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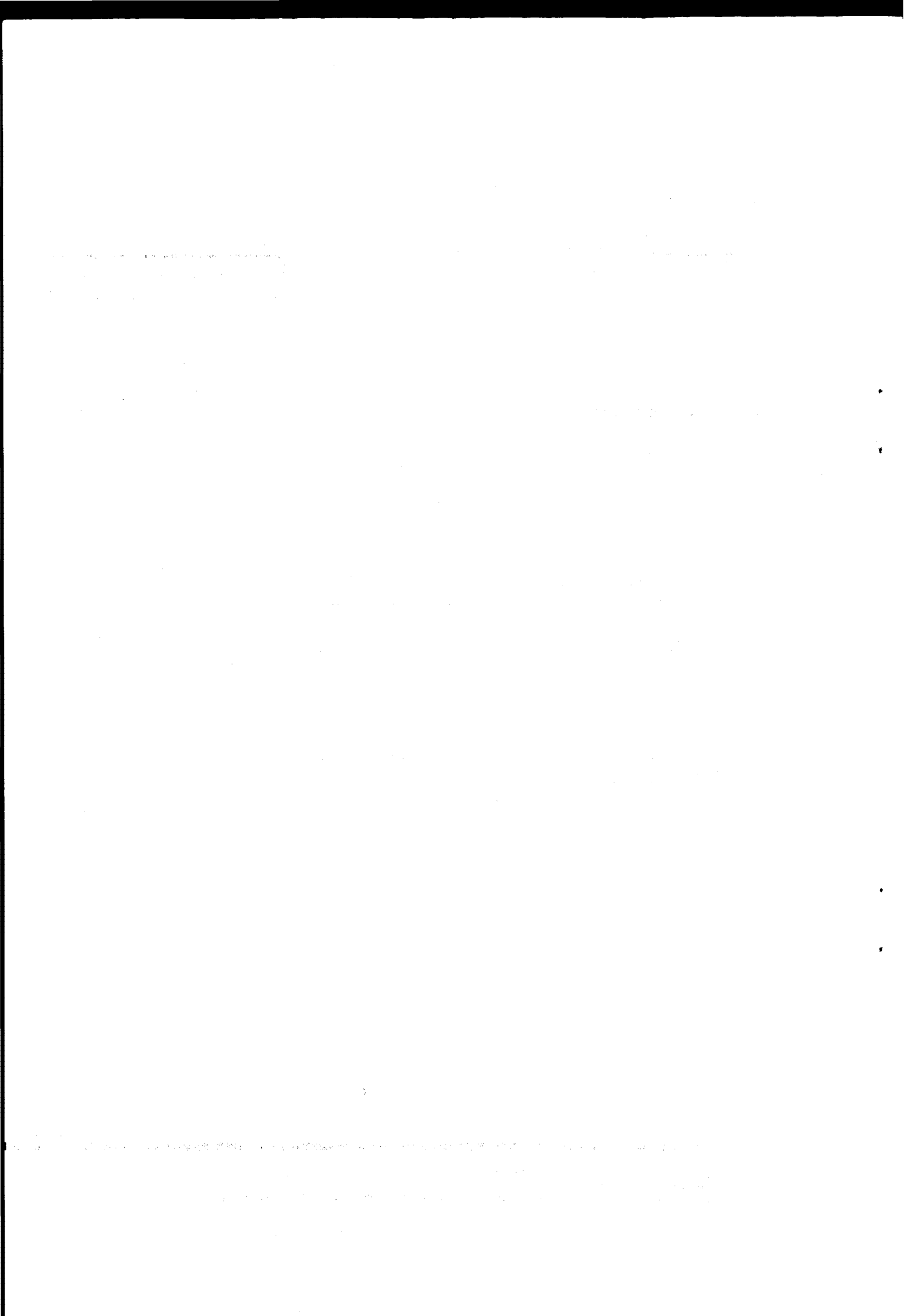
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REGIONAL POLICY AS A MEANS OF IMPROVING COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

(Mr G. Bersani)

Regional policy had always featured prominently in the CD Group's political philosophy, said Mr Giovanni BERSANI, Vice-President of the European Parliament, speaking on behalf of the Group at the last part-session held in July. There was often a tendency to look at regional policy solely from the point of view of economic assistance, around which a worrying situation was unfortunately developing in the Community, and therefore to regard it as a marginal issue, merely a question of intervening in certain emergencies far removed from the central problems of growth, development and personality which lie at the very root of our Community.

CD, had, instead, always maintained that, the more one thought about all aspects of regional policy, the more convinced one became that it was fundamentally a comprehensive policy, not confined to marginal areas or to individual sectors of society, which embraced a wealth of quantitative and qualitative considerations. This was the policy which perhaps more than any other, would mould the true face of European society, the Community's mode of being even more than the way it dealt with the greatest human problems of our times.

In fact, one could not begin to talk about regional policy without first clearly establishing what was meant by a region, in addition, of course to the nature of its relations with the nation-State and the Community; then and only then could the instruments and methods to be applied be determined.

The goal should be not a European super-State but a varied and carefully structured Community in which the region, overcoming the desire to adopt a dialectical pose vis-à-vis the nation, felt that it had a creative part to play in a enriching democracy. In such a Europe, the region, even before making demands, would be ready to accept its role, and act as a creative component of a different political reality.

This was the sense in which the regional question is basically political and concerns the most delicate aspects of institutional and constitutional relations.

The right moment to pose all these questions would certainly be when the Commission, after sketching out its regional policy, had to present the set of definite formal proposals with which it intended, within time-limits and by methods to be laid down, to face up to its responsibilities and launch an effective policy for dealing with regional problems.

But there were other considerations to bear in mind. The first was the question of regional participation in a Community political construction. Since this problem deserved thorough attention, representatives of the regions should be allowed to sit on the special board proposed by the Commission. Eventually, however, it should be possible to make more effective arrangements, i.e. to set up some sort of ad hoc bodies, representing the regions, to work alongside the institutions.

Secondly, the CD Group felt that, ten years after the first well-timed conference arranged by the Commission to carry out a preliminary study of regional problems (a vital meeting because it generated the political will of the institutions, and particularly of Parliament, to get to grips with regional policy), the time had come to arrange another conference. A dialogue bearing closely on regional needs would provide a really democratic boost to the whole process.

During the last ten years, the regions had developed in Belgium; in Italy they had continued to progress as a whole on advanced democratic lines; in Germany, a new line of development in internal relations had taken place within the Land framework; in France the administrative regions had emerged. In other words, this was a period of evolution and maturing for regionalism.

And what of the problems in this field peculiar to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark, the three new political forces that had become part of the enlarged Community?

Mr BERSANI felt that such a conference ought therefore to be held and the adaptation of the regional development fund seriously considered. 'We fear,' he continued, 'that the deadline may not be met, but we firmly believe in the wider vision to which I referred. The setting up of the national fund by 31 December will serve as a test of all that we have been saying about regional policy, a crucial test of credibility in the face of the pledge of solidarity which, backed by self-imposed restraints, must form the backbone, the moral and political centre which constitutes the driving force of any community'.

In addition, the CD Group believed that, besides the fund, it might be useful to set up machinery for guiding and coordinating private investments in a pluralist approach to the promotion of new economic structures (especially in the weakest areas) reflecting the CD's political conception of the relations between the economy and the directing centre - all this, of course, closely linked up with the prospect of the introduction of a system of planning and coordination such as had often been recommended by Parliament.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT NEEDS AN ARBITRATION COMMITTEE ON BUDGETARY POWERS

The European Parliament is at present dealing with problems relating to the strengthening of its budgetary powers and related questions concerning legislative rights. This matter will remain a subject for discussion for some time yet; the difficulties involved became abundantly clear at the July part-session of the European Parliament.

Mr AIGNER, speaking on behalf of the Christian-Democratic group, stressed that the group viewed the present discussion as a preliminary to the forthcoming debate between Parliament on the one hand and the Commission and the Council of Ministers on the other. For the purpose of debate, Parliament must prepare concrete proposals on the 'joint budgetary rights' with the Council, planned for 1975, which the Commission could use as a guide and in its dealings with the Council. He was emphatically opposed to the procedure adopted in the Spénale report, under which 'one rejected the proposals only on principle and then moved on to a motion of no confidence'.

Even though the discussion in the Christian-Democratic group on the relationship between budgetary and legislative powers was still in progress, Mr AIGNER felt personally that the full budgetary powers demanded by Mr Spénale for Parliament were inseparable from full legislative rights. Mr AIGNER was opposed to the idea of granting such rights to the European Parliament, however, because they would contradict the federal nature of Europe and would be opposed by national parliaments, fearful that the smaller countries would be outvoted by the larger Member States.

On the other hand, a system of equal status for the Council of Ministers and Parliament would have to be found, a notion Mr AIGNER had failed to discover in the Commission proposals. To resolve possible conflicts arising between a Council and Parliament enjoying equal rights, he proposed the setting up of an arbitration committee - modelled on the mediation committee of the German Bundesrat and Bundestag - a role that could possibly be assumed by the Commission.

He also asked for full rights of control to be accorded to the European Court of Auditors so that Parliament could use it as a control body in granting its discharge.

POLITICAL RESOLVE IS LACKING FOR A EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME

(Dr H.E. JAHN)

During its July part-session, the European Parliament turned its attention for the third time to the Commission's proposals for a Community environmental policy. In the light of the resolutions adopted on the first two texts it had been assumed that the Council of Ministers would soon reach unanimity on a programme of environmental action. At the Paris Summit Conference in October 1972, however, attention was merely drawn to the need for an environmental policy at Community level. At the same time, the Community institutions were invited to establish before 31 July 1973 a programme of action which has now been laid before the European Parliament by the Commission, and on which the Council - disregarding the instructions of the Summit and the European Treaties - has only consulted the European Parliament on a facultative basis, and then one month later than scheduled. The Committee on Public Health and the Environment, on whose behalf Mr JAHN presented the report on the proposals from the Commission to the Council for a programme of environmental action of the European Communities, is acting on the assumption, however, that the European Parliament has been consulted on an obligatory basis on the programme of action as a whole.

In his statement to the plenary sitting, Mr JAHN stressed that the matter in hand was not so much the approval of a programme of action as the examination of the content and scope of the concrete proposal to be made by the Commission, which is to put the environmental programme into effect.

Mr JAHN stressed the particular importance of the Commission's demands for environmental protection of a preventive nature and the application of measures best suited to the geographical area concerned - whether at the local, regional, national, Community or international level. Action taken at supranational level should not be confined to the environmental measures adopted by individual Member States.

That was why the programme contained '1. Projects aimed at reducing and preventing pollution and nuisances; 2. Projects intended to improve the environment and the quality of life; 3. Community action or, where appropriate, joint action by Member States in international organizations'.

Mr JAHN went on to state that the prerequisite for an effective fight against pollution is the definition of tolerance limits for harmful substances in the environment and in manufactured products. This calls for standardization at Community level of measurement methods.

In conclusion, Mr JAHN stressed that the foundation of a European Institute for Environmental Protection should be included in the programme, as was recommended by the European Parliament and noted in the previous texts of the Commission. The task of this Institute would be the co-ordination of national measures for environmental protection and the implementation of action at Community level.

A COMMON STRATEGY AS THE PREREQUISITE FOR SECURITY OF ENERGY SUPPLIES

(G. SPRINGORUM)

The Paris Summit Conference in October 1972 placed special emphasis on energy policy, the European Parliament has been calling on the Council of Ministers to establish a Community energy policy for many years and the Council itself pointed to the urgent need for such a policy as long ago as 1968. But it was not until 22 May 1973 that the first Council meeting ever to be devoted exclusively to energy policy issues was held. On behalf of the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology, Mr SPRINGORUM tabled a motion for a resolution on the outcome of the Council meeting at the European Parliament's July part-session in Strasbourg.

Mr SPRINGORUM outlined three of the considerations which had prompted the committee to put forward this motion. Firstly, the meeting had clearly shown that the Council's present policy is preventing the establishment of a Community policy and that the Council is trying to restrict as far as possible the powers of the Commission, which for its part seems willing to have given up any claim to a leading political role.

Secondly, assessments of the outcome of the meeting vary. While the Commission speaks of a success, the governments of the Member States feel that no headway was made towards establishing a Community energy policy. The Council of Ministers did adopt three Commission proposals, but these were so unimportant that they make little contribution to a common policy. Although it was agreed that further meetings should be held in the future to discuss energy policy and although the Commission was instructed to work out a basis for discussion on measures to ensure security of supplies, a solution to the main issues was not found at the Council meeting.

Finally, account must be taken of the present situation on the energy market. The energy shortage in the United States will affect the Member States of the Community because imports from Europe will be used to fill the gap to some extent. The suggested restrictions on the export of petroleum products from the Community are merely a short-term solution to the energy problem. What the consumer countries must do is establish a system of fair distribution of the available energy to all those requiring it, to be put into effect in the event of a supply crisis. An arrangement of this kind presupposes, however, that the Member States agree on a definition of a common energy policy. What the Council meeting showed, and what provoked American criticism, was that this concept does not yet exist. We are in fact faced with the question of whether the search for

a solution to the energy supply problem should remain the responsibility of each country individually or of the European Community or whether all the consumer countries should join in an Atlanto-Japanese community to seek this solution.

Energy supply is not only a technical but also a political problem. The extent to which the Council of Ministers shows itself to be genuinely and politically willing to establish a real European Community policy and the Commission can play an active and progressive part in this field will determine the basis on which the commercial and technical aspects of the problem will be solved.

The spokesman for Parliament's Christian-Democratic Group, Mr SPRINGORUM, emphasized the adverse effects that the Council's and Commission's lack of political initiative is having on the energy sector.

ACTIVITIES OF CD MEMBERS

- o Mr JAHN put three written questions to the Commission on the proposal for a directive recommending negotiations on a textiles agreement between the Community and Hong-Kong and on the problem of the discharge of waste water into Community estuaries and coastal waters in view of the international convention on the protection of coastal waters which Germany would like to bring about.
- o Mr MARTENS addressed three written questions to the Commission requesting information on trends in the Community dairy, beef and veal and pig-meat markets.
- o Mr VETRONE asked the Commission in a written question what account it intended taking of the parliamentary questions put by Italian members in Montecitorio on the negotiations between the EEC and the Mediterranean countries on citrus fruit.
- o Sir Anthony ESMONDE prepared a report for the Committee on Public Health and the Environment on the proposal from the Commission to the Council for a directive on the approximation of Member States' legislation on aerosols.
- o Mr DEWULF addressed a written question to the Council and Commission on the exchange rates used in implementing the budget, referring, in particular, to the effects of parity changes on the salaries of Community officials.
- o A written question put by Mr GIRARDIN to the Commission concerned social benefits for miners resident in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. He asked the Community executive in particular about the agreement between France and Luxembourg applying to workers in mines and assimilated enterprises.
- o Mr Erik BLUMENFELD, European policy expert of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group and member of the CD group in the European Parliament, spoke in Bonn on European political unification. He displayed concern at the fact that the national governments did not seem prepared to implement the decisions taken in this field at the Paris Summit last October.

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THE E.P. AND THE EEC-USA NEGOTIATIONS

by GIOVANNI GIRAUDO¹

The European Parliament has a definite duty to express an opinion on the preparations for the autumn meeting and negotiations between the United States and Europe and, as a matter of urgency, to adopt a clear position in this matter which will be binding on the Member States' governments and the Council who should respect the solemn declarations of unity and cohesion of the Community made at the Paris summit less than a year ago.

This question must be given priority and its political significance for relations between the United States and the Community, America and Europe, will depend entirely on whether the Parliament's proposals are adopted or rejected. If the Community, which is a real, autonomous and responsible, if not sole, determinant of the future of these relations, were not there to make its presence and influence felt in the negotiations by mobilizing its institutions at the highest level, the political consistency of one of the negotiators (i.e. the European Community), rather than the content of the negotiations, would suffer.

It may seem unrealistic to demand such a commitment from the Community Council of Ministers and the Member States' governments at a time when some governments are asking for the transition to the second stage of monetary and economic union to be postponed. I believe, on the contrary, that compensating for the more or less unavoidable delays on the road to economic and monetary union by giving a boost to political cooperation in view of the special autumn appointment, at least, shows true realism. A distinguished colleague who recently left the

European Parliament and whose opinions, though often not shared by the majority, always met with respect and interest, in the last draft resolution that he prepared, declared that closer political cooperation must allow the Community to assert its personality and the Member States to take a common line from the very beginning of the major negotiations opening with our main world partners.

This resolution establishes a prudent and logically coherent line for the Community and Member States to follow in their meeting with President Nixon but, beneath the surface, they are really loudly denying the commitments undertaken at the Paris summit. We agree with the French Foreign Minister, Mr JOBERT, who, in a recent address to the French Assembly, called for a clearly defined and accepted common European policy but added that, in the meantime, we should accept and implement the principle laid down in Paris, i.e. the recognition that the time has come for Europe to fully awake to the unity of its interests, the extent of its capacities and the importance of its true duties. Though this principle does not force all aspects of major negotiations into a Community mould, it does require that, in future, nothing contrary to its interests should emerge from them. The whole bilateralism versus multilateralism controversy about the negotiations with the United States is a sort of illogical diplomatic metaphysics - an artificial argument, since it takes no account of the fact that we must not expect to deal with all problems at once but examine and resolve them gradually after first placing them in a general context which should be defined, considered and planned in good time by the appropriate Community bodies, with the agreement of the Member States' governments.

It seems to me that the Council of Ministers is the obvious body to define the elements of this general political context, provided that it meets soon at the level of the Heads of government with the Commission's participation.

This would set an important precedent in no way contradictory to the Treaties and the procedure could be used again in the autumn to agree on the most suitable venue for the meeting with President Nixon: I think that if the European Parliament were chosen this would be an important step, conferring great prestige on the Parliament as a whole.

¹ Senator Giovanni Giraudo was born in the province of Cuneo. He graduated in Law and in 1953 became a member of the Chamber of Deputies, then, in 1958, he entered the Italian Senate, in which he belongs to the Committee on European Community Affairs. He has been in the Italian government several times: as under-secretary in the Presidency of the Council, in the Ministry of the Interior and involved in the Reform of Public Administration. He was a director of the Cuneo Chamber of Commerce. He entered the European Parliament in 1959 where he is a member of the Bureau and Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee.

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