



A Tale of Three Cities

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By holding European elections in 1979 the Community achieved a major constitutional objective of the Rome Treaty. Will 1980 see progress towards an important parallel move in finding a seat for the Community institutions, or at least rationalising the places of work?

Article 216 of the Treaty provides that "the seat of the Community's institutions shall be fixed by mutual agreement between the Governments". No mutual agreement has been reached; it has not been attempted. Three provisional "places of work" exist — Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. The Members and staff of two of the five institutions — the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors are based in Luxembourg. The secretariat of the Council of Ministers is in Brussels, though for three months of the year the Council meets in Luxembourg. The Commission also has its headquarters in Brussels, though about a quarter of its 8,500 staff work in Luxembourg. Only Parliament is torn between all three cities: its headquarters and the overwhelming majority of its staff are in Luxembourg, its committees almost always meet in Brussels, while its plenary sessions are held, at least at present, in Strasbourg.

Although the Treaty provision to fix "the seat" of the institutions has never been implemented, a 1958 agreement between the governments specified that "the Assembly shall meet in Strasbourg". A subsequent 1965 agreement confirmed that the secretariat of Parliament should remain in Luxembourg.

Divided

By 1973, the year when Britain joined the Community, occasional meetings of the 142-Member Parliament of the Six had been held in Luxembourg. This practice was extended that year when the Luxembourg authorities opened a new building with a chamber able to seat the 198 Members from the Nine, and from then until the European elections in June 1979 Parliament's monthly plenary sessions were divided almost equally between Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

With the further increase of membership to 410 it was necessary for all plenary meetings to be in Strasbourg, although the Luxembourg authorities have been building a new, bigger chamber, now virtually complete. On February 11 this year the French government, the city of Strasbourg and the department of Bas Rhin signed an agreement aimed at underlining and developing Strasbourg's European role. The French Government will finance improvements to air and other links between the city and European capitals — notably covering any deficit on a new London-Strasbourg service — and other improvements in facilities in Strasbourg.

President Giscard d'Estaing commented that there was "a convergence of interests" regarding Parliament and no

rivalry between Strasbourg and Luxembourg. "Strasbourg must be the seat of the deliberations. Luxembourg is the seat of some of its means of work", he said.

Two days later Parliament's Bureau decided that all remaining plenary sittings this year should be held in Strasbourg. This decision invoked strong criticism from the Luxembourg Government, which "deplores the decision" which "upsets the balance of the arrangements which govern the establishment of the provisional places of work. . ."

Parliament's own staff are unhappy too. Of the 1900 employees in Luxembourg some 800 spend up to five days in Strasbourg each month, while at other times smaller numbers travel to Brussels to service committee meetings there. Following the Bureau's decision in favour of Strasbourg the staff are to vote whether they will refuse to go there after July 1.

High Costs

Members too are restive, concerned not only for the effects on Parliament's efficiency but with the cost to the taxpayer. In 1978 it was calculated that the result of working in three cities cost £6.5 million a year, or 11.6 per cent of the parliamentary budget. These included wages and other costs incurred for the 9.8 per cent of the staff whose employment directly resulted from the three-city operations; another 5 per cent were employed in the management of buildings in the three cities.

This year costs will be even higher, possibly double the 1978 level. The rejected draft budget provided for expenditure on buildings of £12 million. Of the £8.1 m. earmarked for rents, £1.07 m. was for offices in Brussels, £1.48 m. for some 58 sitting days in Strasbourg (or over £25,000 a day) and £4.57 m. for offices in Luxembourg. Last summer the Court of Auditors argued that it would be more economical for the Community institutions to buy rather than to rent buildings. But is that possible in what are still only "provisional places of work"?

In a report to Parliament last December, Robert Jackson (Dem/UK), rapporteur for the parliamentary budget for 1980, commented: "Parliament could not accept the view taken by Council that decisions governing the Parliament's working places should be taken by Member States, on the basis of a common agreement. Your rapporteur fully accepts that the Treaty gives to the Member States the right and the obligation to determine the seat of the institutions. However, as regards its Rules of Procedure and the working conditions, and consequently the working places of the European Parliament, Parliament itself is sovereign."

Work in Progress

Proposals sent to Committees for Opinion or Advice

DOCUMENT	SUBJECT	Main Cttee	Other Cttee
COM(80)7 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a Regulation on trade arrangements between Rhodesia and the EEC	Dev.	Agric.
COM(80)653 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Regulation on the common organization of the wine market	Agric.	Budget
COM(79)717 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Regulation on tariff quotas for certain wines in Tunisia	Ext.	Agric. Dev.
COM(79)724 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Regulation on peas and field beans used in the feeding of animals	Agric.	Budget
COM(79)737 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a Directive on income tax with respect to freedom of movement for workers within the EEC	Social	Econ.
COM(79)740 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Regulation on fruit juices and similar products	Env.	Agric.
COM(79)750 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Regulation on the common organization of the market in beef and veal	Agric.	Budget
COM(79)761 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Regulation on certain types of citrus fruit originating in Spain	Ext.	Agric. Budget
COM(79)599 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a decision on the Association of the Overseas Countries & Territories with the EEC	Dev.	Ext. Agric. Econ.
COM(79)762 fin	Proposals from the Commission for: a) a Decision on aid to refugees in the countries of the Near East b) a Regulation on the supply of sugar to UNWRA as food aid	Dev.	Budget Agric.
COM(79)772 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a Directive on the laws of the Member States relating to rear-view mirrors for two or three-wheeled motor vehicles	Econ.	Transport Env.
COM(79)776 fin	Proposal from the Commission on an amending Regulation on tariff quotas for certain wines in Portugal	Ext.	Agric.
COM(79)787 fin	Proposals from the Commission for: a) a Directive on the fuel consumption of motor vehicles b) a Directive on the engine power of motor vehicles	Econ.	
COM(79)786 fin	Proposals from the Commission for: a) a directive on roll-over protective structures (ROPS) for certain construction plant b) a directive on falling-object protective structures (FOPS) for certain construction plant	Econ.	Env.
COM(80)2 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Regulation on the temporary suspension of aids for the purchase of dairy cows and of heifers intended for milk production	Agric.	
COM(79)780 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Directive on the medical examination of personnel engaged in the production of meat products	Env.	
COM(79)784 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending Directive on the medical examination of personnel engaged in the production of poultrymeat	Env.	
COM(80)22 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a regulation on transitional measures until the entry into force of the second Convention of Lomé	Dev.	
COM(80)25 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a regulation on certain fish stocks and the fixing of catches in 1980 available to the Community	Agric.	
COM(79)794 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a directive on VAT and excise duty procedure applicable to the stores of vessels, aircraft and international trains	Econ.	
COM(79)792 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a directive on restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations	Env.	
COM(79)741 fin	Proposals from the Commission for: a) a draft directive on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods by inland waterways	Trans.	Budget
COM(79)743 fin	b) a draft directive on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods by rail		
COM(79)785 fin	Proposal from the Commission for a regulation on zootechnical standards applicable to breeding animals of the porcine species	Agric.	
COM(79)793 fin	Proposal from the Commission on research development in biomolecular engineering	Energy	Budget, Env. & Econ.
COM(79)675 fin	Proposal from the Council for a regulation on the conclusion of the Transitional Protocol between the EEC and the Republic of Cyprus	Ext.	Agric.
COM(79)778 fin	Proposal from the Commission for an amending directive on the laws of the Member States relating to textile names	Legal	Econ.

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. In January Parliament voted on 17 proposals from the Commission. Reporting back in February, the Commission said:

1. In eleven cases Parliament adopted Committee reports (working document No. given in brackets) which made no amendments to Commission proposals:

- Report by Mr Combe on a directive on health problems affecting trade in fresh poultrymeat (619/79);
- Report by Mrs Cresson on a regulation concerning classical swine fever (571/79);
- Report by Mrs Cresson on a directive concerning certain derogations in connection with swine fever (620/79);
- Report by Mr Nielsen on a directive concerning tuberculosis and brucellosis (621/79);
- Report by Mr Poniatowski on a regulation concerning arrangements for trade between Southern Rhodesia and the EEC (673/79);

- Report by Mr Almirante on two proposals concerning wine of fresh grapes and liqueur wine originating in Cyprus (568/79);
 - Report by Mrs Carettoni-Romagnoli on the CCT in respect of certain agricultural products originating in Turkey (562/79);
 - Report by Mr Lemmer on a directive on procedures for the exportation of goods (547/79);
 - Report by Mr Seeler on the CCT in respect of certain types of fish (643/79);
 - Report by Mrs Agnelli on imports of adult bovine animals from Yugoslavia (622/79);
 - Report by Mr Giummarra on frozen beef and veal (569/79);
2. In one case Parliament, through the procedure without report, approved Commission proposals without amendment. This was a proposal concerning the processing of agricultural products from the ACP or OCT.
3. In three cases Parliament adopted reports which proposed amendments which the Commission accepted:
- Report by Mr Lega on a regulation

amending the Staff Regulations as regards family and social policy and the pension scheme (584/79);

- Report by Mr Ghergo on a five-year research plan on radiation protection (552/79);
 - Report by Mr Combe on a proposal concerning cocoa and chocolate products intended for human consumption (618/79);
4. In the case of two reports the Commission was unable to accept the Parliament's amendments:
- Report by Mr Luster on a proposal concerning the trade arrangements applicable in respect of certain goods derived from processing agricultural products (590/79);
 - Report by Mr Lega on the amendment of the Staff Regulations as regards the adjustment of basic salary (584/79);
5. In January and February, following requests by Parliament, the Commission granted aid to storm victims in Messina, made proposals on financial aid and food for Afghan refugees and granted emergency aid for Mauritius, following hurricane *Claudette*.

Replies to Members' Questions

Cross-border schemes in Ireland – *Ian Paisley (Ind/UK)*

The Community is to finance at an estimated cost of 8 m. EUA the arterial drainage of agricultural land on either side of the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

Tree disease – *Charles-Emile Loo (Soc/F)*

The Community is funding research into Dutch elm disease and the disease of the cyprus tree. This will probably also provide knowledge about the disease attacking plane trees in the Mediterranean area.

Textile redundancy aid – *Barry Seal (Soc/UK) et al.*

The Social Fund can be used to aid employees made redundant in the textile industry to be retrained for other jobs or other jobs in the textile industry which are not threatened by low-priced imports. Regular consultations are taking place with Comitextil and the European Clothing Manufacturers Association.

Sugar surpluses – *William Newton-Dunn (Dem/UK)*

Despite the transfer to the Development Chapter the Community is not to finance the export of sugar surpluses through the European Development Fund but through a general budget section.

PQ's more than doubled – *John Marshall (Dem/UK)*

A speed-up in the time taken to answer written questions is promised by the Commission. During the Autumn of 1979 just under a quarter were answered within a month. Of about a thousand questions asked, some four hundred had been answered by the end of the year. Since the European elections the number of questions has more than doubled – but so has the number of MEP's, from 198 to 410.

Month PQ Rec'd	1978	1979
July (17-end)	42	74
August	31	63
September	73	154
October	98	301
November	71	244
December	78	166

The Commission adds that they are getting longer, many comprising numerous separate points and requiring lengthy and often costly research.

One-man Price Commission – *Victor Michel (EPP/Bel)*

Q: How many 'A' officials in the Commission's Environment and Consumer Protection Service are concerned with protection in regard to prices?

A: One 'A' official is engaged part-time in monitoring prices in general.

Portugal's car industry – *Horst Seefeld (Soc/Ger)*

Portugal has plans for restructuring its motor industry prior to joining the Community which include import quotas for vehicles. The Commission and Council are involved in negotiations with Portugal regarding this.

Aid for farm accounts and computers – *David Curry (Dem/UK)*

Farm management is an activity which falls within the normal competence of advisory services or private institutes in Member States. The Commission has no function with regard to this activity. Nevertheless, in the interest of promoting better farm management, the Community grants a special subsidy for the keeping of farm accounts in the control of Council Directive 72/159/EEC Art. 11. Indirectly such a subsidy may favourably influence the development of on-farm computers.

What held up Lomé II – *Colette Flesch (Lib/Lux)*

Only one subject posed a really major problem and delayed progress in the final round of negotiations for Lomé II: this was the clause on non-discrimination among Member States where investment is concerned. The difficulties were attributable to the relatively loose wording of the negotiated texts as regards the machinery for implementing the clause.

Replies to Members' Questions

Greek unions, the law and the EEC – Victor Michel (EPP/Bel)

By signing the Treaty of Accession writes the Commission, Greece has undertaken to comply not only with the original Treaties and secondary legislation, but also with the general legal principles recognised in the Member States, which, according to the settled interpretation of the Court of Justice, form an integral part of Community law. As regards trades union freedom the Commission states that it "has no immediate plans to adapt the Member States' existing national laws on trade union freedom". This, it says in no way detracts from applicant States' duty to adjust their laws to the *acquis communautaire*, which stipulates, *inter alia*,

respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the legal orders of the present Member States, the importance of which was stressed in the European Council's declaration on democracy and the Commission Opinion of 23 May 1979 on the application for accession to the European communities by the Hellenic Republic. Although analysing Greek laws is not necessarily a decisive method of establishing beyond doubt whether there is a violation of the principles of freedom of association, "one may wonder, states the Commission", "whether the binding nature of arbitration, as laid down in Article 9 *et seq.* of Law 3239/55, does not constitute an infringement of the very substance of the right to strike, as

enshrined in the fundamental rights and principles recognised in the present Member States."

Save it – Karl Fuchs (EPP/Ger)

The maximum potential energy saving on an electric oven could be 40%, and on other appliances up to 50%. Standardisation, the Commission estimates, could reduce the total energy consumption of household appliances from 5% to 1% of gross Community consumption.

Instant Coffee – Ernst Muller-Hermann (EPP/Ger)

The transfer of instant coffee manufacture to developing countries which produce coffee is consistent with Community development policy. The Commission is sure that the Community industry is well able to compete with Brazilian and other manufacturers.

Future Committee Meetings

Held at Parliament's Brussels offices at 3, Boulevard de l'Empereur (unless otherwise indicated). This list is provisional.

Agric	31 March	–	1 April
Social(1)	"	–	"
Control	"	–	"
Pol(2)	"	–	"
Rules	1 April		
Dev(3)	1 April	–	2 April
Legal	"	–	"
Control	21 April	–	22 April
Energy	"	–	"
Dev	"	–	"
Women(2)	"	–	"
Youth	22 April	–	23 April
Rules	"	–	"
Pol	"	–	"
Agric(2)	22 April	–	24 April
Econ	23 April	–	24 April
Legal	"	–	"
Social	"	–	"
Ext(2)	24 April	–	25 April
Reg	"	–	"
Trans	"	–	"
Env	"	–	"

Budget(2)	28 April	–	29 April
Legal	"	–	"
Dev	"	–	"
Control	29 April	–	30 April
Women	"	–	"
Ext(2)	30 April		
Control(2)	27 May	–	28 May
Econ	"	–	"
Legal(5)	"	–	"
Reg	27 May	–	28 May
Rules	"	–	"
Budgets(2)	28 May	–	29 May
Ext	"	–	"
Social	"	–	"
Women	"	–	"
Trans	29 May	–	30 May
Env	"	–	"
Youth	"	–	"
Pol(2)	"	–	"
Energy	2 June	–	3 June
Control	3 June	–	4 June
Legal	"	–	"
Rules	"	–	"
Agric(2)	"	–	"
Budgets(1)	4 June	–	5 June
Region	"	–	"
Dev	"	–	"

Econ	5 June	–	6 June
Ext(4)	"	–	"
Trans(1)	"	–	"
Women	"	–	"
Env	23 June	–	24 June
Rules	"	–	"
Women	"	–	"
Pol(2)	"	–	"
Budgets(1)	24 June	–	25 June
Ext(2)	"	–	"
Soc	"	–	"
Region	"	–	"
Control	25 June	–	26 June
Econ	"	–	"
Youth	"	–	"
Dev(1)	"	–	"
Agric(2)	26 June	–	27 June
Energy	"	–	"
Legal	"	–	"
Trans	"	–	"

- (1) 2, rue Ravenstein, Brussels
- (2) Palais d'Egmont, Brussels
- (3) Palais de Congres, Brussels
- (4) Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg
- (5) Robert Schuman Blg., Luxembourg

Farm Prices and the 1980 Budget

Parliament is to take steps to accelerate the procedure for adoption of the 1980 budget and at the same time eliminate the need for a supplementary budget to provide finance for agricultural spending following the annual farm price review. A special extraordinary plenary session to be held in Strasbourg from 24–26 March will be entirely devoted to considering

the 1980–81 farm prices. This, according to the Budgets Committee Chairman Erwin Lange (Soc/Ger), should allow the Council of Ministers to reach agreement on those prices at the end of March and include the resulting expenditure forecasts in a new budget draft which it could present to Parliament during the April plenary session. The first and second readings could then be taken during the session in May. This would be the first time that farm spending has been fully included in the main annual budget – something which Parliament has been

advocating for several years.

Introducing Diane

"A pioneering achievement". This was how Commission President Roy Jenkins saw the first Community-wide information network which Parliament's President Simone Veil inaugurated on 13 February 1980 during the Strasbourg plenary session. The network provides access to over 150 data bases and is accessible through the national telecommunications systems.