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THIS MONTH IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Highlights of the September session of the European Parliament, held in Strasbourg, France, from September 14-18.

Fears grow on unemployment

September 15 -- "The overriding problem in the 1980's will be that of unemployment", EC Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner Ivor Richard told the European Parliament. Unemployment in the 10 nation European Community had risen from 6 million in 1978 to almost 9 million (8 per cent of the EC workforce) at the present time and it was still rising. "The worst hit sections of society have been the young, women and workers over 50", said Commissioner Richard.

His concern was echoed by Winifred Ewing (European Progressive Democrat, United Kingdom). She said that a whole generation was now being bred in some areas where not a single person in certain families had personal experience of a paid job.

Commissioner Richard urged concerted Community action to develop new areas of employment in the energy and information technology sections and by small business. The priority of the Community's Social Fund, he said, would henceforth be job creation.

"Inflation is still with us and still acts as one of the major obstacles to employment recovery", Richard stated. "But we can no longer afford to neglect other objectives in the fight against inflation or await the defeat of inflation before tackling unemployment."

Unemployment (continued from page 1)

The parliamentary debate was on three reports on unemployment: by Heinke Salisch (Socialist, West Germany) on the impact of energy problems and new technologies, by Domenico Ceravolo (Communist, Italy) on the adaptation of working time, and by Corentin Calvez (Liberal, France) on EC unemployment policy.

The Salisch report warned that the new "microchip" technologies were displacing jobholders and preventing the creation of new jobs in existing manufacturing and service industries. However, it recommended that the Community should make every effort to develop advanced technologies and ensure the creation of sufficient jobs. It also welcomed the Commission's efforts to develop a common strategy for the introduction of new technologies.

Tom Spencer (European Democrat, United Kingdom) thought that the Salisch report had taken a "sterile" approach. If Europe refused to accept new microelectronics technologies, he argued, it would be swamped by its competitors.

Sir David Nicolson (European Democrat, United Kingdom) said that with the advent of the new technologies the industrialised countries were experiencing "a classic case" of industrial change. Employment might have fallen in traditional manufacturing industry, but it had risen in the emerging information technologies.

Parliament condemns human rights violations in Guatemala and El Salvador

September 17 -- Turning to foreign affairs, the European Parliament passed resolutions condemning human rights violations in Guatemala and El Salvador. It also urged Thailand not to close its Vietnamese refugee camps.

The Parliament adopted a resolution on Guatemala expressing "its abhorrence of the constant violation of human rights in Guatemala" and appealing to EC member state governments to protest to the Guatemalan government, the leaders of the opposition and the foreign governments encouraging the guerillas.

The resolution continued: "An end to the violence is a prerequisite for the restoration of democracy since only then will the people of Guatemala be given the opportunity to have their say by means of free elections."

Human rights (continued from page 2)

The parliamentary resolution on El Salvador condemned "the violation of human rights, terrorism and violence in all their forms, regardless of who is responsible", called on all parties to cease hostilities and supported "all efforts to facilitate negotiations between the Junta and the Government on the one hand and the opposition FDR on the other". The Parliament also proposed that the European Community should make more emergency aid available for use in El Salvador by international humanitarian bodies such as the Red Cross.

In a third resolution, the Parliament urged Thailand to reverse its decision that its Vietnamese refugee camps are to be closed and all newly arriving boat people transferred to detention centers.

The EC budget: Bidding opens for 1982

Unlike many national legislatures, the European Parliament's role in the law-making process is mainly consultative. But it is far from impotent, particularly on questions concerning the European Community budget.

The 1981 Community budget amounted to \$ 21.8 billion (or 20.8 billion EUA). This was provided by the Community's agricultural levies, customs duties from the Community's common external tariff and by a contribution of a maximum of 1 per cent of the value added tax base in each member country. While the Parliament has no say over the raising of Community revenue, it can force increases in so called "non-obligatory" spending. It can also reject the whole budget.

Two years ago, the Parliament did reject the budget proposed by the Council of Ministers because it wanted more resources to be spent on Community social and regional policies and less on agriculture. The Community was left in financial difficulties for almost seven months before a budget more acceptable to the Parliament was adopted.

In June the Commission announced a preliminary draft 1982 budget of \$ 23.5 billion (or 22.4 billion EUA). The EC Council of Ministers produced its own response in July. This took the form of a draft budget of \$ 22.7 billion (or 21.6 billion EUA) which was formally presented to the European Parliament this week.

Budget (continued from page 3)

Speaking for the Council, UK Employment Secretary Norman Tebbit described the Council's draft as "an opening bid". The Commission Vice President responsible for Budget and Financial Control, Christopher Tugendhat, criticised the Council for cutting back planned expenditure on the regional and social funds to levels which did not even keep pace with inflation.

The European Parliament will return to the budget at a special session in early November and observers expect it to call for the Council's draft to be amended along the lines proposed by the Commission.

1 EUA = \$ 1.05 on September 15, 1981

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Background note

The European Parliament has 434 members, 410 of whom were directly elected by the citizens of the then nine member countries of the European Community in June 1979. They were joined by 24 members from Greece when that country joined the Community in January 1981.

Members of the Parliament sit not by country but by political group. These are: --

Socialist Group	120
Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group)	107
European Democratic Group	63
Communist and Allies Group	45
Liberal and Democratic Group	39
Group of the European Progressive Democrats	22
Group for the Technical Coordination and Defence of Independent Members	11

In addition, there are 10 members who are non-attached and 16 who have decided to indicate at a later date which group, if any, they will be joining.