, objective of the early years, namely to establish, with the setting-up of the Directorate-General for Information, an integrated and coordinated information service, whose policies and activities would be open to scrutiny, has suffered some political and administrative interference. This was understandable enough, given the situation at the time and the short-term political aim, and should not be condemned. Nonetheless, it was of such a kind as to undermine to some extent the objective of an integrated approach and therefore prevent information work from being as effective as it should. Similar conclusions are to be found in the Spierenberg report and in that of the 'Three Wise Men'. Organizational changes affecting policy implementation and involving changes in the assignment of responsibilities within the information services, as well as occasional shifts of emphasis in the choice of methods and media, have prevented the achievement of optimal results.

An additional problem has been the attitude of the individual Member States to information policy. The governments have not shown much enthusiasm - to put it mildly - for disseminating information on the European institutions or allowing it to be disseminated, although attitudes have varied considerably from one country to another. In a few cases they have amounted to outright non-cooperation.

Any examination of the history of the Commission's information policy and assessment of its present effectiveness must be based on two aspects:

- The Commission's task:

this is formulated in broad terms and without restrictions in the Community treaties, namely to develop a comprehensive information policy for the Community.

- The administrative resources available (money, organization, staff and material facilities):

up to now, there has been a fixed amount of money available for information and, while it is not the committee's task to consider budgetary aspects here, money has imposed certain constraints on the other three factors.



## Organization

10. From the beginning the Commission has maintained two services in Brussels to implement its policy: the Spokesman's Group and the Directorate-General for Information.

It must be noted with regret that these two services have, in the main, worked independently of each other, with only minimal cooperation. This is not the way to achieve the integrated approach originally intended.

11. The Spokesman's Group's task is to keep the 300 or so press, radio and TV reporters accredited to the Community institutions in Brussels informed of current events in Europe.

The original practice of having national spokesmen has lapsed. Instead, the spokesmen are assigned particular areas of responsibility - a welcome development.

Given the technical facilities and staff that the Spokesman's Group has had at its disposal, it may be said that it has performed its task as well as could be expected and the impact of the information supplied by it has been relatively satisfactory - only relatively, because it has to cope with a number of special problems.

The accredited newsmen come mainly from the nine Member States, but also from many other countries. They include reporters from the major press agencies, newspapers and radio and television networks.

Those from the European agencies such as 'Agence-Europe', VWD (daily) and 'Europolitique', as well as weekly agencies like 'Agrar-Europe' are particularly important. The latter give daily detailed reports on the European institutions and national events concerning the Community.

The list of subscribers to these publications is, however, very limited (large firms, lobbies, ministries, industrial organizations and individual daily newspapers).

It has become increasingly difficult for the accredited reporters to secure space in their parent publications for matters connected with the Community and its institutions. By and large, the frequency of reports on Europe in the daily press has declined over the last few years.

Mention has already been made of the reserved, even negative, attitude of the national authorities to information policy. The Commission cannot be blamed for this; it is, indeed, the main cause of its difficulties.

One result is that even on television, most European reports are about the European Council and its meetings. This is of only limited value in promoting the idea of European integration.

It is evident that the Commission's information policy has not yet succeeded in arresting the decline in topicality of European integration, let alone ensuring, as it must, a steady increase in interest among ordinary people.

It is recommended that the Commission look into this problem, which to a large extent explains the limited impact of the Spokesman's Group's work, and work out appropriate remedies in cooperation with the national agencies concerned.

12. The task of the Directorate-General for Information is primarily to publicize the fundamental importance of the Commission and its activities for the development of the Community, making use of the available background information. This includes detailed information on all the policy areas concerned, the CAP, energy policy, development policy, social policy, monetary policy and policies on women's affairs, young people and universities, industry and research, consumer affairs, transport, etc.

The Directorate-General also has to establish and maintain contacts with leading national and European organizations in the Community, Europe Houses, political parties and unions, working through the press offices of these bodies.

It provides display material for fairs and exhibitions in the Member States and non-Community countries.

It also receives groups and individual visitors at the Community's places of work and prepares programmes for them.

Finally, the Directorate-General for Information draws up information programmes and campaigns, acting in collaboration with the press and information offices in the Member States.

To sum up, in contrast to the Spokesman's Group's role of furnishing information on current events, it is the task of the Directorate-General for Information to spread understanding of the Community and its policies among the ordinary citizens of the Member States as well as in third countries. Its work must be judged by the extent to which this objective is achieved.

13. In comparing the two services - Spokesman's Group and the Directorate-General - it must be said that in matters of organization, technical facilities and staff, the Commission has sought constantly to enhance the importance of the Spokesman's Group, while the influence of the Directorate-General has declined. This is understandable in view of the Commissioners' need for publicity on topics of the day, but will ultimately alter the balance between these services to the detriment of information work as a whole.

In view of the Commission's fundamental task, efforts should be centred on increasing the impact of the Directorate-General's work.

That this has not happened is due mainly to undesirable developments and deficiencies in organization.

14. In 1977 the Commission, fully in accordance with the original intention, brought the staff of the Spokesman's Group and the Directorate-General for Information together under the Director-General of Information.

The committee acknowledges the reasoning behind the decision to bring all the information staff under a single person directly answerable to the President of the Commission.

This move presupposes, however, that as the person with overall responsibility for the Commission's information policy, the Director-General appreciates the essential nature and tasks of the services placed in his charge and deploys them in a manner befitting their importance.

Up to now, however, it has not been possible to expand the work of the central services of the Directorate-General and make it more effective. On the contrary, the Directorate-General has been weakened both structurally and as regards staffing. The idea of a reform based on decentralization was adopted. A list was drawn up of officials willing to give up their jobs in information and transfer to other directorates-general.

In addition, the number of external staff had to be increased with the opening of new offices in the Member States (Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast), in the applicant states (Lisbon, Madrid, Athens) and in some associated and third countries (e.g. Ankara). The balance between the two directorates, 'centralized' and 'decentralized' information, shifted in favour of the latter. The implications of this for the administration of the external offices must not be overlooked.

For understandable budgetary reasons (the need to keep to the establishment plan) these developments led to a visible decline in the amount of

attention paid to information policy in certain Commission departments. Most important, the service which until then had been the strongest and most effective, that dealing with agricultural information, was almost completely dismantled.

The overall effectiveness of Directorate-General X - Information - was weakened by this idea of decentralizing certain services. The Agricultural Information Division was turned into a small subdivision in DG VI - Agriculture, and the Youth and Universities Division was transferred to DG XII - Research Science and Education. Individual officials were moved from certain information services of DG X to other directorates-general (DG I - External Relations, DG IX - Personnel and Administration, and DG XII - Research, Science and Education).

The inevitable result of these changes was that the officials who had been transferred now found themselves very largely isolated, compelled to fight for the cause on their own, cut off from the guidelines issued in DG X and unable to ensure optimal results from their work.

In principle, the Commission's aim of decentralization can be supported on certain conditions, that is to say, if the establishment plan allows for both a well-staffed, effective central service and well-staffed divisions in the individual policy-making directorates-general. Then it would only be a matter of these divisions succeeding in putting their views over in their directorates-general and working in close conjunction with the central services, to produce an information policy with a wide impact but directed from a single centre.

Because of the meagre establishment plan these preconditions for successful decentralization are not met. So this reform has got stuck halfway. The division responsible for information to trade unions was able to resist attempts to transfer it to DG V - Social Affairs - because of union opposition, but it is now incongruously combined with consumer groups and women's organizations. The division responsible for information to developing countries was not transferred to DG VIII - Development - because the Commissioner responsible feared it would mean loss of independence in regard to information policy.

#### Problems of decentralization

15. After considering these organizational efforts by the Commission and developments to date, we may say that decentralizing the information services may be useful, provided that:

- it is based on adequate staffing as described above;
- it is carried out systematically in all policy sectors, regardless of sectoral opposition,

- there is a permanent central liaison service responsible for issuing instructions and coordinating the work of the central Directorate-General for Information and the information divisions transferred elsewhere.

None of these three criteria are satisfied at present.

Accordingly, the process of decentralization had to stop halfway, with inevitably adverse results:

- the weakening, not to say tearing apart of DG X;
- lack of safeguards and inadequate supervision by those in charge of information of the work of the individual services scattered among other DGs;
- the isolation of the 'milieu' policies (such as agriculture, youth and universities) since their DGs are naturally not geared to considering matters from the angle of information;
- greater autonomy for the external offices in the nine Member States, since these offices, which are executive bodies of the Commission, can no longer be supplied with as much information on all sectors as before.

The present problems are aggravated by the fact that the need and demand for information has increased. To take one example, it is hardly conducive to efficiency to remove the information service covering youth and universities from the central Directorate-General just when young people, most of all, are to be won over to the European ideal.

Even in the greater autonomy of the external offices we must note an ultimately dangerous trend towards the 're-nationalization' of an information policy originally conceived in Community terms in the interests of European integration.

There can be no doubt that the Commission has recognized this danger and attempted to counter it by staffing measures (see point 16).

In conclusion, it is recommended that the Commission examine, in cooperation with the committee's working party on information, the implications of recent developments noted in this report and work out, on the basis of the budgetary funds available, a new approach to organization to achieve optimal results from its information work.

## 16. Staffing

Apart from organization, the other crucial factor is staff. The most important principle must be to fill the top managerial posts in the information services and those of the heads of divisions which come

directly under them with people with expert knowledge of information and public relations work. It hardly needs stressing that appointments to these posts based on national or party-political preference are not conducive to a balanced policy.

Whether this principle has always been observed - save in the early years and in the case of the Spokesman's Group, the impact of whose work has, not surprisingly, been more satisfactory than that of other services - is a question the Commission is seriously urged to examine. A lack of relevant experience on the part of top officials in the information services or the sifting out the experienced journalists from the central service and their subsequent posting elsewhere must in the long run diminish efficiency at the centre. Even in the first campaign organized jointly by the Commission and Parliament in preparation for direct elections, the vested interests of the Member States were so much to the fore that it proved impossible to have a centrally directed information service, although this was hardly the fault of the Community's information policy.

17. The trend towards 're-nationalization' of the external offices was recognized by the Commission in good time.

In September 1978 it was decided that the heads of the fourteen press and information offices in the Member States and all other officials employed there should be changed every three years.

The value of a regular inter-change of staff between the centre in Brussels and the external offices cannot be challenged. It would be wrong to have the heads of the external offices and the heads of division at the centre occupying these posts permanently.

Unfortunately, the resistance of the external office heads to transfer has been so great that so far only one has moved. For the Commission to tolerate this state of affairs would mean the loss of a principle which is recognized as sound. To try to get round the problem by recalling the lower grades from the external offices to the centre cannot be regarded as a satisfactory solution.

With regard to the three-year tour of duty, the Commission should examine whether a longer period, say five to six years, would not be preferable. Information work requires a thorough knowledge of the local conditions, which are totally different in each Member State. This familiarizing process alone takes between one and two years.

18. Other essential factors in the success of information policy are content and means.

19. It is understandable that in previous years the first task was to provide those sections of the population directly affected by the policy-implementing measures of the Council and Commission with relevant information. That applied particularly to all measures relating to the common agricultural market, but also to the introduction of measures and programmes for other groups, such as young people, women, trade unions and so on.

With the inevitable introduction of a new key principle of the Commission's information policy, namely, to promote general understanding among Europe's citizens of the significance of a united Europe and the individual steps which have to be taken by the executive for this purpose, there was a switch in emphasis.

The Commission's proper recognition that changes were required is to be welcomed. It should continue along those lines, taking care to ensure, however, that

- the specialized information for sections of the population affected by Community measures remains adequate,
- the content of the publications issued by the Commission for wider publicity does not become trivialized and therefore pointless.

It is also important for wider publicity that the latter approach (explaining the need for European policy in simple terms) should not exclude the former (detailed specialized information for the important sectors involved in integration).

It is self-evident that this stipulation entails an increase in financial resources for the Commission's information policy.

#### Instruments - Spokesman's Group

20. Responsibility for developing and using appropriate instruments is divided between the Spokesman's Group and the Directorate-General for Information.

For its threefold task the Spokesman's Group employs the following means:

- short reports on current events and communications to the three hundred or so accredited journalists in Brussels. These short reports are forwarded direct to journalists and supplementary questions answered. Publications (brochures, etc.) are not produced by the Spokesman's Group;

- telexes, also called 'bio-notes' to the external offices. These are sent out daily both within the Community and overseas. They report on the Commission's day-to-day work, its proposals, and the results of Council meetings;
- the Radio, Television and Films Division is equipped with full technical facilities, including studios. It was transferred in 1979 from the central directorate and merged with the Spokesman's Group (as a separate unit) in a new Media Directorate. This move is appropriate since it makes for coordination and helps output on current events, to be stepped up.

In future this division must be more effective in measuring up to one of the major principles of modern information policy, namely to influence a wide radio and television audience directly.

The division has a fully equipped mini-TV station which is linked directly to Eurovision and is, indeed, worth about 50 million Belgian francs. But it is used far too little by the European TV correspondents in Brussels and even by the Commission services. What is potentially one of the best instruments for competing in the information field and assisting in the public relations effort for the benefit of the Commission's services remains largely unexploited.

The Commission should be urged to expand the work of the Radio, Television and Films Division to include essential new activities. Some proposals are:

- closer cooperation with the TV stations, which are all in financial difficulty and would welcome some support of a technical and 'intellectual' kind;
- possibility of producing video-cassettes on subjects of current interest in all Community languages. This could be substantially expanded at relatively little cost and in cooperation with European professional, political and educational organizations of various kinds (introduction of an audio-visual network to provide information on Europe for schools and colleges);
- use by Members of the European Parliament and the political groups for contacts with their constituents.

#### Instruments - Directorate-General for Information

21. Since the reorganization of 1978/79 the Directorate-General has been responsible for internal and external information. The latter is produced by the external offices in the different Member States. (See point 22 for further details).



In 1980 internal publications will account for approximately 31% of the information policy budget. The most important is 'Euroforum', which used to appear weekly but now appears every fortnight. In addition, the Directorate-General deals with information for groups of visitors and conferences. In this it is assisted by the visitors' service which arranges talks by some of the divisions (Agricultural Information, Trade Unions, Women and Consumers and Development - information for the third world). These divisions also produce publications of their own. As mentioned under point 14, the former Agricultural Information and Youth and Universities Divisions were transferred from Directorate-General X to others (DG VI and DG XII). The result is that the Agricultural Information Division now produces its own publications within the Directorate-General for Agriculture.

22. An evaluation of the various information instruments used shows that hitherto there has been no adequate coordination between Directorate-General X (Information), Directorate-General IX (Administration), the various other directorates-general of the Commission and the Publications Office in Luxembourg. Separate information material now been produced edited and distributed by all these departments, involving an enormous amount of work which could be much reduced if all publication activities were coordinated centrally.

A further result is that the material cannot really be adjusted to demand, no general guidelines are laid down and available resources are not used rationally.

In the case of the external offices, the current dispute about the value of publishing independent national magazines has still not been settled. The Commission ought to come to a decision on this matter rapidly; in principle it is recommended that a separate magazine be published in each country, based on central guidelines, because of the different circumstances obtaining in the various countries concerned (cf. point 29)

#### External offices

23. The Commission of the European Communities has a press and information office in the capital of each of the nine Member States. In order to take account of special regional conditions, regional sub-offices have been set up in the United Kingdom and in the Federal Republic of Germany in addition to the main offices in London and Bonn. There are regional sub-offices in Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff and Berlin. The committee fully agrees with the Commission that because of the good results produced by regional information services, sub-offices should also be

set up in the other Member States. For a variety of reasons connected with conditions within Germany there is a very good case for setting up two sub-offices in Germany, one in the north and one in the south. With a view to reinforcing EEC information policy in France and Italy, it is strongly recommended that sub-offices be set up there, for example one in Bordeaux, one in northern and one in southern Italy. Because of the urgent need to extend the range of information activities in the European Community, and since at present no provision is made for this, the committee calls for the appropriate financial resources to be entered in the 1982 budget.

Offices have now been set up in the applicant countries Greece (Athens), Spain (Madrid) and Portugal (Lisbon). We agree entirely with this. An office should also be set up in Ankara, since the Turkish Government wishes Turkey to join the Community.

An information officer has been appointed in most of the Community's major diplomatic missions in third countries, for example at the International Authorities (GATT) in Geneva, in Washington, New York, Ottawa, Tokyo and Bangkok.

Yet the European Community only has one press and information office for the whole of South America (in Caracas, Venezuela). In view of the importance of that area, information activities in South America should be stepped up.

It is recommended that the Commission draw up a long-term plan of the further offices required for the provision of more extensive information about Europe. The expression of this intention in the Information Programme for 1980 is welcome.

Such a plan would give a clear idea of the funds required for the external offices to carry out all their tasks so that these resources could be entered promptly in the budgets.

It must be pointed out that even now the staffing of the offices has proved inadequate, especially in the small offices in The Hague and Luxembourg. Both these cities harbour a number of European institutions which must not be left in an informational limbo.

#### Tasks and activities of the external offices

24. The tasks of the external offices (main offices) in the individual countries are as follows:

- to act as centres in the Member States to which anyone who requires information of any kind on European affairs can turn and where their requests are answered directly or forwarded elsewhere;

- to carry out the European Community's information policy and reflect in miniature all the activities of the Commission's Directorate-General for Information;
- to represent the Commission of the European Communities in the capitals and act as points of contact with the respective national authorities and institutions.

In view of these tasks the Members of the Commission and its senior officials should use the services of the external offices when they visit the national governments - a practice not always followed hitherto;

- to act as an instrument to disseminate European ideas, thought and documentation among all interested bodies in the respective countries;
- to provide information to the Commission by continuously reporting back to the appropriate departments on all internal developments in the Member States relevant to European policy (feedback);
- to keep in close contact with the respective national press and media organizations.

This last task is particularly important, and in this connection it is necessary to ensure that the heads and staff appointed to the external offices are highly competent and thoroughly acquainted with the local situation.

In view of these tasks, it is clear that the staff of the national information offices must be 'all-rounders' combining a general knowledge of the Commission's major activities with political commitment and journalistic experience. Future staffing plans should be based on this important principle.

#### Present situation of the external offices

25. The effectiveness of the press and information offices in the Member States still varies greatly. There is also a wide variation in the numbers of staff employed, even in the larger offices (e.g. Paris, London, Bonn and Rome).

Although obviously a larger number of staff does not necessarily mean higher quality work, the Commission should take the appropriate staffing, financial and political measures to help those offices which hitherto have proved less efficient than others. It is clear that historical reasons closely bound up with the history of the establishment of the Community explain why some offices operate less effectively than others.

The Commission should, however, combat any tendency to preserve outdated structures or approaches to the tasks set by the external offices and, in particular, break down any resistance to change shown by the staff.

26. The internal office structure and the allocation of tasks among the staff must therefore be clearly defined and the information policy pursued by the external offices must follow the same lines as that of the Brussels headquarters.

It is recommended that the Commission draw up appropriate establishment plans and staff directives for the external offices which take full account of national and regional factors and may therefore differ from office to office.

27. The measures to decentralize the Commission's information policy described in point 14 necessarily affected the information offices in the Member States as well. In the past nearly all the information material was produced in Brussels, but recently the external offices have begun to produce their own material.

In principle this is welcome, since it will ensure that the information is effective in spite of the very different national conditions. But the Commission has yet to find an acceptable compromise in the fixing of priorities. The priorities of the European Community must not take second place to national priorities.

28. Given the modest funds at their disposal, the external offices should seek ways and means of financing their activities from sources within the country concerned. Successful examples of this are exhibitions organized by large industrial undertakings.

29. The information activities in the capitals must be coordinated and agreed in Brussels. Differences of opinion on this between senior information officials in Brussels and the heads of the external offices should be clarified and settled in order to achieve a more uniform approach in all the offices concerned.

For example, Brussels and some of the external offices differ as to whether each office should publish its own magazine or indeed whether such magazines should be printed and published at all.

The first solution seems more appropriate since national 'Europe' magazines are more likely to have a wide circulation and at the same time can take account of national and regional differences.

The decisive factor here is, however, that such a magazine must be produced with sufficient journalistic expertise. Rather no magazine at all than a boring magazine that no one reads. Of course this depends largely on making the necessary funds available.

Lastly, consideration should be given to the question whether all information material published by the external offices should on principle be produced by them on their own. In some cases it might be more sensible to contract out certain types of production. This applies particularly to films, which may gain in topicality and effectiveness if produced by private companies rather than being handed down from the remote heights of Brussels.

30. In summary, it must be noted that since the direct election of the European Parliament the citizens of Europe expect more information on their Europe, clearly remembering the pre-election promises of their MEPs. The information produced by the external offices plays an important role here.

These expectations can be met only if the Community steps up its information policy. Beside the undeniable need to increase the budget appropriations allocated to the external offices, there must be more effective coordination and close and continuous contacts and exchanges of view between Brussels and the external offices regarding their various requirements.

Annex I to the Information Programme for January to April 1980 of the Secretariat General of the Commission of 22 January 1980 may be regarded as a step in the right direction. The annex sets out the detailed financial and practical objectives and gives precise details of the information methods and media to be used. It also lays down management instructions for the external offices which ensure coordination between them and Brussels.

Principal conclusions

31. The substance of the Commission's Information Programme for 1980 (COM(79) 701 final), except for the organizational structure of the agricultural information unit in the Directorate-General for Agriculture, may be fully endorsed. Without wishing to repeat the detailed findings and objectives set out in the Information Programme for 1980, the committee expresses its agreement with the following in particular:
- the realization that there is a growing demand for information about the Community in the Member States, the applicant countries and the Third World;
  - the requested increase in appropriations for 1980 (Item 2720 of the budget) from 7.5 million EUA to 9 million EUA;
  - the call for information activities to be concentrated mainly in the Member States;
  - the recognition of the crucial importance of the mass media for communicating with the general public;
  - the setting up of a new Media Directorate bringing together the Spokesman's Group and the Radio, Television and Films Division, and increasing the funds earmarked for these priority information activities;
  - extending the relations between the external offices and the media of their respective countries;
  - increased information activities directed at important formers of opinion in national institutions and organizations;
  - reorganizing the information services to form a single unit within the Commission;
  - further extending the network of external offices;
  - making the publications programme shorter and of higher quality.
32. The Commission is correct in its view that the main dilemma of the Commission's information policy lies in the discrepancy between the information work to be carried out by the Commission and financial and political reality. The theory that providing information on the Community is vital for both the Commission and Parliament is quite inconsistent with the political, practical and financial facts.

33. Politically, the Community has not been willing hitherto to allocate anything like adequate funds for information in priority areas such as social policy, energy policy and regional policy. Only if the Commission and Parliament make joint efforts in the next few years by constantly appealing to forces in the Council concerned with building Europe and to pro-European national parties, institutions and public opinion, which in turn will influence their national governments, can they bring about any change in its capacity as Parliament's committee responsible for information policy. The committee will pay particular attention to this task and it requests the Commission to cooperate closely with it and put forward proposals on a continuous basis.

34. It is in practice impossible to reach the citizens of Europe with the information produced by the European Community. This is demonstrated by the fact that the German press offices and Federal ministries allocate an overall budget of DM 130 million on information for the citizens of the Federal Republic, of which as much as DM 82 million is earmarked for activities abroad. In addition, Germany earmarks funds for regional press offices, ministries and many other organizations.

By contrast, the Commission's budget for its external office in Bonn is DM 3 million. This shows that at best the Commission can only reach opinion formers in the Community countries while at the same time attempting to establish a niche for itself in national coverage of topical issues.

This leads to the following inevitable conclusions:

in the past the Commission often tried to undertake too many activities at the same time with very modest funds and staff, so we welcome the fact that since 1977 and in its Information Programme for 1980 and the most recent guidelines for the Information Programme for January to April 1980, the Directorate-General for Information has set out clear priorities and is allocating the limited resources carefully. The headings it has defined - mass media (Press, radio and television), opinion formers (politicians, Members of Parliament/leading members of large organizations) and topical activities on specific issues - provide the only practical way of making the best of the given financial situation.

There can be no doubt that at present there is probably no other sensible way of allocating the existing resources.

In the existing situation it is impossible to launch genuine 'information campaigns'. However desirable continuous 'propaganda for Europe' between European elections might be, mass publicity (e.g. advertisements, literature through the post, etc.) is out of the question for financial reasons.

The Commission's decision to concentrate information policy within the Community must also be recognized as sound. The European Community's information policy cannot aim at producing considerably less information within the Community than outside it. Satisfying the demand of the citizens of Europe for better information about the supranational, growing unification of Europe must take precedence over providing information for the world at large outside the European Community.

35. Financially, the Commission - and the committee - is faced with a major problem if it wishes to implement an information policy in line with its mandate. Even if existing budget appropriations were tripled, which is not feasible for political reasons at this stage, the funds allocated for the external offices in the various capitals and for the Commission's regional activities would not be nearly sufficient to produce any lasting, wide-ranging and in-depth effect. It is even doubtful whether the objective of bringing Europe closer to its citizens can be achieved by monetary means at all. Only tangible political results, comprehensible to the individual citizen and with an obvious effect on his living conditions, can create that broad consensus that is needed as an impetus for the Europe of the future. In this context, the Commission's and Parliament's information policies have only an auxiliary role to play - albeit an essential one. So under present circumstances the committee's assessment and recommendations are aimed mainly at the achievement by the Commission of better informational results with the available funds. It welcomes those Commission measures and aims in this area which clearly coincide with the committee's views. Special emphasis can be placed on:

- putting an end to the variable and often sporadic utilization of information instruments,
- ensuring continuity of publications and avoiding changes to titles once introduced,
- increased use of up-to-date technical processes and rational use of existing technical aids.



As regards the allocation of existing resources, the Commission's decision for 1980 to allocate 39% of appropriations to publications by the external offices, 31% to information activities in Brussels and 30% to activities carried out by the press offices in non-Community countries may be endorsed.

Great importance should be attached to the elimination of the shortcomings in the organization of the Commission's information activities which have come to light in the past and present. (For details, see points 10 et seq.). Since it is not possible to alter the financial situation, the attempts by Brussels to decentralize information activities, which began some years ago, must be regarded as a dead end.

The Commission has obviously realized this, changed course and placed greater emphasis on centralized organization again. More specifically it is recommended that further organizational measures be taken as a matter of urgency.

36. The fusion of the posts of Director-General of Directorate-General X and the chairman of the Spokesman's Group should be revoked so that a balance can be established between these two different functions. For staffing and operational reasons it is understandable, for instance, that the chairman of the board of a large firm, who is also head of the personnel department, whereas the purchasing, sales, finance and production departments are each run by a separate member of the board, should devote more attention to personnel, to the detriment of other equally important departments, than he would do if he were in charge of and therefore felt equally responsible for all the departments. We described the drawbacks of the current chain of command under point 13.

The Commission is therefore advised to give the Spokesman's Group its own chairman who would be a Director under Director-General X; the Group would thus be a separate directorate like those for centralized and decentralized information activity. This is particularly necessary now that the Commission has decided to set up a Media Directorate, which we welcome, bringing together the Spokesman's Group and the Radio, Television and Films Division. This in no way impinges on the principle that the activities of the Spokesman's Group are independent of the information activity of Directorate-General X. On the contrary, their independent activities will complement their information tasks, and this must be to the benefit of the Commission's overall information strategy.

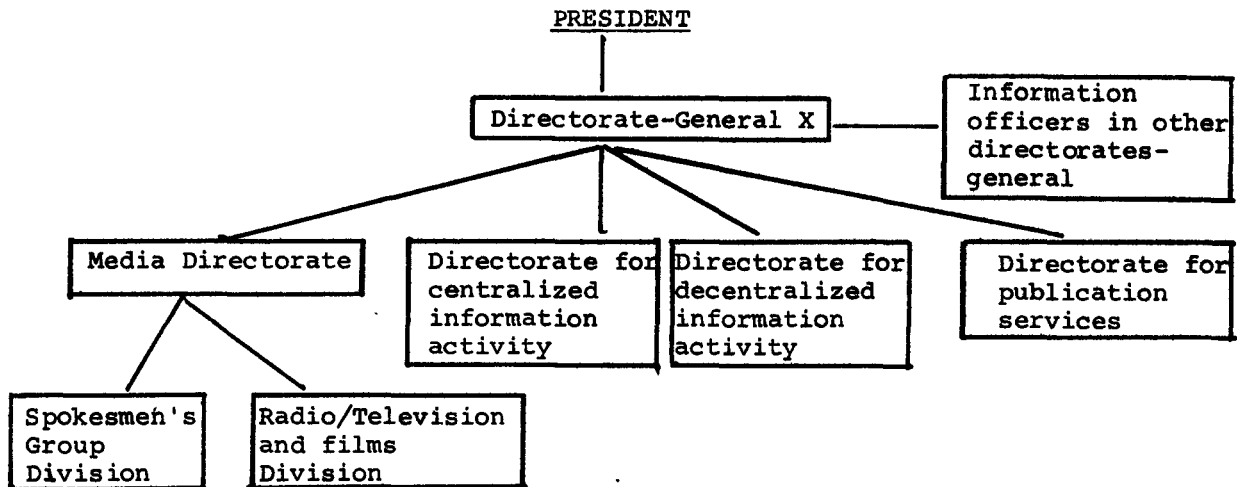
One alternative would be to appoint a deputy to the Director-General in DG X, whose main duties also involved those of Head of the Spokesman's Group. The Deputy Director-General's main responsibility would be to

head the central information office, and he would be an expert in the fields of internal and external information.

37. We also urgently recommend that the publication services required to carry out the Commission's information activities in general should be returned to Directorate-General X, as a separate directorate on an equal footing with the others, even though its primary function is not to produce information but to provide a technical and staff back-up for the production of information. Their present subordination to Directorate-General IX, which is concerned with administration and not information, must be changed. This is in line with the Commission's own expressed aim to centralize all individual services connected with information policy. If the publication services returned to DG X this would lead to more efficient production of information and satisfy the need for the greatest possible economy; in short, it would make the services more cost-effective.

However, this does not apply to the publication of the monthly and annual reports, which could remain the responsibility of Directorate-General IX. If the Community is to have a uniform information strategy, the present widely dispersed sources publishing the various information brochures must be concentrated in one place. For instance 'Documentation européenne' is produced independently of the Directorate-General for Information by the Directorate-General for Administration (IX), and this obviously detracts from the uniformity of information publications. In this context we must draw attention to the inherent need for continuity of publication, which means retaining titles of proven value and ensuring they appear on a regular basis - in spite of the importance of flexibility and the ability to adapt to unexpected events. Failing this kind of continuity, the consumer will become confused and lose interest.

Consideration could therefore be given to the merits of organizing Directorate-General X on the basis of the following establishment plan:



38. The rapporteur cannot agree with the Commission's decision to take the agricultural information unit out of the Directorate for centralized information activity and put it under Directorate-General VI. The reasons are set out under point 18. Even if the Commission's original intention to decentralize its information services could not be carried through, with all the drawbacks this involved, at least the present welcome decision to recentralize these services should be implemented consistently and without prejudicial exceptions. This step is the right one in terms of the future, especially now that the European Community has moved past the stage of a primarily agricultural Community and is approaching the stage of attributing equal importance to a variety of policies. The fact that at present the Community still allocates the lion's share of its budget to agriculture must not deflect our sights from a future in which it will assume tasks of more general political scope.

39. With a view to centralizing the information activities in Directorate-General X while at the same time coordinating the information on all the Commission's topical and longer-term political activities, it would be most welcome if an information officer from Directorate-General X were appointed to every politically relevant directorate-general. They are the authorized channels and act as spokesmen for the wishes and aims of their directorate-general vis-à-vis Directorate-General X, and for the Directorate-General for Information vis-à-vis the other politically relevant directorates-general, in the sense that they can say what information activity is feasible and what is acceptable in terms of a uniform information policy. This requires continuous if not daily exchanges of views with the directorates of Directorate-General X. This kind of horizontal and vertical integration (cf. point 37) of all the

information services would crown the efforts to consolidate and concentrate the organization of information policy. Only in such a way can the Directorate-General for Information always have advance knowledge of longer-term prospects in all areas and of ongoing topical information activities. The information officers in the various directorates-general must therefore know what is happening in their directorate-general. They must not stand apart but must act from inside.

40. The importance of broadening the technical back-up infrastructure must not be underestimated. Under point 37 we described how this back-up could be incorporated in the Radio, Television and Films Division of the Media Directorate and the new Directorate for Publication Services that is to be set up.

The existing technical facilities, such as computers, radio and television studio, telecopiers and so forth must be used more efficiently and made accessible to all so as to provide more value for the money spent (cf. point 20).

41. As regards filling senior posts in the information sector, emphasis must be laid on the drawbacks of a quick staff turnover and lack of qualifications, training and experience in information. Notwithstanding the merits of scientists and senior diplomats, the job of information officer requires dynamism, ability to work well with the public and journalistic experience, qualities which are associated with other activities to a much lesser extent, if at all. The efficiency and effectiveness of any organization depend on the specific qualities of the management. It is imperative that this principle be observed when future posts are filled.

42. Furthermore, the committee points to the importance of ensuring adequate coordination and exchange of ideas between the Commission's and the European Parliament's information policies, within certain limits of course. Even if the two institutions have quite independent and separate tasks, they share the same aim: to inform the citizens of Europe and make them more aware of the activities required to create a genuine European Community.

It is important for both institutions that their activities should not be carried out in the abstract and be regarded by the citizens as taking place in a vacuum and therefore incomprehensible and largely useless. The committee therefore now calls upon both institutions to draw up an outline of future joint activities in areas considered of value by both institutions, and to report back to the committee on this.

43. Lastly, the committee itself also has the task of keeping in constant contact with the major information services, in view of the importance of information policy to the European Community.

This would include the following:

- participating in a briefing of the Commission's Spokesman's Group,
  - inspecting Directorate-General X's technical infrastructure,
  - viewing the material produced to date by the Radio, Television and Films Division,
  - familiarity with all existing printed material, brochures, posters, etc.,
  - occasional exchanges of view with the Director-General and Directors of Directorate-General X.
- 
- visits to the European Community's main external offices,
  - occasional participation by representatives in the programmes of the visitors' groups in Brussels,
  - participation in conferences and symposia on political information,
  - contacts with representatives of the mass media and journalists in Brussels and Strasbourg.

Such closer contacts will give the committee in-depth knowledge of the way the Commission plans and carries out its information policy and lead to a fruitful exchange of views between the Commission and the European Parliament on all questions connected with information policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION

Assessment of results to date and recommendations for the  
shaping of the information policy

Introduction - points of reference of the report

44. This assessment of Parliament's information policy is based on
- the final report of the Working Party on Information to the enlarged Bureau of Parliament of 24 February 1977 (Doc. PE 47.636/fin.),
  - the introductory talk delivered to the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport at its meeting of 2 October 1979 by the Director-General for Information and Public Relations (Doc. PE 59.985/Ann.IV).

The subsequent part of the report aims:

- to determine and assess Parliament's specific information responsibilities,
  - to describe and examine in a spirit of constructive criticism the information policy work accomplished by the information services of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations,
  - to put forward proposals, in agreement with the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations, for improving and strengthening Parliament's information policy, and
  - to submit them to the Bureau of Parliament as the committee's recommendations.
45. The basic points of departure for assessing and examining Parliament's information policy are the following facts:

In past years the staffing and financial resources of the European Parliament's information services were about one tenth of the resources allocated to the information policy carried out by the Commission on behalf of the European Community.

This was justifiable in the past because as long as the European Parliament was an Assembly of Members who were not directly elected, the Commission had almost exclusive responsibility for the vital task of Community information policy, that is to say to inform the European citizens of all the Member States about the growth, structure and future of the European Community. If we define the Commission's information responsibilities in these terms, and if the primary task of the Commission's information services is therefore

- in general, to clarify for the general public the executive and legislative measures taken by the Council and the Commission with a view to the integration and further development of the European Community towards European Union, and
- in particular to explain and make comprehensible to specific social groups individual measures taken by the Council and the Commission in sectoral policy areas,

then the primary task of the directly elected European Parliament's information services must be

- to show how Parliament, on an equal footing with the Commission of the European Community, participates in the Community's short and long-term activities both as regards the general shaping of a European future and in sectoral policy areas, and
- to give the publicity that is due to a parliament about the activities of the directly elected members of the European Parliament in their constituencies or regions.

All the information activities of Parliament's information services must therefore be guided by the following first principle:

How can the work of Parliament be presented to the wider public in concrete and interesting terms?

What do the Members of Parliament do?

How do they do it? Why do they do it?

In future, the primary task of the directly elected Parliament's information services must therefore be to use the instruments of information and public relations in order to provide adequate information to the citizens of the European Community about the part played by the European Parliament and its Members.

The assessment and recommendations in respect of the European Parliament's information policy must take account of this fundamental objective. At the same time, emphasis must be placed even at this point on the equally fundamental conclusion to be drawn, namely that the financial resources and staff of Parliament's information services must be **substantially increased**.

46. Because of their different responsibilities, a clear distinction must be drawn between the Commission's information policy and the independent role of Parliament in information activities. It would be quite wrong to assume that the two institutions have parallel information responsibilities and that their information services can therefore follow the

same guidelines and use the same working methods. From this distinction between their information policy responsibilities it follows that their information services must also have a different structure. As in the case of the Commission's information mandate, the committee regards it as its special responsibility in this part of the report to throw light on Parliament's mandate. The committee will evaluate the structural soundness of Parliament's information services and their efficiency and lay down political guidelines for their activity.

### Informational responsibilities of Parliament and its information services

#### General situation and requirements

47. Parliamentary information services have appeared in the traditional national democratic states only in recent years. Yet this has made no difference to the basic informational function of the parliaments, which is to be their own 'spokesmen' and the sole authentic representatives of their own political role. Without an information service which acts as an intermediary and inevitably filters and colours the facts, the people and the media would come directly face to face with parliamentary activities in public meetings. The media assess and report within the framework of their constitutional freedom of opinion. Whereas in the past very few administrative measures were necessary, such as allocating seats to journalists, in recent years three new developments have led to the creation of official information services in nearly all national parliaments:
- the increasingly complex communication networks of the modern media produced by the need for instantaneous transmission of words and pictures call for a more extensive technical and administrative back-up;
  - the publicity and information 'overkill' practised everywhere by public and private organizations in order to secure coverage by the media compels the parliaments to embark on public relations activities too, if they are not to be ignored;
  - the increasingly abstract, technical and varied nature of many parliamentary debates calls for the preparation of generally comprehensible background material for the parliamentary journalists on the spot and for indirect reporting of proceedings.
48. These general trends apply much more to the European Parliament than to the national parliaments. They emerged there much sooner for various reasons and led to the formation of the first parliamentary information service anywhere.



The main reasons are as follows:

- the dispersal of Parliament's activities between Strasbourg, Luxembourg and Brussels prevented the establishment of a permanent nucleus of parliamentary journalists at any of these places. The European Affairs Correspondents in Brussels do devote some attention to Parliament's activities, but give priority to the Commission and the Council.

If the Council meets in Brussels at the same time as Parliament meets in Strasbourg or Luxembourg, important parliamentary events often pass unmentioned because of the absence of reporters, or because journalists and the media find out about them too late to give them coverage. It proved necessary from the start for Parliament to set up its own information service, and on a much larger scale than in national parliaments, in order to establish lines of communication between Strasbourg and Luxembourg, which were neglected by the media, and the European Affairs Correspondents and media in all the Community countries. It also proved essential to expand the technical and administrative back-up services because of the present shift in emphasis in the media towards television and radio;

- while some decisions of general interest taken in national parliaments give rise to headlines without any prodding by the parliaments, the rather impenetrable and wearisome decision-making processes of the European Parliament take a very minor place in the flood of information to which the media are exposed. Parliament was therefore obliged from the outset to provide a flexible public relations service that was more comprehensive than that of the national parliaments in order to secure for itself a place in the news;
- the European Parliament's debates tend to leave the citizens of Europe cold compared to those in the national parliaments because they do not recognizably affect them personally. Only a few specialists realize the real effects of these debates on the Community's long-term political development, which is why these effects must be highlighted and explained by the information service. There is also the problem of Parliament's many official languages, which can lead to linguistic and political misinterpretations. So from the very beginning an auxiliary service of experienced linguists had to be set up in order to provide the journalists with basic information and to explain Parliament's procedures.

49. The responsibilities of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations must be defined on the basis of these requirements

and in the light of Parliament's unchanging basic function as regards information, namely to be the sole authentic spokesman with the job of explaining its political role. This Directorate-General must be a modern technical instrument, based on the specific concept of transnationality, designed to enable the directly elected Parliament to project itself more clearly in all its democratic legitimacy, authority and consequently increased influence.

Unlike the Commission, it must under no circumstances evolve an information policy of its own that produces propaganda in support of decisions that have been taken. Then it would automatically be biased towards one or other of the political forces represented in the parliamentary arena. Instead it must concentrate on its sole task, which is to inform the general public of the role of Parliament in general and of the groups and Members of Parliament in particular.

50. Now that Parliament has acquired a new status as a result of direct elections and the increase in the number of Members, its information services must be expanded as far as the resources available for information policy will allow.

The direct European mandate means that for every Member - barring an ever dwindling number of exceptions - the European Parliament as an institution has now become a centre of immediate political activity. Consequently, the image and position of the European Parliament must be highlighted more prominently in the media by more intensive public relations work, and the media representatives must be given better working facilities by the provision of first-class technical assistance. This objective alone would require greater financial resources than are allocated to information in the Community budget for 1980. The second objective, namely to inform the public in detail of the part played by the groups and Members of Parliament, cannot even be approached without special supplementary budget appropriations. Specific information on individuals and groups cannot be provided now that the number of Members and groups has increased and their political activities are so varied. That is why even before direct elections press offices were set up for the groups as a kind of ersatz facility. Naturally the Directorate-General takes up any ideas and proposals put forward by individual MEPs or groups for assisting Parliament in its public relations work - provided these are not party-political proposals - and implements them insofar as it has adequate resources.

51. This mandate, based on the experience of a quarter of a century of transnational parliamentary information activity and the requirements of the directly elected European Parliament, forms the cornerstone of

the structure and operation of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations.

The Directorate-General, under the administrative authority of the Director-General with two Directors under him, is divided horizontally into 'geographical sectors' and vertically into the centralized 'operational sectors' based in the Secretariat in Luxembourg. The geographical sectors are the information services in the nine Member States, the 'operational sectors' are the information services working directly in Parliament, which are divided up into three sectors. Given the present scale of Parliament's information services, the distribution of responsibilities and resulting organization must be regarded as sound.

Parliament's external information offices by geographical sectors

52. It proved necessary from the outset to adapt information and public relations activities to the individual national situations because of the wide differences in attitude and mentality among the media representatives, as well as in the media structures, encountered in the different Member States. That is why an information officer was appointed for each Community country. As the workload of each information officer grew, it was decided to shift the main emphasis of their activity to external offices in the national capitals and to increase the number of staff.

This increase in staff, which in some countries has not yet been completed, means that the external offices can continue to be properly staffed during part-sessions and can relay information on events there despite the absence of the head of the office, who has to attend all the part-sessions. Because of the differences in practical service requirements in the various countries, the German Head of Division works from Luxembourg while his deputy works in Bonn; the Dutch Head of Division is based mainly in Brussels with an external office in The Hague. He and his Belgian counterpart also deal with information on the activities of the parliamentary committees from Brussels. Given the range of activities now undertaken by the external offices (see below), it is important that this is reflected in both the number and the qualifications of staff in each office.

53. As regards the location of the external offices in the national capitals, the committee asks the Commission to consider again whether it might not be advisable in principle to put them under the same roof as the Commission's external offices, while of course ensuring that they operate separately and in separate offices. This would surely give added impact to such 'European Community houses' in the national

capitals; it would allow the two institutions to dovetail their documentation centres and ensure better coordination between their activities, especially since the Commission has an extensive organizational infrastructure in its external offices.

Parliament's external offices are also responsible for providing some assistance to Members of the European Parliament in the national capitals. For the time being this depends on the respective ties of MEPs with their national parliamentary administrations, but in the course of time some uniformity should be achieved. The College of Quaestors is looking into this question. The Quaestors should also examine the extent to which there should be Parliament facilities in those Commission offices which are not in national capitals; for example, Berlin, Edinburgh and Cardiff. They should examine, too, the extent to which Community offices in third countries, particularly the United States, give adequate attention to Parliament's (as opposed to the Commission's) activities.

54. The geographical sectors can act as permanent points of contact in the individual countries to service the media, public bodies and the representatives of various interest groups. So far, only one mass publicity campaign has been launched. This was the 'multi-media campaign' launched together with the Commission to prepare for the first direct elections. In the light of the special character of a parliamentary information service, such major campaigns should only be undertaken on rare occasions, in cases where the Commission and Parliament have identical, clearly defined objectives.

The geographical sectors work closely together with the operational sectors of the Directorate-General and with the other Secretariat services to ensure a good back-up for the regular contacts with opinion formers and decision-makers.

The external offices must fulfil the following different functions:

Relations with the media

55. The primary tasks of the external offices are to provide a flow of information and documentation for the media to ensure that the information reaches its destination and is effective, and to maintain general contacts with the media through the organisation of press conferences, press receptions, visits to the Parliament's plenary sittings and committee meetings open to the public, etc.

The external offices send out a flow of information in the form of agendas, briefing and post-briefing on the part-sessions, as well as press releases on committee meetings. As far as the part-sessions are concerned, this briefing is systematic and is appreciated by press and broadcasting correspondents. As far as committee meetings are concerned, however, the coverage by DG III staff should be more systematic.

There are two basic problems:

- the difficulties involved in sending reports on committee meetings promptly from Brussels or Luxembourg to the national offices - aggravated by the frequent arrival of the appropriate agendas only after the meetings have taken place! Although telecopier facilities exist, the system is far from being totally reliable. As a result, reports on committee meetings reach the media more systematically through the press corps in Brussels - which in turn can place the national offices in an embarrassing position when 'follow-up' information is requested;
- the uncertainty of the rules governing the disclosure of committee proceedings. Under Rule 41 of the Rules of Procedure, only 'statements prepared on the responsibility of the chairman shall be made public', unless the committee meeting itself has been opened to the press. This can on occasion place the representative of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations in a difficult position. Some committees are now open to the press; others are not, and clearer guidelines would be useful.

Contacts with the media are maintained in many ways, depending on practice in the country concerned, and may involve visits to the editorial offices, participation by information officers in meetings with journalists, and so forth.

Relations with industry, commerce, governmental organizations,  
local authorities, trade unions, voluntary organizations, etc.

56. In recent years an increasing amount of national offices' work has involved the provision of briefing to organizations other than the press. The period before the first direct elections saw a rapid growth of interest in the European Parliament by official, industrial and voluntary bodies, and this has created a demand both for specialized documents and for a proficient enquiry service. In particular, the offices have been asked to distribute, and to answer questions on, Parliament's working documents and the debates to which they have given rise.

In this field close cooperation with the equivalent Commission offices has been of especial relevance. Shared data-retrieval systems, and a common system for dealing with specialist enquiries will be vital. Investigation is urgently required into the possibilities of access to Community data-banks and into the channels through which working documents and other parliamentary documents are made available.

The need to provide information to industry, commerce, etc, also raises the issue of the national offices' flow of information from Parliament's committees. This is not just a question of reports from committee meetings themselves. Interest groups of all kinds are wishing to know such facts as

- to which parliamentary committee a matter has been referred;
- who has been appointed rapporteur;
- which other committees are giving opinions, and who are the draftsmen;
- the likely date of a decision by the committee;
- the likely date of the report to plenary sitting.

This raises two questions which need answering:

- (a) to what extent are national offices free to disclose information contained in the Bulletin, committee agendas and committee minutes?
- (b) how can the national offices be assured of receiving a steady flow of information on committee activities from the Directorate-General for Committees and Inter-parliamentary Delegations?

#### Relations with educational bodies

57. Recent years have also seen a rapid growth in demand for briefings from educational bodies, in particular colleges and schools. In many cases this has taken the form of requests for material - particularly display material - to be used in 'European Parliament' projects as well as for speakers and audio-visual material.

At a higher academic level, there has been a growth also in the numbers of research students and academics requiring special briefing on the workings of the European Parliament. Much of this can, of course, be redirected to the Directorate-General for Research and Documentation in Luxembourg. But this, like the question of briefings on committee activities, raises the further matter of the national offices' relations with the Directorates-General other than that for Information and of Public Relations (see point 62 below).

#### Relations with the general public

58. The information campaign on direct elections brought the national offices more intensively than ever before into direct contact with the general public. In particular, they became centres for the distribution of a wide range of leaflets, pamphlets, booklets, posters, etc. on the European Parliament and its work. The demand for such briefings has continued since the elections.

There has also been a continuing demand for speakers on the European Parliament, other than those connected to a political party. The extent to which the national offices of the Parliament should attempt to provide such speakers is a matter for debate. Clearly, the staff of the offices themselves can only undertake a very limited number of speaking engagements (though it is difficult for them to avoid undertaking a basic minimum). The Commission offices maintain a panel of speakers in order to meet similar requests; the issue provides another example of the need for cooperation between the Parliament and Commission offices at a national level.

### Publications

59. A number of national offices have in the past published newsletters and other material specifically suited to local conditions. The special problems of the UK, for example, made it necessary before direct elections for the office in London to publish a basic briefing pamphlet, 'Your Voice in Europe', taking account of the constituency system provided for in UK election law, regular 'European Parliament Reports', and other briefing pamphlets.

A decision is now required as to the extent to which the national offices should now publish material of their own. In principle it would seem appropriate for the offices themselves to determine whether local circumstances make such publications necessary, and provision should be made for the necessary finance.

### Preparations for visits

60. The national offices are also responsible for the preliminary selection and forwarding of applications by groups of visitors to the European Parliament who may be entitled to receive an allowance towards their travelling expenses. The Visits Section arranges the financial terms and the basic programme for group visits; but, in practice, the national offices are substantially involved in travel arrangements, the selection of speakers, the booking of rooms, and the hosting of the visitors on arrival in Strasbourg or Luxembourg. Members of the national offices' staffs are often involved themselves in briefing groups of visitors.

The current expansion and reorganisation of the Visits Section should improve the arrangements for the reception and briefing of visitors to the European Parliament (see also point 65). A clearer definition of the responsibilities of the national offices is, however, required.

### Relations with the Parliament's Secretariat

61. The national offices are formally the 'sub-offices' in the Member States of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations. However, in practice, they are to some extent the 'sub-offices' of the Parliament's Secretariat as a whole, and are certainly considered to be so by the public, national authorities, interest groups, and Members of the European Parliament themselves.



As has already been noted, the national offices need to maintain close contacts with several Directorates-General if they are to meet the demand for information. In particular, a two-way flow of information is required with DG II (Committees and Interparliamentary Delegations) and DG V (Research and Documentation).

In addition, there is the question of the relationship, if any, between the national offices and the Members of the European Parliament themselves, particularly those from the country concerned. In principle, the offices must scrupulously maintain their responsibility to the Parliament as a whole. Inevitably however they will be most concerned with issues which are also of concern to the Members of their own nationality, irrespective of party.

Some study is therefore now required of the relationship between the national offices and (A) the other Directorates-General, (B) the appropriate national 'delegations', and (C) the offices of the political groups, where these also exist at a national level.'

62. As a result of direct elections and of the first impressive demonstrations on the part of Parliament that it had a political resolve of its own, a growing number of journalists is now prepared to devote continuous attention to the development of the European Parliament and give it space in the media. The Directorate-General must offer them as much help as it can.

A basic problem arises here than can be solved only by radically improving the facilities offered to parliamentary journalists. The Directorate-General for Information should do all it can to counteract the rather bad impression it has given of handling relations with parliamentary journalists too formally and bureaucratically. Unlike the national parliaments, which are inclined to suffer from journalistic pressure and yet usually offer journalists excellent working facilities, the European Parliament must offer greater incentives to persuade journalists to take any interest at all. Working facilities offered to journalists in national parliaments as a matter of course include the following:

- offices for interviews with MPs and concentrated journalistic work,
- better communications between press room, press gallery and MPs,
- financial assistance to accredited journalists.

The committee proposes as a suitable instrument the introduction of the special status of permanently accredited journalist to the European Parliament. Hitherto, any media representative who so wished could immediately obtain a daily pass for the sittings, but now the Directorate-General must propose strict criteria governing the granting and withdrawal of permanent passes for accredited journalists and the privileges to be associated with them. The accredited journalists should form an association which would provide the most suitable means of channelling their wishes and suggestions to Parliament and its Directorate-General for Information.

#### Parliament's centralized operational sectors

63. The organization and work of Parliament's centralized operational sectors is split between the three divisions of the central directorate under the Director-General for Information and Public Relations:
- Visits Sector,
  - Publications and Central Documentation Sector,
  - Audio-visual Sector.

#### Group visits service

64. Recent years have brought a welcome increase in requests for group visits, which unfortunately exceeded the available reception facilities and financial resources. Many requests therefore had to be turned down, although the Directorate-General managed to side-step the difficulty to some extent by also receiving visiting groups in the Secretariat in Luxembourg between part-sessions. The drawback of this arrangement is that the visitors only hear about Parliament through the information officers and do not become acquainted with its function in the Chamber. On the other hand the advantage was that visitors did not have to be 'whipped through' the machinery of part-sessions owing to lack of space and time. Since it is visiting groups who establish direct contacts between Parliament and the public throughout the Community, the directly elected Parliament must give priority to encouraging this activity. At the same time, given the increasing demand, a priority list of criteria for admission must be drawn up taking account of the multiplier effect of the respective groups requesting visits.

65. The following principles should govern arrangements for handling visiting groups:

- The budget appropriations earmarked for group visits must be distributed between the geographical sectors on a percentage basis in line with the number of MEPs from each country with appropriations not used by one sector being transferred to another sector;
- the principle of paying a flat-rate travel allowance per kilometre and per capita for groups leaving from the same point of departure still applies, although the rate must be adjusted to the rising cost of living; it has also proved advisable slightly to increase the kilometre rate for very great distances;
- the heads of the external offices must draw up the list of priorities for group visits from their geographical sector, giving precedence to lower and middle level multipliers;
- the working party of the committee proposed in the 'Conclusions' should consider future arrangements in respect of authorization of and subsidies for group visits, in line with the requirements of the directly elected Parliament.

66. In view of the new activities of the European Parliament, which are still largely ignored by the citizens of the Community and by their opinion formers, scientists and researchers, it is essential for these activities to be brought to the attention of the public's 'critical intelligence' in the appropriate manner and made more readily understandable. In preparation for direct elections the Directorate-General arranged a number of seminars lasting several days for high-level opinion leaders and decision-makers. They elicited keen interest and met with a good response. These seminars must continue, on the basis of new objectives, and the necessary funds must be made available and implementing bodies set up. The existing group visits service must be expanded into a division if its organization and staffing are to be commensurate with the work to be performed. The necessary appropriations should be entered in the 1981 budget.

The committee urges the Bureau to adopt without delay the proposal already submitted by the Directorate-General.

Publications and Central Documentation Sector

67. The Publications and Central Documentation Sector is responsible for the preparation of information documents aimed at both the general public and journalists and other opinion leaders.

The form of all publications in the six languages is identical, but as regards content, the choice of news and the editorial style must be free of any party-political bias and geared to the political understanding of the inhabitants of the various linguistic areas.

68. The brochure entitled 'The European Parliament' is published for the general public in large quantities in response to the high demand, and is updated regularly. The brochure describes in readily understandable although not facile terms the objectives, structure, working methods and history of the European Parliament. Where possible the contents of this publication are identical for all six editions, language sectors. For future editions, it should be ensured that enough copies are available to enable every MEP to carry out his political grass-roots activities in his home country and to obtain further copies at any time.

This brochure must continually highlight Parliament's new self-awareness and its role in the inter-institutional relations of the European Community.

The Publications and Central Documentation Sector publishes and distributes the following material for journalists and multipliers:

- the agendas for part-sessions as soon as the Bureau has fixed them;
- briefings, i.e. previews of the main subjects to be dealt with at part-sessions with a concise analysis of the relevant committee reports. Such briefings often help journalists to decide whether to attend a debate and they regard them as invaluable;
- during part-sessions, a daily summary of the debates available in the press room and intended to make it easier for journalists to see the relevance of the debate;
- at the end of each part-session the complete summary of all the debates and their outcome, which is immediately sent out to newspapers, periodicals and other specialized publications as background material for journalists. The editors of each language edition are directly responsible for the distribution;

- a reprint of the summary in newspaper format under the title 'European Parliament - EP News' enlivened by photographs and directed at interested individuals and groups. A special despatch office is being set up in the Central Documentation Sector for these interest groups. In Germany and the United Kingdom the same document appears as an annex to well-known private publications about Europe so that it reaches a broad range of interested readers.

69. Additional publications would seem to be required in the following areas:

(a) There is a demand from journalists for supplementary briefings describing Parliament's policy (i.e. previous decisions) on topical issues: e.g. in connection with a debate on energy policy.

(b) Similarly, Parliament should issue a publication for journalists containing the Council's and Commission's answers to written questions. These are, of course, published in the Official Journal, but a full subscription to the series is expensive, and publication of summarized and selective replies to questions would ensure much wider coverage (as in the UK office's 'European Parliament Digest').

(c) The problems faced by the national offices in connection with reports of committee meetings have already been noted. The more systematic issues of press releases following committee meetings, a greater political content in the releases, particularly in the highly-charged area of relations between Parliament, the Commission and the Council, and the holding of more press conferences following more important committee meetings would be useful. However, a more satisfactory approach would be the regular publication of a special Bulletin on the activities and decisions of committees. (The principal difficulty would seem to be the already mentioned provisions of Rule 41).

(d) Excellent though the brochure 'The European Parliament' is, there is considerable unmet demand for a range of shorter, less sophisticated publications on the Parliament. Some national offices have, in the past, met this demand by publishing their own material (see point 60) and it may be that this approach is the best, suiting the publications to the local market. Alternatively, the Publications Sector should prepare as a matter of urgency 'companion' publications to 'The European Parliament' in, say, four-page and eight-page versions.

(e) Likewise, there is also an unmet demand for publications describing particular aspects of Parliament: for example, its budgetary powers, its committees and interparliamentary delegations, the structure of the political groups, etc. Again, the Publications Sector should prepare, as a matter of urgency, a pamphlet series covering these topics.

(f) The information campaign on direct elections revealed a considerable demand, particularly from schools and colleges, for posters and wall charts on the Parliament. This demand continues and should be met.

This committee believes that the production of a range of publications, both those already existing and those described above, is a matter of the greatest importance. Accordingly, it calls on the Publications and Central Documentation Sector to present to the committee, as soon as possible, a publication programme for 1981, giving details of content, design, print-runs and distributions, and taking account of the differing needs of the different national markets.

70. A continuous flow of news on Parliament's activities is provided by the notes and press releases issued by the political groups; the Directorate-General for Information is of course in no way responsible for this material, although its staff will provide technical assistance on request.

Press releases about committee meetings not open to the public have also had some impact among highly specialized journalists and press agencies. They are drafted by the Directorate-General for Information, mainly by its staff in the Brussels office, under the political responsibility of the given committee chairman. The media might show even more interest if these press releases had more political content or if press conferences were held after particularly fruitful committee meetings. It is primarily the press releases on the outcome of committee activities in the highly charged area of relations between Parliament, the Commission and the Council which must be made more political. They are bound to arouse more interest in the role of Parliament among the media representatives. If the committee chairmen were generally in favour of producing information along these lines, the staff in the Brussels office would have to be increased or else assistance would have to be provided by systematically sending to Brussels press officers normally working elsewhere.

71. The committee attaches importance to breaking the silence prevalent among the public, and in particular the press representatives, about the activities of the committees and the results achieved.

The committee therefore suggests that consideration be given to the merits of publishing a Bulletin on committee decisions.

72. If a proper range of publications along the lines suggested above is to be produced, consideration must also be given to the tasks and organization of the Publications and Central Documentation Sector itself. In particular:
- (a) the Sector should concentrate more specifically on publications, and should not be over-burdened with ancillary tasks: e.g. providing an 'ad hoc' information service;
  - (b) the Sector should have at its disposal adequate staff, and staff with the appropriate qualifications in publishing, journalism, graphic design, etc.

If necessary, the information function currently carried out by the Publications Sector should become the responsibility of a separate unit within DG III. Close cooperation with other Directorates-General - and in particular that for Documentation and Research - is in any case necessary in this context.

#### Audio-visual sector

73. The structural changes taking place in the techniques of broadcasting information, which are leading towards the ever-increasing predominance of electronic media and are still far from complete, called for a prompt response from the European Parliament's Directorate-General for Information to the new and very expensive technical demands especially in the field of television.

Modern parliamentary democracy is now inconceivable without the influence of television, and for the directly elected European Parliament it is imperative that it make its presence felt through that medium. Communications research has demonstrated that institutions whose work calls for a wide measure of publicity will fail to reach the public if they neglect television.

The committee emphasizes that the directly elected Parliament will not make an impact on the European electorate unless it exploits the television medium.

74. Accordingly, the Directorate-General for Information began building up its own audio-visual sector as long ago as 1974. This department provides technical support and services for photography, film, radio and television. It cannot and must not, however, in any way substitute its own policy for free reporting by the media themselves. The department has expanded and is further expanding its activities mainly in the television sector, in line with the emerging needs of the European Parliament.

75. There are two principal difficulties in the way of reporting the European Parliament:

- the distance from national television stations, and
- the cost of television circuits.

Although it is possible to hire a local film crew, the cost of sending even a director and reporter is expensive for a small station. Large stations often send a full crew and when something important is to happen, most of the television networks send teams from the Member States, with up to 20 TV crews fighting for the opportunity to film in the Chamber, thereby seriously impeding the proceedings of the House and forcing the President to call for order.

If a television station wants to have a report on the same day as a debate takes place, this is an extremely expensive operation for even a brief piece and is the principal obstacle preventing most stations from making news reports, especially at the periphery of the Community. Circuit costs are also a problem for stations wanting to use the daily news summary compiled by the European Broadcasting Union, although these are unlikely to have the regional interest needed to attract a small station.

A successful solution to the problems arising from this situation would have the following benefits:

- the television networks would save money,
- all the networks would be treated equally since all would be provided with neutral documentary television material,
- the material could be available immediately,
- proceedings in the Chamber would not be disturbed.

76. The problem of technical support for radio has been solved by the provision of sufficient recording and broadcasting studios, but the technical support structure for television is still in its infancy.

On a proposal from Parliament's Working Party on Information, the Bureau of the European Parliament decided on 13 October 1976 to set up its own television studio with all the requisite technical equipment.



This equipment is mobile and can be used to cover plenary sittings in both Strasbourg and Luxembourg. Following a thorough technical study, 1,250,000 EUA was entered in the 1977 budget for the purchase of equipment and 21 posts for technical staff were entered on the 1979 establishment plan. Because of the time taken to recruit staff and the complexity of the technical structure, the studio is unlikely to be operational before the end of 1980. The committee attaches great importance to the completion of the project.

- All the plenary debates will be recorded by four electronic cameras and stored on video tapes. Representatives of the television networks will be able to view the material and obtain a copy of any particular extract which they can then transmit to their own network in their own name. This system can also be used for closed-circuit transmissions to other rooms. It would only require the presence of a television producer and not a full TV crew. The technical equipment would also be available to television networks wishing to record interviews or other special material. Of course, this arrangement would not preclude a full camera crew from visiting the places of work of the European Parliament if it wished to film special reports from its own particular angle.
- The studio would make its own recordings of outstanding events at Parliament directly available to the EBU for live transmission. One technical prospect worth following up is the international transmission of TV broadcasts by satellite, which would also extend individual reception to as many as 30 channels. It is already feasible to transmit the same picture to various countries with several different soundtracks. In this way, a multilingual debate in the European Parliament could be received simultaneously in different linguistic regions with the same picture but with a soundtrack appropriate to each region. At all events, Parliament's own filming and recording studio forms a starting point for the prompt and positive utilization of this potential new development in television techniques, however controversial it may still be politically.
- A special working party set up by the EBU to assess the effectiveness of the television coverage of the first direct elections to the European Parliament has considered this project in detail. It formally expressed its 'unreserved interest' in benefitting from all the advantages of the technical services provided. The political questions arising from the utilization of the material supplied and the final versions of the news reports will, of course, remain the

province of the national television networks. This interplay of mutual interests should form a solid basis for the full utilization of the Parliament's own studio and prevent the service from being blocked by the national television networks.

77. In accordance with the foregoing, and on behalf of the directly elected European Parliament, the committee gives its full political backing to the decisions taken by its predecessor principally in the interests of the directly elected Members, that Parliament should set up its own television infrastructure. The high cost of purchasing and maintaining the equipment will be offset by its effectiveness and must therefore be met. Otherwise the possibility cannot be discounted that one national television company with a corresponding political objective will be given preference.
78. A further political initiative should be taken with a view to providing better television coverage from Strasbourg and Luxembourg in the Member States in order to reduce the very high transmission tariffs applied by the state monopolies (such as the Post Office). The Commission is requested to take the necessary steps.
79. Conclusions and recommendations

Although the directly elected European Parliament is still seeking to establish its own working methods and its own style, also in respect of its information policy and in the field of cooperation between Members and the Administration, the committee nonetheless endorses the findings of the Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations that

- the task of disseminating information on the Parliament, its significance and its developing importance must be taken separately from the Commission's information activities,
- the information service must be properly organized to that end, an adequate number of staff recruited and that staff effectively deployed,
- the information media must be developed and services to clients improved, especially with a view to increasing the impact on television and improving advanced audio-visual techniques,
- an appropriation commensurate with the objectives set must be entered in the budget in good time.

The European Parliament's information policy has developed on the

basis of the specific requirements arising from its multilingual and transnational character and the sheer size of the area to be served and of the experience acquired over the years. The direct election of the Members requires new initiatives which must be approached prudently and which call for close cooperation between the Members and the Administration. This report puts forward a number of suggestions and measures which need to be placed on a sound financial and organizational footing. This calls for on-going cooperation between the Members, who can contribute their political understanding of the significance of modern information techniques, and the officials of the information service, who can contribute their administrative and professional skills. For this reason the committee intends to set up a standing select working party within the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport which will concern itself with the numerous detailed aspects of the information policy. It should include a number of Members and representatives of the Directorate-General and be led by the rapporteur on information policy.

The political guidelines for the working party will be laid down by the committee as a whole. Experience acquired with such a working party in the past has shown that four or five Members, working together with the appropriate members of the information staff under the direction of the Director-General, can quickly and efficiently perform the detailed work within the guidelines laid down by the committee.

