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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

1979 - 1980

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13 NOVEMBER 1979

DOCUMENT 1-514/79

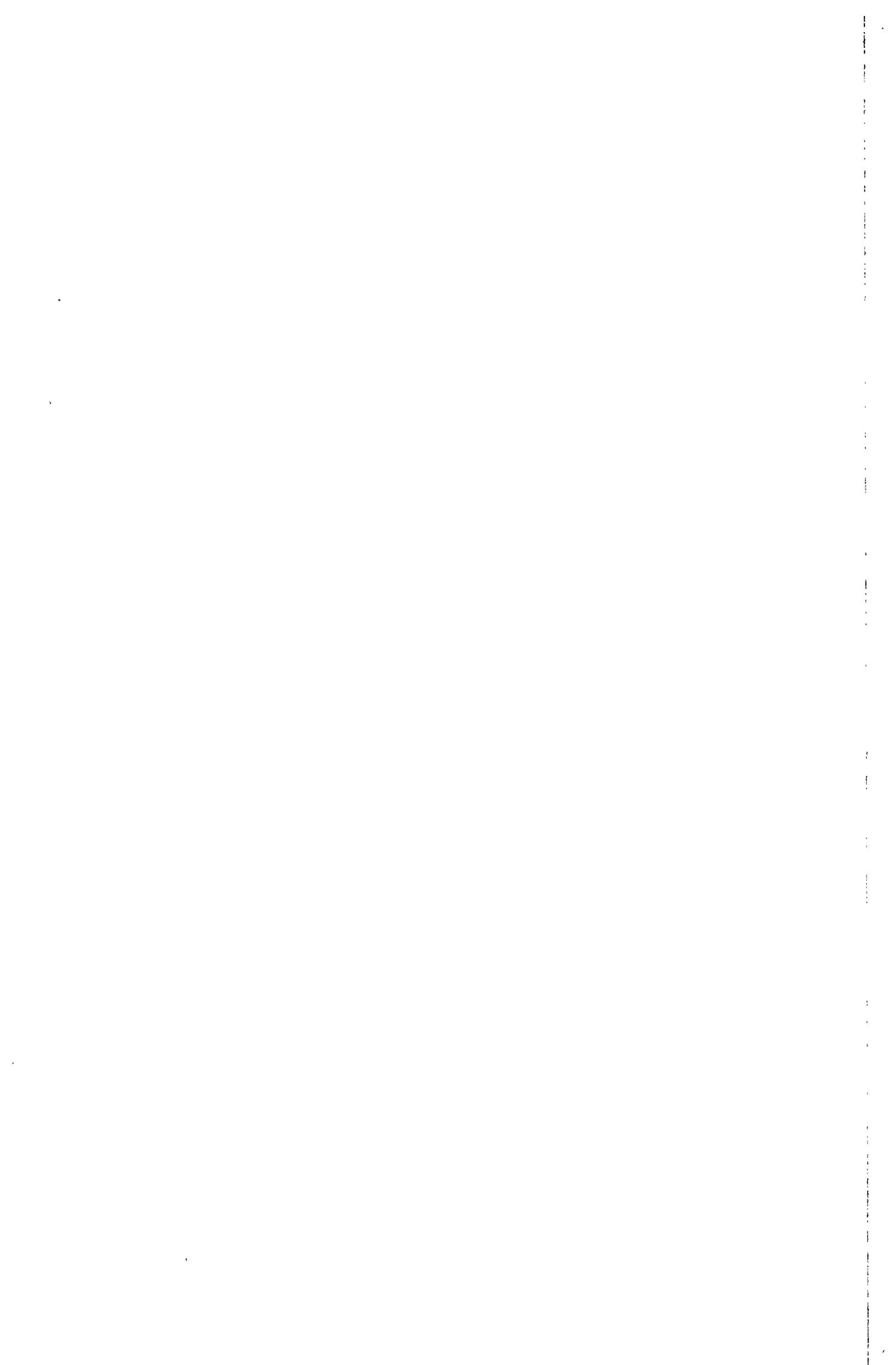
MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr VERGES, Mr CHAMBEIRON, Mr DAMETTE,  
Mr DENIS, Mrs DE MARCH, Mr FERNANDEZ,  
Mr FRISCHMANN, Mr MARTIN, Mr PIQUET  
and Mrs POIRIER

with request for urgent debate  
pursuant to Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure

on the ~~/~~proposal to reduce the sugar quota of  
the French overseas departments

02.1



The European Parliament.

- having regard to the Commission's proposals for the sugar regulation for 1980/1985, which involve a reduction of at least 10% in the A quota sugar production sold at guaranteed prices during the 1979/80 marketing year,
- whereas these proposals are contrary to the policy fixed by the Community itself concerning the imperative need to increase sugar production in the island of Reunion, since the preamble to the sugar regulation of 13 February 1978 concerning the 1977 and 1978 production of A quota sugar stated that the increase of sugar production in Reunion was conditional upon purchase of that production at A quota prices; the A quota for 1979/1980 was 291,300 tonnes for Reunion,
- whereas the plans for increased sugar production which have been in operation for several years in Reunion, and which are just being introduced in the Antilles, aim for an A quota white sugar production figure of 300,000 tonnes for Reunion, 120,000 tonnes for Guadeloupe and 30,000 tonnes for Martinique, that is a total of 450,000 tonnes, which is compatible with the A quota of 466,000 tonnes currently guaranteed by the Community. Reunion's sugar production this year will be approximately 285,000 tonnes, and the areas that have been cleared of stones and planted should raise production to 300,000 tonnes in 1980 or 1981,
- whereas, unlike sugar beet which is an 'annual' plant, sugar cane is planted for a minimum of five to eight years. The new plantations in Reunion have thus been planted for a period of five to eight years, and it is on this basis that planters have contracted loans and calculated their return on investment. No other form of culture can therefore be envisaged in the immediate future,
- whereas on the one hand sugar-cane production in Reunion constitutes the livelihood of the overwhelming majority of farmers, and sugar production more than 85% of the island's exports, and whereas on the other hand sugar production in Martinique and Guadeloupe must be maintained at a substantial level if the extremely serious economic and social situation in the Antilles is not to worsen,
- whereas in this connection two figures are sufficient to illustrate the present crisis in Reunion: more than 20% of its active population is entirely without work and 60% is dependent on social security, while more than 92% of sugar-cane planters who are paid the guaranteed A quota price have an official income that is lower than the SMIC (index-linked minimum statutory wage), which is itself 30% lower than the French SMIC, in spite of the fact that the cost of living in Reunion is 40% higher than in France,
- whereas a 10% reduction in the A quota of the 1979/1980 harvest, coupled with the abolition of the B quota, will reduce the proportion of sugar production that can be sold at guaranteed prices, and hence the income of planters and local industries, to such an extent as to ruin the former and seriously jeopardize the latter and, in the case of the Antilles, remove all possibility of increasing, or even maintaining, their current sugar production level,
- whereas, since the ACP/EEC Consultative Assembly agreed, out of consideration for their under-development, to maintain at 1,300,000 tonnes the sugar production of the associated ACP States sold at guaranteed prices in the Community, it would be anachronistic for the European Parliament which owes its existence in part to the votes of the French overseas departments, to allow the Commission to penalize these departments which form part of the Community, since they too are essentially agricultural and suffer from under-development. In these circumstances, applying to sugar-cane production the same treatment as sugar-beet production will mean penalizing under-developed countries which form part of the Community,



1. Asks the Commission to cancel its proposals for reducing the A quota sugar production of the French overseas departments sold in the Community;
2. Asks the Commission to fix the quotas in the 1980/1985 sugar regulation in accordance with a production figure of 300,000 tonnes for Reunion, 120,000 tonnes for Guadeloupe and 30,000 tonnes for Martinique;
3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

#### JUSTIFICATION

Quite apart from the Commission's proposals, it is the whole future of the economy of the French overseas departments and territories and their population which is at stake.

