



UK regions poised for aid boost

The European Regional Development Fund, from which Britain is a major beneficiary, is far too small and needs to be restructured to take more account of the particular needs of the regions, Pancrazio De Pasquale (Com/It) told a well-attended press conference at the close of a meeting of Parliament's Regional Policy and Regional Planning Committee in Liverpool on 25 September. The meeting had earlier resolved that "despite a substantial increase, the financial resources made available to the ERDF in the Commission's preliminary draft budget for 1982 are still inadequate to cope with the pressing regional problems facing the Community." The Committee and Parliament as a whole would, said the Chairman, be fighting the Council of Ministers over moves to cut the size of the fund and adopting an important report calling for major revisions.

Earlier in the week delegations from the Regional Committee had visited South Wales, Belfast, the South of Scotland and Merseyside.

Merseyside

Members of the delegation to Merseyside were briefed by officers of Merseyside County Council and Liverpool City Council and given a tour of Liverpool to illustrate a selection of local initiatives and opportunities. With the party was the local MEP for Liverpool, Gloria Hooper (Dem/UK). After hearing of some of the problems of Merseyside, including unemployment at 20%, declining population and migration of young skilled people to other areas, Members were told of the need for ERDF funds to help the regeneration of the urban area. It was not major spending on infrastructure which was needed, but a package of small projects, particularly to improve business confidence and job-creating investment. The tour of the city took in enterprise zones, the vacant Dunlop factory and other buildings and land, environmental projects, housing renewal and road construction schemes, the Merseyside Innovation Centre and the Maritime Museum. A visit to the site of the disturbances in Toxteth was also included.

Scotland

A variety of problems facing peripheral regions of the Community were seen first-hand by the

delegation which visited the South of Scotland.

The visit began with a briefing by the Strathclyde Regional Council, Scottish Economic Planning Department, Scottish Development Agency, Strathclyde University and representatives from the Highlands and Islands Development Board, Regional Council and Shetlands Council.

The delegation, led by Roberto Costanzo (EPP/It), including MEPs from France and Italy (with Alasdair Hutton (Dem) from the United Kingdom, then left Glasgow for a look at the closed Linwood car plant and projects for recovery and new industry in the Garnock valley. At Ayr harbour Members heard from the Ayr Fisherman's Association about the need for a common Community fishing policy. Industrial dereliction from now-closed coal mines and its effects on rural communities was seen at Patna, Dalmellington, Cummock, Muirkirk and Douglas Water. One of the highlights of the day was a visit to the hill farm of Francis Hunter-Blair at Marbrack near Carsphairn. A discussion on the problems of the rural community and the integration of hill-farming with forestry was held with Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington, the Convenor of the Scottish NFU's Hill Farming Sub-Committee, and the Conservator of the Forestry Commission in the South of Scotland.

Wales

The delegation to Wales was particularly concerned with the consequences on the regional economy of the closure of steel mills in Cardiff, Ebbw Vale and Shotton which contributed to the fall in employment in the industry from 69,000 in 1975 to under 30,000 last July. The effects on other industries and services contributed substantially to the rise of unemployment in Wales over the same period from 58,000 to 161,000 or from 5.5 to 14.8 per cent of the total work force. This last figure compared with 11.6 per cent for Great Britain as a whole.

The members of the delegation were very much struck by these figures and other evidence of Wales' difficulty from their discussions with representatives of the Wales TUC, the CBI, the Welsh Development Agency and local authorities. On their second day in the Principality they toured a number of areas affected, including the sites of

the former East Moors (Cardiff) and Ebbw Vale steelworks and the slimmed down but continuing Port Talbot works. On the other hand, the evident determination of the authorities to change, modernise and improve the South Welsh industrial environment through the clearing of tips, road-building and the building of advance factories was impressive. At a meeting with Welsh Minister of State Wyn Roberts the delegation learned that to date the total of Community grants and loans directly to Welsh projects is £803 million, and Members had seen evidence of this from the signboards at the sites of several projects.

The six-Member delegation to Wales was led by Thomas von der Vring (Soc/Ger) and included also Win Griffiths (Soc/South Wales) and Peter Price (Dem/West Lancs).

Northern Ireland

Housing conditions in the city and in particular the financial, political and security problems involved in helping to solve them were the main concern of the European parliamentarians who spent two days in Belfast before going on to Liverpool.

The delegation was led by Sig. De Pasquale, and included two of the Northern Ireland Members — John Hume (SDLP) and John Taylor (UU) — one each from Holland and Greece, three from southern Ireland and two from other parts of the UK.

Belfast City Council arranged a detailed briefing for the Members by civil servants, senior members of the housing executive and city

councillors as a prelude to their tour of housing estates in north, east and west Belfast, a visit to the harbour and shipyard and calls at a Youth Opportunities Programme workshop and the Avoniel leisure centre. Members also met the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr James Prior, at Stormont.

Part of the west Belfast tour had to be curtailed for security reasons, but in other parts of the city members talked to residents about their problems and saw for themselves some of the worst housing conditions. Wherever they went, Members could not fail to be aware of the “troubles” — armoured police and army vehicles, security checks, demolished buildings along the peace lines, bombed sites and countless slogans.

The effect on the delegation was probably best summed up by their Greek colleague, Mr Georgiadis Zardinidis when he said, “I come from a small country similar to yours and I think I can understand your problems”.

Not remote

The extended visit by Members of the Regional Committee illustrates the importance which has been attached by the European Parliament in recent months to allaying any fears of the remoteness of European institutions. Since early last year Parliament’s Environment, External Relations, Legal and Agricultural Committees have all held meetings in the United Kingdom. The Political Affairs Committee is also due to meet in London during the first week of December and will be addressed by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington.

Replies to Members’ Questions

Nuclear electricity cheaper

Nuclear power station electricity is cheaper than from coal or oil, particularly at high load factors, says the Commission. This conclusion from information already available from electricity producers has recently been reinforced by new forecasts from the Commission drawn up with the cooperation of Community producers and using a harmonised method of calculation of costs for power stations due to enter service in future years. The forecasts include capital costs, total fuel cycle, dismantling and research costs.

WQ 535/81 by Mrs Suzanne Dekker (Ind/NL)

More parking facilities for the disabled

Full support in encouraging Member States to extend the provision of parking facilities for disabled people is

being given by the Commission. This follows a recommendation from the European Conference of Ministers of Transport on 6 December 1979 for reciprocal arrangements to be made by 1980. Disabled parking facilities were also raised at a meeting between the Commission and representatives of the International Year of Disabled Persons national committees in December 1980. The Commission also promises to take up the matter in initiatives planned with local authorities.

WQ 2304 by Lady Elles (Dem/UK)

Plans to end pension discrimination

The Commission has confirmed that the Court of Justice’s preliminary ruling in case 69/80 on inequality between men and women with pension schemes could be invoked in similar cases. It constitutes an interpretation

of Article 119(2) of the EEC Treaty. When an employer contributes to a pension scheme on behalf of its employees by means of a sum additional to gross salary, this contribution must be taken into account when considering whether men and women are receiving equal pay. The Commission is aware of this discrimination and is planning to send proposals for its eradication to the Council of Ministers at the end of 1981.

WQ 302/81 by Mrs Ien van den Heuvel (Soc/NL)

No restriction on cheap re-exports

The Community has no rules to enable a surcharge to be imposed on low-priced exports of consumer goods if they are re-entered for consumption within the Community, and none are contemplated since they would

Work in progress

DOCUMENT	SUBJECT	Main Cttee	Other Cttee
COM(81)366 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the conservation of fishery resources Letter from the Council on the appointment of 4 members of the Court of Auditors	Agric Control	
COM(81)358 fin	Proposals for a decision on the setting up of a Community inter-institutional information system and the use of telematics for Community information systems	Econ	Budget
COM(81)357 fin	Proposal for a decision to adopt a research and training programme in controlled thermonuclear fusion	Energy	Budget
COM(81)364 fin	Proposal for a regulation on olive oil producer organisations for 1981/82	Agric	Budget
COM(81)377 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the conservation and management of fishery resources applicable to vessels of certain non-member countries off the coast of Guyana	Agric	
COM(81)435 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the distribution of the total catch of stocks in the Community fishing zone for 1981	Agric	
COM(81)436 fin	Proposal for a decision on fishing arrangements between the EEC and Norway for 1981	Agric	
COM(81)451 fin	Proposal for a decision on Community aid granted for the reconstruction of the regions affected by the Greek earthquakes in February and March 1981	Econ	Budget
COM(81)434 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the fixing of total allowable catches for 1981 and the shares available to the Community	Agric	
COM(81)306 fin	Proposal for a regulation amending the Financial Regulation of 21 Dec 1977 on the general budget of the European Communities	Budget	
COM(81)361 fin	Proposal for a decision on air pollution within the member States	Env	
COM(81)378 fin	Proposal for a regulation introducing arrangements for movement within the Community of goods	Econ	
COM(81)422 fin	Proposal for a regulation on generalised tariff preferences for 1982 to 1985	Dev	Agric, Econ Ext, Budget
COM(81)460 fin	Proposal for a regulation amending the staff regulations of officials	Budget	Legal
COM(81)420 fin	Proposal for a directive on the protection of laying hens kept in battery cages	Agric	
COM(81)458 fin	Proposal for a regulation on aid for bee-keeping in 1981/82, 1982/83 and 1983/84	Agric	
COM(81)258 fin	Proposal for a directive on statistical surveys on sheep and goat stocks	Agric	
COM(81)279 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the sheepmeat and goatmeat market	Agric	Budget
COM(81)274 fin	Proposal for a directive on the classification, packaging and labelling of paints, varnishes, printing inks, adhesives and similar products	Env	
COM(81)266 fin	Proposal for a regulation on the conclusion of the Agreement for commercial and economic cooperation between the EEC and India	Ext	Dev
COM(81)281 fin	Proposal for a decision adopting a research and development programme (1982 to 1985) in raw materials	Energy	Budget

COM(81)315 fin	Proposal for a regulation on producer groups following Greek accession	Agric	Budget
COM(81)355 fin	Proposal for a regulation compensating Greece for its contribution to the cost of the financial mechanism and supplementary measures for the UK	Budget	
COM(81)247 fin	Proposals for a regulation on the wine market and the quality of wines produced in specified regions	Agric	
COM(81)194 fin	Proposal for a directive on the Community list of less-favoured areas (Netherlands)	Agric	
COM(81)244 fin	Proposal for a directive on the Community list of less-favoured areas (Greece)	Agric	

Action taken

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

1. In 8 cases Parliament adopted committee reports which were favourable to Commission proposals:

- Report by Miss Quin on restructuring the inshore fishing industry (267/81)
- Report by Mr Früh on monetary compensatory amounts (344/81)
- Report by Mr Papeafstratiou on the Community list of less-favoured areas (353/81)
- Report by Sir Henry Plumb on a special drainage scheme for less-favoured areas in the West of Ireland and the interest rate subsidy provided for the modernisation of farms in Ireland (393/81)
- Report by Mr Bocklet on aid for hops producers for the 1980 harvest (392/81)
- Proposal for a directive on health problems affecting trade in fresh poultrymeat (98/81)
- Proposals for a decision on the conclusion of fishery arrangements between the EEC and Sweden for 1981 and measures for the conservation and management of fishery resources applicable to Swedish vessels
- Report by Mr Battersby on the conservation and management of fishery resources applicable to vessels in the Faroe Islands (265/81)

2. Using the no-report procedure, Parliament adopted the following:

- Proposal for a regulation on the arrangements for agriculture products and certain goods coming from the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and overseas countries and territories

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

- Report by Mr Tuckman on pre-accession aid for Portugal (266/81)

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

- Report by Mr Fischbach on the lifting of parliamentary immunity (321/81)
- Report by Mr Zagari on the seat of the European Communities' institutions, particularly the European Parliament (333/81)
- Proposal for a resolution by Mr Abens on the setting up of an ad hoc committee to submit proposals on the development of the Community (889/80)

- Report by Mr Hänsch on relations between the European Parliament and the Council of the Community (216/81)
- Report by Mr Diligent on relations between the European Parliament and Member States' Parliaments (206/81)
- Report by Mrs Baduel Glorioso on relations between the European Parliament and the Economic & Social Committee (226/81)
- Report by Mr Van Miert on the European Parliament's right of initiative and its role in Community legislative processes (207/81)
- Report by Lady Elles on European Political Cooperation and the role of the European Parliament (335/81)
- Proposal for a resolution by Mr Albers on the closure of the Ford works in Amsterdam (370/81)
- Proposal for a resolution by Mr Bonaccini and others on the worsening situation in the car industry (381/81)
- Proposal for a resolution by Mr Welsh and others on distortion in the market in horticultural products (381/81)
- Proposal for a resolution by Mr Früh and others on 1981/82 farm prices (373/81)
- Proposal for a resolution by Mr Habsburg and Lady Elles on the prevention of terrorism (368/81)
- Proposal for a resolution by Mr Lega on amendments to the Staff Regulations (384/81)
- Proposal for a resolution by Mr Loo on food aid for the underprivileged in Morocco (369/81)
- Report by Sir John Stewart-Clark on trade relations between the EEC and Japan (240/81)
- Report by Mr Cohen on the communication on the UN Conference on the last developed countries (Paris 1-14 Sept 1981) (330/81)
- Report by Mr Kellett-Bowman on budget supervision in relation to European schools (345/81)

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

Emergency food aid to Yemen via the World Food Programme, Angolan refugees in Zambia, Afghan refugees in Pakistan, The Kingdom of Morocco, the Niger, Madagascar, Mauritius and the people of Kampuchea.

Emergency financial aid to the famine victims in Uganda, Angolan refugees in Zambia, Saint Vincent Island, which had suffered torrential rain, earthquake victims in Iran and the flood victims in China.

conflict with the Community's international obligations. Under GATT rules, the only surcharges which could be imposed on imports of these goods are anti-dumping or countervailing duties and these are not intended to prevent or restrict the re-entry of low priced exports.

WQ 528/81 by Michael Welsh (Dem/UK)

New youth exchange handbook

A first European handbook for organisers of youth and educational exchange is to be published in 1982 by the Commission. The handbook will include lists of all the major agencies operating in this field at the Community and national levels.

WQ 533/81 by Reinhold Bocklet (DPP/Ger)

Small increase in farm production

The latest information available to the Commission indicates that the changes in production of the main products between 1980 and 1981 will probably be as set out below.

Product	% change 1981/80
Common wheat	0
Barley	0
Cheese	+2.2
Butter	+2.2
Skimmed-milk powder	+0.9
Whole milk powder	+9.0
Evaporated milk	+1.0
Beef and veal	-3.6
Sugar	+1.5
Poultrymeat	+5.0
Pigmeat	+0.8

WQ 285/81 by David Curry (Dem/UK) and Fritz Gautier (Soc/Ger)

Public supply tenders too late admits the Commission

In many cases, the present system for publicizing contract notices in the Community does not allow tenderers sufficient time to submit their bids or applications. This is mainly because of the delays in transmitting notices to the Office for Official Publications in Luxembourg and the time taken to distribute the S Supplement to the Official Journal. To speed things up the Commission is again to press for the contracting authorities to send their notices to the Luxembourg Official Publications Office by telex or telegram. The S Supplement is to be distributed quicker; eventually it should be available via the Euronet

network. If necessary the Commission will also propose that the present rules on publication of contracts be amended.

WQ 562 281 by Michael Welsh (Dem/UK)

Unfit frozen foods

On the basis of the information available to the Commission, there is at present no technically reliable system for prompt identification of products which have undergone unacceptable increase in storage temperature.

It is for the national foodstuffs inspection authorities to ensure that any products which have become unfit for human consumption as a result of an interruption in the refrigeration process are withdrawn from the market.

An informal warning system set up by the Commission and the Member States in 1979 quickly notifies the competent authorities of any possibility of intra-Community trade in such products.

WQ 547/81 by Vera Squarcialupi (Com/It)

EIB loans to Northern Ireland £128.2 million

During the period 1 January 1973 to 30 June 1981, the European Investment Bank lent the equivalent of £128.2 million to Northern Ireland as follows:—

Individual loans	£ million
1974: Short Brothers & Harland Ltd aircraft construction facilities in Belfast	2.5
1977: Extension and modernisation of telecommunications system	128.5
1979: Construction of first stage of Kilroot power station (loan with ERDF 3% interest subsidy)	33.3
Improvements to road network, mainly in Belfast and Londonderry areas	15.0
Extension and modernisation of Michelin (Belfast) Ltd tyre factories at Belfast	4.0
1980: Further development of telecommunications network	41.0
Second loan for Michelin (Belfast) Ltd tyre factories project	8.0

1981: Improvements to the road network — second loan 5.0
127.3

Four credits totalling £900,000 were provided for industrial investments from funds made available by the EIB under an arrangement with the UK Government whereby the Department of Commerce in Northern Ireland and equivalent authorities in England, Scotland and Wales act as the EIB's agents in lending for small and medium-scale ventures in assisted areas, and under a scheme with similar aims operated through the International and Commercial Finance Corporation Ltd.

WQ 585/81 by Rev Ian Paisley (DUP/UK)

Large firms

Since 1970, the Commission has carried out a wide range of studies on the development of industrial concentration in the Community. The findings of these studies indicate that between 1962 and 1972 the degree of concentration increased at an ever greater speed each year in almost all countries and all industries. Since 1973 the level of concentration in the different industries has remained basically stable, particularly in those where it is already high. The annual Reports on Competition Policy, of which ten have been published to date, contain further information on the nature of these studies and of their main findings.

According to estimates based on work still in progress, it would seem that, as a proportion of total gross output sold, total sales by the 100 largest companies in the European Economic Community rose from 24% in 1968 to 37% in 1973 and fluctuated around 44% between 1974 and 1978.

WQ 654/80 by Barry Seal (Soc/UK)

No assurance on disposal of surpluses within EEC

Asked whether it would draw up proposals to ensure that agricultural surpluses not used for food aid programmes be disposed of entirely within the Community, the Commission has replied that it cannot do so on grounds of cost. Although, it says, it will continue to keep in mind a fair balance between disposal on the Community's own market and export, "for the great majority of products it is substantially cheaper for the Community's budget to dispose of surplus production in export markets

and it is for this reason that the Commission cannot give the assurance requested by the Honourable Member”.

WQ 575/81 by Win Griffiths (Soc/UK)

Training for dangerous load drivers

Of the Ten only France and Germany have made it obligatory for drivers of heavy-duty vehicles to receive training in the transport of dangerous loads. Although the Commission accepts the need for training of this type to be standardised throughout Europe and hopes to take action as soon as possible its transport officials are too busy with other work at present.

WQ 591/81 by Horst Seefeld (Soc/Ger)

Unemployment benefit when abroad

One of the basic requirements for entitlement to employment benefit under national legislation is that the unemployed person must be available to the local employment services.

Under EEC Regulations a person who has become unemployed in one Member State, in circumstances entitling him to receive unemployment benefit of that Member State, may go to another Member State in search of employment after having been registered in the first Member State and remained available to that State's employment services for a period of four weeks. He will need also to

register with the employment services of the other Member States to which he goes in search of employment and, provided he does so, will continue to receive the unemployed benefit of the first Member State for a period not exceeding three months, despite the fact that he is not available to the employment service of that Member State.

The Commission is currently re-examining this three month limit rule. Although in exceptional cases this period may be extended by the competent authorities of the first Member State, consideration is being given to a more general relaxation of the rule, taking advantage of provisions in the national legislation allowing resumption of entitlement following periods abroad.

WQ 590/81 by William Newton Dunn (Dem/UK)

NEDC Report under study

An NEDC Report which includes figures showing high UK duty and high prices on heavy fuel oil and other oil products compared with those in other Community countries is currently being studied by Commission departments.

WQ 517/81 by Miss Joyce Quin (Soc/UK)

Applying Treaty to air transport

As part of a Community transport policy, the Commission aims to apply the principles of the EEC Treaty to air

transport in the Community. The Commission is therefore studying all the economic, political, administrative, social and regional aspects of operating air services within the Community with a view to establishing optimum conditions of competition and service in Community airspace. It will inform Parliament of the findings of its studies and of its conclusions in due course.

WQ 129/81 by Robert Moreland (Dem/UK)

Food stocks not high

The volume of public intervention stocks at end-June 1981 was approximately as follows:—

	'000 tonnes	no of days of consumption
Common wheat	3,228	29
Barley	451	5
Rye	299	36
Durum wheat	182	16
Skimmed milk powder	255	46
Butter	23	5
Beef (Bone-in equivalent)	228	13

The Commission does not have detailed figures of the stocks in private hands, but the private storage aided stock of butter at end-June was about 156,000 tonnes and the private storage aided stock of pigmeat was about 21,000 tonnes.

The public intervention stocks of the Community are primarily designed to ensure the efficient working of the market organizations in the interests of producers and consumers. They would, however, play some role in feeding the population in a time of crisis.

WQ 427/81 by Isidor Früh (EPP/Ger)

Committee dates

Held at Parliament's Brussels offices (unless otherwise indicated). This list is provisional.

Budget	19 Oct-21 Oct
Ext	19 Oct-20 Oct
Legal	19 Oct-20 Oct
Region	19 Oct-20 Oct
Env	19 Oct-20 Oct
Pol	19 Oct-20 Oct
Youth (1)	20 Oct-21 Oct
Agric	20 Oct-21 Oct
Econ	20 Oct-21 Oct
Energy	20 Oct-21 Oct
Soc	20 Oct-21 Oct
Dev	20 Oct-21 Oct
Rules	21 Oct
Agric	26 Oct-27 Oct
Ext	26 Oct-27 Oct
Legal	26 Oct-27 Oct
Control	26 Oct-27 Oct
Econ	27 Oct-28 Oct

Energy	27 Oct-28 Oct
Trans	27 Oct-28 Oct
Env	27 Oct-28 Oct
Control	9 Nov-10 Nov
Ext	9 Nov-10 Nov
Soc	9 Nov-10 Nov
Region	9 Nov-10 Nov
Env	9 Nov-10 Nov
Dev	9 Nov-10 Nov
Rules	9 Nov-10 Nov
Agric	10 Nov-11 Nov
Econ	10 Nov-11 Nov
Energy	10 Nov-11 Nov
Legal	10 Nov-11 Nov
Youth	10 Nov-11 Nov
Control	23 Nov-24 Nov
Dev	23 Nov-24 Nov
Econ	23 Nov-25 Nov
Agric	24 Nov-26 Nov
Legal	24 Nov-25 Nov
Youth	24 Nov-25 Nov
Budget	25 Nov
Energy	25 Nov-26 Nov
Social	25 Nov-26 Nov

Region	25 Nov-26 Nov
Env	25 Nov-26 Nov
Rules	25 Nov-26 Nov
Ext	26 Nov-27 Nov
Trans (2)	26 Nov-27 Nov
Budget	30 Nov-2 Dec
Spain (Cortes) (3)	30 Nov-1 Dec
Youth	1 Dec-2 Dec
Rules	1 Dec-2 Dec
Energy	2 Dec-3 Dec
Ext	2 Dec-3 Dec
Legal	2 Dec-3 Dec
Econ	2 Dec-4 Dec
Pol (3)	2 Dec-4 Dec
Budget	3 Dec-4 Dec
Social	3 Dec-4 Dec
Trans	3 Dec-4 Dec
Env	3 Dec-4 Dec
Budget	7 Dec-9 Dec
Rules	21 Dec-22 Dec

- (1) Sorrento
- (2) Athens
- (3) London