

Annex

Official Journal

of the

European Communities

No 1-305

English edition

Debates of the European Parliament

1983-1984 Session

Report of Proceedings
from 24 to 28 October 1983

Europe House, Strasbourg

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NOTE TO READER

Appearing at the same time as the English edition are editions in the six other official languages of the Communities: Danish, German, Greek, French, Italian and Dutch. The English edition contains the original texts of the interventions in English and an English translation of those made in other languages. In these cases there are, after the name of the speaker, the following letters, in brackets, to indicate the language spoken. *(DA)* for Danish, *(DE)* for German, *(GR)* for Greek, *(FR)* for French, *(IT)* for Italian and *(NL)* for Dutch.

The original texts of these interventions appear in the edition published in the language spoken.

Resolutions adopted at sittings of 24 to 28 October 1983 appear in the Official Journal of the European Communities C 322, of 28 November 1983.

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IN THE CHAIR : MR DANKERT

President

(The sitting was opened at 5 p.m.)

1. Resumption of the session

President. — I declare resumed the session of the European Parliament adjourned on 14 October 1983.¹

2. Statement by the President on events in Lebanon

President. — Ladies and gentlemen, the dastardly outrages in Beirut...

(All the Members rose)

strike primarily at France and the United States. However, other European countries are also represented in Lebanon. It is true to say therefore that Europe is particularly concerned at these events.

¹ Approval of the minutes — Petitions — Authorization to draw up reports — Referral to committee: See the Minutes of this sitting.

I feel that I am voicing the sentiments of this entire House when I express first of all our profound sorrow and sympathy to the families of the victims.

I firmly pledge the support of our Parliament for the efforts being made by European countries to restore peace in Lebanon.

The sacrifice of our fellow-Europeans will not have been in vain if it helps to bring peace and liberty to that sorely distressed part of the world. I would ask the House to observe a minute's silence in memory of those young soldiers who gave their lives in the cause of peace.

(The House observed a minute's silence)

3. Agenda

President. — At its meeting of 12 October 1983 the enlarged Bureau drew up the draft agenda which has been distributed to you.

At this morning's meeting the chairmen of the political groups asked me to propose a number of amendments to the House.

(The President read the amendments to the agendas for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday)²

² See Minutes.

President*Friday:*

— since the President-in-Office of the Council is unable to be present, the two oral questions to the Council by Mr Johnson, on the protection of the environment and economic development, and Mr Gautier, on motor vehicle exhaust gases, are withdrawn from the agenda. All the other questions, which are addressed to the Commission, will remain on the agenda.

Mr Gautier (S). — *(DE)* Mr President, thank you for the information you have just provided. Can you give an assurance that the oral question on exhaust gases will not only feature on the agenda of the next part-session but will be scheduled for debate in the presence of the President-in-Office of the Council? Secondly, I persist in my belief that the remaining questions on the agenda, in the context of the joint debate, are somewhat of a hotch-potch. I have never believed environmental policy to be susceptible to such treatment and I therefore feel that the questions I have just referred to ought, rather, to be taken separately, for I fail to see the connection between such issues as the drought afflicting the Sahel region and flags of convenience and such-like.

Mr Bangemann (L). — *(DE)* Mr President, we had decided to give pride of place under this item on the agenda to the question tabled by Mr Johnson and to consider the remaining questions, including that on flags of convenience, as dealing with individual aspects of environmental protection. Mr Gautier has, perhaps, overlooked the fact that his question deals exclusively with environmental aspects. It is not my fault that the questions tabled by Mr Johnson and Mr Gautier to the Council have to be withdrawn in view of the latter's absence. Nevertheless I feel that the colleagues who have tabled such questions are most interested in keeping them on the agenda and I would ask you therefore to leave it unchanged. I am not sure that Mr Gautier's proposed change has been moved in the correct manner.

President. — Mr Johnson's question is a kind of umbrella question covering all the others, and since that is being withdrawn, I think that there can no longer be any question of a joint debate. I feel therefore that we can now take the various questions separately.

Mr Gautier (S). — *(DE)* Mr Bangemann has obviously not been paying sufficient attention to the proceedings. I agree with your suggestions on the procedure, Mr President, but I would also ask you to carry forward my question, and that of Mr Johnson, to the next part-session and to treat them separately on that occasion. Community citizens have a special interest in seeing legislation to control exhaust gases being treated as a subject in its own right, rather than one point among many in the overall context of a

general discussion on environmental protection. I have requested such a separation with a view to enabling Parliament to provide the public with an unambiguous stance on the issue.

President. — Whether this item can be put on the agenda for the next part-session will depend on whether the Council can be present or not. Furthermore, the November and December agendas are already overloaded. However, we shall see what we can do.

Mr von der Vring (S). — *(DE)* I have a question concerning Friday's proceedings. Will the vote on those reports on which the debate has been concluded on Thursday be taken on Friday after the oral questions and the debates on them, or will it be taken beforehand?

President. — Mr von der Vring, the vote on reports already dealt with will be taken first thing on Friday. After that we continue with the other debates.

Mr Møller (ED). — *(DA)* Mr President, it is only 14 days since the enlarged Bureau drew up the draft agenda, and representatives of the Council were present who accepted these items. It seems very odd to me therefore that now, on Monday, we are told that the Council President cannot attend on Friday. Anyone can, of course, be unavoidably detained, but no reason whatsoever is given to explain why the Council President cannot be here on Friday to answer the oral question which has been on the agenda for a fortnight.

President. — Mr Møller, this was accepted with the proviso that the President-in-Office of the Council would be able to be present on that Friday. We had good hopes that he would be, but he is not able at this moment.

Mr Sherlock (ED). — Mr President, I must agree with the observations made by Mr Gautier and Mr Bangemann on this relegation yet again to a latterday debate of two important environmental matters. Important though the budget is, these matters touch upon the lives of every citizen in this Community every day. Had those who drew up the agenda and put on it these two matters, both of which are referred to the Council, cared to look at their diaries, they would have seen that the 28th of this month, which is next Friday, is one of the most important national holidays in the Greek calendar. I think that just a little forethought on the part of those who draw up the agendas could save this sort of time-wasting nonsense.

Finally, I must agree with the observation by Mr Gautier that it is time, if these matters are put off to another part-session, that matters pertaining to the environment should cease to be packed away in any odd corner that is left in any small part of the agenda.

President. — Mr Sherlock, I think that your remarks are not fair. This is the first time that the enlarged Bureau has proposed to the House that it deal with a number of oral questions — not reports by committees — which have been trailing along on our long list for a considerable period of time. Of course, we try to combine the questions to the Commission with questions to the Council. As for the holidays in Greece, well, anyone who is President of the Council these days will probably not have much holiday anyway. That is really all that one can say about the unavailability of the Council on Friday next.

Mr Hord (ED). — Mr President, in the light of the information which has just been furnished by my colleague Mr Sherlock — namely, that it is a Greek public holiday on Friday — would there not be some merit in transferring the business which we are discussing from Friday to, say Thursday afternoon, particularly now that Mrs Nielsen's report is withdrawn and, with the consent of the House, I would be very happy for my own report to be taken on Friday morning? In this way we should get the business done on Thursday and everybody would, I hope, be satisfied, including the Greek representatives, who will still be able to go on holiday on the Friday in question.

President. — Mr Hord, you know that we have the budgetary votes on Thursday. It is very difficult to foresee their duration — they might be rather long — and I think the GATT report will also take a considerable period of time. Moreover, a new report has been added to the agenda on Argentinian refugees. So the agenda on which we have already agreed without a night sitting makes it highly improbable that we shall be able to deal with those questions also on Thursday.

Mr Konstantinos Nikolaou (S). — (*GR*) Mr President, I would like to thank our two British colleagues who mentioned the Greek national holiday. Nevertheless, let me say that the Greek Members of the European Parliament will be here on Friday until 1 p.m., when their flight is due to leave. Thus, there is no need to postpone the debate, but in any case I thank our colleagues for their suggestion.

Mr Wurtz (COM). — (*FR*) Mr President, just a remark on the Arndt report. We only received this text on the day prior to the final date for the tabling of amendments. I would therefore ask you if you could possibly extend the deadline to tonight.

President. — Mr Wurtz, I accept what you say. I propose therefore that the deadline for tabling amendments to this report be fixed for 8 p.m. this evening. The same will hold for the Scrivener and Pfennig reports. The deadline for tabling amendments to the new items entered on the agenda is fixed for 12 noon tomorrow.

(Parliament adopted the draft agenda thus amended)¹

4. Air transport

President. — The next item is the second report (Doc. 1-454/83/rev.) by Miss Forster, on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, on

the proposal from the Commission to the Council (Doc.1-740/81 — COM(81) 590 final) for a directive on tariffs for scheduled air transport between Member States.²

Miss Forster (ED), rapporteur. — Mr President, I do not believe that this Community can afford to be protectionist. The days when Europe was the rich man's table are gone. Those seeking jobs or trying to run businesses which create jobs are faced with a world in recession where people protect themselves and their countries' industries. They protect what they have for fear that any opening up or liberalization will look like weakness. I believe they are wrong. Those who hide from reality grow weaker, not stronger.

The scheduled airlines are the same: they are extremely protectionist. They have too many large aeroplanes chasing too few passengers, because in an era of rising costs and unemployment there are not enough people who can afford to pay for the seats at the prices they are now asking. So what do they do? They protect themselves from anybody who might offer lower prices and different services. They say they have the divine right to run air services in Europe their way, at their prices and to protect their jobs.

If God were a European, I am sure he would disagree, because he has wings of his own and can get around the place. From London to Athens, for example, he would not pay £ 280 Club Class or £ 221 Eurobudget — which you cannot even cancel if you are ill. And neither, Mr President, would I. I went for £ 85 to the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs in June, which voted unanimously, with only three abstentions, for the directive as amended by the committee. It is now my duty as rapporteur to ask this House to do the same and vote in favour of the directive.

I know I have support in some parts of this House, and I will therefore address my remarks to those who I know are against the report.

Who are these people from six different countries who move almost identical amendments? They are uncannily alike. I am sure they are all charming

¹ Speaking time: see Minutes.

² See also OJ Annex No 1-292 pp. 287-296 and p. 312, as well as Debates of 4 July 1983, pp. 4 and 5.

Forster

and intelligent, but they do appear to be a trifle inconsistent. Mr Hoffmann and Mr Herman I would normally expect to believe in free competition. Mr Halligan, Mr Key and Mr Carossino and Mrs Desouches — who are they representing with their amendments? Not the consumer, that is for sure, despite their Socialist and Communist beliefs. They, Mr President, are the airline group ganging up to protect the flag-carrying State airlines. Their protectionist line may be right in the short term — there will be no disturbance, no changes and no redundancies. But what about the situation in five or ten years' time? Are the flag-carriers going to be competitive when flying outside Europe to third markets? No, I do not believe they will be. Passengers will choose instead the People's Express or a revamped Pan Am. And what is happening inside Europe? Is the development and growth of European industries going to be helped by airline tickets which are at an artificially high level, thus putting an added burden on manufacturing industries which are doing their best to compete with Japan and Far East low-cost producers? I am a Conservative and I believe in preserving the best of the *status quo*: to this extent I sympathize with some of the amendments; but in the long term, Mr President, I believe my committee is right and the amendments are wrong.

Introducing a little competition on a route-by-route basis, that is all we are asking for. We are not asking for deregulation overnight. I am sure it would be good for the airlines and good for the airline users.

Mr Hoffmann and his friends, I feel, have feet of clay; they should try to fly a little higher, a little faster and a hell of a lot cheaper.

(Applause)

Mrs Desouches (S). — *(FR)* Mr President, I shall not go into the substance of this debate, as I feel that everything, or just about everything, has already been said, but I would like to comment on the procedural aspects the House has witnessed with regard to this report. I believe such a procedure provides a classic example of the way in which Community procedures can be deflected from their real objectives and Parliament assigned a useless and even ridiculous role.

The mechanics are quite straightforward: the Commission submits to Parliament for the latter's opinion a proposal for a directive; once the Commission has gone through the formal motions it can then proceed to draw up its own text with a free hand. Since spring we have known that the Commission was working on new proposals and that, I quote, 'it will be necessary to alter certain points of the directive in order to take account of the changed statutory and economic situation'. Notwithstanding, the Commission is still dragging its feet and stubbornly refusing to allow Parliament to raise the issue of the changes envisaged. The Commissioner responsible informed our Committee

on Economic and Monetary Affairs that 'it need not concern itself with the validity or otherwise of the texts submitted to it'. In other words, we are there to vote and not to ask questions, least of all intelligent questions. I would add that such an attitude brings the Parliament into disrepute in the eyes of the airlines which understand, only too well, the Commission's game and will thus be emboldened to ignore a Parliament whose powers have so obviously been repudiated. Some time ago we debated medium-range projects. We are now confronted with an immediate problem, one which concerns the real power of this Parliament. You will, I trust, appreciate that my group and I are not, under the circumstances, favourably disposed towards this directive.

Finally, Mr President, with regard to Miss Forster's motion for a resolution I would point out, to my colleagues that there is a page missing from the text which has been distributed and that they have not got therefore Articles 10, 11 and 12 which is, to say the least, somewhat embarrassing.

President. — As far as the French version is concerned, Mrs Desouches, you are quite right. As a result of a technical error there is one page missing.

Mr Franz (PPE). — *(DE)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, my group, the Group of the European People's Party, shares Miss Forster's regret that the free market forces are being prevented from functioning in the air traffic domain by national protectionism and subsidies. It must be obvious to all that this lack of competition is a fundamental flaw in Community air transport. More efficient competition in this sphere, however, presupposes that all market participants operate under the same conditions. Nationalized and semi-nationalized carriers, sheltered as they are from the eventuality of bankruptcy, are every bit as much out of place in this scheme of things as monopolies, cartels and other concentrations of market power. Although the domain of air traffic, unlike that of other modes of transport, is not subject to Community regulations on competition, we are nevertheless fortunate in having a viable European air transport system which assures scheduled air services between the Member States of the European Community. However, the intricacies of a pricing policy, difficult enough for the expert to come to grips with and therefore well-nigh impossible for many users, coupled with a lack of market transparency result in a national market compartmentalization and, consequently, considerable restrictions on competition. Equal opportunity for the competing airlines in the air traffic sector has yet to become a reality. A framework in which this can be achieved must first be created before this sector can be exposed to free competition. A transitional period will be called for. It will take some time therefore for the conditions of free competition which will ensure a user-oriented market to be attained in this sector.

Franz

The exposure of the air traffic sector to a greater degree of deregulation is, however, both necessary and possible already, even if this has to proceed cautiously in order to avoid damage. The safety, precision and punctuality which have been characteristic of European air transport must be maintained. Hence the need for compromise.

The Forster report, now before us, on the Commission proposal to the Council for a directive on tariffs for scheduled air transport between Member States follows in the footsteps of the Schwartzberg report and represents an additional milestone on the way towards the application of Community competition rules to the air transport sector.

Community air transport needs more competition, more transparency for the consumer and, consequently, more deregulation. One can only subscribe completely to Miss Forster's contention that the existing restrictions on the European market are one of the chief reasons for excessively high air fares. Fortunately European air space has been hitherto free of barriers, but the achievement of a completely free Community internal market would ensure a simplification of the formalities and hence considerable cost reductions. There is no reason why a Düsseldorf-Paris flight should be any more complicated than one from Düsseldorf to Munich.

The exhaustive discussion of the Commission's proposal for a directive and the motion for a resolution in the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs has resulted in numerous substantial amendments and improvements and has underlined the significance of this proposal for Community air transport. The implementation of the directive throughout the Community will lead to a more efficient tariff practice in Community air transport as a result of increased competition. The Group of the European People's Party has tabled several amendments and we look forward to their adoption. Although my group does not subscribe unconditionally to the Forster report, we would nevertheless like to extend our thanks to the rapporteur for the unstinting effort she has put into it. Miss Forster, we have not made things easy for you in the committee stage nor, indeed, here in the plenary and we should be grateful that you have not thrown in the towel. A complex and sensitive area such as that represented by air transport cannot be changed with one bold stroke. However, we agree with your contention that this represents a step in the right direction. Hence the PPE group is prepared to vote in favour of the motion for a resolution provided our amendments are incorporated.

Mr Moorhouse (ED). — Mr President, in our opinion the rapporteur has done a great job. Her thoroughgoing analysis and her thoroughly sensible recommendations could go far to help develop a common air transport policy for Europe. The time has

now come for the Council of Ministers to get to grips with this vital issue and not to dilly-dally any longer. They must show the people of Europe that they are not merely the lackeys and the stooges of the national air carriers.

Mr President, this proposal from the Commission marks the third stage in the Community's efforts to bring air transport undertakings within the rules of competition of the Rome Treaty and so liberalize scheduled air services within the EEC and indeed in Norway, Sweden, Spain and Portugal. We are absolutely convinced that this is the only way to develop still further the internal markets and bring down air fares which are still far too high, notoriously so on certain routes, not least in Scandinavia.

The first stage was the adoption by Parliament and the Council of Ministers of the directive on inter-regional air services, which takes effect on 1 October 1984. That will give air carriers the opportunity to start up entirely new services at cost-related fares. That is the crucial point — cost-related fares, not fares that are a rip-off which only the bureaucrats and the businessmen can afford because they are not paying the fares themselves. More than that, the new directive will enable new air services to be opened up on such routes as Aarhus to Hamburg, Manchester to Toulouse, Liverpool to Antwerp, Copenhagen to Strasbourg, to name but a few.

But to bring the IATA air carriers and the men who run them within the rules of competition of the Community and to get agreement on this proposal on air tariffs is a much tougher proposition than the inter-regional air services draft directive ever was. We know all too well, as do our colleagues in the Council of Europe, that the IATA carriers, with one or two honourable exceptions, are fighting a tough rearguard action, a relentless campaign. They are determined, ruthlessly determined, to resist Community legislation. We see ample evidence of this in the strenuous efforts that the national air carriers are making here at Strasbourg up to this very minute, and over lunch and dinner, to win colleagues to their side. Let us therefore make it abundantly clear that our prime duty — and I appeal to my colleagues here — is to our constituents, to our electorate, and not to that small exclusive clique of powerful airline heads who seek to perpetuate their iron hold on the airways of Europe.

Mr President, was it not Abraham Lincoln who once said, *you can fool some of the people all the time, all the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time!* So it is with people and airfares! People can see perfectly well for themselves how the newly-famous US airline People's Express can fly a person across the Atlantic from London to Newark in the United States for no more than £ 99 single.

(Interruptions from the left)

Moorhouse

They do not like this, but this is a fact! £ 99 single, 3 000 miles or so. Yet it costs as much as £ 255 economy fare to be flown from, say, Rome to Copenhagen.

Mr President, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that scheduled air fares on many European routes are too high, absurdly so, and they could be significantly reduced by airlines run on less extravagant lines and operating more economical aircraft.

(Further interruptions from the left)

You do not like competition! We know that quite well. Nor do you like cheap fares. That, of course, we also know only too well. You should be here to represent the constituents of Europe and not the big airline interests!

This directive will not be passed unless and until it is agreed by the Council of Ministers. This is what we have to work for. Alas, it is all too clear that despite intense activity by the Commission, by the European Parliament and by the Council of Europe, the Transport Ministers, with maybe two or three honourable exceptions, are not prepared or are too timid to interfere in the affairs of their national airlines. Indeed, it is not going too far to say certain national airlines act as a state within a state...

(Protests from the left)

... regarding themselves as out of reach of the law. I will give you an example. The chairman of Lufthansa, Mr Ruhnau, when he paid a visit to Strasbourg, was frank enough to show that he did not appear to be aware that the Community could conceivably affect his freedom of action. He, like the USSR, does not recognize the Community. Equally, Mr President, in Denmark it is somewhat difficult to liberalize Scandinavian air transport policy because the official in charge, Mr Halck, is also on the supervisory board of SAS, and one does wonder whether such a situation is legally or morally acceptable.

So, given these obstacles, it would seem that we are in for a war of attrition. We may yet have to join my honourable colleague, Lord Bethell, in his now famous legal action to try and get a fair deal for air travellers in Europe. How much better it would be if airline heads could see sense and come to terms with the political realities!

Mr President, failing an early solution, let the airline heads not underrate our determination, both in this Parliament and in the Council of Europe, to invoke the Rome Treaty and thereby give air travellers greater freedom of movement through lower air fares, a cause for which all of us, and I make this final appeal to my colleagues, should strive. We shall certainly be supporting the report.

(Applause from the European Democratic Group)

Mr M. Martin (COM). — *(FR)* Mr President, at its second reading in the Committee on Economic and

Monetary Affairs the revamped Forster report did not strike us as noticeably different from the first version which had evoked considerable criticism from my group, the French Communists and Allies.

The amendments to the Commission text, whilst introducing a greater degree of coherence than had prevailed in the wake of the previous vote, are either purely cosmetic or, alternatively, tend to further shift the thrust of the directive in what we consider to be the wrong direction. Admittedly, some concessions have been made in the presentation with a view to rendering the text more attractive. Thus Article 3 no longer refers to 'costs' but 'overall costs'. The principle of standardization of freight charges and equalization of different airlines' charges, while not being admitted formally, would now appear to be tacitly recognized. In the main, however, the amendments only lend weight to our original point of view.

I shall give three examples. On the arbitration procedure to be set in motion to resolve disputes, both the wording of the directive as it currently stands and that of the proposed amendments introduce an unbelievable degree of bureaucracy. In the case of additional state aid to airlines, one of the new amendments envisages investing the Commission with power to ensure that such aid is in conformity with Article 92 (3) of the EEC Treaty.

Furthermore, consultations between airlines would be subject to Commission supervision, and the Commission would be called upon to rule on the compatibility, or otherwise, of specific concerted practices with the rules on competition laid down in Article 85 (1) of the EEC Treaty.

As to the motion for a resolution, it bears the obvious hallmarks of the proponents of deregulation. The objective of attaining a gradual liberalization owes a lot to the incessant barrage of criticism which has assailed national air carriers, which are subject to the constraints that are incumbent upon a public service and that are incompatible with the consideration of transport as just another product.

Finally, convinced that the international agreement concluded in 1967 provides a framework within which price-fixing mechanisms can involve, we do not intend to emulate the authors of the motion for a resolution in their desire to establish a Community authority to oversee civil aviation. The *de facto* result of such action would be the departure from IATA, a framework eminently capable of responding to the challenge of elaborating an improved civil aviation tariff system.

For all of these reasons we shall be voting against the proposal for a directive and the motion for a resolution.

(Applause from the Communist and Allies Group)

Mr Nyborg (DEP). — (DA) Mr President, I should like to say at the outset that, while I speak on behalf of the European Progressive Democrats, some of the views I present will be my own.

I have spoken in this forum for the cause of liberalism in the past, and I shall do so again today. The aim of an air transport policy should be to benefit the consumers to the maximum extent possible and at the same time to ensure that the various air transport undertakings in the Community operate under the same competitive conditions. In this context we should prevent the air transport undertakings from limiting free competition, for example, by means of pool arrangements. It is also the task of the Commission as the guardian of the Treaty. When we look at the development of civil aviation in the world, we have to agree that it is the private companies which have been the driving force in the reduction of prices to the advantage of the consumer. It is also the private companies which have been most innovative in their thinking. It was the private charter companies, for example, which made a serious effort to provide air transport for the man in the street. In Denmark we have seen how entrepreneurs ready to take initiatives organized charter flight traffic on systematic lines to the advantage of sun-starved northerners and to the advantage of the tourist industry in the south.

I am one of those people who have followed Sir Freddy Laker's fight over the North Atlantic with interest and enthusiasm, and I am one of those people who are annoyed at the fact that it costs more to fly from London to Copenhagen than to fly from London to the USA. There is a need for new thinking and greater flexibility in the air transport sector. This is recognized in the more or less state-owned national air transport undertakings. I note, for example, that the SAS annual report for 1981-82 says on the subject of fare conferences under IATA auspices that: 'A consequence of fare coordination is that international fare setting is often characterized by rigidity and lack of innovative thinking'. Let us have greater transparency in the fixing of fares. It is quite conceivable, for example, that there are certain airports which impose unreasonable landing and take-off charges.

I have proposed an amendment to the motion for a resolution in the Forster report which may seem extensive in its scope, but I think we should make the proper distinctions. If a state-owned company, for reasons of national or regional policy, maintains an otherwise uneconomic route from the centre of the country to a remote area, its cost should not be a charge against the price of a ticket on other routes, international routes for example. If there are regional or social reasons for the tariff policy, it should be shown clearly in the accounts.

As I have said, there is a need for new thinking in air transport. Down here on *terra firma*, we see discount stores of all kinds prospering. Would not something of the kind be conceivable in the air transport business? Why should young people on long journeys, for example, not have the option of taking packed lunches with them on the plane and save themselves the cost of the meals provided? We are quick to criticize and compare European air fares with those in America, and I must admit, Miss Forster, that there is no direct comparison, but that is our own fault. If we had made better progress in creating the European internal market, we would have been able to secure reductions in air fares on the international routes within the Community. Indeed, on some routes today you might almost think that the waiting times for passport and customs formalities in transit are longer than the time actually spent in flight.

Let me conclude with the following observation: if private companies are given more of a chance, we shall undoubtedly see an increase in the number of passengers travelling by air. We shall see people on aeroplanes who previously never had the means to avail themselves of this convenient and rapid mode of transport, and an increase in passenger traffic will, all things being equal, be to the advantage of the air transport industry as a whole and hence to the consumers as well.

Mr Key (S), draftsman of an opinion for the Committee on Transport. — Mr President, as majority members of the Committee on Transport and the Socialist Group we listened with great interest to the very pleasant and very polite words of Miss Forster. In reality, however, her proposals are not as polite or as pleasant as she makes out. She is, in fact, in favour of deregulation. She is in favour of complete free competition. I think it was all summed up in the words of her colleague and co-conspirator, Mr Moorhouse, who stated very clearly that he was in favour of cost-related fares and that he wished the whole of the air transport industry to be brought within the crude rules of our rules of competition. The proposals put forward by Miss Forster would destroy the regional services of this Community. Small regional airports whether in the Highlands of Scotland or in areas like my own, like Bradford, and other regional airports throughout the whole of the Community, would be finished because they would not be able to compete. The private competitors will only go for the cream, and they will take the cream and forget about everybody else.

Secondly, they are totally irrelevant to the policy which transport should be pursuing, namely, providing a service for the individual consumer. You are only interested in profit. There is such a thing in transport as public service obligation. We are there to provide a service for people, not something that somebody can make a little bit of profit out of today and