

European Parliament Information

The Sittings

November 1978



THE SITTINGS

STRASBOURG, 13th – 17th NOVEMBER 1978

THE WEEK

The politics of EMS

The European Monetary System (EMS) was the chief talking point of the European Parliament's session in Strasbourg this week.

The drift of the debate on Thursday was one of cautious support – Lord Ardwick suggested that the UK Government might go along with it in due course – coupled with comments on the conditions under which it would be acceptable.

There was also clear recognition that EMS was not merely a technical device to keep exchange rates stable, but had major political import too. However, though EMS was a move towards greater monetary integration, it was not to be confused with EMU – the economic implications of which pointed unambiguously towards federalism.

The other highlight was Council President Hans-Dietrich Genscher's review of political cooperation between the Nine over the last twelve months. 'When we speak with one voice, he said, the world listens.' On Friday, he said, the Nine would urge their OECD colleagues (meeting in Bonn) to accept a common code of conduct for companies operating in South Africa.

On the home front, the ministers for home affairs had now prepared an anti-terrorism agreement for signature and ratification.

Parliament's next session will be in Luxembourg from 11th to 15th December. The second reading of the budget for 1979 will be the main business.

Monday evening (5.05 p.m. to 6.15 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9.40 p.m.)

Parliament's business this evening, which included Mr Lezzi's report on food aid – the EP expressed some misgivings at the management procedures used – and debates on EC-Yugoslavia relations and the export earnings of ACP copper producers, was set aside from 6.15 p.m. to 7 p.m. for an address to the House by Portuguese President Ramalho Eanes. Referring to the opening in October of negotiations for Portugal's accession to the Community, President Eanes said his country's application had been made on the basis of the historical and cultural considerations which made Portugal an integral part of Europe. Membership, he thought, would not mean an end to Portugal's national identity, but merely an adaptation to 'the new European dimension'.

Tuesday morning (10 a.m. to 1.15 p.m.)

First item on Parliament's agenda this morning was nuclear safety: specifically, the Commission's 6m pounds proposals for research into the safety of light water reactors. Speakers used the debate to discuss the wider aspects of nuclear energy, particularly the need to convince public opinion that nuclear power was not only essential but safe.

The House then went on to discuss the plight of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union, all speakers condemning the way minorities are being persecuted there.

Tuesday evening (3.05 p.m. to 9.55 p.m.)

Parliament this afternoon listened to a statement by Commissioner Davignon on the Community's steel crisis. The Commission's aim was to restructure the industry: in the meantime, Community help had been given to more than half of all steelworkers made redundant, and 15,000 new jobs had been created. There was also a Commission statement on the recent Tripartite Conference between the EC, governments and the two sides of industry: Vice-President Vredeling admitted that the results had not lived up to expectations. Other business: debates on public health research programmes and protecting groundwater from pollution.

Wednesday morning (10.15 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. to 2.20 p.m.)

Political cooperation was the theme of this morning's three and a half hours debate. German Foreign Minister and President of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Nine Mr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, told the House that political cooperation amongst the Nine had continued to make progress. He referred particularly to progress on enlargement, the Euro-Arab dialogue, relations with ASEAN and a joint stand on terrorism. Speakers in the debate appeared generally unconvinced: there was particular concern about southern Africa and the situation in Iran.

Wednesday evening (3 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.)

The main talking point in this evening's debates was a series of Commission documents now before the Council concerning education, a field in which the Community's responsibility is somewhat limited. The documents concerned the teaching of languages in EC schools, the study of the Community, higher education pursued in other Member States and the education of young women up to 18. There was a general welcome for these papers which the Education Ministers are to consider on 27th November.

Thursday morning (9.35 a.m. to 11.20 a.m.)

Among the various items considered this morning was a Commission proposal to pay out some 3.9m EUA (2.6m pounds) over the next three years as a subsidy to firms which degerm maize to produce corn oil. This is a high quality product of which there is a shortage at present. Mr Howell, agriculture committee spokesman, asked the House to reject this proposal. He was supported in this view by Mr Klinker, who said it would simply be a subsidy to the industry and consumers, and Mr Inchauspé. But what really disturbed Mr Howell was the Commission's 'inflexibility'. The Commission, he insisted, must take note of Parliament's opinions. Mr Burke replied that there were political arguments in favour of the proposal which, he said, would in any case cost only a minimal amount of money. Mr Howell and his colleagues remained unconvinced.

Thursday evening (3 p.m. to 8.35 p.m.)

In a four-hour debate this afternoon Parliament discussed the planned European Monetary System (EMS). There was virtually universal support for the principle

of what Sir Brandon Rhys Williams called 'a civilised multi-currency system', although the question of British participation – either now or later – gave rise to some disagreement. Characteristic of the entire debate, however, was the general recognition that EMS – as a first step towards EMU – was a political and not just technical move.

Friday morning (9 a.m. to 9.40 a.m.)

The two main points raised in this morning's debates concerned: 1) the hardship caused in some areas of the UK because of the tariffs on fisheries products, and 2) difficulties that the enlargement of the Community is liable to throw up for those Mediterranean countries with which the Community has preferential agreements. On the first point Mr Gundelach said that these tariffs would be reviewed once the current Geneva negotiations were completed, and on the second point he assured the House that the Commission was aware of the problem and was endeavouring to devise an appropriate solution.

MONDAY 13th November 1978

Food Aid

Mr Lezzi's report on the Commission's proposals (Doc. 237/78) for managing food aid (Doc. 414/78).

At present, food aid management is in the hands of the Council. Delays occur and EC commitments go unfulfilled. 82 per cent of the 1976 food aid was not supplied until 1977, while 60 per cent of the 1977 programme had to wait till 1978.

The Commission is proposing it should look after most of the management side itself, especially as the Treaty makes it responsible for executing the budget anyway. Mr Pietro Lezzi (It, S) (development and cooperation committee rapporteur) agreed but was concerned by a proviso whereby responsibility for aid management would, in the event of disagreement, revert to the Council.

For the budgets committee, Mr James Scott-Hopkins (UK, EC) questioned the classification of food aid as expenditure necessarily resulting from the Treaty of Rome. He feared that to leave it to the Council – as the Commission proposes – to decide as to the volume of aid to be given, would justify such a classification. He wanted the proposal amended so as to safeguard the powers of the budgetary authority.

In the ensuing debate there was unanimous support for the idea of the Community's having a coherent food aid policy geared to the real needs of the world's poorest peoples and not simply reflecting the state of disposable surpluses on the EC's agricultural market.

Replying to the debate, Mr Cheysson could not accept Parliament's argument about the classification of expenditure: this provoked comment from both Mr Aigner and Mr Scott-Hopkins, but said he shared the wish expressed by all speakers to see the Community enter on a multiannual, rolling programme for food aid.

EC trade with Yugoslavia

Mr De Clercq's report (Doc. 408/78)

Yugoslavia has a deficit in its trade with the Community. And it is growing (from some 220m pounds in 1968 to an estimated 1,500m pounds in 1977).

Which underlines the point of negotiations now in progress between the EC and Yugoslavia for the renewal of an agreement which expired on 30 September 1978.

Mr Paul De Clercq (Be, L), for Parliament's committee on external economic relations, expressed the hope that the present negotiations would soon be brought to a successful conclusion. Mr De Clercq, in common with other speakers in this brief debate, stressed the need for much better arrangements with Yugoslavia than those prevailing at present.

Mr Bob Edwards (UK, S) in particular appealed to the Commission to press the Council to think big in the negotiations with Yugoslavia, and not get caught up in petty considerations which bore no relation to the importance of the problem involved.

Replying to the debate Commission vice-president Wilhelm Haferkamp said he hoped that the Council meeting of 21 November would clear the way for real progress in the Community's negotiations with Yugoslavia

Export earnings of ACP copper producers

Mr Cheysson, replying to a question from Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Doc. 423/78), undertook to make proposals regarding the export earnings of ACP copper producers. He took Sir Brandon's point about the vulnerability of Zaire, Zambia and Papua New Guinea.

Address by President Eanes of Portugal

President Colombo welcomed the President of the Portuguese Republic, H.E. Antonio dos Santos Ramalho Eanes, to the European Parliament. Parliament had, he said, repeatedly declared its support for the enlargement of the Community, and its Members looked forward to the day they would be able to welcome their Portuguese colleagues.

President Eanes said that Portugal's membership in the Community would entail responsibility, but that responsibility would find its compensation in the privileges of membership. Membership did not mean the extinction of national differences, 'but continuous adaptation of national realities to the new European dimension.'

TUESDAY 14th November 1978

Thermal water reactor safety

Mr Veronesi's report (Doc. 411/78)

Mr Protogene Veronesi's (It, CA) motion asked Parliament to approve a Commission proposal on Community financial backing for research into thermal water reactor safety in the Member States. The cost of such a programme over the five years from mid-1978 to mid-1983 would be 8.8 million EUA (5,978,729 pounds).

There was support from all of Parliament's political groups for this proposal. While all speakers welcomed the specific aspects of the research being proposed – accidents involving coolant loss and functioning of the emergency core cooling systems, protection against gas cloud explosions, and escape of radioactivity into the atmosphere – the debate itself turned into something of a general discussion on the safety of nuclear power stations overall.

Mr Ron Brown (UK, S), for the environment committee, regretted that the proposed safety studies were so late in coming. However, Mr Gerhard Flämig (Ge), for the Socialists, pointed out that, to date, there had been no fatality in any light water reactor power station resulting from nuclear accident.

Mr Karl Fuchs (Ge, CD), Mr Paul de Clercq (Be, L), Lord Bessborough (UK, EC) and Mr Hector Rivierez (Fr, EPD) for their respective political groups, all touched on the need to convince the public that nuclear energy was safe.

Mr Tam Dalyell (UK, S) suggested that the Commission look into the question of storing nuclear waste in the Caithness area of Scotland.

Replying to the debate Commissioner Brunner agreed that it was essential that public opinion should be given a true picture of the nuclear energy situation. He hoped that the Commission's proposed safety research programme would go some way towards dispelling fears on this subject.

Persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union

Further to a motion agreed in Parliament on 11th May, the Political Affairs Committee has been monitoring the way human rights are being respected. For the committee, Mr Cornelis Berkhouwer (Du, L) tabled a motion strongly

condemning the Soviet Union for the way it is treating minorities, especially Jews.

Mr Berkhouwer's report had widespread support although some Members, Communists in particular, felt it wrong to concentrate solely on the Soviet Union when condemning human rights violations.

Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody (UK, S) and Mr Ronald Brown (UK, S), on the other hand argued that the Soviet Union's treatment of minorities sat ill with its status as a great and sophisticated nation. Lord St Oswald (UK, EC) argued that the Russian leaders were acting very like their Czarist predecessors in persecuting Jews, except that now the persecution was more racist than religious.

Lord St Oswald reminded the House that Articles 34 and 52 of the Soviet Basic Law or constitution were intended to guarantee equality before the law and freedom of conscience. He spoke of the 'sheer cynicism' with which these articles were disregarded and added that Christians and Moslems as well as Jews were being ill used by the Soviet authorities. Several other speakers, including Mr Prescott, Mr Normanton, Mr Covelli, Mr Sieglerschmidt, Mr Hamilton and Mr Bertrand spoke in similar vein.

Technical obstacles to trade

Mr Brunner, replying to Mr Nyborg's question (Doc. 445/78), said the Commission would be submitting proposals to further the freer trade objective on 22nd November.

QUESTION TIME

Questions to the Commission

Independent airlines (Mr John Corrie)

Commissioner Vouel said that it was the responsibility of Member States to decide which areas of their territory were to be served by air and which airline should serve them. The Commission could only take action on unfair competition by state airlines on the basis of a complaint.

Curtailing milk production (Mr James Scott-Hopkins)

The Commission would be submitting proposals to curtail milk production in the EC shortly, Mr Vouel said, and Parliament would be consulted. Mr Scott-Hopkins (UK, EC) said that the proposals, as he understood them, would do nothing to solve the problem of surpluses.

Soviet oil sales to the EC (Mr Tom Normanton)

There was no indication that oil from the USSR would account for 25 per cent of Community oil imports by 1985, Mr Brunner told the House. The EC was dependent on oil imports and would seek to obtain oil from as many sources as possible. However, the main aim had to remain reducing dependence on all oil imports.

Commission office in New Delhi (Sir Geoffrey de Freitas)

The Commission remained interested in establishing a representation in India, Mr Brunner said, but closing down an existing office would not make this any easier. He hoped funds would become available to open a New Delhi office at some time in the future.

Fast breeder reactor in Kalkar (Mr Jochen van Aerssen)

The SBR 300 fast breeder reactor project was a joint undertaking under the Euratom Treaty, Mr Brunner said, and design changes were the Community's responsibility. However, since the Commission had had no official notification of proposals on this subject made by North-Rhine Westphalia, he could not comment further. Mr Tam Dalyell (UK, S) suggested the project could be relocated in Caithness

Vote

See summary.

State of the steel industry

Viscount Davignon told Parliament this afternoon that he was asking the Council for the steel budget to be doubled, from 90m EUA to 180m EUA in the next steel year. The money would come from the customs duties on steel imports. He told Parliament that the Council accepted the need for the Community to have more funds at its disposal for helping the industry back to its feet but seemed hesitant about where the money was to come from.

Mr Davignon reminded the House that everyone in Europe seemed to be losing money on steel, at a rate of 1000 Belgian francs or 16 pounds for every ton of steel produced. At the same time productivity was improving. In 1975 many plants were taking over 17 man hours to produce one ton of steel. The best firms then were running at 6.7 man hours. Today the rate in the Benelux countries and Italy was 6.2, in Germany 7.5, in France 9.3 and over 10 in the United Kingdom.

At the same time, the Community had a steel production capacity of some 200 million tons. If this were used to the extent of 85 per cent, it would mean a production of 170 m tons. But the Community would be producing only around 132 million tons in 1978 (about four to four and a half more than in 1977: US production would be up 6 per cent and Japan down by 2 per cent). This would leave an excess capacity of approximately 20 m tons (taking account of expected increase in consumption), i.e. 100,000 fewer jobs by 1985.

The Commission's response had been to monitor production levels, hold prices and so create a breathing space in which the industry could be restructured. To come back to jobs, some 50 to 60 per cent of the 60,000 people left unemployed so far had received Community help.

Creating fresh jobs meant some 3000 EUA a time but as 15,000 new jobs had been created already Viscount Davignon did not think the challenge an impossible one.

Restructuring meant new processes and new investment, not only in Europe but elsewhere. Even in Japan the steel industry was reckoned to be in need of modernisation. And here the Community could help with investment capital. This also gave the Community a lever to see that investment made was in line with the Community's guidelines for steel.

Viscount Davignon then answered questions, adding that he would be coming back before Parliament for a further debate on steel in December. The questions touched on how well the Community was checking to see its policy was being pursued and two EMPs asked if the Commission had the power to get its policy implemented. The answer was that controls and checks were careful, frequent and widespread and that the Commission was looking to the Council for a decision on funds.

Use of Community ore resources

Mr Porcu's question (Doc. 292/78)

Mr Antoine Porcu (Fr, CA) wanted to know why the Community's ore resources – notably in the Lorraine region of France – were being underused, why mines were being closed and expensive imports of ore used in steel production instead.

Mr Davignon, for the Commission, pointed out that there were many new ore supplies in the world today. He found it difficult to accept Mr Porcu's claim that these imports were more expensive than domestic resources: he would analyse the figures. Assuming imports were, in fact, cheaper, it was only natural that the steel industry – itself in trouble – would wish to buy them to cut costs and remain competitive.

Tripartite Conference

Mr Vredeling's statement
CD motion (Doc. 443/78)

Mr Vredeling told the House that he had 'mixed feelings' about the outcome of this year's Tripartite Conference. Most speakers in the debate preferred to think of it as a failure – it had done nothing positive towards creating a single new job in the Community.

However, there was some recognition that the Commission's conference document – proposing work sharing, a shorter working week, earlier retirement, etc., as a means to increasing employment – was on the right lines.

Public health

Mr Ney's report (Doc. 406/78)

The Commission is proposing a second research and development programme to focus on (a) attempted suicide as a public health problem, (b) detection of tendency to thrombosis, (c) evaluation, understanding and substitution of impaired hearing, (d) criteria for perinatal monitoring and (e) common standards for quantitative electrocardiography. It is estimated that the programme would cost 2.79 m EUA (1.83m pounds) and last up to four years, depending on the research area, beginning on 1st January 1979.

Mr Camille Ney (Lu, CD), for the Parliament's public health committee, asked the House to endorse the Commission's proposals, subject to the election of the proposal's reference to cost. This, in the view of the budgets committee, should be laid down during the budgetary procedure.

There was general approval in the House for the proposals, although Mr Johannes Lamberts (Du, S) felt that the time for research was over, and action was now needed.

Mr Brunner, for the Commission, thanked the House for its support.

Protecting groundwater against pollution

Mrs Squarcialupi's report (Doc. 403/78)

Groundwater represents 70 per cent of available water resources in the Community and its protection is vital. The Commission wants to define ways of preventing, reducing or eliminating groundwater pollution caused by the discharge of dangerous substances.

Mrs Vera Squarcialupi (It, CA), for the environment committee, felt the Commission's proposals did not go far enough and called for considerable amendment.

Vice-President Natali said the Commission would look at the amendments sympathetically but he was concerned that the Council's reactions would be less than favourable.

Environmental R and D programme

Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti's report (Doc. 409/78)

Article 4 of the Council's decision on an environmental research programme (1976-1980) provides for a programme reappraisal in 1978. The Commission is accordingly proposing an increase in Community expenditure from 16 m EUA (10.9m pounds) to 20.8 m EUA (14.1m pounds) for research into: (a) exposure-effect relationships for pollutants and environmental chemicals; (b) environmental information management; (c) the reduction and prevention of pollutions and nuisances; and (d) protecting and improving the natural environment.

Mrs Maria Luisa Cassanmagnago Cerretti (It, CD) asked the House to approve the Commission's proposal, subject to some amendment.

Mr Brunner thanked the House for its support.

WEDNESDAY 15th November 1978

Political cooperation between the Nine

Hans-Dietrich Genscher's statement

Mr Genscher, German Foreign Minister and Council President, told Parliament today of the growing importance of political cooperation between the Member States, pointing out that this cooperation was a reminder to the world at large of the progress being made towards European unification.

Many of the other points he made were already familiar: the Nine's support for the Anglo-American plan for Rhodesia; their support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and their support for the UN initiative on Namibia. Mr Genscher trusted that UN observers would be present at the elections planned for 5th December there.

He suggested too that the prospects for the Euro-Arab dialogue were now better and told Parliament that he and his colleagues would be meeting with ASEAN foreign ministers next week in Brussels.

In the debate that followed EMPs expressed recognition of the achievements of political cooperation but felt that too little had been done in several vital areas of the world where the Community's influence could be brought to bear.

Chief amongst these were southern Africa, the Middle East and Iran.

More generally, there was a call for a greater 'institutionalization' of political cooperation, which was at present merely an offshoot of the regular Council of Ministers. Why not set up a special Secretariat to coordinate work - a sort of Community 'Foreign Office'?

QUESTION TIME

Questions to the Council: Mr Klaus von Dohnanyi replied.

The milk surplus (Mr James Scott-Hopkins and Mr Ralph Howell)

In May, Mr von Dohnanyi said, the Council had asked the Commission for a report on the milk surplus. This report had been submitted and was now being considered. In reply to supplementary questions, he said that various points raised by Members would be taken into account: the suitability of an area for dairy farming (Mr Spicer); the importance of a quota system to curb an 18 per cent over-production (Mr Howell); the fact that many dairy producers were small farmers working fewer than 30 acres of land (Mr L'Estrange); taxing margarine or soya imports from the USA would not help world trade (Mr Hughes); taxation levels were such in some countries that it was impossible for farmers to switch from dairy to beef production (Mr Corrie).

Non-utilisation of EC funds (Mr Tam Dalyell)

The Council, said Mr von Dohnanyi, was aware of the problem but argued that there had been some improvement. Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody (UK, S) protested that the matter needed dealing with now.

Sea pollution (Mr Gerald L'Estrange)

Mr von Dohnanyi told Parliament that the Commission would be making proposals for dealing with this problem.

Investment and employment (Sir Geoffrey de Freitas)

The steps taken by the Community to promote investment and increase employment had included the Ortolí loans, the doubling of the investment capital of the European Investment Bank and an increase in the regional fund, said Mr von Dohnanyi.

Law of the sea (Mr Ludwig Fellermaier and Mr John Prescott)

The Law of the Sea Conference had not yet reached any conclusions with regard to the exploitation of mineral rights on the seabed outside the 200-mile zone. It was difficult to find common ground on this matter, Mr von Dohnanyi admitted, but the Council was certainly not encouraging exploitation of such resources at the present time.

Questions to the Foreign Ministers

Elections in Namibia (Mr Willy Dondelinger)

The Nine would not recognize Namibia as an independent state if elections in that country did not take place under UN supervision, Mr von Dohnanyi said. Asked how the Community could meet requests for aid from a country it did not recognize, he said the Community would cross that bridge if it came to it. He expected the elections would take place under UN control.

Equipment for rocket launching (Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody)

This question, concerning the activities of the OTRAG company in Zaïre, had not been discussed by the foreign ministers. While he had views on the matter as German Foreign Minister, Mr von Dohnanyi said, he could not express them in the European Parliament.

Diplomatic bags (Mr Tam Dalyell)

The foreign ministers expected the report of their sub-group on abuse of diplomatic privileges soon. Mr Dalyell (UK, S) suggested that diplomatic bags should be subjected to electronic screening to ensure that they were not being used to smuggle weapons or explosives.

Vote

See summary.

Trade with Israel

Committee question to Council and Commission

Mr Klaus von Dohnanyi, for the Council, began his reply by reviewing the development of the EC's trade with Israel. On 1st November 1978 an additional protocol to the EC's agreement with Israel had come into force and ways were being explored as to how trade could be further improved.

Mr Roy Jenkins, for the Commission, said that imports from Israel had increased while EC exports had remained stable, doing something to lessen Israel's deficit in its balance of trade with the Community. This trend had not been maintained in the first four months of this year but it was a little early to assess the significance of this.

In sum, the three years during which the agreement had run had made a satisfactory contribution to the trade between the two parties.

Mr Schelto Patijn (Du), for the Socialists, was concerned about the impact that enlargement could have on the EC's Mediterranean policy. Political agreements, such as the Camp David one, tended to distract attention from Israel's need to develop an economy for peace, an economy of survival.

Mr Erik Blumenfeld (Ge), for the Christian Democrats, shared this view. He found the replies given by both Mr von Dohnanyi and Mr Jenkins were rather inadequate. Israel had had a 900 m dollar deficit in its trade with the EC in 1977 and its deficit this year would be worse. Why had the Council still not decided to extend greater concessions on EC imports of Israel's citrus fruits?

Mr Tom Normanton (UK), for the European Conservatives, raised two practical points which he asked the Commission to look into: difficulties over the shipment of flowers from Israel into the heartlands of Europe (there had been trouble over obtaining landing permission for the aircraft concerned), and difficulties over the shipment of textiles. He was not asking that these imports should be increased but that there should be a better management of the restrictions involved.

Lastly, he urged the Commission to look into the possibility of setting up scientific cooperation with Israel, particularly in solar energy.

Mr Giuseppe Vitale (It), for the Communists, was also disappointed by the Council and Commission's replies.

Lord Bethell (UK, EC), for the REX committee, stressed that Israel's economic problems were considerably more serious than those of the Community. So a measure of generosity was called for.

Mr von Dohnanyi, for the Council, and Mr Jenkins, for the Commission, replied to the debate.

Air traffic safety

Mr Fuchs' questions (Docs. 418 and 419/78)

The future of Eurocontrol after 1983 was at the centre of Mr Fuchs' questions to Council and Commission.

Replying for the Council, Mr von Dohnanyi said the Council had received a preliminary report from COREPER this summer on the advisability of dealing with air traffic safety and control on a Community-wide basis but further consideration was needed.

For the Commission, Mr Burke said Eurocontrol would remain in existence after 1983, although air control procedures would revert to national authorities. However, Mr Burke added that the Commission as such had no direct responsibility in the matter of air traffic control.

Speakers in the debate emphasized the need for European cooperation where human lives were at stake. It would be shortsighted to let the Eurocontrol agreements lapse.

Keeping our environment clean

Mr Muller's question to the Council

Further to the Commission's action programmes on the protection of the environment of 1973 and 1976 the Council was asked why only one-third of the

measures proposed had actually seen the light of day. All speakers in this brief debate expressed their dissatisfaction on this point.

Education in the Community

Mr Power's report (Doc. 410/78).

There was a general welcome this evening for a series of Commission documents the Education Ministers are to consider on 27th November. These concern the teaching of languages, the study of the Community, higher education in another Member State and the education of young women up to 18.

Mr Patrick Power (Ir, EPD), rapporteur for Parliament's Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education, put down a motion drawing attention to the problems associated with the teaching of migrant workers' children and to the importance of protecting the languages and cultures of all the Community countries, including those of ethnic and linguistic minorities.

Similarly, the motion advocated including Community studies in every school's curriculum, especially now that all future citizens of Europe would be called on to vote in European elections.

In the debate that followed there was a wide feeling of regret that the Community's scope in education is so limited. As Mr Carlo Meintz (Lu, L) pointed out, it is really mainly through the harmonization of qualifications that the Commission has to operate. True, there had been progress here, in securing freedom of establishment for doctors, lawyers and dentists but there had still been no decision regarding architects, midwives, vets, accountants or tax advisers.

For other speakers, such as Mr Willem Albers (Du, S), it was the children of migrant workers who were the chief concern. Mr Albers drew attention to the criminality rate among the 14 to 18 year old groups of migrant workers' children in Munich and Stuttgart. This, he described as a 'time bomb'.

Lord Murray of Gravesend (UK, S) welcomed the proposals for the exchange of teachers hoping the target figure of 10,000 would soon be reached. Still more important, he felt, were pupil exchanges. And there he urged that equal consideration be given to the otherwise underprivileged. Mr Liam Kavanagh (Ir,

S) shared these views but drew attention too to the problems of ensuring the mother tongue were properly taught and learned.

Mr Tom Ellis (UK, S) emphasised the importance of preserving Europe's cultural diversity, looking back with sadness on the cultural genocide his people had experienced in the United Kingdom.

Mr Borge Halvgaard (Da, EPD) put the case for esperanto, a concept Mr Power's motion rejected as not being practical.

THURSDAY, 16th November 1978

Cargo shipping

Mr Jung's interim report (Doc. 429/78)

There is concern at the worsening competitive position of Community merchant shipping interests faced with cut-price cargo tariffs quoted by Soviet and East European fleets.

The Commission has proposed setting up an information system to help clarify the position in cargo liner transport. While welcoming this, Mr Kurt Jung (Ge, L) stressed that, in the meantime, the Community should not shirk from taking counter-measures if necessary to protect EC maritime interests.

Lord Bruce of Donington (UK, S) referred to exacerbation of the situation by shipping firms using 'flags of convenience'.

Mr John Prescott (UK, S) warned against overemphasizing the Russian threat, which was often exaggerated. It was difficult, he said, to reconcile the demands of European shipowners for the right to buy cheap vessels outside the Community and at the same time be protected against cut-price competition.

In reply, Commissioner Burke said that the expected agreement by Council on the proposal indicated a willingness on the part of Member States to tackle these problems.

Aid for pineapples

Mr Liogier's report (Doc. 352/78)

The Community produces some 13,800 tons of pineapples each year, mainly in the French overseas department of Martinique.

Owing to the special circumstances under which pineapples are harvested, the processing of the product extends over a rather long period. This period, delaying the granting of production aid, gives rise to financial difficulties for the processors, who are required to pay a minimum price to the producers of fresh pineapples.

The Commission is therefore proposing that advances against the aid due may be paid to processors on submission of a supply agreement or contract with the producer of the fresh fruit.

Mr Albert Liogier (Fr, EPD) called on the House to approve the Commission's proposal.

Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody (UK, S) felt the granting of production of aids to Martinique was discriminatory against ACP pineapple exporters.

Mr Burke, for the Commission, referred to the need to accept the principle of Community preference.

Temporary import arrangements

Mr Inchauspé's report (Doc. 405/78)

All Member States have special arrangements under which a variety of goods and products may be granted exemption from customs duties when temporarily imported. This Commission proposal is intended to harmonize these arrangements on a Community-wide basis. The exemptions would apply to all classes of goods 'where the transactions concerned have no economic effect' and would be valid for not more than six months.

Mr Michel Inchauspé (Fr, EPD) asked the House to approve the proposal, subject to amendment.

For the Commission, Mr Burke sought a change in the wording of one of the amendments. Mr Inchauspé said he thought this could be accepted by the external relations committee.

EC-Greece oils and fats trade

Mr Albertini's report (Doc. 432/78)

The Commission has proposed changes in the regulations on the Community's oil and fats trade with Greece. Mr Francesco Albertini (It, S), for Parliament's agriculture committee, asked the House to approve the Commission's proposal.

Degerming maize

Mr Howell's report (Doc. 412/78)

Corn oil is produced from maize germs, of which there is a shortage in the Community. The Commission is thus proposing to grant an aid to undertakings which degerm maize of 1.7 EUA per 100 kgs of maize germ for a three-year period beginning 1 January 1979.

Mr Ralph Howell (UK, EC), rapporteur for the agriculture committee, has his doubts as to the value of the proposal. He asked the House to reject it.

The EC produces 85 per cent of its corn oil needs and the effect of the Commission's proposal would only increase this by some 5 per cent.

Corn oil is a high quality product and it would serve no useful purpose to interfere with the market, said Mr Howell. Mr Michel Inchauspé (Fr), for the European Progressive Democrats, was in full agreement.

In reply, Mr Burke told the House that the proposals had been requested by the Italian Government, they would cost only 3.9m EUA over three years to implement and would facilitate agreement on other proposals concerning the oil seeds sector.

To which Mr Hans-Jürgen Klinker (Ge. CD) replied that this was simply a subsidy for the industry and for the consumer. If people wanted a high quality

oil they should pay for it: this had nothing to do with the common agricultural policy. Mr Howell agreed with him. He took great exception to the Commission's apparent unwillingness to take on board what Parliament's agriculture committee was saying. The Commissioner had simply trotted out the same points that he and his colleagues had heard in committee. The Commission must take note of Parliament's opinions, he said.

QUESTION TIME

Questions to the Commission

European Community cultural week (Mr Patrick Power)

The Commission would be prepared to consider requests for help in the organisation of cultural events, said Mr Jenkins.

EC accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (Mr Schelto Patijn, Mr Willy Calewaert and Mr Raymond Forni)

The Commission was still considering this matter. Mr Hellmut Sieglerschmidt (Ge, S) asked whether an initiative by the European Parliament might help here. 'Yes, it could be of considerable importance', said Mr Jenkins.

Meeting place for the elected European Parliament (Mr Ron Brown)

Asked whether the Commission would take an objective study of this issue, Mr Jenkins replied that he did not think it was a problem wholly susceptible to solution by objective study. Would Washington have been chosen as the capital of the USA if an objective study had been made, he asked? Besides which, of course, this was not a matter for the Commission. It was a matter for the Member States.

UK exchange controls (Sir Brandon Rhys Williams)

Mr Ortoli said the Commission had provisionally authorized the UK's exchange controls and would be reviewing the position before the end of the year.

Grey seals (Mr Tam Dalyell)

The biological situation was being examined and it was hoped that a report would be available early next year.

Vote

See summary.

Economic and monetary union

Lord Ardwick's report (Doc. 437/78)

Mr Pisani's report (Doc. 448/78)

Mr Stetter's report (Doc. 434/78)

Lord Ardwick, introducing his report, prefaced his remarks by saying that he was optimistic about eventual British participation in a European monetary system (EMS).

Moving on to the concept of economic and monetary union (EMU), Lord Ardwick stressed the political – and indeed federal – implications that this would have for Europe. There was a clear distinction between EMU and EMS: the latter was more a technical move and at most a preliminary step towards EMU.

Nevertheless, EMS had a political significance, namely the wish to take this preliminary step towards EMU. But there were many questionmarks hanging over the technicalities of EMS, and Lord Ardwick looked to the Commission for clarification.

Mr Edgar Pisani (Fr, S), rapporteur for the economic and monetary committee, put a number of technical questions relating to FECOM (European Monetary Cooperation Fund).

Mr Ib Stetter (Da, EC), introducing his report on the Commission's annual report on the economic situation in the Community, pointed out that existing economic divergences amongst Member States could seriously jeopardize the proposed EMS. Efforts now should be aimed at closing this gap.

The dominant theme of the ensuing debate was a probing into precisely what the EMS would involve and the conditions under which EMPs speaking for their various groups and committees would find it acceptable.

Nearly all Members affirmed their support for the principle of what Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (UK, EC) called a 'civilized multi-currency system'. Sir Brandon himself felt that London's position as a world money market precluded Britain from joining the scheme immediately. However, like all other British Members who spoke – with the exception of Mrs Winifred Ewing (UK, Ind) – he thought Britain should and would join, later if not sooner.

The only Irish speaker in the debate, Mr Richie Ryan (CD), saw EMS as a means towards further reducing Ireland's economic and monetary dependence on the United Kingdom: if UK misgivings kept that country out of the scheme, he hoped Community support would enable the Republic to join.

For the Council, Mr Manfred Lahnstein said he hoped that all Member States would become party to the scheme. What had to be avoided was a 'two-speed' Community.

Vice-President Ortoli, for the Commission, pointed out that the initial transitional phase planned for EMS should give those member countries with doubts or difficulties the opportunity to seek adjustment.

FRIDAY, 17th November 1978

Cyprus sherry

Mr Spicer's report (Doc. 438/78).

The Commission is proposing to open a quota for imports into the Community of sherry from Cyprus. This tariff quota is to be in two instalments, the first (of 8,600 hectolitres) being valid until 31 December 1979. 7,000 hectolitres may be taken up by the UK. The second instalment of 1,400 hectolitres will constitute a reserve. Mr Jim Spicer, for the committee on external economic relations, put down a motion asking the House to approve the proposal.

Temporary duty waiver for fisheries products

Lord Kennet's report (Doc. 450/78)

The Commission is proposing that CC duties on cod, haddock, hake and fillets of hake be suspended at 10 per cent between 1 January and 30 June 1979. Lord Kennet (UK, S), for the committee on external economic relations, asked the House to approve the proposal.

Mr John Prescott (UK, S) asked if these tariffs could be reconsidered. The rules as applied at present were causing hardship in some areas. Mr Gundelach said that once the current Geneva negotiations were over, these tariffs could be reconsidered to ensure the EC's processing industry is able to obtain supplies.

Conference of Mediterranean States

In reply to a question from Mr van Aerssen (Doc. 421/78) Mr Gundelach said he was aware of the problem and assured the House that the Commission was endeavouring to devise appropriate solutions to the problems liable to face other Mediterranean States after enlargement.

Goods transport by road and rail

Mr Damseaux's report (Doc. 425/78)

In 1975 the Council adopted common rules for certain types of combined road/rail carriage of goods between Member States. The Commission now wants to extend these rules, which removed quota and various administrative restrictions, to cover combined road/rail container services.

This proposal was approved without debate.

Tractor parts

Mr Nyborg's report (Doc. 424/78)

The Commission is proposing to align the laws of the Member States on the towing hooks and reverse on wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. This proposal was approved without debate

Postal charge waivers

Mr Nyborg's report (Doc. 398/78)

Abolition of some charges at customs proposed. The Commission is proposing that 'the postal administrations of the Member States shall cease to collect any charges for presentation to customs in respect of consignments of goods from another Member State which are relieved from turnover taxes and excise duties payable at importation.' This proposal was approved without debate.

Vote

See summary.

SUMMARY

Monday 13th November – Friday 17th November 1978

(Document numbers in brackets)

Monday, 13th November 1978

5.05 p.m. to 6.15 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9.40 p.m.

Action taken on Parliament's advice

Written statement received from the Commission.

Food aid

Mr Lezzi's report (Doc. 414/78) on Commission's proposals (Doc. 237/78)

Address by President Eanes of Portugal

EC trade with Yugoslavia

Mr De Clercq's report (Doc. 408/78)

Export earnings of ACP copper producers

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams's question (Doc. 423/78).

Tuesday, 14th November 1978

10 a.m. to 1.15 p.m. and 3.05 p.m. to 9.55 p.m.

Thermal water reactor safety

Mr Veronesi's report (Doc. 411/78)

Persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union

Mr Berkhouwer's report (Doc. 430/78).

Technical obstacles to trade

Mr Nyborg's question (Doc. 445/78).

Question Time

Questions to the Commission (Doc. 431/78).

Vote

The House agreed to the motion, after amendment, in the report by Mr Lezzi (food aid) (Doc. 414/78) and to the motions in the reports by Mr De Clercq (EC trade with Yugoslavia) (Doc. 408/78), Mr Veronesi (nuclear safety) (Doc. 411/78) and Mr Berkhouwer (plight of Jews and other minorities in USSR) (Doc. 430/78).

State of the steel industry

Commission statement by Viscount Davignon.

Use of Community ore resources

Mr Porcu's question (Doc. 292/78)

Tripartite Conference

Mr Vredeling's statement for the Commission.
CD motion (Doc. 443/78).

Public health

Mr Ney's report (Doc. 406/78).

Protecting groundwater against pollution

Mrs Squarcialupi's report (Doc. 403/78).

Environmental R and D programme

Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti's report (Doc. 409/78)

Wednesday, 15th November 1978

10.15 a.m. to 11 a.m., 11.30 a.m. to 2.20 p.m. and 3.05 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.

Statement by Mr Genscher, German Foreign Minister and President of the Conference of Foreign Ministers

Followed by a debate.

Question Time

Questions to the Council and to the Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Nine.

Vote

The House agreed to the motion tabled by Mr van der Gun (Tripartite Conference) (Doc. 443/78) and to the motions in the reports, after amendment, by Mr Ney (medical research) (Doc. 406/78) and Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti (environmental r and d) (Doc. 409/78) and to the motion in the report by Mrs Squarcialupi protecting groundwater (Doc. 403/78).

Trade with Israel

External economic relations committee question to Council and Commission (Docs. 416/78 and 417/78).

Air traffic safety

Mr Fuchs's questions to Council and Commission (Docs. 418/78 and 419/78).

Keeping our environment clean

Mr Willi Müller's question to Council (Doc. 420/78).

Education in the Community

Mr Power's report (Doc. 410/78).

Thursday, 16th November 1978

9.35 a.m. to 11.20 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 8.35 p.m.

Cargo shipping

Mr Jung's interim report (Doc. 429/78).

Aid for pineapples

Mr Liogier's report (Doc. 352/78).

Temporary import arrangements

Mr Inchauspé's report (Doc. 405/78)

EC-Greece oils and fats trade

Mr Albertini's report (Doc. 432/78)

Degerming maize

Mr Howell's report (Doc. 412/78)

Question Time

Questions to the Commission

Vote

The House agreed to the motions in the reports by Mr Power on education (Doc. 410/78), Mr Jung on cargo shipping (Doc. 429/78), Mr Liogier on tinned pineapples (Doc. 352/78), Mr Inchauspé on temporary import arrangements (amended) (Doc. 405/78), Mr Albertini on trade in fats and oils with Greece (Doc. 432/78) and Mr Howell on degerming maize (Doc. 412/78).

Economic and monetary union

Lord Ardwick's report (Doc. 437/78), Mr Pisani's report (Doc. 448/78) and Mr Stetter's report (Doc. 434/78).

Adjusting wine-growing potential

Mr Pisoni's report (Doc. 451/78).

Friday, 18th November 1978

9 a.m. to 9.40 a.m.

Cyprus sherry

Mr Spicer's report (Doc. 438/78).

Temporary duty waiver for fisheries products

Lord Kennet's report (Doc. 450/78).

Conference of Mediterranean States

Mr van Aerssen's question (Doc. 421/78).

Goods transport by road and rail

Mr Damseaux's report (Doc. 425/78)

Tractor parts

Mr Nyborg's report (Doc. 424/78).

Postal charge waivers

Mr Nyborg's report (Doc. 398/78).

Vote

The House agreed, at the beginning of today's sitting to the motions in the reports on EMU by Lord Ardwick (after amendment) (Doc. 437/78), Mr Pisani (Doc. 448/78) and Mr Stetter (Doc. 434/78).

The House agreed to the motions in the reports by Mr Pisoni on wine-growing potential (Doc. 451/78), Mr Spicer on Cyprus sherry (Doc. 438/78) Lord Kennet on tariffs on fisheries products (Doc. 450/78), Mr Damseaux on road and rail transport (Doc. 425/78), Mr Nyborg on tractor parts (Doc. 424/78) and Mr Nyborg on postal charge waivers (Doc. 398/78).

Reports not taken

Mr Cointat on discharge for 1976 financial year

Mr Cifarelli on EC-Spain fishing agreement

Mr Joxe on EAGGF

Mr Pisoni on wine sector

Mr Amadei on Community action in the cultural sector deferred to December

Other items not taken

Lord Kennet's question on the cost of smoking deferred to December

POSTSCRIPT

Resolutions adopted in November

Parliament gave its unqualified approval to Commission proposals regarding:

cargo shipping (Doc. 429/78)

tinned pineapples (Doc. 352/78)

trade in oils and fats between the Community and Greece (Doc. 432/78)

importation of materials for use of the blind and other handicapped persons (Doc. 263/78)

importation of educational, scientific and cultural materials (Doc. 264/78)

expenditure on transport infrastructures (Doc. 268/78)

energy consumption of domestic appliances (Doc. 274/78)

health problems affecting trade in fresh meat (Doc. 323/78)

Greek wines (Doc. 328/78)

Turkish agricultural products (Doc. 329/78)

frozen beef and veal (Doc. 330/78)

crude oil and petroleum products (Doc. 332/78)

international goods transport by road (Doc. 356/78)

olive oil from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and Turkish agricultural products (Doc. 384/78)

consolidated texts in the wine sector (Doc. 389/78)

Spanish citrus fruit (Doc. 397/78)

wine-growing potential (Doc. 451/78)

Cyprus wines (Doc. 438/78)

certain types of fish (Doc. 450/78)

combined road/rail transport (Doc. 425/78)

postal charges on consignments presented to customs (Doc. 398/78)

Parliament gave its qualified approval to Commission proposals regarding:

European monetary system (Doc. 448/78)

Parliament noted that the necessary details concerning the implementation of the policy had not been provided; it therefore merely took note of the Commission's proposal but hoped to be able to hold a debate on the subject in December.

Economic policy (Doc. 434/78)

Parliament deplored that the Commission had been so late in submitting its proposal for economic policy guidelines for 1979 that the report had no real significance; it nevertheless commented on various aspects of the report.

Agricultural tractors (Doc. 424/78)

Parliament approved the proposal but looked forward to the introduction of a new procedure — at present in the final stage of preparation — for the elimination of technical barriers to trade.

Parliament called for amendments to Commission proposals:

Mr Lezzi's report (Doc. 414/78) on food aid management

Parliament proposed a number of amendments aiming at preserving its budgetary powers and the Commission's responsibility for implementing the budget; in particular, food aid should be regarded not as agricultural expenditure, but as non-compulsory expenditure (legal basis — Art. 235), and the Committee on Food Aid should have an advisory capacity only. (conciliation requested)

Mr Veronesi's report (Doc. 411/78) on safety in thermal water reactors

Parliament approved the proposal but put forward an amendment to Art. 2 aiming at preserving its budgetary powers.

Mr Ney's report (Doc. 406/78) on medical and public health research

Parliament called on the Commission to ensure that the financial implications of such multiannual programmes can be considered by Parliament during the budget procedure, and it proposed an amendment to this effect.

Mrs Squarcialupi's report (Doc. 403/78) on protection of groundwater

Parliament proposed a series of amendments correcting terminological inaccuracies and generally tightening the provisions; it also called for proposals on discharges from agricultural activities.

Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti's report (Doc. 409/78) on research and development in the environmental field

Parliament asked the Commission to concentrate environmental research on pinpointing 'nuisances' in good time, and to increase coordination of national and Community research; it proposed an amendment to Art. 2 aiming at preserving its budgetary powers.

Mr Inchauspé's report (Doc. 405/78) on temporary importation arrangements

Parliament proposed amendments to Art. 5 (informing the Commission before decisions are taken), Art. 24 (partial payment of duty) and Art. 32 (communication of data relating to certain importations).

Parliament rejected a Commission proposal:

Mr Howell's report (Doc. 412/78) on aid for degerming maize

Parliament rejected the proposal which it considered to be of doubtful value. It asked the Council, if it nevertheless adopts this proposal, to make provision in Arts. 1 (2) and 5 for consultation of Parliament.

Parliament also adopted other resolutions:

Relations between the EC and Yugoslavia (Doc. 408/78)

Parliament stressed the need to increase Yugoslavia's exports to the Community and to remove discrimination against Yugoslav migrant workers.

Jewish community in the Soviet Union (Doc. 430/78)

Parliament asked that, in preparation for the Madrid meeting in November 1980 following up the Helsinki Conference, Member States' governments should insist on compliance by the Soviet Union, and all other signatories, with the Helsinki Final Act.

Tripartite Conference (Doc. 443/78)

Parliament called on the Commission to ensure that negotiations between the social partners are intensified with a view to achieving an appropriate division of available labour, and requested the Commission to draw up appropriate social policy proposals.

Education in the European Community (Doc. 410/78)

Parliament stressed that high priority should be given to the teaching of migrant workers' children; it welcomed the proposal to establish a series of pilot projects on foreign language teaching, but did not believe it practical to select any one language as a compulsory first foreign language.

Economic and monetary union (Doc. 437/78)

Parliament considered that EMU (EMS) must ultimately lead to a far greater alignment of the Member States' economic policy, and that this alignment has to be accompanied by greater economic convergence and a reduction in the regional and social disparities; the basic objective should be an integrated economic, monetary and social policy.

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