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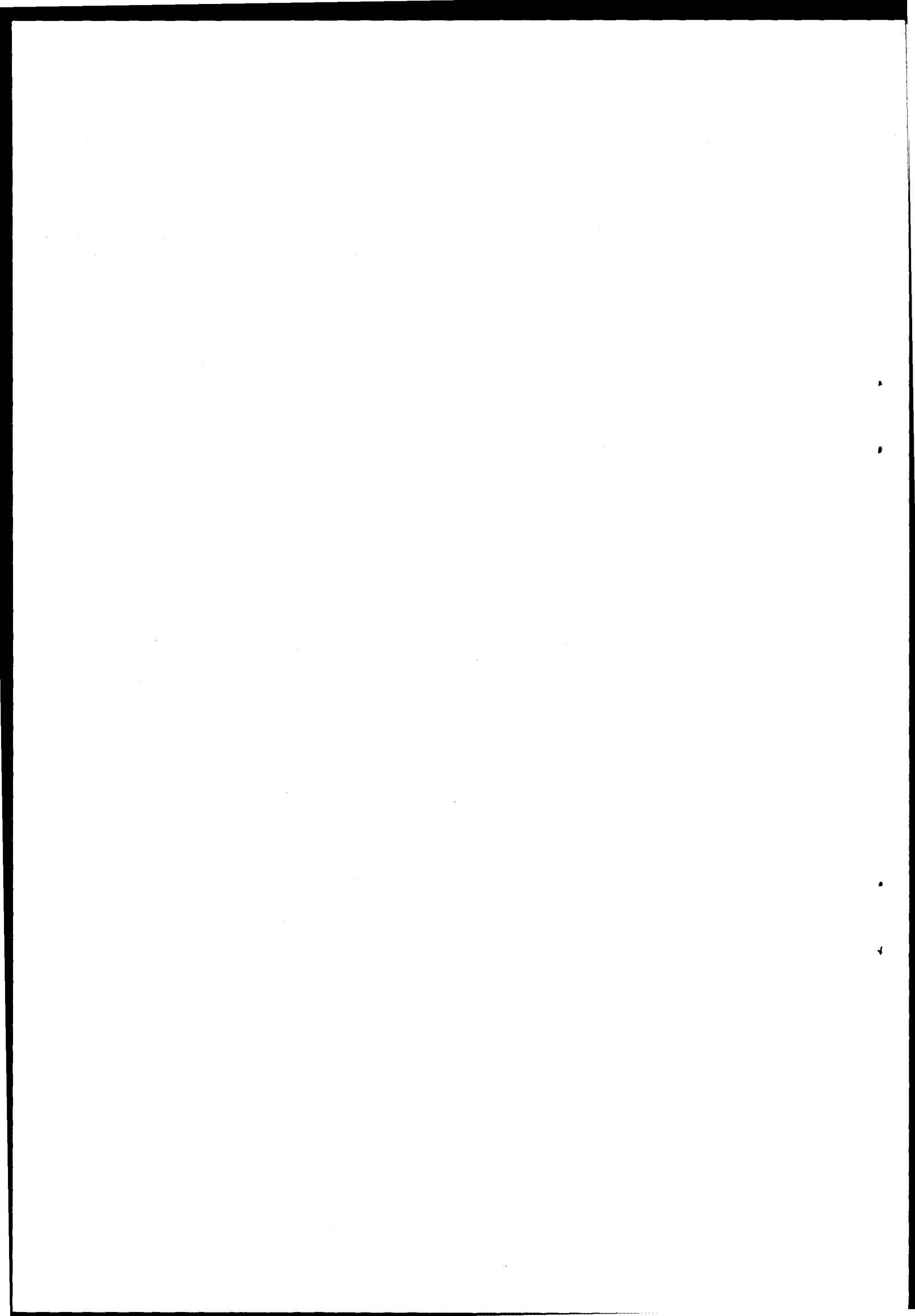
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The Social Fund as a means of structural adjustment

'The basic problem is that of aid from the European Social Fund for the retraining and vocational training of workers wishing to change to sectors, which, at least in the light of present circumstances, offer a positive future', said Mr BERTRAND, rapporteur for the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment. 'However, at the present time when the Community must cope with a serious recession (let us not forget that there are more than 4 million unemployed), we feel that the resources offered to us by the EEC Commission to deal with this problem are completely inadequate'.

'We must also realize', Mr HÄRZSCHEL pointed out on behalf of the Christian-Democratic Group, 'that confining promotional measures to some regions and to certain sectors with structural problems will have certain disadvantages. What is lacking is a broad overall approach, both to the labour market and to the possibility of regulating this market by joint action. For the most part the efforts being made are purely sectoral but we can only hope that they will lead to a Community policy on the labour market'.

'We can no longer accept', said Mr GIRARDIN, 'an extension of the area of application of the Social Fund, when the financial resources needed to implement the new proposed measures correctly and consistently are lacking'.

Community information policy

During the debate on the 1975 information programme proposed for the Communities by the Commission, Mr KLEPSCH, as spokesman of the Christian-Democratic Group, regretted the inadequacy of the information being given on the operation and achievements of the European institutions. While welcoming the fact that the information programme drawn up by the Commission aimed at providing the general public with more information, Mr KLEPSCH insisted that the information activities of the Community institutions should be more effectively coordinated.

Mr SCHUIJT, speaking on his own behalf, suggested that it would be advisable to set up in each country a Community body composed of senior officials of the information services.

'One of the reasons why Community information is such a difficult problem', said Mr SCHUIJT, 'is that the public is confused about the Community institutions. It is obvious that they find it difficult to understand the entire situation, especially since there is no single geographical point of reference for the Communities, which are sometimes to be found in Brussels, sometimes in Strasbourg and sometimes again in Luxembourg'.

Safety in European air space

'Although no minister has as yet opposed the survival of Eurocontrol, the Christian-Democratic Group voices its own concern lest the institution be eventually disbanded or else survive in some form other than that of a supra-national institution.' This was stated by Mr NOTENBOOM on behalf of the Christian-Democratic Group. He went on to say: 'It is inconceivable that so much technical knowhow, such an efficient working team and so much valuable experience gained at the cost of enormous capital investment and human effort should be wiped out. What is primarily at stake is safety in European air space'.

The situation in the Mediterranean basin and in the Middle East

'In the light of the criticism levelled by the Arabs at the EEC-Israel Treaty, it is important', said Mr BLUMENFELD, spokesman for the Christian-Democratic Group on this problem, 'that the European Community should make it quite clear to the Arab countries and to every other country with which it has to make agreements in the future that in no case will it ever bow to pressure of any kind. On the contrary, the EEC feels that by treating all its partners in the Mediterranean basin equally Europe will be making a positive contribution to peace, reconciliation and the removal of tension'.

'By reminding Greece and Turkey that they are closely linked with the Communities as Associated States', said Mr JAHN, 'the Member States can by diplomatic means help to advance a just solution to the Cyprus problem'. Mr JAHN went on to stress that if Europe continues to 'stand idly by' in foreign policy matters, this will not help to keep the Community stable but will, in fact, have the opposite effect.

Mr BLUMENFELD saw the European Community carrying out the same stabilizing function as far as the Middle East situation was concerned. 'We cannot', he said, 'leave it entirely to the USA and the Soviet Union to look for peaceful solutions. It is Europe's historic destiny and its responsibility at this particular moment in history to play its proper part as an impartial partner in peace negotiations'. This was equally true of the solution to the Cyprus problem, where Europe must make itself available as an intermediary, all the more so as Greece and Turkey are linked with the Community as associate members.

THE CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRATIC GROUP APPOINTS HEADS OF NATIONAL DELEGATIONS

During the May plenary part-session in Strasbourg the Christian-Democratic Group named the heads of its various national delegations. Two new members were appointed to head the Italian and German delegations and the other heads of delegations were confirmed in their appointments. The following is the full list:

Italian delegation:

Senator Vincenzo VERNASCHI. Born in Cremona in 1929, he is a lawyer and has been mayor of his native city. He was elected to the Italian Senate in 1972 and has been a member of the European Parliament since 1972.

German delegation:

Mr Egon KLEPSCH. Born in 1930, he has been a member of the European Parliament since 1973. He has had an interest in European problems since the time he was National President of the CDU Youth Movement and was President of the EUYCD from 1954 to 1970. He is a member of the ECDU representing his party (CDU) and also represents his party on the Bureau of the German Secretariat of the European Movement.

Belgian delegation:

Senator René PETRE. Born in Ghin-Les-Mons in 1911. After a long career in the trade unions he was Minister of Public Works for 5 years and a member of the National Executive of his party (PSC). He has been a member of the European Parliament from 1961 to 1968 and from 1972 onwards.

Dutch delegation:

Mr Willem SCHOLTEN. Born in Deventer in 1927 he has been a member of the Second Chamber of the States-General since 1963, Under-Secretary for Finance from 1971 to 1973, chairman of the parliamentary Finance Committee and secretary of his party (CHU). He has been a member of the European Parliament since 1973.

Luxembourg delegation:

Mr Jacques SANTER. Born in 1937, he has been a member of the European Parliament since 1 January 1975 and of the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies since 1974. He has been Minister for Social Affairs and Minister for Culture. In 1974 he was elected chairman of his party (Christian Social Party) and is a member of the ECDU and of the Luxembourg National Council of the European Movement.

French delegation:

Senator André COLIN. Born in 1910 at Brest. Founder and Secretary-General of the MRP, he was its President from 1959 to 1963. He has been Under-Secretary to the President and to the Minister of the Interior, Minister in charge of the Merchant Navy and the Overseas Departments of France. He is chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, of which he has been a member since 1959. He was a Member of the National Assembly (Chamber of Deputies) from 1945 to 1958; he has been a member of the European Parliament in 1958 and from 1963 onwards.

Irish delegation:

Mr Charles MCDONALD. Born in 1935 in Ballyroan, County Laois (Ireland). He is his party's (Fine Gael) expert on agricultural problems; he was a Senator from 1961 to 1973 and was then elected to the Chamber of Deputies. Since 1957 he has been a member of the Urban Council of his native town, of which he has also been chairman. He has been a member of the European Parliament since 1973 and is chairman of the Committee on Regional Policy and Transport.

EUROPE'S COMMITMENT TO THE THIRD WORLD

by Senator Pierre DESCHAMPS¹

I have no hesitation in saying that the meeting of the Joint Committee of the Parliamentary Conference of the EEC-AASM Association, held in Dublin on 21-23 May last, was the first of its kind in the world, as far as relations between industrialized and developing countries are concerned.

The main purpose of our meeting in Dublin was to enable us to think, to exchange points of view and to set our future course with regard to what must be done to make the Lomé Convention a reality, to realize the hopes which it raised and avoid disappointing the enthusiasm with which it has been greeted.

In addition, we had to decide in practice what measures should be taken to implement the clauses providing for the establishment of a Consultative Assembly with its related bodies.

There can be no doubt that the experience gained from previous Conventions was extremely valuable to the negotiators. It was this experience, in fact, which led to unanimous agreement on the need for incorporating in the new institutions certain representative, consultative and joint bodies, the membership, nature, and operating rules of which have yet to be precisely defined.

One of the basic features of the Lomé Convention, to my way of thinking, is that it has committed Europe and its partners to a determined drive towards unity.

This is certainly true as far as Europe is concerned. As President Ortoli said, 'Europe has today a development policy vis-à-vis the Third and Fourth Worlds, a policy that is clear in its objectives, ambitious and varied in its means, a policy the implementation of which will provide us with our finest hour in the eyes of the world'. This cooperation policy remains an open-ended one, but even though it provides for contacts with non-associated developing countries, it will in no way endanger the continuation and development of cooperation with the ACP countries.

At this very time when excessive prominence is being given to confrontations and trials of strength, both between peoples and between countries, and especially between the industrialized world and the developing world, the Lomé Convention has produced a drive towards unity within each group of partners and, at the same time, united them all in a joint commitment to a

¹ Senator of the PSC Party (Belgian Christian-Democrats) for the La Louvière constituency and chairman of the Joint Committee.

policy of energetic cooperation. Our resolve to press on with this cooperation is taking a more practical shape with every passing day, and this is another basic axiom to which we shall give much thought in the future.

The success of the Lomé Convention will depend essentially on precise facts and figures concerning international trade, on accurate forecasts of world economic developments and on accurate statistics from each associated country with regard to its needs, its resources and its means. This is a task for the experts, and the work that they have put into the preparation of the very detailed documents signed on 28 February shows that we can have the utmost confidence in them.

One further point: the future of the Convention will depend above all upon the spirit in which it is implemented. And where is this spirit to be better nourished and better given expression than in the sincere and cordial personal contacts established at meetings of the Assembly or of the Joint Committees?

On 10 May 1975 a ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the Schuman declaration was held at Montigny-les Metz (France) and Scy-Chazelles. On this occasion the Aristide Briand medal of Saarbrücken's European Academy of Otzenhausen was awarded to Alain Poher, President of the French Senate, for his dedication to the cause of European integration. The formal proceedings included an address by Mr Alfred BERTRAND, the European Parliament's rapporteur on Political Union. Having recalled the personality of Aristide Briand, author of the most important scheme for European Union advanced before the Second World War and the only one to have got as far as discussion at government level, Mr BERTRAND stressed that it was Robert Schuman's declaration of 9 May 1950 that gave the first practical impulse to the work of building a united Europe. With this declaration European Union passed from an ideal into the realm of action. We quote some passages from Mr BERTRAND's address.

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There is certainly no dearth of fine-sounding declarations of intent, which could possibly send public opinion, and particularly the young people of our countries, into raptures, if it were not that our fellow citizens have been so often and so deeply disappointed. I have always emphasized that repeated disappointments of this kind can be the cause of irreparable damage to our parliamentary democratic system as a whole. Even our Heads of State or Government lose all credibility in the eyes of their peoples when they do not keep their promises and when they forget, or fail to put into practice, what they have solemnly declared. They sow the seeds of doubt and uncertainty in a world which by now has no longer any great certainty to offer. This kind of crisis of confidence has another side. All public opinion polls indicate that the peoples of our countries are in favour of European Union, to be more precise, of European political union. This being the case, can anyone be still so blind as to think that when political leaders dig in their heels and act against the will of their peoples, this can happen without damage to democratic structures?

Furthermore, our peoples, even those of the larger Member States, feel, perhaps unconsciously, that no State on its own is at all likely to overcome the present crisis. It is a fact that the Nine have not yet found or put into practice any means of narrowing the gap between their various positions in the face of the present crisis. There are inequalities between them which explain the persistent tendency to work out different national solutions to cope with one and the same challenge, which, however, can never be met except by a joint effort.

There is, alas, only one conclusion we can come to, namely, that in the Community political strength and decisiveness assert themselves only when crisis is hammering at our gates. It seems that we must sink even deeper into the morass and that our peoples must feel the effects of the crisis weighing even more heavily upon them before any decision is taken to do what for quite some time now has been seen to be inevitable and urgent.

Three years ago, that is before the Paris Summit of 1972, Parliament requested, in a resolution adopted by a huge majority on 5 July 1972, that the Community should be provided with:

- a European government
- a European Parliament with the usual parliamentary powers
- a Chamber of States.

As far as the European Parliament's Christian-Democratic Group at least is concerned, this remains the institutional model on which European political union should be based. But even when it has effective institutions, and it can never be too late for this to happen, European Union will still be entirely illusory unless we give it some meaningful content.

This will call for a wide-ranging debate on the principles and basic attitudes which should inspire the policy of European Union, so that Europe may become the true fatherland of all its citizens.

The political parties which up to now exist only within the national frontiers must organize and prepare themselves for this debate. In other words, we must create European parties, which will have to draw up fundamental programmes for Europe.

It would be very difficult to imagine an election campaign for direct election of members of the European Parliament in which the parties would advocate national objectives. Now for the first time in the history of the European Communities, dates have been set for European elections. The 1974 Paris Summit fixed them for 1978, and the European Parliament proposes that they should be held on the first Sunday of May 1978.

If Prime Minister Tindemans succeeds in the task entrusted to him, as we hope he will, the task of presenting such a meaningful and convincing image of European Union that the Council will set up this Union before 1980, then the Community will have acquired a new dimension, thanks to direct elections.

Then and only then will we have the right to honour the memory of Robert Schuman without pangs of conscience. Once we have created European political union, we shall have carried out the mission he entrusted to us and respected his last wishes.

CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRATIC GROUP STUDY DAYS

The Christian-Democratic Group of the European Parliament held its study days in the Hague on 5, 6 and 7 May under the chairmanship of Mr LÜCKER, chairman of the group.

The topics discussed were agriculture, the trade union movement and European Union. The various topics dealt with and the rapporteurs were as follows:

- The development of the common agricultural policy and the effectiveness of the mechanisms involved

Rapporteur: Mr VETRONE

- Problems and proposals with regard to the adaptation of the common agricultural policy

Co-rapporteur: Mr MARTENS

- Specific aspects of the common agricultural policy

Co-rapporteur: Mr FRÜH

- The development of the trade union movements in Community countries

Rapporteur: Mr PETRE

- The trade unions and Christian Democrat political forces

Rapporteur: Mr BERSANI

- Continuation of the debate on Mr Bertrand's questionnaire with a view to drawing up the report on European Union.

In the presence of Mr P. LARDINOIS, EEC Commission for Agriculture, the Group held an exchange of views on the stock-taking of the common agricultural policy, with a view to submitting, before the European Parliament's summer recess, a resolution on the restructuring of the agricultural policy based on the reports drawn up by Mr Vetrone, Mr Martens and Mr Früh. For this purpose a working party was set up consisting of the rapporteurs, Mr De Koning and Mr Zeller.

The Group then debated the reports by Mr Pêtre and Mr Bersani.

Having heard Mr Pêtre's exposé on developments in the trade union movement in the Europe of the Nine, with particular reference to the recently created European Confederation of Trade Unions, the Group noted with satisfaction that this large trade union organization at European level has recognized national trade union organizations with different principles and doctrines, while respecting their individual character.

This exposé was the subject of a long debate which will be continued at the next meeting.

Meanwhile, a working group has been appointed to draw up, in collaboration with the European Union of Christian Democrats, a broad programme of social policy which will form one of the bases of Christian-Democratic social policy in the Community and in Europe.

The Christian-Democratic Group of the European Parliament hopes that increasingly close contact will be maintained with social and trade union circles at European level.

As regards Mr Bertrand's report on European Union, the Christian-Democratic Group opened a debate which will be continued during the next European Parliament part-session in Strasbourg so as to comply with the deadlines which Parliament has set itself.

Apart from Mr Lardinois, Mr Van der Stee, Dutch Minister of Agriculture, former members of the Christian-Democratic Group and numerous Dutch political personalities also attended the study days.

The reports presented at the study days in the Hague will be published in the series 'Quaderni del Gruppo D.C.'
(Christian-Democratic Group Notes)

FROM THE USA TO US

by Mr Dario ANTONIOZZI¹

We do not know whether President Ford's recent firm statements to the effect that America is resolved to reassume the leadership - characterized more by its burthens than by any honour to be derived from it - which it has exercised for decades in world politics, will lend the leaders of the United States that credibility and strength, the weakening or partial loss of which had threatened the entire strategy underlying the world balance of power.

Paradoxically enough, it is the opponents of this leadership and those who would question it that have most to fear today from any further weakening of American positions, because they must realize that an American 'fall from power', which unfortunately had seemed to be one of the features of recent times, would have succeeded not only in jeopardizing the safety of Washington's allies but also in involving in the present crisis countries belonging to other blocs, especially those of the Third World and the non-aligned countries. The fact is that we cannot with impunity shake to its very foundations a system which, with all its inevitable defects, with its gaps and shortcomings, has nevertheless enabled machinery to be set in motion which preserves fundamental liberties by allowing of flexible adjustments, unforeseeable recoveries and above all those correcting factors which are indispensable to the proper functioning of the complex international machine.

While the undeniable setbacks suffered by American policies at many points of the international chessboard cannot be blamed entirely on the bitter dissensions and internal divisions caused by the Vietnam war and the Watergate affair, it is quite certain that these latter events ended up by paralysing the Executive's power to act and that this led to the temporary decline in the bold and vigorous lead always given by the United States in international activities.

Ford seems to be anxious to put a new policy into effect in order to overcome these difficulties and to heal these dissensions. There should be no lack of understanding for his position on the part of his Atlantic Pact Allies; it is to be hoped that the American people will once again react with vigour and responsibility to the difficulties with which their country is faced.

¹Member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Christian-Democratic Group. He has been a deputy since 1953 and has been several times Under-Secretary and is at present national Assistant Secretary of the Christian-Democrat Party.

There is one observation, however, which seems called for. Under the guidance of a leadership which has always resisted any temptation to adopt authoritarian ideas or solutions, the United States is proving that it is anxious to face up to even the most difficult tests, such as Portugal's downward slide into a position where fundamental liberties are trampled underfoot, the collapse of anti-Communist resistance in Vietnam and the on-going highly dangerous situation in the Middle East, without reverting to rash or hasty action, keeping steady nerves and searching patiently for solutions not prompted solely by defence of its own big power interests.

We have seen the Soviet Union react in much more dramatic fashion to much less proximate dangers and to the mere possibility of changes much less serious in their consequences. We have only to think of the military occupation of Czechoslovakia merely because the 'Spring' had broken out there, not to mention the violent repression of the Hungarian Revolution under the flimsy pretext that Imre Nagy could have requested that his country be allowed to leave the Warsaw Pact.

THE TRADE UNIONS AND POLITICS

by Professor F. BURGBACHER

I have always seen politics as a continuing attempt - and I stress that it is an attempt - to combine freedom with justice. At the present time we are jeopardizing freedom by introducing uniformity, equality and other levelling concepts in its place. If this is what is wanted, then freedom must be totally or partially restricted.

A political party's prospects of winning elections depend to a great extent on the credibility of its party politics. In the case now under consideration, it is hardly consistent to oppose power concentration in the form of mergers, multinational undertakings or other institutions while not only allowing the same thing to happen but actually encouraging it in the case of the trade unions. In order to give some idea of trade union power in the economic field it is sufficient to recall how the British Labour Party dealt, for instance, with the vote on Europe at the Labour Party Congress, when the majority, which as a result of the constitution consists of trade union members, voted against their own elected Prime Minister, Mr Wilson.

The same thing happened in the German Federal Republic when in 1974 the Public Transport Workers Union, the ÖTV, despite warnings from a Federal Government and Chancellor of similar political leanings, succeeded in pushing ahead with its wage claims and in doing so added in large measure to the trend in the finances of the Federal Republic towards a deficit.

Salvation cannot be attained by creating new institutions, unless the ideological principles have been clearly and unequivocally established beforehand. Catholic social doctrine and Protestant social ethics are indispensable foundations for Christian Democrats, and if we are to be true Christian Democrats, we must accept them without reservation. At present Christian social teaching is undergoing revision, and when this work has been completed, we must see how much of it we ourselves can accept and how much, for political reasons, requires adaptation.

It is time we stopped being scared out of our wits everytime someone accuses us of being conservative. Christian Democrats must always be conservative on certain fundamental points of ideology, if they are not to be untrue to themselves.

The respect that is their due must once again be given to the principle of solidarity, because of its impact on cooperative thinking in economic and social life, and, more especially, the principle of subsidiarity.

Federalism contributes to subsidiarity and it is interesting to note that the federally governed countries of the free world have succeeded in dealing with their problems much more satisfactorily than the centrally governed States.

In conclusion I should like to mention that most burning question of the moment, namely, worker participation. I am, of course, basically for worker participation, because people cannot be treated simply as objects but must be respected as individuals. I have, however, considerable reservations with regard to worker participation on the basis of complete parity. I should not like to add to the danger of worker participation turning out to be a kind of conspiracy between employers and workers 'to exploit the consumer'. The task of the producer is to provide all consumers with the products they need or want on favourable terms. In addition, therefore, to employers and workers we must take account of the consumers, who form a very important group, because it is only in this way that an undertaking can adequately fulfil its purpose from the point of view of the national economy. We should therefore give consideration to the advisability of introducing a third force, namely, consumer representation. I feel it would be wise for Christian Democrats to espouse this idea. I am sure it would be particularly well received by our peoples and our electorates.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES FAVOURS
EUROPEAN UNION

by GIANFRANCO MARTINI¹

More than 3,000 delegates from the nine Member States of the European Community, Switzerland and Austria were present at the XIth meeting of the Council of European Municipalities in Vienna in April.

Once again this was the occasion of an important meeting of local and regional administrators, all of them committed to the joint struggle for a supranational and democratic Europe.

At the present time, in fact, the Council of European Municipalities combines within its ranks some tens of thousands of local and regional authorities and has as its stated aims the mobilization of representatives of local democracy in favour of European political unification, supplying them with adequate and up-to-date information on Community policies and alerting them to experience of local government gained by local authorities through the European institutions.

Those taking part in the Vienna meeting were particularly interested in new developments towards European Union along the lines laid down by last December's Summit and debated the topic 'European Union by 1980: citizens, local authorities and regions in relation to the proposal made by the governments - a model of a federal Community'. Two reports were drawn up on the definition of European Union - the first on 'local and regional autonomy, participation, federal power' (rapporteur: Mr Serafini, Secretary-General of the Italian section of the Council of European Municipalities) and the second on 'Europe's place in the world' (rapporteur): Mr Meyers, former Belgian Cabinet Minister and President of the Belgian section of the Council of European Municipalities).

The final resolution, which was approved unanimously with only the Italian Communist Party delegates abstaining, stresses vigorously the need for the establishment of a European government and says that it is essential that when the Tindemans report finally comes to be put into effect, it should be entrusted to a European Parliament elected by direct universal suffrage, which would thus become the Constituent Assembly of the United States of Europe. The European Parliament, in fact, seemed to the Vienna delegates the only institution capable of really raising the quality of its performance in building up a political Europe and the institution most independent of national and extra-national interests.

¹ Assistant Secretary-General of the Council of European Municipalities and member of the Regional Policy Committee of the ECDU.

In a second policy document, the meeting addressed an urgent appeal to British local authorities to commit themselves without reservation to working for a 'yes' result in the forthcoming referendum, so that Britain may remain a member of the Community.

The highlights of the opening and closing sittings were addresses by several prominent European political personalities, including the President of the EEC Commission, Mr Ortoli, and the President of the European Parliament, Mr Spénale. The importance of the Congress was underlined by the presence of the President of the Austrian Republic, Mr Kirchsclaeger, the Austrian Federal Vice-Chancellor and the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, all of whom addressed the delegates.

The meeting was also attended by many Christian Democrat delegates from various European countries who brought to the two working parties their experience and their deep European convictions, giving testimony once again to the invaluable part played by Christian Democrat parties in various quarters in building up a democratic Europe on the foundations of sound institutions. We have only to think of the well-known report by Mr Bertrand to the European Parliament.

Mr Poher, President of the French Senate, was also present at the Vienna meeting.

DOCUMENTS

IS DEMOCRACY SAFE IN PORTUGAL?

by Mr Paul DE KEERSMAEKER¹

When a people that has lived for 45 years in poverty and political ignorance under a medieval feudal system is summoned to the voting booths barely one year after a military coup d'état, its choice is eagerly awaited not only within the country itself but also in all European countries where free and democratic elections have been an established right for a long time.

When we speak of the elections of 25 April, we must not forget that they are intended only to set up a Constituent Assembly; the elections for a legislative Assembly will be held only next October, and it is only the result of these elections that will determine the composition of the new government. Only then will it be possible to discuss ruling coalitions. For the moment, the present Provisional Government remains in power, and the Armed Forces Movement and the Revolutionary Council remain in charge for a further three years in accordance with agreements drawn up between the MFA and the political parties.

However, it still remains true that the first elections for nearly half a century have taken place, and the results reflect the calm, orderly atmosphere in which they were held. The majority of the Portuguese people came out in favour of the more moderate parties, particularly the Socialist Party of Mario Soares and the Centre-Left party, the PPD. The Portuguese people demonstrated convincingly that they want a break with the past and a progressive social and economic policy within a free and democratic political system. In the last analysis, the elections were an unqualified rejection of the Communists, who had infiltrated every sector of Portuguese life.

The principal victor was undoubtedly the Socialist party of Mr Soares, which took 38% of the votes. The PPD result (27%) was below what its leaders had hoped, but this was certainly due to the absence, owing to illness,

¹ At a meeting of the ECDU Policy Committee on 17 and 18 April in Vienna, it was decided to send a delegation of observers to the elections on 25 April in Portugal.

Amongst the members of the delegation was Mr Paul DE KEERSMAEKER CVP Deputy (Belgian Christian Democrat Party), who met Admiral Rosa Coutinho, Cardinal Riberio, Mr Mario Soares and the leaders of the PPD and the CDS. This article first appeared in the ZEC, the monthly review of the CVP.

during the election campaign of its founder and political secretary, Mr Carneiro, and also to the lack of any international support. In the light of its financial resources and of its privileged position with regard to the mass media, the result obtained by the Communist Party (13%) was a rather poor one. It had hoped that the imposition of a single trade union on the country would enable it to capture all the workers' votes.

Recent events in Portugal indicate that the Communists and their supporters in the Armed Forces Movement are annoyed by the choice made by the great majority of the people in favour of parties pledged to a free and pluralistic democracy.

The Democratic and Social Centre Party (CDS) was only moderately successful in the elections. It was not easy for this party to present an attractive image in a climate of opinion inflamed by influences from the Left. It was subjected to a persistent smear campaign by the parties of the extreme left, and its alliance with the proscribed Christian Democrat Party only served to strengthen the impression of a right-wing orientation.

The relatively insignificant number of blank votes prevented the MFA from giving itself a mandate of any kind.

The election results are revealing and show clearly the leanings of the Portuguese people. They have finally bolted the door on any return to the past, and at the same time they have quite definitely rejected any move towards a Communist regime. They have, instead, come out in favour of the implementation of a progressive social and economic programme in a free and democratic society. There is a danger however, that the Communists with the help of some members of the MFA, will try to thwart the freely expressed will of the people.

It is to be hoped that the more thoughtful members of the MFA, faced with a clear choice on the part of the Portuguese people, will avert this danger. On the other hand, it would be wrong for Western countries to claim that the implementation of democracy in Portugal must necessarily follow along the lines of the classic and stereotyped models of these same Western societies. It is for the Portuguese people to bring about political and economic democracy in accordance with their own needs and their own patterns, and it should be our task to support and encourage them.

Their greatest concern, however, at the present time is the economic situation, and it is in this area that a young democracy is faced with the greatest danger.

Portugal has barely emerged from a medieval feudal system, the main features of which were a monopolistic economic structure and, particularly

in the south of the country, an agricultural system based on large landed estates.

In the social sector the situation is extremely grave: very low wages, no unemployment benefits, and no right to strike. Portugal, like all other countries, is now suffering the consequences of the world economic crisis and must, in addition, cope with the consequences of a sudden disengagement from her former colonies. Tourism has declined, and many Portuguese emigrants have stopped sending home money from outside the country. The absence of any consistent economic and social policy since 25 April 1974 has led to disruption of the economy, which has in turn reduced investments to zero and led to mass unemployment.

In these conditions the country needs a series of basic reforms: agricultural reforms, democratization of the economy, since at the present time all capital is concentrated in the hands of a small number of families, social measures. All this requires a climate of calmness and confidence so that production can be set in motion once again and the necessary investments attracted.

Developments in the economic situation will determine political developments and, indeed, the future of Portugal. The only way in which present trends can be reversed is to prop up Portugal's fragile economy with external aid, and it is for this reason that a European Community aid programme is eagerly awaited.

Portugal, as Admiral Coutinho assured me, is orientated culturally and materially towards Europe. He added, however, that Portuguese public opinion is sceptical about the sudden interest and concern being shown by Western countries in the evolution of democracy in Portugal and has not forgotten that, for almost 50 years, Europe did not concern itself at all with Portugal, but left it under the domination of a feudal regime. When I told him in reply that the Belgian Christian Democrat Party (CVP) at its 1973 conference on foreign policy openly denounced the Caetano regime, he did not seem at all impressed.

The only way in which we can compensate for our past indifference is by giving proof of effective solidarity. This, in my opinion, is the way in which we can best contribute to building up genuine democracy in Portugal.

