



## Parliament gets more say under New Rules

A greater say for the Parliament in the process of passing Community legislation is one important outcome of the adoption by Parliament of new Rules of Procedure. Overwhelmingly approved by 271 votes to 11 with one abstention on 26 March the new rules were first used for the May session.

In the new rules Parliament has sought to build on the limited but specific legislative powers in the Community Treaties as reinforced by the judgment of the Court of Justice in Luxembourg in October 1980 (the isoglucose case — see Digest No. 10). The Court held that the consultation procedure required before the adoption of Community legislation can only be considered complete when Parliament has given its opinion to the Council. This means that in all cases where Parliament has a right to be consulted, the Council cannot take a decision without first hearing Parliament's opinion. Although this opinion is not binding on either Commission or Council, in the words of Parliament's Rules spokesman Rudolf Luster (EPP/Ger), "Parliament must assume that neither of the other institutions wishes to take decisions which are not supported by the majority of the directly-elected representatives of the peoples of the Community".

By voting on the Commission proposal itself, as well as subsequently on its own report, and by holding out the possibility, when it considers the proposal unwelcome, of referring it back to committee (thereby delaying any decision), the Parliament will be able to exert greater pressure on the Commission either to change its proposal or to abandon it completely.

In practice a new two-stage procedure is being introduced. Parliament will first of all vote and possibly amend the text of the Commission proposal, so that it can form an initial opinion without at this point concluding the formal consultation procedure. Then if there are substantial differences of opinion between Parliament and Commission, these can be further considered and perhaps negotiated — the matter still being within the Parliament. Then at the second stage the Parliament will vote on its own resolution and amendments contained in the committee rapporteur's report, thus terminating the consultation procedure.

Greater accountability is also being required of the Council. In the case of certain important Community decisions, where the Council intends to depart from Parliament's opinion the conciliation procedure may be initiated. The subsequent committee report on the results of the conciliation will be debated and voted on by the Parliament. Even where conciliation is not required, if the Council feels impelled to

depart from the Parliament's Opinion on matters of particular importance it will still be asked for an explanation.

**The new Rule 35 states:**

"1. If a Commission proposal fails to secure a majority of the votes cast, the President shall, before Parliament votes on the motion for a resolution, request the Commission to withdraw the proposal.

2. If the Commission does so, the President shall hold the consultation procedure on the proposal to be superfluous and shall inform the Council accordingly.

3. If the Commission does not withdraw its proposal, Parliament may decide not to vote on the motion for a resolution and to refer the matter back to the appropriate committee.

In this case, the committee shall report back to Parliament within one month or, in exceptional cases, any shorter period decided by Parliament."

Other points in the new Rules include:

**Attendance:** The names of Members present at each sitting to be listed in the Minutes.

**Roll call:** Names of Members voting and how they voted to be listed in the Minutes.

**Term of Office:** The President, vice-Presidents and Quaestors to be elected every 2½ years. In the event of a vacancy the Member elected shall serve only the unexpired term.

**Parliamentary questions:** Written questions and answers on the work of the Bureau, enlarged Bureau and Quaestors to be published in Parliament's Bulletin within thirty days of tabling. Tighter rules also adopted for Question Time and other Questions to the Commission and Council.

**Political groups:** A minimum of 21 Members to form a political group if from one Member State, 15 if from two or ten if from three or more.

**Committees:** With Parliament's approval a committee may be delegated to give an opinion or advice on behalf of the Parliament or Commission proposals of a technical nature. This is in addition to the procedure without debate.

**Topical debates:** One or two periods totalling up to three hours each session are to be reserved for topical or urgent debates.

**Explanations of vote:** These are to be limited to 1½ minutes per Member or 3 minutes for a group.

**Budget vote:** The final vote on the overall draft budget is abolished (Mr Luster notes that this vote had not been foreseen in the Treaties and has often caused difficulties).

## Seat deadline near

The first day of the next part session, June 15, will see the expiry of the deadline set by Parliament for the Council to take a decision on the seat of Parliament. This deadline was included in a resolution with support from all sides which was passed on 20 November 1980 (see Digest No. 10). Thus far the consultation between Council and Parliament requested in that resolution has not begun. Although the April "summit" meeting of the European Council held in Maastricht briefly discussed the situation, the Member States only

agreed to maintain the status quo — on the "provisional places of work" — a situation which is deplored by Parliament. Budgetary Control spokesman Peter Price (Dem/UK) again criticised the Member governments for failing to take a decision for 23 years when he presented a report on 9 April on Parliament's expenditure. The Maastricht decision, he said, showed "a flagrant disregard for the taxpayers of Europe".

# Work in progress

DOCUMENT	SUBJECT	Main Cttee	Other Cttee
COM(80)893 fin	Proposal for a directive on a prospectus to be published when securities are offered for sale to the public	Legal	
COM(80)906 fin	Proposals for i) a regulation on the financial balance by railway undertakings ii) a decision on the improvement of railway undertakings	Trans	
COM(80)891 fin	Proposal for a directive on direct insurance other than life insurance	Legal	
COM(80)898 fin	Proposal for a regulation on a survey on the structure of agricultural holdings for 1979/80	Agric	
COM(80)912 fin	Proposal for a directive on formal qualifications of doctors, nurses responsible for general care, dentists and veterinary surgeons	Legal	
COM(81) 36 fin	Proposal for a regulation on Community transit	Econ	
COM(81) 20 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the conservation and management of fishery resources for vessels of certain non-member countries off the coast of Guyana	Agric	
COM(81) 9 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the common organisation of the market in live trees and other plants	Agric	
COM(81) 26 fin	Proposals for a regulation on a Community Tariff quota for heifers and cows other than those intended for slaughter	Ext	
COM(80)907 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the obligations inherent in the concept of a public service in transport by rail, road and waterway	Trans	
COM(80)914 fin	Proposal for a directive on the mutual recognition of formal qualifications in medicine and the freedom to provide services in respect of doctors activities	Legal	
COM(81) 4 fin	Proposals for a directive on i) certain activities in the field of pharmacy ii) the mutual recognition of formal qualifications in pharmacy	Legal	
COM(81) 5 fin	Proposal for a directive on regenerated cellulose film intended to come into contact with foodstuffs	Env	
COM(80)860 fin	Proposal for a directive on the right of appeal in respect of customs matters	Legal	
COM(80)914 fin	Proposal for a directive on the laws of Member States relating to cosmetic products	Env	
COM(81) 50 fin	Proposals on the fixing of prices for certain agricultural products and certain related measures (1981/82)	Agric	Budget
COM(81)203 fin	Proposal for a decision on fishing arrangements between the EEC and Norway for 1981	Agric	
COM(81) 81 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the conservation and management of fishery resources applicable to Norwegian vessels	Agric	
COM(81) 41 fin	Proposals for regulations concerning food aid in 1981	Dev	Budget
COM(80)846 fin	Proposal for a decision on a research programme in medical and public health research	Env	
COM(81) 42 fin	Proposal for a directive on the marketing of cereal seed and seed potatoes	Agric	
COM(81) 56 fin	Proposal for a directive on the limit values for discharges of cadmium into the aquatic environment	Env	
COM(80)683 fin	Proposal for a directive on the sampling and analysis of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water	Env	
COM(80)730 fin	Proposal for a decision on the exchange of information on the quality of surface fresh water following Greek accession	Env	
COM(80)742 fin	Proposal for a regulation on a higher rate of intervention by the European Social Fund	Soc	
COM(80)792 fin	Proposal for a directive on air quality limit values and guide values for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulates	Env	
COM(80)793 fin	Proposal for a directive on the quality of water intended for human consumption	Env	
COM(80)812 fin	Proposal for a decision to adopt joint research programmes for coordinating agricultural research following Greek accession	Agric	Budget
COM(80)848 fin	Proposal for a regulation introducing an accounting system for expenditure on infrastructures in respect of transport by rail, road and inland waterways	Trans	
COM(81)106 fin	Proposals for regulations on i) a common measure for the development of beef cattle production in Ireland ii) temporary financial aid to Ireland for pre-movement tuberculin testing and brucellosis blood sampling of cattle	Agric	Budget
COM(81) 52 fin	iii) an additional premium for maintaining suckler cows in Ireland Proposal for a regulation on the import system in the sheepmeat and goatmeat sector of certain non-member countries for 1981. Recommendation on the discharge to be given to the Commission for the implementation of the budget and the amending and supplementary 1979 budgets	Ext Control	Budget

# 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.

At its 9-13 February part-session Parliament voted on 7 reports dealing with Commission proposals.

1. In five cases Parliament adopted committee reports which were favourable to Commission proposals:

- Report by Mr Delatte on isoglucose (1-792/80)
- Report on the common organisation of the market in cereals (1-701/80)
- Report by Mr Curry on the F.O.D.'s sugar quota (1-748/80)
- Report by Mr Gautier on the common organisation of the market in fishery products (1-841/80)
- Report by Mr Turcat on projects for energy-saving and alternative sources of energy (1-836/80)

2. In one case Parliament proposed amendments which the Commission did not wish to accept:

- Report by Mr Nielsen on the use of substances with a hormonal action and having a thyrostatic action in domestic animals (1-840/80)

3. In one case the Commission was prepared to accept some of Parliament's amendments:

- Report by Mr Nyborg on exemption from VAT in the case of final importation of goods (1-646/80)

4. The Commission also took note of Parliament's opinions on:

- Report by Mrs Majj-Weggen on the position of women in the Community (1-829/80)
- Resolution on the investiture of the Commission 1981 (1-888/80)
- Report by Mrs Van den Heuvel on violations of human rights in Uruguay (1-693/80)
- Report by Mr Balfour on convergence and budgetary matters (1-136/80)
- Resolution on duty-free allowances for travellers within the Community (1-861/80)
- Resolution on President Sadat's visit to the EP and the Euro-Arab dialogue (1-882/80)
- Resolution on assistance for Calabria for damage caused by recent floods (1-883/80)
- Resolution on the indictment of 13 Brazilian trade union leaders (1-879/80)
- Resolution on rest time for drivers in distant islands and sparsely populated areas (1-887/80)
- Report by Mr Beumer on fixed prices for books (1-554/80)

5. Following Parliament's concern, the Commission was taking action to:

- Contact the Italian Government to obtain further information on the nature of the disaster and the extent of the damage in Calabria
- Decide the sum to be allocated to the Greek communities affected by the earthquake
- Grant emergency food aid in respect of skimmed milk powder to Angola; cereals to Salvadorian refugees in Honduras; and skimmed milk powder for inhabitants returning to Zimbabwe
- Grant emergency financial aid to the Fiji Islands for victims of hurricane Arthur; to Malawi; and to aid organisations for inhabitants of El Salvador

At its 9-13 March and 23-26 March part-sessions Parliament voted on 9 reports dealing with Commission proposals.

1. In three cases Parliament adopted committee reports which were favourable to Commission proposals:

- Report by Mr Poniatowski on relations between the EEC and Zimbabwe (1-834/80)
- Report by Mr Josselin on certain fish stocks conservation and management measures for vessels of certain third world countries in the area 200 miles off the coast of Guyana (54/81)
- Report by Mr Nielsen on (i) an understanding on fisheries for 1981 between the EEC and Norway (ii) certain fish stocks conservation and management measures applying to Norwegian vessels (55/81)

2. In six cases Parliament proposed amendments which the Commission did not wish to accept:

- Report by Mr Hoffmann on the timetable for Council decisions on transport (end 1983) (1-951/80)
- Report by Mr Gautier on future multilateral cooperation for NE Atlantic fisheries (56/81)
- Report by Mr Kirk on 1981 catch quotas for vessels of Member States fishing in the NAFO Convention Area (1-831/80)
- Report by Sir Henry Plumb on certain fish stocks in the Community fishing area (53/81)
- Report by Mr Bocklet on the market in sugar (57/81)
- Report by Mr Ligios on certain agricultural products (50/81)

3. The Commission also took note of Parliament's opinions on:

- Resolution on the composition of parliamentary committees (1-976/80)
- Report by Mrs Clywd on handicapped persons in the Community (1981) (1-868/80)
- Report by Mr Lalor on the Western Sahara (1-532/80)
- Report by Mrs Castellina on Stabex (1-698/80)
- Report by Mr Spinelli on the European Communities' 1982 financial and budgetary policy (1-936/80)
- Report by Mrs Pruvot on youth activities (1-826/80)
- Report by Mr Prag on youth sandwich training in the Community (1-460/80)
- Report by Mrs Lenz on relations between the EEC and Romania (1-678/80)
- Report by Mr Luster on compensation for victims of violence (1-464/80)
- Report by Mr Malangré on the British Government's planned immigration controls (1-573/80)
- Report by Mr Curry on disruption of the European apple market (1-757/80)
- Resolution on the attempted coup in Spain (1-970/80)

4. The Commission informed Parliament of aid granted to disaster victims since the last part-session:

- (i) food aid in the form of cereals to Somalia and El Salvador
- (ii) emergency aid to Kenya, Djibouti, Mali, Seychelles and Senegal.

At its 6-10 April part-session Parliament voted on 12 reports dealing with Commission proposals.

1. In six cases Parliament adopted committee reports which were favourable to Commission proposals:

- Report by Mr Woltjer on abuses resulting from the sale of agricultural products on vessels (953/80)
- Report by Mr Früh on the improvement of infrastructure in less-favoured agricultural areas of Germany (1-860/80)
- Report by Mr Provan on statistical sur-

veys of cattle herds (1-859/80)

- Report by Sir Henry Plumb on cattle production in Ireland (1-108/80)
- Report by Mr Gautier on a fishery agreement between Canada and the EEC (39/81)
- Report by Mr Muntingh on the conservation of Antarctic marine resources (79/81)

2. In three cases Parliament proposed amendments which the Commission did not wish to accept:

- Report by Mr Sutra de Germa on the common organisation of the market in cereals, sugar and rice (71/81)
- Report by Mr Gautier on contract loans to promote investment in the Community (28/81)
- Report by Mr Ippolito on uranium prospecting and mining (1-949/81)

3. In three cases the Commission was prepared to accept some of Parliament's amendments:

- Report by Mr Newton Dunn on the protection of workers against harmful exposure to lead (1-858/80)
- Report by Mr von Wogau on the indication of origin for textile and clothing products (73/81)
- Report by Mr Lega on the recruitment of officials in consequence of the Greek accession (87/81)

4. The Commission also took note of Parliament's opinions on:

- Report by Mr Welsh on the renewal of the Multifibre Agreement (61/81)
- Report by Mr Colleselli on the present situation of wine-growing in the Community (1-680/80)
- Resolution on the adjustment of the co-operation agreement with Yugoslavia following Greek accession to the Community (10/81)
- Resolution on the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (6/81)
- Report by Mr Walters on economic aspects of exploiting the sea-bed (1-869/80)
- Resolution on the supply of foodstuffs to Poland (1-969/80)
- Resolution on Community aid for Afghan and Pakistani refugees (7/81)
- Resolution on the joint Council meeting (14/81)
- Report by Mr Price on the European Parliament's administrative expenses (1-952/80)
- Report by Mr Spinelli on the Community's own resources (1-772/80)
- Report by Mr Adonnino, Mr Ansquer, Mr Dankert and Mr Jackson on the inter-institutional dialogue (77/81)
- Resolution on the military junta in Turkey (104/81)
- Resolution on the persecution of the Bahai community in Iran (109/81)
- Resolution on the Lebanese crisis (112/81)
- Resolution on the Franco-German loan (135/81)
- Resolution on the situation in Poland (129/81)
- Resolution on the Maastricht European Council (134/81)

5. The Commission informed Parliament of aid granted to disaster victims since the last part-session:

- emergency aid to:
  - drought victims in Guinea & Mali
  - victims of an epidemic of meningitis in Upper Volta
  - victims of recent events in Chad
  - victims of a cholera epidemic in Tanzania
  - African refugees
  - victims of recent events in Lebanon



# Replies to Members' questions

## Money for battered wives — *Johanna Maij-Weggen (EPP/NL) WQ 1659/80*

The Commission has allocated a financial contribution sufficient to cover a substantial proportion of the cost of the European conference held in Brussels on 14 and 15 February 1981 by the Belgian Federation for Battered Wives.

This conference is concerned — among other things — with the integration of women into the working world, an area in which Community action is in progress.

The Commission is always prepared to look into the possibility of granting financial aid to organisations setting up training courses and other programmes for the promotion of women's employment, provided such programmes fit into the context of Community activities and that the organisations meet certain criteria laid down to qualify for such assistance.

## Upholding Directives on pollution — *Bouke Beumer (EPP/NL) and Johanna Maij-Weggen (EPP/NL) WQ 1718/80*

Holland and Belgium are to be taken to the Court of Justice by the Commission for failing to incorporate into their national laws a June 1975 Council of Ministers Directive on the quality required of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water. The question arose following complaints about pollution of the river Meuse for which millions of people in Belgium and Holland draw their drinking water supplies. Apart from this and a May 1976 Directive on pollution, the Commission has made, or is considering making, proposals to the Council for further Directives on the discharge of effluent and dangerous substances into the aquatic environment. These include mercury, aldrin, dieldrin and endrin, cadmium and a number of pesticides.

## UK unemployment and the EEC — *Lord O'Hagan (Dem/UK) WQ 1494/80*

Membership of the Community has moderated the factors increasing unemployment in the UK, says the Commission. It believes that the adverse effects of recession on Community economies have been kept to a minimum, in particular by the Community's open-trade policy which has successfully replaced the self-defeating protectionist policies which marked recessionary periods in the past.

Membership of the Community contributes in a number of ways to the level of economic activity and thus to employment in the UK. For example trade inter-dependence has increased substantially and as a result UK exports to the Community provide a significant proportion of employment in the UK: indeed, from 1972 to 1979 the share of UK exports to the Community increased from 29.5% to 42% of total UK exports (which were rising during the same period by 23% pa). In addition the UK has received over the period 1973 to 1979 loans amounting to £4.4 billion ECU from the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Investment Bank and under the arrangements for the New Community Instrument. These loans have financed investment projects and have therefore supported directly and indirectly employment in the UK.

At present all Western industrialised countries are suffering from high levels of unemployment, whether they are members of the Community or not. This is in part due to the conjunction of slow or negative economic growth with an increase in the labour force seeking employment. High levels of in-

flation, increasing energy costs and the slowness of the industry-based economies to adapt to the changing patterns of world trade leave little scope for any expansionary policy.

## French aid to the poultry sector — *Lord O'Hagan (Dem/UK) WQ 1628/80*

Asked by the questioner whether farmers in France who put up poultry houses are receiving a 20% grant towards costs, the Commission denies that this is the case. The EEC directive on the modernisation of farms, it states, excludes both national and Community aid to farmers for the purchase of poultry and for investments in the poultry and egg sectors. Enquiries by the Commission confirm the absence of such state aid.

## Parliament not consulted — *Joyce Quin (Dem/UK) WQ 1681/80*

351 draft regulations and directives mostly of a technical nature or of minor importance were not referred to Parliament over the twelve month period 1 December 1979 — 30 November 1980. 122 related to agriculture, 125 to administration of the customs union, 60 to external trade and 13 to fisheries.

## Task force — *Willy Vernimmen (Soc/Bel) WQ 1693/80*

The Commission now has an inter-departmental task force whose job is to coordinate European financial instruments with structural goals, e.g. the Social Fund, Regional Fund, and the European Investment Bank. For a long time, these instruments operated independently inevitably leading to inconsistency and jeopardised effectiveness. The task force has, in particular, been involved in:

- the improvement of the distribution of Fund
- the improvement and publication of criteria for the selection of projects or operations
- the acceleration of payment performance in the Funds
- the rationalisation of the simultaneous use of several instruments for one project
- the improvement of a "regionalised information system"
- a new Community brochure of Community interventions
- providing for the data backup of publicity campaigns, visits of Commissioners, etc.

## Aid for redundant shipbuilding workers — *Joyce Quin (Soc/UK) WQ 1748/80*

The Commission's proposals for the creation of a form of aid from the European Social Fund for the maintenance of the incomes of shipbuilding workers has not yet been approved by the Council.

The Community aid as envisaged in the proposal would be aimed at people over 55 who withdrew from the employment market after ceasing to work in a shipyard. The aid would be limited to a maximum of 4,500 ECU (about £2500) per person. The payments made in Britain under the Redundancy Payments Scheme and the Shipbuilding Redundancy Payments Scheme do not apply to the same age groups and do not require that beneficiaries withdraw from the employment market.

The aid from the fund would result in increased support for redundant shipbuilding workers on the one hand to the extent that the British Government could adjust its schemes to the more generous conditions laid down for the Community aid, and on the other because the Fund's support could be

added to the expenditure already undertaken by the national authorities.

## Less bureaucratic in Brussels — *Lord O'Hagan (Dem/UK) WQ 1848/80*

General administration in national government departments in 1979 accounted for 2.8 per cent of the Community's population. Community (Commission) staff represent only 0.0045 per cent.

## Cancer risk from sweeteners — *Johanna Maij-Weggen (EPP/NO) WQ 1657/80*

The regular average daily consumption of 600 ml (just over one pint) of low calorie soft drinks containing saccharine or cyclamates means that the consumer "is likely to exceed by far" the acceptable daily dose for those artificial sweeteners and that "these drinks should not form part of the regular diet". The Commission also draws attention to the use of these substances as a food ingredient or in tablets. The Scientific Committee for Food has approved a provisional acceptable daily dose of 0-2.5 mg of saccharine per kg of body weight, as laid down by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives. It advises against the use of saccharine in baby food and stipulates that there should be informative labelling on foodstuffs containing the sweetener. Although a toxicological evaluation of cyclamates has not yet been carried out at Community level, the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee has put the provisional acceptable daily dose at 0.4 mg of cyclamate per kg of body weight.

## Committee dates

This list is provisional.

Agric	11 May — 12 May
Rules	11 May — 12 May
Ext	12 May — 13 May
Budget	12 May — 13 May
Legal	12 May — 13 May
Region	12 May — 13 May
Env	12 May — 13 May
Econ	13 May — 14 May
Soc	13 May — 14 May
Dev	13 May — 14 May
Pol	13 May — 15 May
Trans	14 May — 15 May
Energy	14 May — 15 May
Control	18 May — 19 May
Youth	18 May — 19 May
Ext	18 May — 20 May
Agric	19 May — 21 May
Rules	19 May — 20 May
Energy (London)	20 May — 21 May
Legal	20 May — 21 May
Econ	21 May — 22 May
Budget	25 May — 26 May
Soc	25 May — 26 May
Region	25 May — 26 May
Legal	26 May — 27 May
Env	26 May — 27 May
Econ	9 Jun — 10 Jun
Agric	22 Jun — 23 Jun
Youth	22 Jun — 23 Jun
Dev	22 Jun — 23 Jun
Econ	23 Jun — 24 Jun
Ext	23 Jun — 24 Jun
Region	23 Jun — 24 Jun
Pol	23 Jun — 25 Jun
Budget	24 Jun — 25 Jun
Soc	24 Jun — 25 Jun
Rules	24 Jun — 25 Jun
Control	25 Jun — 26 Jun
Energy	25 Jun — 26 Jun
Legal (Edinburgh)	25 Jun — 26 Jun
Trans	25 Jun — 26 Jun
Env	25 Jun — 26 Jun