COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÉENNES • KOMMISSION DER EUROPÄISCHEN GEMEINSCHAFTEN • COMMISSIONE DELLE COMUNITÀ EUROPEE • COMMISSIE VAN DE EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAPPEN • COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

IP(70)83

GROUPE DU PORTE-PAROLE
SPRECHERGRUPPE
GRUPPO DEL PORTAVOCE
BUREAU VAN DE WOORDVOERDER
SPOKESMAN'S GROUP

INFORMATION A LA PRESSE • MITTEILUNG AN DIE PRESSE • INFORMAZIONE ALLA STAMPA • MEDEDELING AAN DE PERS • PRESS RELEASE

22 May 1970

Embargo: Saturday, 23 May 1970
15.00 hrs.

Summary of the address by M. Jean-François Deniau to the 52ème Congrès national de la Mutualité, de la Coopération et du Crédit agricoles (52nd National Congress of Agricultural Friendly Societies, Co-operatives and Credit) in Vichy on Saturday, 23 May 1970

On Saturday, 23 May M. Jean-François Deniau, a member of the Commission of the European Communities, spoke in Vichy to the 52ème Congrès national de la Mutualité, de la Coopération et du Crédit agricoles.

M. Deniau referred to certain of the causes of malaise among the agricultural population and pointed out that the aim of the Commission of the European Communities in the proposals it had submitted to the Council of Ministers was to ensure that farmers enjoyed a fair income and living conditions more in line with those enjoyed in other occupations.

He recalled that since November 1969 a new scale of farm prices had been proposed which would improve outlets for farm products and lessen the financial burden. Although the question of surpluses had sometimes been overstated, up to the point of giving the impression that it was the only problem of present-day agriculture or, again, that it was a specifically European problem, better control over markets or adaptation to requirements was none the less necessary. Annual outlay in the Community on market support alone could be put at 13 000 million new French francs. It should be possible to envisage putting these sums progressively to better use in an endeavour to modernize the structures of production.

M. Deniau pointed to the developments in the recent Commission proposals compared with the 1968 memorandum on the reform of agriculture and stressed in particular the flexibility of the proposed measures and the concept of gradual implementation of the reforms envisaged. It would doubtless be necessary to carry flexibility even further, for everything which is too rigid is in danger of

turning out to be economically unsound or inapplicable in human terms. The road to be taken was that of development contracts linking aid from the State with undertakings to be fulfilled by the beneficiaries. Since general regulations or absolute criteria were unlikely to be appropriate, it was the agricultural friendly societies, co-operatives and credit institutions which could play a new and determining role in responsibility for and administration of operations on these lines.

Speaking of the coming negotiations on enlargement, M. Deniau stressed that the possibilities they could offer to producers in continental Europe, and in particular to French farmers, depended essentially on two conditions:

(a) First, acceptance by Great Britain of the basic rules of the common agricultural policy and of the solidarity which this involved in various fields;

(b) But also, the improvement of France's own agriculture, especially as regards the marketing of products. Although in certain cases the British market offered very interesting outlets, it should not be forgotten that British farming, which was very modern and highly competitive, could also step up its own production.

In conclusion, M. Deniau pointed out that when speaking of agriculture we had, of course, to think of the products but also of the farmers, that is to say of the human beings involved. Something which may be theoretically perfect can be in danger of proving unacceptable in practice and therefore useless. The true problem was to facilitate choices. But for there to be a choice the possibility of a real option must exist. It was therefore necessary to act simultaneously on the planes of industrialization and of regional policy - i.e. to create jobs outside agriculture - while taking steps to modernize agriculture itself.

In this connection, it was not reasonable to condemn a priori this or that form of farming, particularly the family farm. What was important was to associate, in the pursuit of certain objectives, guarantees and future prospects by giving new life to the concept of responsibility.
