

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATION

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## COSTA RICA

Capital : San José

### Constitutional System and administrative structure

Presidential Republic.

Executive power in Costa Rica is vested in the President. Provincial and local bodies derive their authority from the national government. There is an extensive press, and over 20 national trade union federations.

### Parliamentary System

Legislative power is exercised by a unicameral Legislative Assembly with 57 members elected for four years.

### Elections

Universal adult suffrage is compulsory. The president is elected every four years and must receive 40% of the vote. Presidential and legislative elections were last held on 7 February 1982.

### Composition of Government

The President is Luis Alberto Monge, a social democrat of the National Liberation Party (PLN) which won 57% of the vote in 1982.

The President is assisted by two Vice-Presidents and a 14-member Cabinet.

## Political Parties

Costa Rica has a multi-party system. The PLN holds 33 seats in the 57-member Legislative Assembly and the next largest party is the Social Christian Unity, which fought the 1982 elections as the Unity Coalition.

## Recent History

Costa Rica is considered to be the most firmly established democracy in Central America and it has no armed forces. Costa Rica seeks to maintain a policy of neutrality, but is inevitably, to some degree, caught up in the conflicts of the region.

June 1984 President Monge made a tour of 12 European countries during which he reiterated his country's adherence to neutrality and requested economic aid and investment.

September 1984 Conference of foreign ministers from EEC, Central America, Spain and Portugal takes place in San José.

October 1984 President Monge restructures cabinet in an attempt to increase the administration's efficiency.

During 1984 Tension and incidents along the Costa Rica/Nicaragua border continued (due to the presence of Nicaraguan 'contras' in northern Costa Rica).

## COSTA RICA

Area : 50,700 sq km

Population : 2,380,000 (1983)

- average rate of increase 1970-1983 : 2.5%
- population aged under 15 : 36.3% (1982)
- percentage of population of working age (15-64 years) : 58% (1980)
- engaged in agriculture : 34% (1982)
- urban population : 46.9% (1981)

Capital : San José

Other main cities : Puerto Limón

Main language : Spanish

Currency : Colon; US\$ 1 = 44.00 colones (from June 1984)

GNP (1983) : - at market prices : US\$ 2420 m  
- per capita : US\$ 1020

Annual average growth rates of consumer price indices :

- 1970-80 : annual average 11.3%
- 1980-82 : annual average 61.5%

Main products :

- agricultural: coffee, bananas, sugar, cocoa, cotton, hemp, meat
- minerals: bauxite
- manufactured goods: processed food, aluminium, textiles, chemicals, cement, plastics

Foreign Trade (1982) :

- imports : US\$ : 945 m
- exports : US\$ 877 m
- main exports : coffee 24.0%; bananas 21%; meat 7.3%; textile and  
(1980) clothing 5.1%
- main imports : industrial supplies 45.6%; machinery 17.2%;  
(1980) energy 15.4%; food and consumer goods 10.8%;  
transport 7.0%

- major export destinations : USA 32.3%; W. Germany 12.8%;  
(1981) Nicaragua 8.8%; Guatemala 6.8%  
EEC(9) share 23.2%
- major import sources : USA 33.1%; Mexico 7.9%; Venezuela 7.7%;  
(1981) Japan 7.6%; Guatemala 7.1%  
EEC(9) share 10.6%

Balance of Payments (1982) :

- US\$ -206.0 m

Education : (1981)

- illiteracy rate : 11.6% (1973)
- primary education enrollment : 348,616
- secondary education enrollment : 133,909

Health :

- persons per hospital bed : 289 (1979)
- persons per physician : 1470 (1979)
- life expectancy : 72.5 (1981)

Public Finance :

- external public debt outstanding end 1983 : US\$ 2410 m
- service payments on external public debt as percentage of exports  
1982 : 15.6%
- net inflow of public and publicly guaranteed medium and long-term  
loans (1980) : US\$ : 323 m
- total gross ODA (1982) : US\$ 66.71 m  
of which EEC Members : US\$ 14.08 m



## EL SALVADOR

Capital : San Salvador

### Constitutional system

A new Constitution was approved by the Constituent Assembly on 14 December 1983 and entered into force on 20 December 1983. The adoption of a Constitution officially ended the state of siege originally declared in 1980. The Constitution provides for a presidential republic with a unicameral Legislative Assembly.

### Parliamentary System

Legislative power is vested in the National Constituent Assembly, with 60 members elected by universal adult suffrage in 1982.

### Elections

Elections to the Constituent Assembly took place in March 1982. Mr José Napoleon Duarte's Christian Democratic Party won 24 seats and a coalition of right-wing groups won 36 seats. The five right-wing parties formed a government of national unity and Major Roberto D'Aubuisson was elected President of the Constituent Assembly. In April 1982, a politically independent banker, Mr Magana Borja, was elected interim President of El Salvador. In the first round of the Presidential elections held in March 1984, Mr José Napoleon Duarte, representing the centre-left Christian Democratic Party, won 43.4% of the vote, with Major D'Aubuisson representing the right-wing Arena winning 29.7%. In the second round of voting in May 1984, Mr Duarte won 53.6% of the vote to 46.4% for Major D'Aubuisson. He duly became President for a five year term on 1 June 1984.

### Composition of Government

In June 1984, President Duarte appointed a 37-member cabinet, weighted heavily with fellow Christian Democrats. There are three army officers in the cabinet.

## Political Parties

Apart from the Christian Democrats and Arena, the following six parties also nominated candidates for the 1984 presidential elections: The Party of National Conciliation, Democratic Action, the Popular Salvadorean Party, the Stable Republican Centrist Movement (Merecen), The Peoples Orientation Party and PAISA. Apart from the Christian Democrats, all of these parties are considered as being right-wing parties.<sup>4</sup>

The largest of the anti-government guerilla groups is the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). The FMLN is allied with the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) which is a political organisation.

## Recent History

The polarization of left and right in El Salvador during the 1970s became evident in the increase in guerilla activity. During this period and continuing into the 1980s there has been widespread abuse of human rights, including by the army and notably a campaign by right-wing 'death squads'.

March 1980 : With the murder of the Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador in March 1980, the country appeared to be moving closer to full-scale civil war.

December 1980 : Against a background of growing left-wing insurgency, Mr José Dapoleon Duarte was sworn in as President.

March 1982 : Elections to a Constituent Assembly. The right-wing Major D'Aubuisson was elected President of the Assembly and Dr Magana Borja was elected interim President of El Salvador.

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4) Keesings Contemporary Archives, Volume XXX, May 1984.

- February 1983 : A major guerilla offensive throughout the country.
- March 1983 : US President asked Congress to increase assistance to the El Salvador regime. On 15 March 1983, the President of the El Salvador Human Rights Commission was murdered.
- April 1983 : US Congress granted only half of the financial aid requested for El Salvador by President Reagan.
- December 1983 : Entry into force of the new Constitution.
- 1984 : Military engagements between the guerillas and the armed forces continued inconclusively during 1984. There have been continuing allegations about the abuse of human rights.
- March/May 1984 : A two-round Presidential election resulted in the election as President of Mr Duarte.
- 1 June 1984 : President Duarte begins his five-year term of office and appoints a 37-member cabinet.
- July 1984 : President Duarte visited several western European countries in an attempt to obtain economic aid and political support.
- August 1984 : Reportedly pleased with President Duarte's initial efforts to deal with human rights problems, the US Congress approved an additional US\$ 70 m in military aid to El Salvador.

15 October 1984 : Following the acceptance of a proposal made by President Duarte in a speech to the UN General Assembly, a meeting took place between a Government delegation led by President Duarte and a delegation representing the FDR-FMLN, the political and military wings of the rebel movement. It was agreed at the meeting to attempt to "humanize" the war. The fact that this meeting took place was regarded as a highly significant development.

30 November 1984 : A second lower level meeting took place between representatives of the Government and of the FDR-FMLN. There has, as yet, been no major breakthrough in the talks and a certain amount of pessimism has been expressed in the media about the ongoing negotiations.

## EL SALVADOR

Area : 21,041 sq km

Population : 5,230,000 (1983)

- average rate of increase (1970-1983) : 3.0%
- population aged under 15 : 44.1% (1978)
- percentage of population of working age (15-64 years) : 51% (1980)
- engaged in agriculture : 49% (1982)
- urban population : 41.7% (1979)

Capital : San Salvador

Other main cities : San Miguel, Santa Ana

Main language : Spanish, Nahuatl

Currency : Colon, US\$ 1 = 2.5 colones

GNP (1983) : - at market prices : US\$ 3690 m  
- per capita : US\$ 710

Inflation :

- 1970-80 annual average : 11.4%
- 1980-82 annual average : 13.3%

Main products : (1976)

- agricultural : coffee, cotton, sugar, maize, rice
- manufactured goods : textiles, cement, food processing, pharmaceuticals

Foreign trade (1982) :

- imports : US\$ 945 m
- exports : US\$ 408 m
- main exports : coffee 37.6%; cotton 12.1%;  
(1980) textile and clothing 13.2%
- main imports : machinery and transport equipment 13.4%;  
(1980) basic manufactures 22.0%;  
chemical products 19.3%;  
energy 17.8%
- major export destinations : USA 29.7%; Nicaragua 7.6%;  
(1980) Costa Rica 9.4%; Guatemala 24.1%;  
EC (10) 14.5%

- major import sources : USA 25.2%; Guatemala 26%; Japan 4.4%;  
Venezuela 17.0%; EC (10) 9.6%

Balance of payments (1982)

- US\$ -271.5 mio.

Education : (1981)

- illiteracy rate : 42.9% (1971)
- primary education enrollment : 709,567
- secondary education enrollment : 64,702

Health :

- persons per hospital bed : 567 (1978)
- persons per physician : 3040 (1980)
- life expectancy : 63.4 (1981)

Public Finance :

- external public debt outstanding end 1983 : US\$ 1283 m
- service payments on external public debt as percentage of exports  
1982 : 12.6%
- net inflow of public and publicly guaranteed medium and long-term  
loans (1980) : US\$ 107m
- total gross ODA (1982) : US\$ 189.55 m  
of which EEC Members : US\$ 3.64 m

## GUATEMALA

Capital : Guatemala

### Constitutional system and administrative structure

In theory, Guatemala is a Presidential Republic divided into 22 departments. (Guatemala has, however, been under military rule since a coup in 1982. A return to civilian rule is scheduled for 1985).

### Parliamentary System

A Constituent Assembly with 88 members was elected on 1 July 1984, the principal task of which will be to draft a new Constitution and a new electoral law. Its role is, however, limited and effective power remains - for the moment - in the hands of the military.

### Elections

Controversial presidential and legislative elections took place on 7 May 1982. Amidst allegations that the elections were fraudulent, General Angel Anibal Guevara Rodriguez, the Government candidate, was a decisive winner. He was, however prevented from taking office by a coup on 23 March 1982. Following the elections to a Constituent Assembly on 1 July 1984, presidential and legislative elections are scheduled for 1985.

### Parties

Seventeen political parties participated in the election to the Constituent Assembly. The Christian Democrat Party (with 15.6% of the votes cast) and the Union of the National Centre (13.2%) emerged as the largest parties.

### Composition of Government

The President is currently General Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores, who ousted President Rios Montt in a coup on 8 August 1983.

## Recent History

Poor conditions among Guatemala's Indians have sparked outbreaks against the government, and successive regimes have answered with violence.

Extensive fighting between the armed forces and anti-government guerillas continued during 1984. There have been repeated allegations about the abuse of human rights in Guatemala. The United States has temporarily suspended aid to Guatemala on a number of occasions, most recently in November 1983 following the murder of 6 US Aid workers in northern Guatemala.

Relations between Guatemala and newly independent Belize are reported to have improved during 1984.

On 5 January 1983 : General Rios Montt undertook to set up an elected constituent assembly for March 1984. This assembly would draw up a Constitution to replace the one suspended on 23 March 1982 at the time of the coup d'état which brought General Rios Montt to power.

7 March 1983 : Visit of the Pope.

23 March 1983 : Entry into force of new laws for governing electoral activities - Organic Law of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, Law for Voter Registration, Law for Political Organisations.

8 August 1983 : The Minister of Defence, General Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores led a successful coup against President Montt.



- October 1983 : Declaration of an amnesty for guerillas.
- 1 October 1983 : General Mejia announced that elections to a National Constituent Assembly would take place on 1 July 1984.
- 13 January 1984 : General Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores announced that he himself would retain executive and legislative power until presidential elections were held in 1985.
- 1 July 1984 : Elections were held to a National Constituent Assembly.

Presidential elections are scheduled to take place during 1985.

## GUATEMALA

Area : 108,889 sq km

Population : 7,930,000 (1983)

- average rate of increase 1970-83 : 3.1%
- population aged under 15 : 44.1% (1980)
- percentage of population of working age (15-64) : 54% (1980)
- engaged in agriculture : 54% (1982)
- urban population : 39.1% (1982)

Capital : Guatemala City

Other main cities :

Main language : Spanish, Maya-Quiche dialects

Currency : Quetzal; 1 quetzal = 1 US\$

GNP (1983) : - at market prices : US\$ 8890 m  
- at capita : US\$ 1,120

Inflation :

- 1970-80 annual average 10.7%
- 1980-82 annual average 5.3%

Main products :

- agricultural : coffee, sugar cane, bananas, cotton, grain, tobacco
- minerals : oil, nickel, gas
- manufactured goods : processed food, shoes, textiles, rubber, paper

Foreign Trade : (1982)

- imports : US\$ 1,388 m
- exports : US\$ 1,135 m
- main exports : coffee 31.7%; cotton 11.6%; sugar 6.4%;  
(1980) fruit and vegetables 6.8%
- main imports : machinery and transport equipment 31.5%  
(1979) basic manufactures 21.3%  
chemicals 20.3%  
energy 10.7%

- major export destinations : USA 28.7%; El Salvador 12.3%;  
     (1980)                      W. Germany 8.0%; Costa Rica 5.6%;  
                                  Nicaragua 5.6%  
                                  EC (10) share 24.6%
- major import sources : USA 34.8%; Japan 9.2%; W. Germany 7.8%;  
                                  El Salvador 7.7%; EC (10) 16.0%

Education : (1980)

- illiteracy rate : 53.9% (1973)
- primary education enrollment : 803,404
- secondary education enrollment : 156,612

Health :

- persons per hospital bed : 500 (1975)
- persons per physician : 2170.0 (1978)
- life expectancy : 58.8 (1981)

Public Finance :

- external public debt outstanding end 1983 : US\$ 1453 m
- service payments on external public debt as percentage of exports  
     1982 : 7.8%
- net inflow of public and publicly guaranteed medium and long-term  
     loans (1980) : US\$ 60 m
- total gross ODA (1982) : US\$ 46.04 m  
     of which EEC Members : US\$ 7.43 m

## HONDURAS

Capital : Tegucigalpa

### Constitutional System

A new Constitution was promulgated in January 1982. According to the Constitution, the President holds executive power and has a four-year mandate. Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly. In practice, the military retain considerable power.

### Parliamentary System

The unicameral National Assembly comprises 82 members elected by universal adult suffrage for a term of four years.

### Elections

Legislative and presidential elections were held on 29 November 1981. The Liberal Party won 53.3% of the votes cast and 44 seats. The other large party is the National Party which, with 40.9% of the votes cast, obtained 34 seats.

### Composition of the Government

According to the Constitution, the party winning the largest number of votes appoints the President. The leader of the Liberal Party, Dr Roberto Suazo Cordova, was duly sworn in as President in January 1982.

### Political Parties

Apart from the Liberal Party and the National Party, two other parties are represented in the National Assembly: the Innovation and Unity Party (three seats) and the Christian Democratic Party (one seat).

## Recent History

Honduras was under military rule from 1972 until the holding of elections to a Constituent Assembly in April 1980. Legislative elections were duly held in November 1981.

Several anti-government guerilla forces continue to operate within Honduras and the internal security situation is serious. Honduras has an on-going border dispute with El Salvador which led to a war in 1969 and there is tension also on the Honduran/Nicaraguan border due to the fact that some of the Nicaraguan anti-government forces, the so-called 'contras', are operating from Honduran territory.

Even since the return to civilian rule, there have been widespread allegations of human rights abuses.

April 1982 : The National Assembly revoked some of the constitutional civil rights guarantees following pressure from the armed forces for stronger anti-terrorist measures.

November 1982 : The National Assembly approved a series of constitutional amendments which effectively strengthened the role of the armed forces. General Alvarez, the head of the armed forces since January 1982, became Commander-in-Chief.

January 1983 : President Suazo survived a major challenge to his administration following the defection of some deputies from his party within the National Assembly.

March 1984 : In a surprise move, General Alvarez was dismissed as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and went into exile in Costa Rica. Several other senior military officers resigned their commands.

General Lopez was appointed as the new Commander-in-Chief. Among the reasons mentioned for the removal of General Alvarez were reported to be allegations of authoritarianism, of an attempted coup and of the misappropriation of funds.<sup>1</sup>

June 1984 : Amidst rumours of an aborted coup, one of the National Party's 1981 presidential candidates was arrested.

August 1984 : President Suazo called for the resignation of his cabinet and appointed a new cabinet with six changes in it.

November 1984 : An alleged plan to assassinate President Suazo and install a military regime was foiled.

Relations between the USA and Honduras are close and US involvement in Honduras increased substantially during 1983. This included an extensive series of joint US/Honduran military manoeuvres, US naval manoeuvres off the Honduran coast and the establishment of a training base for Salvadorean soldiers in Honduras. The joint military manoeuvres have continued during 1984, but it is reported that strong doubts are surfacing within the Honduran armed forces about support for US policy in Central America and that there is strong opposition inside the army to training troops from El Salvador, a traditional enemy of Honduras.<sup>2</sup>

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1) Keesings Contemporary Archives, Volume XXX, June 1984.

2) Latin America Weekly Report, 6 July 1984.

## HONDURAS

Area : 112 thousand sq km

Population : 4,090,000 (1983)

- average rate of increase (1970-83) : 3.4%
- population aged under 15 : 47.7% (1981)
- percentage of population of working age (15-64 years) : 50% (1980)
- engaged in agriculture : 62% (1982)
- urban population : 37.4% (1982)

Capital : Tegucigalpa

Other main cities : San Pedro Sula

Main language : Spanish

Currency : Lempira : JS\$ 1 = 2 lempiras

GNP (1983) : - at market prices : US\$ 2470 m  
- per capita : US\$ 670

Inflation : 8.9%

- 1970-80 annual average : 7.7%
- 1980-82 annual average : 10.1%

Main products :

- agricultural : bananas, coffee, timber, meat, cotton
- minerals : silver, gold, lead, zinc

Foreign Trade (1982) :

- imports : US\$ 690 m
- exports : US\$ 656 m
- main exports : coffee 25.5%; bananas 28.7%; meat 6%  
(1980)
- main imports : energy and chemicals 31.0%  
(1980) processed industrial products 27.5%  
machinery and transport 30.2%
- major export destinations : USA 57.2%; W. Germany 9.7%;  
(1982) EC(9) 17.9%

- major import sources : USA 42.4%; Japan 5.5%;  
(1982) Trinidad and Tobago 14.1%; Venezuela 4.8%;  
Guatemala 6.5%  
EC(9) 8.6%

Balance of payments (1982) :

- US\$ -249.2 mio.

Education (1980)

- illiteracy rate : 43.1% (1974)
- primary education enrollment : 601,337
- secondary education enrollment : 127,293

Health :

- persons per hospital bed : 742 (1978)
- persons per physician : 3120.0 (1978)
- life expectancy 58.7 (1981)

Public Finance :

- external public debt outstanding end 1983 : US\$ 1886 m
- service payments on external public debt as percentage of exports  
1982 : 22.5%
- net inflow of public and publicly guaranteed medium- and long-term  
loans (1980) : US\$ 141 m
- total gross ODA : US\$ 122.7% m (1982)  
of which EEC Members : US\$ 13.41 m (1982)
- Community aid (1978) : US\$ 3.1 m  
(1980) : US\$ 11.4 m



## NICARAGUA

Capital : Managua

### Constitutional System

The 1949 Constitution was abrogated in 1979 following the overthrow of General Somoza and the coming to power of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). In August 1979 a Bill of Rights was issued. A fundamental Statute took effect from 20 July 1980, pending the drafting of a new constitution. On 4 November 1984, a National Assembly was elected which is charged with drafting a new constitution. Presidential elections were also held on 4 November.

### Parliamentary System

A 90-member National Assembly was elected on 4 November 1984 for a term of six years.

### Elections

A president, a vice-president and a National Assembly, consisting of 90 members, were elected on 4 November for terms of six years. More than 75% of the electorate voted in the Presidential elections and more than 73% in the Legislative elections. The FSLN candidates were elected to the posts of President (Daniel Ortega) and Vice-President (Sergio Ramirez).

### Political Parties

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) won almost 67% of the votes cast in the elections. The next largest parties were the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD) with 14% and the Independent Liberal Party (PLI) with 9.6%.

The four parties belonging to the Coordinadora Democratica (CDN) refused to participate in the elections.

## Recent History

- 1979 - Overthrow of General Somoza by the FSLN following a protracted struggle. The Somoza family had dominated Nicaraguan politics since 1933. The FSLN has been in power since 1979. Executive power during this period was exercised by a three-member junta, which appointed a Cabinet of 22 Ministers. Legislative power was held by a 51-member Council of State, which included representatives notably of the FSLN and related movements, but also included representatives of other political parties, trade unions and professional organisations.
- 1984 - The domestic political situation in Nicaragua in 1984 has been dominated by the controversies surrounding the presidential and national assembly elections which took place on 4 November. As far as the security situation is concerned, fighting continued between the Government forces and the opposition groupings based principally in Honduras and Costa Rica. Nicaraguan foreign policy during 1984 has focussed on the attempts by the CONTADORA group to bring about a negotiated settlement to the region's problems and on Nicaragua's bilateral relations with the United States.<sup>3</sup>

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3) A detailed account of developments during 1984 is provided in a separate document which has been prepared for the European Parliament Delegation for relations with the United States (PE 94.027).

## NICARAGUA

Area : 130,000 sq km

Population (1980) : 3,060,000 (1983)

- average rate of increase 1970-83 : 3.3%
- population aged under 15 : 48.0% (1980)
- percentage of population of working age (15-64 years) : 50% (1980)
- engaged in agriculture : 41% (1982)
- urban population : 53.5% (1980)

Capital : Managua

Other main cities : -

Main language : Spanish, English

Currency : Córdoba (C\$) US\$ 1 = 10.05 córdobas

GNP (1982) : - at market prices : US\$ 2690 m  
- per capita : US\$ 900

Inflation :

- 1970-80 annual average : 4.7%
- 1980-82 annual average : 24.4%

Main products :

agricultural : bananas, cotton, coffee, sugar, tobacco, wheat, meat,  
timber

minerals : gold, silver, copper, tungsten

manufactured goods : oil refining, chemicals, textiles, cement

Foreign Trade (1982) :

- imports : US\$ 775 m
- exports : US\$ 391 m
- main exports : food 72.3%  
(1980) chemicals and manufactures 14.6%
- main imports : food 12.6%; energy 19.9%;  
(1980) machinery and transport equipment 14.1%;  
other manufactures 28.0%; chemicals 21.6%
- major export destinations : USA 21.9%; W. Germany 8.3%;  
(1982) Costa Rica 8%; Japan 10.8%;  
EC share 21.1%
- major import sources : USA 17.2%; Mexico 16.9%; Venezuela 10.3%  
(1982) 10.3%; Costa Rica 7.4%; Guatemala 8.5%;  
EC share 11.1%

Balance of Payments (1979) :

- US\$ 90.1 mio

Education : (1981)

- illiteracy rate : 42.5% (1971)
- primary education enrollment : 509,240
- secondary education enrollment : 936,629

Health :

- persons per hospital bed : 474 (1976)
- persons per physician : 1800.0 (1980)
- life expectancy 56.9 (1980)

Public Finance :

- external public debt outstanding end 1983 : US\$ 3281 m
- service payments on external public debt as percentage of exports  
1982 : 70.2%
- net inflow of public and publicly guaranteed medium- and long-term  
loans (1980) : US\$ 230 m
- total gross ODA (1982) : US\$ 97.70  
of which EEC Members : US\$ 44.37
- Community Aid (1980) : US\$ 3.9 m