



A Parliament beginning to behave like one

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"New boys in Strasbourg", "Attack on farm spending launched". "Euro-MPs put lamb ban to test", "Euro-MPs threat of censure over butter sale", "Backing for UK on budget issue", "Nine urged to help world's hungry", "Euro-MPs press for cheaper air fares", "Public hearing on steel", "EEC running out of funds to pay for food mountains as MPs hold up money", "Members reject the Community budget", "Euro-MPs feel the pinch as budget deadlock halts expenses", "Euro-MPs tired of nomadic life".

These were just a few of the press headlines provoked by Parliament in the year since the first European elections were held on June 7-10, 1979. One writer discussing the Parliament's rejection of the 1980 budget recently wrote "... and no English observer could fail to be transported back to the seventeenth century and think of Hampden and Pym..." although doubting "whether the new Parliament would bring the Stuarts of Europe to heel, or rather the Council of Finance Ministers drawn from the governments of the Nine...". Another review was simply headed "A Parliament beginning to behave like one". And there is evidence to suggest public and lobby agreement. In the Spring, when Ministers were due to decide on farm prices for 1980-81, the largest demonstration took place neither outside the Council nor the Commission but in front of Parliament in Strasbourg.

Outside the Community the importance and legitimacy of Parliament has been clearly recognised in the number of delegations of Ministers and parliamentarians (including the Chinese — see below) who visited Strasbourg during the year and by the visit by Parliament's own President Simone Veil to the United States (where she had talks with President Carter) and the invitation for her to visit China.

Looking ahead, the next few months are again likely to be dominated by consideration of the Community budget: this time for 1981. The Commission's preliminary draft will be presented in July and examined in detail in the autumn (see next issue). A further and not insignificant problem for Parliament is to complete the revision of its new Rules of Procedure: a task which is proving both controversial and long.

Will 1981 see an end to Parliament's "nomadic life"? Several political groups are already consulting their Members on their preference for a single meeting place for plenary sessions; and the earlier decision to hold all 1980 sessions in Strasbourg has already been emended.¹ Formally a decision on the seat of the institutions should be taken by the Member State governments (see Digest No. 4); but there is a widely held view in Parliament that if the governments fail to decide when Parliament should take the law into its own hands for its own places of work.

¹The main budgetary part sessions of June 26-27, October 27-30 and December 15-19 are now in Luxembourg.

Chinese in Strasbourg

Among the delegations visiting the European Parliament from parliaments in non-Member countries — including Venezuela,

Spain, Japan this year alone — none has invoked more interest than that from China which was in Strasbourg on June 16-18.

Led by Mrs Deng Yingchao, widow of the Chinese prime minister Zhou-Enlai, the delegation from the National People's Congress included three other members, nine officials and six journalists.

The other three members of Congress were Mr Wang Feng, First Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party for the autonomous region of Ougours in Singkiang; Mr Tian Bao, Chairman of the Popular Government of the autonomous region of Tibet; and Mr Tian Fuda, Member of the State Committee for Nationality Affairs.

During the visit Mrs Deng had a meeting with President Simone Veil, and the whole delegation from the European Parliament. International problems and European Community-Chinese relations were the main topics.

At a press conference it was announced that President Veil had accepted an invitation to visit China, probably in 1981.

Mrs Deng characterised the international situation in Afghanistan and Cambodia as "hegemonism pushing south", which was a threat to world peace. Gilles Martinet (Soc/Fr), leader of the European delegation, agreed but added that the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia did not "wipe the slate clean" as to European condemnation of the Pol Pot régime.

On mutual relations the Chinese hope to improve their trade balance with Europe, at present in substantial deficit, and Mr Martinet mentioned European hopes of acquiring such raw materials as chrome, manganese, vanadium and some energy sources from China. On 1 January 1980 China also became a beneficiary of the Community system of generalised tariff preferences.

Following this visit about one hundred Chinese trade officials are to participate in a Community-China business week in Brussels in the autumn and there will be a further meeting of the EEC-China Mixed Commission on Trade.

Zimbabwe in Luxembourg

When the next sessions of the Consultative Assembly of the Lomé Convention and its Joint Committee are held in Luxembourg from 22-26 September 1980 MEPs and their Lomé colleagues will probably be joined by delegates from Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is to become the 60th Member of the Convention.

The Assembly will be reviewing progress in the Convention. ACP countries have recently expressed concern about their deteriorating trade balance with the Community. Although the previous years' deficits were turned round in 1979 this was largely the result of higher oil exports from Nigeria. Overall ACP exports rose some 24% to almost £9,000 million. ACP countries enjoyed a £2,000 million trade surplus with the Community but this hid a non-oil deficit of £1,500 million.

Work in Progress

DOCUMENT	SUBJECT	Main Cttee.	Other Cttee.
COM(80)128 fin	Proposal for an amending regulation on an interim common measure for restructuring the inshore fishing industry.	Agric.	Budget
COM(80)202 fin	List of requests for the carry-over of appropriations from the 1979 to the 1980 financial year (non-automatic carry-overs)	Budget	
COM(80)160 fin	Proposals for: a) an amending regulation on the market in flax and hemp b) a regulation on the measures encouraging the use of flax fibres for 1980-82.	Agric.	Budget
COM(80)198 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a regulation laying down for 1980 certain measures for the conservation and management of fishery resources applicable to vessels registered in the Faroe Islands.	Agric.	
COM(79)789 fin	Proposal for a regulation approving two agreements in the form of an exchange of letters with Canada concerning fisheries.	Agric.	
COM(80)134 fin	Proposal for a decision with regard to contributions to be granted to the ECSC out of the general budget of the European Communities.	Budget	Social
COM(80)88 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the conclusion of the agreement on fisheries with Spain.	Agric.	
COM(80)241 fin	Proposal relating to the authorization of additional provisional twelfths for certain sectors of the EAGGF – Guarantee Section	Budget	
COM(80)275 fin	Proposal for transfer of appropriations No 3/80 between chapters within Section III – Commission – of the general budget of the European Communities for the 1980 financial year.	Budget	
COM(80)207 fin	Proposal for directives on swine vesicular disease and swine fever.	Agric.	
COM(80)206 fin	Proposal for an amending directive on the control of classical swine fever.	Agric.	Budget
COM(80)237 fin	Proposal for a recommendation on the recovery and re-use of waste paper and board.	Env.	
COM(80)246 fin	Proposal for an amending regulation on the granting of abandonment premiums in certain areas under vines and of premiums for the renunciation of replanting.	Agric.	
COM(80)254 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the grant of a premium for the birth of calves and the slaughter of certain adult bovine animals during the 1980/81 marketing year.	Agric.	Budget
COM(80)279 fin	Proposal for a regulation for the conservation and management of fishery resources applicable to Swedish vessels.	Agric.	
COM(80)193 fin	Proposal for a directive on labelling of the energy consumption of household appliances.		
COM(80)262 fin	Proposal for a decision adopting a programme in the field of scientific and technical training.	Energy	Budget
COM(80)262 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the amount of aid to producers for the 1979 hop harvest.	Agric.	Budget

Replies to Members' Questions

In summary form; the full questions and answers will be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities. WQ denotes Written Question; QT, Oral Question during Question Time, with date; OQ, other Oral Question.

Sugar – *Brian Key (Soc/UK) WQ 427/79*
Export refunds on Community-produced sugar rose from 8 mn. u.a. in 1974 to 475 mn. last year; the latter included some 350 mn. u.a. in respect of exports of 1.3 mn. tonnes corresponding to the preferential imports under the Lomé Convention. From 1974-5 until 1978-9 the area under (cane and beet) sugar in the Community rose by 11.6% and output by 36.8% – with the UK outstripping other countries with a 13% rise in area and a 79.9% growth in output. But

Community consumption actually fell slightly, so that a 1974-5 deficit in consumption of 10.4% became a 1978-9 surplus of 22.8%. Hence the rise in exports.

	1974-5	1978-9	%±
Area ('000 ha)	1572	1754	+11.6
Output ('000 tonnes)	8569	11720	+36.8
Consumption ('000 t)	9561	9544	-0.2
Exports ('000 t)	310	2724	+778.7

Farm Fund grants – *Alf Lomas (Soc/UK) WQ 1931/79*

Because of limited funds only 61 out of 249 projects in the UK seeking aid from the Guidance Section of the European Agricultural Fund in 1979 received grants. The overall number of requests

was 1,115. Brighton Cooperative Society's request for aid to modernise its dairy was among those omitted. The Commission takes its decisions on the basis of objective criteria and is not influenced by "lobbying".

Battery hens – *Brian Hord (Dem/UK) WQ 1871/79*

Scientific knowledge of the effects of the battery system is insufficient and conflicting. The Commission is setting up a research programme on the matter.

Fish catches – *Joyce Quin (Soc/UK) WQ 1517/79*

The EEC catch-reporting system only began on January 1 and statistics to date are not complete. Existing data do not show catches of member states' economic zones.

Action taken on Parliament's Opinions

Each month the European Commission reports on the action it has taken in response to the Opinions previously expressed by Parliament.

In its 14-18 April part-session Parliament voted on 10 proposals from the Commission. Reporting back in May the Commission said:

1. In two cases the non-report procedure was used:

- proposal for an amending directive on the medical examination of staff involved in the manufacture of meat products;
- proposal for an amending directive on the medical examination of staff involved in the production of poultry-meat.

2. In four cases Parliament adopted Committee reports (working document no. given in brackets) which were favourable to Commission proposals.

- Report by Mr Linde on the communication concerning the Community's new energy policy guidelines (1-816/79)
- Report by Mr von Wogau on a directive concerning certain methods for the quantitative analysis of binary mixtures of textile fibres (1-818/79)
- Report by Mr Michel on the proposals for food aid regulations for 1980 (1-105/80)
- Report by Mr Woltjer on a proposal for measures relating to vessels flying the Swedish flag (1-102/80)

3. In two cases Parliament proposed amendments which the Commission accepted:

- Report by Mr Gonella on the pro-

posal for a directive on the right of residence of Member States' nationals on another Member State's territory (1-40/80)

- Report by Mr von Wogau on a directive on the harmonization of turnover taxes and excise duties applicable to international passenger traffic (1-43/80)

4. In two cases the Commission was unable to accept the Parliament's amendments:

- Report by Mr Luster on a directive on health problems arising from the importation of bovine animals and swine and fresh meat from third countries (1-811/79)
- Report by Mr Nyborg on a proposal for a directive coordinating the procedures for the award of public supply contracts (1-814/79).

At its 19-23 May part-Session Parliament voted on 17 proposals from the Commission.

1. In 10 cases Parliament adopted Committee reports which were favourable to Commission proposals.

- Report by Mr Seligman on the plutonium cycle research and development programme (813/79)
- Report by Mr Buchou on the common organization of the wine market (143/80)
- Report by Mr Gautier on fishing in the direction area determined by the NAFO Convention (147/80)
- Report by Mr Bocklet on animal husbandry standards applicable to pig breeding stocks (41/80)
- Report by Mr Boyes on interim anti-poverty action (75/80)

- Report by Mr Radoux on the co-operation agreement between the Community and Yugoslavia (165/80)
- Report by Mr Woltjer on the conclusion of an agreement with Sweden on salmon breeding in the Baltic (174/80)

2. In four cases Parliament proposed amendments which the Commission accepted:

- Report by Mr Dankert on authorization of additional provisional twelfths (197/80)
- Report by Mr Nyborg on VAT on stores of international vessels, aircraft and trains (42/80)
- Report by Mr Mihr on noise from machinery on building sites (819/79)

3. In three cases the Commission was unable to accept the Parliament's amendments:

- Report by Mr Sutra on quality liqueur wines (142/80)
- Report by Mr Poncelet on a textile/clothing research and development programme (730/79)
- Report by Mr Herman on a clays and ceramics research and development programme
- Report by Mr Simonnet on the use of the ECU in the Community Budget (65/80)

4. In three cases the Commission was unable to accept the Parliament's amendments:

- Report by Mrs Maij-Weggen on colouring matter for use in food-stuffs for human consumption (834/79)
- Report by Mr Combe on intra-Community trade in poultrymeat (619/79)
- Report by Mr Gillot et al. on product liability (120/80)

Replies to Members' Questions

Recycling glass — *Hanna Walz (EPP/Ger) WQ 1408/79*

The Commission plans a study to update the 1973 figure of glass container consumption of 15 mn. tonnes in the EEC. In Germany 450,000 t. are expected to be recycled this year; in France the 1979 total was 300,000 t. and is expected to double by 1983; in Belgium 100,000 t. were recycled in 1978; in the UK two plants are being set up each with a capacity of 50,000 t. Recycling 10% of glass used saves 2% of energy and 1.2 t. of raw materials are saved for every tonne of glass used.

Tobacco tax harmonisation — *Sir David Colson (Dem/UK) WQ 1369/79*

The first objective is to harmonise the excise structure, with tax rates following at a later stage. This pattern is being followed with other excise taxes. Price and other controls such as on advertising may have an impact on free circulation of goods. Where necessary action has been,

and will be, taken to avoid conflicts with the Treaties.

Levy on margarine — *Vincent Ansquer (EPD/Fr) WQ 1050/79*

Margarine comprises 19% of apparent human consumption of fats and oils in the EEC, against 21% for butter, 36% for edible oils, 18% for non-butter animal fats and 6% for other fats. The Commission is aware of the differences of policies applied to different fats and oils, but the Council rejected its proposal for a tax on vegetable oils. In the context of enlargement of the EEC it will be necessary to look again at the problems of the coherence of policies.

Tachographs — *Winifred Ewing (EPD/UK) QT 19/5*

The Commission is not prepared to make concessions regarding its tachograph legislation to the Scottish highlands and islands despite the paucity of the motorways there.

Regional aid — *Maurits Coppieters (TCI/Bel) WQ 1805/79*

European Regional Development Fund grants and European Investment bank loans have been as follows:

	ERDF 1975-9 (mn. u.a.)	EIB 1958-79 (mn. u.a.)
Scotland	159	548 (+243 ¹) ²
Wales	130	279 (+ 43 ¹) ²
Sicily	141	525 (+162 ¹)
Sardinia	83	404
Wallonia	23	62
Flanders	16	22
Corsica	11	—

¹ in brackets: loans for projects shared with adjoining regions

² 1975-79 only

Olympic Games site — *John Marshall (Dem/UK) WQ 125/80*

The Commission does not consider that it has any competence to investigate the feasibility of a permanent site in Greece for the Olympic Games.

Replies to Members' Questions

Microprocessors – Barry Seal (Soc/UK) WQ 1782/79

The Commission does not consider that it is its role to establish production facilities for commercial products. Accurate forecast and timely satisfaction of the market are the prerogative of entrepreneurs and company management. The Commission is making proposals for a series of actions aimed at promoting the creation in Europe of the basic infrastructure for producing advanced technology products.

Fishing vessels – Maurits Coppieters (TCD/Bel) WQ 1768/79

Complete withdrawal of an old vessel from use is not an absolute requirement for receipt of EEC aid for building inshore fishing vessels. But, as in some regions fishing capacity exceeds exploitable resources, some priority is given to projects where the existing vessel is scrapped.

EEC aid to North – Roland Boyes (Soc/UK) WQ 1478/79

In 1975-79 Regional Fund grants in the north of England totalled 138 mn. u.a. for 594 investment projects. Social Fund grants in 1979 were £4 mn, plus a proportion of overall grants to the UK. Farm Fund structural grants in 1975-79 were £2.29 mn. Direct EIB loans to the North in 1975-79 were £208.2 mn.

Food price increases – Barbara Castle (Soc/UK) WQ 252/80 and 253/80

The total effect of the changes in farm prices for 1979-80 was 10.1% overall in national currencies. But because of green rate and other changes the effects ranged from a 0.4% increase in Germany to 19.2% in the UK. The resultant estimated increases in household food expenditure range from 0.2% in Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands to 4.5% in the UK and 4.6% in Italy.

Cruelty to animals – Lord Douro (ED/UK) QT 21/5

When Greece joins the Community in January 1981 the Community directive concerning the treatment of animals when in international transit will be applicable to that country. The Council feels able to assure Parliament that Italy, which imports many live horses from Greece, also applies the directive.

Argentina – Winifred Ewing (EPD/UK) QT 21/5

The Council sees grounds for optimism in Argentina's changing attitude towards human rights. It is however monitoring the situation in the light of a recent Amnesty International report concerning secret detention camps.

Market in securities – Gustave Deleau (EPD/Fr) WQ 1894/79

The Commission will organise in November a symposium for representatives of public authorities and financial circles on the creation of a European market in negotiable securities. In setting up such a market the Commission sees its role as that of a promoter: on the basis of guidelines agreed at the symposium, it will encourage national stock exchanges to move in the desired direction, provide assistance to this end and, if necessary, propose measures.

Discrimination against women – Ann Clwyd (Soc/UK) WQ 1914/79

University graduates may compete for A and LA level posts in the Commission's staff. Permitting graduates to compete for C grade posts would reduce employment opportunities for non-graduates. Opportunities for movement exist between certain categories and the Commission is considering extending such provisions to all categories.

Aid for youth – Christian Poncelet (EPD/UK) WQ 1874/79

Under new rules the European Social Fund in 1979 contributed 35 mn. u.a. to aid 56,000 young people to find jobs "fulfilling a public need." Consideration of proposing to the Council the extension of this programme at the end of its two-year term will be undertaken in the light of an assessment of the results.

Spirits exports – James Provan (Dem/UK) WQ 1925/79

Whisky (and whiskey) exports to non-Member countries in 1979 exceeded exports of all other forms of spirits:

	Tonnes	Value (mn. u.a.)
Whisky	416,658	842
Cognac	117,662	314
Liqueurs	87,922	141
Gin	41,606	66
Total	670,504	1,372

Aid to research bodies – Neil Balfour (Dem/UK) WQ 1880/79

Proposed state aids for research and development, like all state aids, have to be notified in advance to the Commission. As far as is known these rules are being observed and the Commission does not know of any breach of the competition in respect of contract research.

Social Fund – William Newton-Dunn (Dem/UK) WQ 1742/79

Social Fund aid is not available directly to individuals but only on application by Member States for grants to public authorities, certain joint social institutions and private law bodies.

Restrictive practices – William Newton-Dunn (Dem/UK) WQ 1740/79

Last December 31 the Commission had before it 4,075 cases under Arts. 85 and 86 of the EEC Treaty on restrictive practices and abuse of dominant market positions. Of these 3,724 cases concerned notified agreements, 200 concerned complaints received from firms and 171 were undertaken at the Commission's initiative. Of all notifications or applications pending, 63% concern licensing agreements, 26% distribution agreements and 11% horizontal agreements. The great majority of licensing agreements are likely to be covered by the block exemption regulation for patent licences which the Commission is preparing and there will be no need to undertake individual decisions. This also applies to many distribution agreements. The names of companies cannot be given.

Compulsory vaccination – Ernest Glinne (Soc/Bel) WQ 1590/79

The Council decided in November 1978 that this question should continue to be dealt with in the framework of the WHO and the Council of Europe and the Commission is not planning to produce a draft directive.

Committee Notes

Social Affairs and Employment

Shelagh Roberts (Dem/London SW.) to replace Jim Spicer (Dem/Wessex)

Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport

Stanley Johnson (Dem/Wight & Hampshire E.) to replace Sir David Nicolson (Dem/London Central)

Michael Welsh (Dem/Lancashire C.) to replace Jim Spicer.

Bookshelf

Craig, F.W.S. and T.T. Mackie.

Europe votes I: Parliamentary election results 1979. Parliamentary Research Services £6.50.

Lists candidates, parties and results for all nine Member States.

Bell, David

Eurocommunism and the Spanish Communist party.

Sussex European Papers No. 4. £2.00.

The book traces the history of the Communist party in Spain, examines its attitudes towards the Soviet Union and Leninism and its place in Eurocommunism.