

# European Communities

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## Working Documents

1975-1976

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### Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth

on the information programme for 1975 and the complementary information programme for 1975

Rapporteur: Mr. K.H. PETERSEN



By letter of 26 February 1975 the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth requested authorization to draw up a report on the complementary information programme adopted by the Commission of the European Communities for 1975.

Authorization was given by the President of the European Parliament in his letter of 10 March 1975. The Committee on Budgets was asked for its opinion.

At its meeting of 19 March the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth appointed Mr Petersen rapporteur.

It considered the draft report at its meeting of 16 and 17 April 1975 and unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement on 17 April 1975.

Present: Mr Broeksz, chairman and acting rapporteur; Mr Creed, Mr Delmotte (deputizing for Mr N. K. Nielsen), Mr De Sandis, Mr Durieux (deputizing for Mr de Broglie), Mr Hougardy, Mr Kavanagh (deputizing for Mr Calewaert), Mr Meintz, Mr Noè (deputizing for Mr Schulz), Mr Thornley and Mr Walkhoff.

7. Considers that the Commission should be able to use the appropriations available to it in a flexible manner and, in particular, to launch an experimental exchange programme for young people, teachers and other persons, to enable citizens of Member States to get to know one another better and to become aware that they belong to a Community;
8. Hopes that the Commission will be able to make and collect recordings and television films on Community subjects for regular radio and television broadcasts and asks it to make the necessary contacts with the officials responsible for the various national television networks and for Eurovision; also requests the Commission to recruit sufficient numbers of qualified staff in this sector;

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9. Considers that the Commission should not confine itself to providing information on the Community, but that it should concern itself with the impact of its information on the public and with the public image of the Community institutions;
10. Instructs the committee responsible to keep the implementation of the Commission's programme under scrutiny;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of its committee to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTIntroductory remarks

1. This report will cover both
  - the 1975 information programme which, as stated by the Commission, constitutes an additional part of the 1974-75 information programme (Doc. SEC(75) 200 final), and
  - the 1975 complementary information programme, adopted by the Commission following the inclusion in the 1975 budget of supplementary appropriations by the European Parliament (Mr Aigner's amendment) (Doc. SEC(75) 1084 final).

- I. Basic principles of the information and complementary information programmes for 1975

2. After indicating the principles on which its information policy is based and the main themes to be dealt with, the Commission outlines the action that it plans to take vis-à-vis various sectors of the public and the methods it will use.

It goes on to explain how it intends to disseminate information in third (industrialized and developing, associated and non-associated) countries.

3. The principles forming the basis of the information policy set out in the programme are not new: in essence, the Commission must win the support of a somewhat disillusioned public for the Community and mobilize public opinion in favour of the progress to be made.

The tone, however, is new. There is more than a hint of optimism in the 'reshaping' of the information policy. There are no bitter-sweet comments of the type: 'One thing is certain: no information policy can be a substitute for real achievements. We must be well aware that the results of the Commission's information policy will be largely dependent on the decisions taken - or not taken - by the governments of the Member States during the next few years' (paragraph 10, Doc. SEC(73) 4660 final).

The Commission could, by presenting information in more practical and straightforward terms, show the public how it is fulfilling its task as an institution responsible for making proposals, and that it can find compromise solutions to matters on which the interests of the nine Member States may at first be divergent. By assuming its political responsibilities it could also show that failures to act are more often than not the fault of the decision-making body, the Council, and take advantage of this to revive matters on which urgent solutions are required.

4. The Commission, which has in the past concentrated its efforts on the specialized media, the press, radio and television, and their correspondents in Brussels, while developing and improving relations with the major information organs, now wants to reach a larger audience and in particular to reach directly the general public which, on the whole, knows little of the Community.

The Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth feels that this is a sound approach. The mass media, which in general provide the public with accurate information on Community activities, in fact sometimes tend to stress negative aspects, to highlight shortcomings in the Community's organization and to obscure the roles played by the individual institutions.

5. Widespread publicity will show the citizens of the Community that the latter is not an abstract entity or some sort of vague nebula, but a whole of which they as individuals form a part, and that the activities of the Community of Nine affect them in their daily lives.

For this purpose, the Commission lists in its complementary programme actions directed at citizens in the regions. Mobile exhibitions in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and, after the referendum, in the United Kingdom, will make direct contact with citizens possible. In Italy and France, these 'mobile teams' will be able to lay the foundations of an effective information network with many branches.

Contacts established locally with organizations of all types should enable the Commission to bring this information and documentation network to life, for the general public as well as for members of various professions and organizations. There are in fact considerable loopholes at local level in the documentation and information available on Community decisions, particularly to professional organizations (artisans, trade and industry) and other organizations. These decisions are reflected in national regulations and legislation, but without indication of their Community origin.

The citizens of our Member States do not feel part of a Community. It is to be hoped that with a broad information campaign this feeling will be increasingly fostered.

## II. Information within the Community

### a. Themes

6. The three themes
- Europe - for whom?
  - Europe - why?
  - Europe - how?

on which the information policy will concentrate, reflect the Commission's desire to provide the public at large with factual and simpler information.

President Ortoli's statement to the European Parliament on 18 February, in which he introduced the information programme, should be given widespread publicity. At the same time the Commission's information services should,

with the aid of concrete examples, throw further light on the objectives and intentions put forward in this statement.

b. Targets

(a) Trade unions

7. The increase in activities directed at trade unions, particularly the training of leaders in the use of the audio-visual material to be provided in schools, will enable trade unions to become better acquainted with the Community and its activities in the social field (employment, regional policy, etc.). It is known that trade unions are particularly critical of the Community. A concentrated effort should make it possible, if not to prevent all criticism, at least to remove some of the misunderstandings and make trade unionists more objective in their criticism.

(b) Young people

8. With the increased funds at its disposal the Commission will be able to intensify its information activities directed at young people.

There are numerous youth movements, most of them grouped together in federations. The Commission should ensure that the information and documentation it provides to these movements reaches small local groups too. It could help youth movements and groups to set up documentation centres.

In its resolution on the European Youth Forum, the European Parliament proposed (Doc. 41/74, Article 3(4), fourth subparagraph) that 'a Community youth fund should be created and placed at the disposal of the various youth organizations for the implementation of their internal training and information programmes'.

The Commission did not adopt this proposal. It apparently wants to retain responsibility for the European Youth Forum and youth movements.

This is a rather unrealistic attitude, for we know that youth movements are jealous of their independence. It should be remembered that the Council of Europe has adopted a radically different approach, which largely explains its success with youth movements.

Young people who are not members of any organization can be reached through newspapers and young people's magazines, schools, radio and television.

In this connection, the Commission could introduce on an experimental basis an exchange programme aimed at young people and others, similar to existing bilateral schemes (such as that of the Franco-German Youth Office). These exchanges would allow young people from different Member States to gain a better knowledge of the life of European citizens beyond their national frontiers.

An interesting innovation is provided by the competitions which, according to its supplementary programme, the Commission proposes to organize.

(c) Teachers

9. Teachers at different levels occupy key positions suited for passing on Community information and documentation to young people.

In view of the fact that in some countries documentation services for teachers and students are not well organized and often run by untrained teaching staff, it would be a good idea for the Commission to make available to such services, schools and universities documentation that has already been classified and indexed and that could immediately be used and even serve as a basis for the creation of school and university documentation services.

(d) Political circles

10. The Commission seems to want to organize its information network in political circles more efficiently. As in the case of youth movements it should ensure that its information is passed on to small local groups. Not infrequently, when party political groups visit the European Parliament they complain of a lack of documentation on the Community and its institutions.

Information and documentation should also be selected and adapted to the different needs of politicians and organizations.

For members of national parliaments the best method would be to provide cards giving summaries of the basic documents; these documents would continue to be forwarded to the documentation services of the national parliaments.

Members of the European Parliament know from experience that they are swamped by the mass of documents which they receive from the Community institutions and elsewhere. A more efficient information and documentation system would enable savings to be made in the costs of printing and mailing documents that are not used because they are not usable.

(e) Consumers

11. The Commission proposes to supplement the information intended for consumers and to show that Community decisions - which often appear to be very technical - have helped to increase consumer protection.

A check should be made that the Commission services coordinate their activities, since there is one service that is responsible for the environment and consumer information and protection (200,000 u.a. were earmarked for consumer projects in the 1975 budget).

C. Methods

(a) Audio-visual methods

12. Following the European Parliament's suggestion, the Commission intends to make greater use of these modern methods. The Commission's studio will be expanded and the equipment improved.

The Commission says nothing about increasing its staff in the audio-visual sector. It is obvious, however, that these services cannot be really efficient without an adequate number of qualified staff.

The Commission has worked together with television networks long enough to know their requirements. The idea of joint productions with the stations and of supplying them with filmed material is excellent. Video-cassettes are another method of disseminating information which the Commission should use.

Mr Aigner, who tabled the amendment which increased the funds available to the Commission, hopes that the latter will be able to broadcast regularly from its own studios. Such broadcasts could be on a monthly basis to start with.

The Commission, which cannot yet broadcast from its own studios, should be able to prepare material for regular programmes on Community subjects. It will be up to the Commission to negotiate to this end with the national radio and television networks and with Eurovision. For subjects of particular interest to one institution or another the Commission could cooperate with the institution concerned.

(b) Cooperation between the Community institutions in information activities

13. Each of the Community institutions has an information service and each of them should be able to conduct their own information policy independently of the others. This applies to internal services as well as to external offices.

There is no reason, however, why the various institutions should not collaborate with each other and one could well imagine information activities carried out jointly by the services of Parliament and the Commission on specific topics such as elections by direct universal suffrage or budgetary powers.

The Commission does not anticipate such cooperation in its programme. It should establish contacts with the other institutions to consider possible methods and avoid costly duplication.

(c) Publications

14. The Commission intends to reduce the proportion of the budget devoted to publications. There is certainly a wide selection of publications and it has already been said that the Commission was interested in developing its brochures.

The magazines (European Community, EC Information) published by the Commission's external information offices are well designed and attractive. They are also a valuable source of information for many young people. The Commission might consider distributing these magazines more widely by contacting the numerous youth and adult organizations.

In its publications, the Commission should take care to present a lively and practical view of the life and culture of the peoples of the Member States, so as to make the citizens of our Community aware of their European identity in its diverse aspects.

(d) Visits and exhibitions

15. The Commission intends to be more selective. Visits to the Commission, where meetings are not public as in Parliament, are useful, since even if they are only made by a limited number of people they present the Commission to the public and show it the human side of an institution which too often appears to be run by technocrats.

Exhibitions make it possible to reach the public at large but, as the Commission states in its supplementary programme, priority should be given to mobile exhibitions giving contact with people who can act as 'multipliers'.

When exhibitions are held, meetings and round table discussions should be arranged between local experts on various topics and Commission officials with specialized knowledge of different aspects of the Commission's activities.

It should be possible to deal with certain topics of major importance in depth rather than merely provide superficial information. In addition, a temporary information campaign is not enough, and thought should be given to the future and to the informational infrastructure which such exhibitions would make possible.

III. Information in third countries

16. Information activities in third countries which are concentrated on influential circles and the press are very important, partly because of the numerous agreements between the Community and non-member countries, and partly because of the repercussions of certain divisions on the economic life of many of these countries.

In addition to the ACP countries, the Commission's activities extend to other associated countries in the Mediterranean (Turkey and Greece), the Arab countries, the United States, Japan, Canada and countries in Latin America and Asia.

The Commission has opened several offices and is stepping up the activities of the existing offices.

The Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth approves these measures.

With regard to Portugal, the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth believes that a special information campaign should be undertaken to facilitate the development of ties between that country and the European Communities.

IV. Other projects

17. Under this heading, the Commission lists some topics which could be used in information campaigns on the Community. Perhaps it could state in what way these topics will be dealt with.

The Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth is pleased that in 1975 the Commission intends to participate in the activities connected with International Women's Year and attaches special importance to this matter.



FINANCIAL ANNEX

Allocation of appropriations  
for the 1975 programme  
and  
1975 complementary programme

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I. Appropriations entered for the programme on 6.3.1975

Item 2720 (and Item 2730<sup>\*\*</sup>)

u.a.

A. INFORMATION IN MEMBER STATES

- Centralized polyvalent information
- Decentralized polyvalent information  
 (Polyvalent information = information by media which do not specialize on one theme or interest group, e.g. magazines, newsletters, basic brochures, multi-purpose visits, summary films ... This information is partly centralized and partly decentralized at press and information office level) 1,862,400
- Specific information  
 (Specific information = information by media directed towards specific topics such as agricultural policy, consumers and the environment, development aid ...) 537,917
- Information for specialized circles  
 (Information for specialized circles = information aimed particularly at priority circles such as trade unions and universities) 633,760
- Information for youth and educational circles - Item 2730<sup>\*\*</sup>  
 (Information in and outside schools) 846,236

Total for information in Member States 3,880,313

B. INFORMATION IN THIRD COUNTRIES

- European countries with which the Community has concluded a free trade agreement 76,700
- Mediterranean basin 200,700
- Information for associated countries 137,472
- United States 254,652
- Latin America 41,500
- Other third countries 84,000

Total for information in third countries 795,024

C. SUPPORT

- Publishing and graphic work, technical use of radion and television studios, studies and opinion polls, overheads and miscellaneous 241,448

D. RESERVES

- Item 2720 29,451
- Item 2730 3,764

Total reserves 33,215

Total appropriations entered for programme on 6.3.75 4,950,000

Item 2720 : 4,100,000

Item 2730 : 850,000

II. Appropriations earmarked for the complementary programme

Item 2720

Chapter 98

u.a.

A. INFORMATION IN MEMBER STATES

Information for leading regional interests	40,000	Information for leading regional interests (accompanying campaigns aimed at the public)	60,000
-		'Public information campaigns directed at the Community citizen in his own region	236,100
-		'Public' information campaigns directed at the Community citizen in his own home (as a consumer)	25,000
Action in trade union circles (mainly decentralized campaigns in the regions of the Community)	60,000	'Public' information campaigns directed at the Community citizen at work	36,400
-		'Public' information campaigns directed at the Community citizen of the future (young people)	122,500
Other projects (including provisions for TV co-productions)	80,000	-	
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	180,000		480,000

B. INFORMATION IN THIRD COUNTRIES

-		- Mediterranean basin	65,000
-		- ACP countries (Lomé Convention)	50,000
-		- Latin America	25,000
- Contribution towards the financing of the International Exhibition in Okinawa	<u>200,000</u>		
	200,000		<hr/>
			140,000

C. SUPPORT

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D. RESERVES

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Total appropriations for complementary programme	) Item 2720	Chapter 98	620,000
	)		<u>          </u>
	380,000		
Supplement: Item 2730 :	<u>50,000</u>		

