

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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13 April 1981

ORAL QUESTION (0-50/80)

DOCUMENT 1-132/81

with debate, pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

by Mr DELORS

on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

to the Council of the European Communities

Subject: New information technologies

The introduction of new information technologies raises unusually complex problems, not only of an economic and technological nature but also in the field of culture and the protection of basic freedoms. To take only those aspects falling strictly within the terms of reference of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the committee is concerned at the fact that the Community countries are lagging behind in an area that will be a key to efficiency, growth and competitiveness in the years ahead. The new information technologies are a classic case of an industry in which close cooperation at European level, and Community initiatives, can support the efforts made by the Member States and by nationalized and private companies. Joint action would thus have a kind of multiplier effect, commensurate with the scale of the problems involved, on scientific research,

technical innovation, the winning of new markets and the provision of adequate finance.

The committee therefore asks the Council:

1. Is it resolved, in the spirit of its resolutions of 15 July 1974 on a Community policy on data processing, and of 11 September 1979, on a Community action promoting microelectronic technology, to provide a Community response to the challenge of the new information technologies?
2. What is its timetable for considering and implementing:
 - the proposal for a regulation concerning Community actions in the field of microelectronic technology, and
 - the three recommendations on:
 - (a) the implementation of harmonization in the field of telecommunications,
 - (b) the creation of a Community market for telematic terminals, and
 - (c) the first phase in the opening up of public telecommunications markets?

These documents already exist in draft form and are contained in the Commission Communications COM(80) 421 and COM(80) 422 of 11 July 1980.

3. What steps does the Council propose to take to ensure that this policy is successful, e.g.
 - regular consultations between the Ministers concerned,
 - Commission action to encourage cooperation agreements between companies,
 - opening up public supply markets to secure the incentives and benefits of scale,
 - establishment of European standards enabling Member States to solve the problems raised by communications or regain lost ground in the integrated circuits field,
 - the creation of tailor-made financial instruments to stimulate research, innovation, inter-company production agreements, worker training, etc.,and, most importantly, the creation of a special line in the 1981 budget, incorporating figures consonant with targets that may reasonably be set?
4. How does the Council reconcile its determination to develop joint action in these fields with the unfortunate decisions it has just taken

with regard to the 1981 budget:

- on Item 3702, Development of data processing

- . reduction by 2m EUA in payment appropriations
- . reduction by 1.5 mEUA in commitment appropriations (thus preventing the recruitment of essential temporary staff)

- on Item 3704, Studies in telematics

deletion of the entire 1 mEUA, and their replacement by a token entry?

5. How does the Council plan to study the social impact of change brought about by the efficiency of these new technologies?

What measures anticipating such change, and covering the redeployment and retraining of workers, will be drawn up and put in hand to ensure that technological progress is a factor for social progress and not the reverse?