

European Parliament Information

The Sittings

June 1979



THE SITTINGS

STRASBOURG, 17th – 20th JULY 1979

THE WEEK

The newly-elected European Parliament held its opening session at the Palais de l'Europe here in Strasbourg this week. Its first business was to elect a president and it was Simone Veil (until her election, Minister of Health in the French Government) who gained an absolute majority of the votes cast to become the European Parliament's first woman president. It was, incidentally, also a woman, the 86-year-old Louise Weiss, who opened the session on Tuesday (by virtue of her status as oldest Member) and took the Chair until Mrs Veil had been elected.

Looking full of vitality despite her 86 years, Mrs Weiss spoke in clear, ringing tones of how the great Europeans of succeeding generations – many of whom she had known personally – had gradually brought Europeans together. Her speech was frequently interrupted by applause and concluded to a standing ovation.

After Simone Veil's election, the House adjourned until the ceremonial opening of the new session on Wednesday morning.

At the ceremonial sitting, which was attended by distinguished visitors from all over the world, the European Parliament heard speeches from newly-elected President, Simone Veil; from Jack Lynch, Prime Minister of Ireland and President of the Council; from Roy Jenkins, President of the Commission; and from spokesmen for Parliament's Political Groups. The main theme of the speeches was Parliament's role in the next five years. Mrs Veil spoke of the need for Parliament to exercise greater control and to impart a greater impetus to the Community's activities, a point taken up by many subsequent speakers. And here, control over the budget was the main point raised. European Democratic Group leader James Scott-Hopkins also raised the whole question of the Council's accountability. He reminded the House that his group had, on several occasions, criticised the

Council on the way it sets about its work: its excessive secrecy, the inadequate answers to questions from members of the European Parliament, the unassailable, but nonetheless powerful influence of officials in COREPER and so on.

Speaking for the Council, Mr Jack Lynch said: "I should like to say as Head of the Government of Ireland, the first Member State to hold the Presidency following the inauguration of the directly-elected Parliament, that we intend fully to respect that and to strive earnestly for the continuance of the fruitful cooperation which has existed between the Council and Parliament in the past."

At the beginning of Mr Lynch's speech the Reverend Ian Paisley sought to interrupt him but he was ruled out of order by Mrs Veil.

Several Members exchanged comments and quite a few voices were raised but these were inaudible because the Members were not speaking through their microphones.

The ceremonial opening was attended by some 700 journalists and there were many television cameras in the House. Every seat in the Visitors' Gallery was taken, with distinguished guests attending from all over the world.

On Wednesday afternoon Parliament elected its twelve vice-presidents.

On Thursday the House was obliged to devote a considerable amount of time to agreeing the ground rules for the conduct of Parliament's business, deciding eventually to refer the controversial question of the number of Members needed to form a political group to the rules committee.

Thursday's main business, however, was a debate on helping the refugees from Indo-China and Parliament agreed to a resolution welcoming the Conference being held in Geneva on 20th and 21st July; proposing the Commission despatch a coordinated fleet of ships ...; to supply 8000 tonnes of rice and 15,000 tonnes of skimmed milk powder; to allocate one million EUA to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees plus additional aid for 5 million EUA.

On Friday morning Parliament turned its attention to the preliminary estimates for the European Community's budget for 1980. The problem here, Commissioner Christopher Tugendhat pointed out, was that the gap between the Community's budget expenditure and its income from its own resources is closing fast. At the same time the Council is allowing agricultural spending – the biggest budget component – to go on rising.

TUESDAY, 17th July 1979

Oldest MEP opens session

Mrs Louise Weiss, at 86 the oldest Member of the European Parliament, declared the constituent sitting of the European Parliament open at 10 am this morning.

She said that as a journalist, writer and film director she felt 'as though my experience throughout this century and my travels throughout the world were destined to culminate in my meeting with you today'.

'I come to you', she said, 'as one who loves Europe and, with your fore-bearance, I shall try to give expression to the fears and hopes which torment and inspire our collective conscience.'

The world of today was making a difficult transition from the age of steel to the age of the atom, and Europeans found themselves 'caught up in an agonizing process of change from societies of conspicuous consumption into societies of a new kind, compelled to reckon with the contradictory demands of birth-rate and leisure, employment, security and threatened shortage of raw materials' – but they were also heirs to a vital spirituality.

Summarizing the great stages of European history from Charlemagne to the present day, she noted in passing that the youngest Member of the new Parliament was 'an Irish lady who bears the illustrious name of De Valera'.

A man's mind

Quoting in English Shakespeare's line, 'I have a man's mind, but a woman's might,' the 86-year-old parliamentarian then went on to refer to some of her distinguished European contemporaries: among them, Charles de Gaulle, Konrad Adenauer and Albert Einstein.

'But reverence for our ancestors must not paralyse our action', she said, turning to the story of post-war European integration. Here she cited characterizations of the European character made by the Estonian, Count Hermann von Kaiserling, before the war: 'the Briton, half lion, half wolf, but an inoffensive gentleman once his aims were secured; the German, for whom things were more important than people, and who could not thus resist a certain collective nostalgia; the Italian, who looked on the theatre and the stage as an end in itself; the Frenchman, incapable of understanding that others might wish to be different from himself, and wedded to his definitions like a savage to his fetishes'.

The Common Market had survived set-backs, having been born 'not of chance but of necessity'. However, she noted: 'the Community institutions have produced European sugar-beet, butter, cheese, wines, calves and even pigs. They have not produced Europeans'.

'There were Europeans in the Middle Ages', she said, 'in the Age of Enlightenment, and even in the nineteenth century we must recreate them'.

Zest for life

One step towards this would be the establishment of European cultural organizations, but there was a further problem, and that was the falling European birth-rate. She looked forward to a time when married couples would 'be willing to enhance through children their zest for life'.

On human rights, she told the Parliament: 'to lay down the law is not an obligation, but to lay down the law and pretend to enforce it while in reality betraying it is a crime. It will be for you to condemn this crime. It is for you to set the example!'

Mrs Weiss thanked her fellow Members for their attention in each official Community language, as well as Irish, and then concluded – as she put it, 'in my incomparable native tongue' – 'merci du fond du coeur' – 'thank you from the bottom of my heart'.

Credentials checked

A temporary special Committee, consisting of 8 MEPs whose names were drawn by lot, were then appointed to verify the credentials of Members. Following an adjournment, the credentials committee reported to the House. It noted that Miss Shelagh Roberts' (UK) election had been declared invalid by the UK Government. Information about many of the remaining 409 MEPs was incomplete: pending verification of their credentials these Members would take their seats in the European Parliament on a provisional basis, but with full voting and speaking rights.

Election of President

The House convened at 3 pm to elect its President. A motion put down by Mr Egon Klepsch on behalf of the EPP Group, the European Democratic Group and the Liberal and Democratic Group to extend the term of office of the President to two and a half years was declared inadmissible by Mrs

Weiss under Rule 6 of Parliament's Rules. ('No business shall be transacted while the oldest member is in the Chair unless it is concerned with the election of the President or the verification of credentials'.)

Mrs Veil was elected President on the second ballot. Voting figures for the two ballots were as follows:

First Round

Number voting:	404
Ballot papers received:	401
Number of blank ballots:	21
Number of valid votes:	380
Majority:	191
Simone Veil:	183
Mario Zagari:	118
Giorgio Amendola:	44
Christian de la Malène:	26
Emma Bonino:	9

Second Round

Number voting:	404
Ballot papers received:	400
Number of blank ballots:	23
Number of valid votes:	377
Majority:	189
Simone Veil:	192
Mario Zagari:	138
Giorgio Amendola:	47

WEDNESDAY, 18th July 1979

Ceremonial sitting

In her address to the European Parliament at its ceremonial sitting here in Strasbourg this morning, Mrs Veil began by thanking the House for the honour it had conferred upon her. She welcomed the many distinguished visitors seated in the galleries and representing countries in the five continents. She paid tribute to Louise Weiss for her conduct of the opening

business of the House and dwelt for a moment on all Louise Weiss had done to promote the emancipation of women. Mrs Veil paid tribute to the work done by previous presidents of the European Parliament, particularly Emilio Colombo, the outgoing President.

Turning to the way Parliament's role in the European Community had developed and to the way new treaties had given it a growing influence, particularly over the budget, Mrs Veil said that the 'capital event' of Parliament's election would confer upon it 'a new authority' and a new influence which it had to put to effect in enabling the Community to meet the challenges now facing it.

These were threefold: the challenge of peace, the challenge of freedom and the challenge of prosperity. Peace itself was fragile enough and Europe was an island of freedom among vast areas dominated by the rule of force. Mrs Veil said how much the accession of the three new countries to the Community was to be welcomed.

To meet these challenges called for a Europe capable of solidarity, of independence and of cooperation. This did not mean overriding national interests; it meant taking up the European option where this was in the general interest. Mrs Veil dwelt here on the need to redress regional disparities, achieve a real reduction in social inequalities and promote investment levels compatible with the unemployment challenge.

At the same time, independence should not be construed as an aggressive stance but rather as right for Europe to pursue its own approach, over such matters as monetary policy for example.

In conclusion, Mrs Veil spoke of the tasks facing the new European Parliament: to exercise a tighter control, especially over the money-raising side of the budget, and to impart a greater impetus to Community activities, especially in such areas as the search for a common policy on energy.

Speaking for the Council, Ireland's Prime Minister Mr Jack Lynch wished the new Parliament well in serving the hopes and ambitions of Europe.

On Parliament's relations with the Council, which was to be one of this morning's themes, Mr Lynch said: "The relationship between parliament and the Council is evolving and consequently it is inevitable that problems will be encountered. These need not be impossible of resolution if we keep sight of the reasons why the Community came into existence and the purposes it has set out to achieve. I should like to say, as Head of the Government of Ireland, that we intend to strive earnestly for the continuance of fruitful cooperation between the Council and Parliament."

Maintaining motivation

Mr Lynch concluded: "I hope that with effective cooperation between all the institutions and the political will of our Governments, backed by the faith of our peoples, the Community will continue along the path of peace, stability and progress. It is not possible for this generation to envisage what form European integration will ultimately take or in what way future generations will develop the European ideal. It is my sincere hope, however, that the motivation which encouraged the founding fathers to take the first cautious steps along this path will not be lost and that the momentum of this unifying process will be maintained."

Wooden spoon for UK

Roy Jenkins, President of the Commission, in congratulating Simone Veil, said it would be her task to 'guide, preside over – and perhaps even chide' the European Parliament. He promised her the warm and whole-hearted support of the Commission in the pursuit of their joint objectives.

After referring to the recent elections and to the 'wooden spoon' won by his own country, the United Kingdom, for its low turnout figures, Mr Jenkins turned to what he saw as the gloomy economic prospects for the coming decade. He warned that it was not enough to hope that the problems would go away. There was a need to confront the prospect of a check to the rise of living standards.

On European unity, he said it was pointless to argue now about the exact form this would finally take – whether federal, confederal, or whatever. However, he drew applause by adding that there was 'a greater danger of moving too fast than too slow'.

Admitting it was a platitude to speak of yesterday's inaugural session as a historic moment, he said that it nevertheless was one, even if it had been difficult to feel it as such at the time. Historic moments had to 'age a little' before their full quality came out.

Need for credibility

Speaking for the Socialist Group, the newly-elected leader Ernest Glinne (Be) began by wishing Mrs Veil well in her office as President.

Turning to the recent elections, Mr Glinne said he had been struck by the enormous number of people who had not taken part, even in those countries where voting was mandatory. The reason for this was that Europe was neither properly accepted nor understood. The great need for the new

Parliament would be to achieve credibility. To do this it must avoid what he described as “mauvais coups indignes” such as the one which had deprived the House of Mr François Mitterand.

Mr Glinne said that the aim of his group, which represented twenty-nine and a half million voters or 27% of the votes cast in the recent elections, must be to change the policies of the Community: the six million people now out of work were naturally sceptical about what the Community could do for them.

Mr Glinne outlined the policy aims of his group: to achieve better working conditions, a better sharing of jobs and better job training.

On energy policy he stressed that there should be no new nuclear departures without proper public control and adequate safeguards. He stressed the importance his group attached to dealing with pollution, eliminating discrimination against women, protecting consumers (especially against misleading advertising) and protecting the environment.

He concluded by saying that his group's main concern was with the rights of man and civil liberties.

Need for great debate

For the EPP Group, Leo Tindemans (Be) said he was congratulating the new President on behalf of the group of parties which won the most votes in the elections. The Parliament was the most democratic of the Community's institutions. ‘A new balance’ must be reached with the others.

Direct elections had sprung from the 1974 summit in Paris – as had the drafting of a report on European Union (Editor's note: this was the ‘Tindemans Report’). He hoped there would soon be new proposals on European Union. On economic difficulties in the 80s, he said Europe must ‘work together’ in interdependence and human solidarity.

The EP would have to win prestige through the quality of its work and debates. All the opportunities offered by Article 235 of the Treaty of Rome should be put to advantage.

The EPP Group's priorities were the fight against unemployment, especially among the young, and the energy problem. He made a plea for a ‘great debate’ on the ‘state of the union’ in Europe. Did the Community really work, or was there not a danger from hidden protectionism? The Community must speak with one voice on issues such as the Middle East, the North-South dialogue – even on European security. We, as Europeans, must have the courage to take a stand.

It must be a 'Europe of the citizens', in all its wealth of cultural variety. The voters must not be let down.

Council responsible to no-one

Speaking for the European Democratic Group, Mr James Scott-Hopkins (UK) urged the House not to underestimate the difficulties the new European Parliament was going to have in exerting its influence. Past experience, over such matters as enlargement, EMS or how decisions should be taken on the Council had not been encouraging. But the Council could not now ignore Parliament indefinitely.

At the same time, he said, Parliament must itself work efficiently and review its system of reports and resolutions; it must work out satisfactory relations with colleagues in the national parliaments. And he hoped the Parliament would be able to take up, with the appropriate authorities, such matters as the question of a permanent site for its activities.

The elections had shown the relevance of the European Parliament. Now the Parliament had to fulfil its promise. This meant looking into local, technical and specific concerns as well as the big institutional questions.

But, on this last point, Parliament had to develop its control. And it could do this without depriving national parliaments of power: they, for example, had no control over agreements reached with third countries. The Council was responsible to no one. 'We shall continue politely but firmly to seek to hold the Council to account for the decisions it reaches – or, often more damaging, does not reach – from the point of view of the Community's interest. We owe no less to our electors.'

Eurocommunism more than an idea

Speaking for the Communist Group, Mr Enrico Berlinguer (It) began by saying that although there were differences between, for example, the French and Italian Members of his group, they collectively represented more than 16 million people dedicated to a common cause: to stop the decline of Europe. In this respect Eurocommunism was not just a great idea, it meant specific initiatives to solve common problems. Turning to the point made by Mr Glinne, Mr Berlinguer argued that the low turnout at the European elections should be read as a criticism of the way the Community works. There had to be new progress in many areas if the aspirations of working people were to be fulfilled.

Ten missing Liberals

Speaking for the Liberal and Democratic Group, Mr Martin Bangemann (Ge) laid his main emphasis on the problem of involving people in the Community enterprise. It was important for all Community citizens – including immigrant workers – to have the same rights. And here he turned to the rights under the electoral system. Mr Glinne had protested that François Mitterand had not been able to take a seat in the European parliament. He drew attention to the 10 Liberal Members who would have been elected from the United Kingdom had the electoral system been different. These were also a minority who needed and expected help from the Community. Turning to the tasks of the new Parliament, Mr Bangemann took Mrs Veil's point about developing the European Parliament's power and control, especially over the budget.

Economic War

Michel Debré (Fr) for the Group of European Progressive Democrats, said it was not enough to speak in terms of monetary disorder or industrial crisis in the world – this was 'economic war'. Monetary war was responsible for the world economy 'jungle'; oil had become a factor in a power struggle; governments of countries with large manpower and low wages were taking advantage of their position to attack overseas markets while keeping their own closed.

The challenge must be met by placing cooperation between national governments at the basis of the European idea and by the European democracies respecting the values out of which they had arisen.

The EC was founded on the idea of free trade, but also of Community preference. The Common Agricultural Policy was not a sop to a special interest group but an expression of the very principle of the Community.

Space failure

He regretted the failure of Europe to cooperate in space development. It would have been an inspiration if this year, 1979, a European space-craft could have been launched, with Europeans inside.

Louise Weiss had been right yesterday to stress the importance of keeping up the European birthrate, thus rejuvenating the current generation, he said.

Mr Marco Pannella (It), for the Independent Group, wondered how the major political groupings – Socialists, Christian-Democrats and Liberals – could condone the spending of \$ 400,000 million annually on armaments at a time when people were still dying in conflicts around the world.

Mrs Else Hammerich (Da) said she was speaking on behalf of a strong anti-Community movement in Denmark. She and her colleagues had not sought election in order to sabotage the European parliament: what they intended to work for was a looser form of cooperation between Denmark and the EC. Direct elections, she said, were not a step towards greater democracy, but rather a consolidation of the Community's stranglehold over national sovereignty.

Election of Vice-presidents

Parliament then elected its twelve vice-presidents:

Marcel Vandewiele (B, EPP)
Guido Gonella (It, EPP)
Johann Katzer (Ge, EPP)
Pierre Pflimlin (Fr, EPP)
Bruno Friedrich (Ge, EPP)
Gérard Jaquet (Fr, Soc)
Anne Vondeling (Ne, Soc)
Basil de Ferranti (UK, EC)
Mario Zagari (It, Soc)
Poul Møller (Da, ED)
Allan Rogers (UK, Soc)
Danielle Demarch (Fr, Com)

Three rounds of voting were necessary, since only 11 of the 14 candidates received the required absolute majority on the first ballot, and none of the remaining three candidates received an absolute majority in the second.

Voting figures in the three rounds were as follows:

First ballot	
Number of Members voting:	397
Ballot papers received:	393
Blank or spoiled ballot papers:	3
Valid votes cast:	390
Absolute majority:	195
Votes received were as follows:	
Mrs Demarch:	148
Mr de Ferranti:	291

Mr B. Friedrich:	298
Mr Gondella:	307
Mr Jaquet:	293
Mr Katzer:	307
Mr Lalor:	161
Mr Møller:	284
Mr Pflimlin:	304
Mr Rogers:	270
Mrs Spaak:	60
Mr Vandewiele:	313
Mr Vondeling:	293
Mr Zagari:	288

Second ballot

Number of members voting:	379
Ballot papers received:	374
Blank or spoiled ballot papers:	18
Valid votes cast:	356
Absolute majority:	179

Votes received were as follows:

Mrs Demarch:	163
Mr Lalor:	144
Mrs Spaak:	49

Third ballot

Number of Members voting:	268
Ballot papers received:	266
Blank or spoiled ballot papers:	8
Valid votes cast:	256

Votes received were as follows:

Mrs Demarch:	130
Mr Lalor:	109
Mrs Spaak:	17

THURSDAY, 19th July 1979

The entire morning was taken up by a procedural debate on the order of business for Thursday and Friday. Three roll-call votes were held on proposals from the Independents' Group to postpone discussion of the Luster report on changes to Parliament's rules.

Summit results

The afternoon opened with a statement by the President of the Council, Michael O'Kennedy, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the Irish presidency in the coming six months.

He said Ireland was committed to seeing that the role of the EP was recognized and respected. Reporting on the European Council in Strasbourg on 21 and 22 June, he said 'tangible solidarity' had been shown in dealing with the energy problem, which had shifted our economic foundations. He welcomed President Carter's recent decisions. It had been agreed imperative to continue developing nuclear energy and nuclear technology. He stressed the value of a consolidated Community approach on this and on economic action to meet inflation and unemployment.

The European Monetary System was an 'auspicious portent' and he hoped the UK would join it by the end of the year. After stressing his desire to see movement towards eliminating regional imbalance within the EEC, he turned to enlargement and said that substantive issues with Spain would be discussed at meetings in September and December.

Referring to 'painfully slow' progress on the common fisheries policy, he said 'it may be that recent political changes have created a better climate'.

On budgetary matters, the Commission was soon to present proposals for new 'own resources'. He would wish to see some progress on this during the Irish presidency. In social affairs, priority would go to employment, especially among youth. He noted that the Council had committed itself to settle questions of farm modernization, farm retirement and disadvantaged areas' schemes, on which the Commission had made proposals, during the Irish presidency. In industry, the main restructuring proposals now being formulated related to steel, shipbuilding and synthetic fibres.

The first meeting of the Joint Commission with China under the trade agreement was currently in session in Peking. On political cooperation he expected the Nine's Agreement on the suppression of terrorism to be opened for signature in Dublin during the Irish presidency.

'I declare my intention', he said, 'to cooperate most fully in the establishment of real dialogue both formal and informal, between us'.

For the Commission, President Roy Jenkins stressed the close link that had existed between the European Council meeting in Strasbourg and the Western Summit in Tokyo. That link had been energy. There had been no doubt in the minds of any of the participants at either meeting, Mr Jenkins said, that the energy problem 'could not merely damage our economies, but bring them into a state of dislocation if not collapse within the next decade'.

What had Strasbourg and Tokyo achieved, Mr Jenkins asked? A firm EC commitment to solidarity in saving energy was one gain. Another was that the United States had been persuaded to adopt specific commitments of its own. The mechanisms agreed to make these commitments work now had to be put into effect.

Oil growth link

The ultimate test for the Western world as a whole, Mr Jenkins said, would be its ability to 'break the link between economic growth and the consumption of oil.' Any countries or groups of countries which failed to do this would become the 'dinosaurs of the industrial world' of the 1990s.

However, Mr Jenkins went on, there was some hope in the situation: the effort needed to develop energy conservation methods and alternative energy sources could prove to be the stimulus to higher investment and lower unemployment. But such an effort would have to include the Third World.

The European Council in Strasbourg had also looked at the Community's prospects up to 1990. At present we faced high unemployment. But towards the end of this period we would find ourselves with an ageing population and a diminishing workforce. Moreover, the EC's share in world trade would shrink considerably. To meet these problems, a great effort would have to be made to improve productivity, adapt to market requirements and modernize industrial plant. In particular, Mr Jenkins said, we would have to master the high technology revolution. It was therefore vital that a Community strategy for advanced industrial technology be worked out.

Strain

These changes would surely place a strain on the Community and its institutions. Specific problems in the short term were the common agricultural policy, the cost of which was increasing 'at an alarming rate', and the budgetary system and its effects on individual member states.

But for all the problems the Community faced, there were positive aspects too: in 1979 the EMS had been set up, agreement reached with Greece on accession, agreement in GATT and with the ACP countries. And above all, 1979 had seen the first direct elections to the European Parliament.

Solidarity

For the Socialist group, Mr Willi Brandt, (Ge), referring to the 'artificial atmosphere in this Chamber', spoke of the ties of solidarity that had

developed among Europeans and which were so evident in 'the fresh air of Strasbourg'. It was sad that Europe's Parliament had proved itself incapable this morning of displaying that solidarity.

Had direct elections come too early? No, probably too late. Whatever happened, this Parliament now had to prove its usefulness. Public hearings were one way of doing this, Mr Brandt suggested. A first opportunity might be this autumn, prior to the Madrid CSCE follow-up conference.

But Parliament's role could only be effective so long as it did not become too polarized in its internal structure.

The Community, Mr Brandt went on to applause, 'must do more for Europe's weaker regions'.

Turning to the reports on the Strasbourg and Tokyo summits, he said he found Mr Jenkins' call for an end to the link between oil and growth 'inspiring'. It was now more than evident that a Community energy policy worthy of the name was long overdue.

Other points from Mr Brandt's speech: the need to develop the Community's external relations; the need to stop the arms race if the world was not to 'arm itself to death'; and the assertion that the jobs of our grandchildren - depended on the development of the poor countries of the world.

In conclusion, Mr Brandt warned against use of the term 'crisis' which implied a temporary state of affairs. What we are facing, he said, was a fundamental change in the way our world functioned. 'What we need now' Mr Brandt said, recalling the words of Aneurin Bevan, 'is a society with freedom from fear, with hope and reasonable chances for the younger generation'.

Common policy

Speaking for the European People's Party, Mr Egon Klepsch, (Ge) argued that the Community must be seen to be getting somewhere and both he and European Democrat leader James Scott-Hopkins agreed with Willi Brandt that something had to be done about a common policy for energy. Mr Klepsch pointed out that the talk, earlier this year, about Community solidarity had hardly fared well when it came to the Tokyo summit.

And energy was not the only problem: there were the one and a half million young people who were looking for work who wanted something better for

work than jobs vacated only because people were being pensioned off. The young had not to be made to feel they were not wanted by society.

But the answer lay in common action: here he hoped that the United Kingdom would soon join the Economic and Monetary System and so help resolve the social and economic crisis the Community was facing. This would be even more to the point when the three applicant States joined the EC.

Mr Klepsch also wanted to see foreign policy cooperation developed so that the Community adopted a common stance in relations with third countries. Lastly he hoped something could be done – as Mr Tindemans had urged yesterday – about such ordinary things as Summer Time, a European passport and a European driver's licence, things which could do much to bring the Community home to the citizens who had elected the European Parliament.

Defence

Mr Scott-Hopkins, (UK) leader of the European Democratic Group, welcomed what he called the 'helpful and constructive' attitude of the Council. But like Mr Klepsch, he wanted to see more cooperation between the Nine in foreign policy. And one should not forget defence. He asked the Council to refer to Parliament here before the US and the USSR said their final words about SALT II.

He agreed too with Mr Klepsch that the European Parliament should be involved in the Community's foreign relations: in the negotiations with Portugal and Spain, for example. It would not do for the Parliament to be presented with 'faits accomplis' here. On trade, he urged a real effort, in the next six months, to sweep away some of the trade barriers that had been put up where they should not have been.

Turning to agriculture, Mr Scott-Hopkins said 'cannot go on as we are ...'. He described the present arrangements for spending taxpayers' money on the storage and disposal of surpluses as 'lunacy'. The Council had not done terribly well here. And the Commission had done even worse. He urged the Commission to put forward constructive proposals for dealing with this by January 1980.

The people of Europe, he said, were looking to the European Parliament to make the Community work to their benefit, particularly over energy, (where the United Kingdom had a short-term advantage which it must use as best it could in the interests of Europe), and over jobs.

Economic storm

Giorgio Amendola, (It) for the Communists and Allies, said the results of the Strasbourg and Tokyo meetings already belonged to the past. There had been a commitment on energy consumption, but would it be put into effect?

This was not just an economic crisis – it was a storm. Our problems could only be dealt with at the roots. Economic programming was needed. People talked of 6 million unemployed, but there were 12 million migrants. Class structure meant Europeans weren't benefiting to the same degree.

Europe needed détente and disarmament. The money saved could be put to better use. The problems of the world were nuclear arms, the demographic explosion and the food supply. There was a choice: to cooperate with the poorer countries with the chance of bettering their lot, or protectionism and shutting ourselves off – which could lead to the destruction of our democracies.

We must fight together to build a new Europe – 'a Europe for peace and disarmament'.

Energy agency

Jean-François Pintat, (Fr) for the Liberals and Democrats, welcomed the fact that agreement had been reached on farm prices, but said the fundamental issues were unchanged. The problem of surpluses had been left to the Irish presidency.

He was glad that the Council and Commission Presidents had concentrated on energy, which was the 'key economic and political issue of our age'. We needed 4% growth to cure unemployment, and this was impossible while energy problems were unsolved.

The energy crisis was political one. Europe must diversify its sources of supply. The effects of the Iranian upheaval could be met in the short term, but more permanent solutions needed time: 8 to 10 years for implementing a nuclear project. A common energy policy was the acid test of political resolve in Europe.

His group advocated a major European loan facility, running to billions of EUAs, to set up an effective European Energy Agency which could invest productively to save energy and to finance alternative strategies. More meetings were also needed between producers and consumers, including those from the Third World.

Rightful role

Patrick Lalor, (Irl) for the European Progressive Democrats, said that the citizens would not tolerate constant wrangling on procedural matters from the EP. On energy, he said immediate, effective action was needed. The annual EC growth rate was likely to fall from 3.4% to 2.8% per annum.

The commission should do more to eliminate regional disparities. There was a need for a truly adequate, increased Regional Fund, which would remove structural unemployment.

Turning to the Vietnamese refugees, he compared their plight to that of the European peoples in times of war.

Referring to frightening signs of discontent among the young unemployed in Europe, he called for worksharing, while, on the CAP, he said his Group would be 'steadfast in its defence', without being unreasonable. There were no food queues in the Community.

He hoped for a fruitful relationship between the Council and Parliament. 'This assembly must be accorded its rightful role in the legislative process'.

The problem exercising Mauritz Coppieters, (Be.Ind) was the way Europe had neglected its regions. Its regional policy had failed and it had failed because people living in the regions themselves had not been directly involved in the EC's regional policy.

Another independent Member, Pino Romualdi, said that the National Right party of Italy, which he represented, was totally committed to making a constructive contribution to European integration and to solving the agonising problems of our time. And here he alluded particularly to terrorism which had neither been controlled nor contained in Italy.

Multinationals

Socialist group leader Ernest Glinne, (Be) pointed out that the nuclear power programme decided on by the Council in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis now stood no chance of being realised. There was thus a clear need to seek alternatives, and particularly to control the activities of the multinational oil companies, many of which, in turn, were controlled by major multinational banks.

André Diligent, (Fr.EPP) agreed that there had been a failure to establish an effective Community energy policy. What did the Council now intend to do in the various sectors?

For the European Democrats, Sir Fred Catherwood, (UK) said that, if these economic and energy problems were to be resolved, it was only as a Community that we could resolve them. Indeed, the fate of the European Parliament itself depended on a solution being found.

'The Community is the dynamo of the world's economy', he said, and it was the Community that should provide the lead in expanding world trade, on which our future prospects depended.

Unemployment

Gustave Ansart, (Fr.CA) spoke of unemployment as the central problem facing Europe today – a problem for which the 'capitalist cartels' and the multinationals bore much of the responsibility, he said. If a solution was to be found, we would have to take 'daring social measures' – such as introduction of the 35-hour week and earlier retirement.

The ensuing debate ranged over many issues: Colette Flesch, (L), for the Liberals, spoke of the new convention and Pacific countries; the provision for aid had been increased by 62% and new arrangements would be brought in for raw materials but the new convention would make no reference to human rights and one means by which aid would be dispensed – the European Development Fund – would not be made part of the budget. Winnie Ewing, (UK,EPD) began with a special tribute to Louise Weiss and to Simone Veil. Reminding the House there were more women voters in Europe than men, Mrs Ewing suggested it might be appropriate to speak of a year of women in Europe.

Mrs Ewing was concerned most, as representative of the largest constituency in the United Kingdom, that there should be closer links between people in the regions and those running the Community's regional fund. The elections, she said, had aroused great interest in the Highlands and Islands – mainly because EC issues like fisheries policy, regional development, energy policy were front line issues there.

In conclusion Mrs Ewing trusted that the House would find room, in the European bouquet of flowers to which Willi Brandt had alluded, for the Scottish thistle.

Neil Blaney, an Irish independent Member, told the House his constituents were also strongly in favour of the Community because they were encountering problems only the Community could solve: the fall from 112,000 to 68,000 in the number of people in the creamery dairy supplies industry, the need to stimulate beef production and the way small farmers were being 'gobbled up' by big farmers.

Richard Seligman, (UK), for the European Democrats, took up Willi Brandt's point about energy policy. The United Kingdom, he said, had dropped its policy of antagonism to a common policy. This he said, was a matter for survival because no one country could afford the capital investment in alternative energy sources on the requisite scale. President Carter was talking of 88 billion dollars in the USA but far more would be needed there. US policy was crucial in another sense, because unless they cut their energy consumption the Community would be very seriously affected.

Basil de Ferranti, (UK,ED), former President of the Economic and Social Committee, spoke of the degree of understanding of the Community's importance which he had met with in his election campaign – both in design offices and on the shop floor of the factories he had visited.

Replying to the debate, Michael O'Kennedy noted the degree of concensus among speakers on the need for Community solidarity. This was matched, he felt, by a new sense of urgency, particularly about energy policy at Council level.

Indo-Chinese Refugees

In a statement on behalf of the Council, Michael O'Kennedy said that in proposing the conference on the Indo-China refugee problem which starts tomorrow in Geneva under UN auspices, the EC had created a basis for global action to tackle the problem at its source.

He assured the House that in providing aid for the relief of refugees, the Community would make it clear to Vietnam, Cambodia and any other states involved that this did not imply acceptance of 'this disorderly exodus' continuing from these countries.

Bob Cohen, (Du,S) said food aid must not be used as a weapon. Lord Bethell, (UK,ED) spoke of the 'massive issue of life and death'.

For the Commission, Claude Cheysson said at least 400,000 refugees were surviving in abominable conditions. The meeting in Geneva tomorrow, chaired by the Secretary-General of the UN, would receive a report from the UN High Commissioner for refugees.

The Commission had never played politics with food aid and food aid was still being provided to Vietnam under previous budget allocations, although aid of 54 mua under the 1979 budget had been suspended.

The EC was ready to meet half the cost of food aid for refugees in transit over an interim period. As regards final asylum, this was a matter for

individual governments. Out of 200,000 refugees granted asylum, 60,000 had been taken in by EC states. The Commission favoured giving aid to other countries offering to take refugees. If EC countries could take any more, help should be possible, perhaps through the Social Fund.

Maria Louisa Cassanmagnago Cerretti, (It,EPP) said it was particularly tragic that the refugees from Vietnam should include so many children – and this in what the UN had designated the ‘Year of the Child’.

100,000 die

Lord Bethell, (UK,ED) said a representative of the UN High Commission for Refugees had told him that an estimated 100,000 Vietnamese boat people had perished on the high seas during the month of June – twice as many as had landed safely. EC food aid to Vietnam should be diverted to Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees, the speaker suggested. He hoped that the Geneva conference would succeed in finding a humanitarian solution to what he described as ‘mass murder’, ‘racism’ and ‘genocide’.

Reminding the House of the ‘heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people of their independence’, Guido Fanti, (It,CA) rejected calls for food aid to Vietnam to be discontinued. He hoped that the Geneva conference would consider not only the refugee problem but also the question of helping the whole of Indo-China to find its feet again.

Edgar Faure, (Fr,L) suggested that food aid – and, indeed, financial aid – should be stepped up. A ‘Community ship’ should be sent to the area to provide help and rescue refugees, and help given to countries in the area to enable them to provide temporary refuge. EC countries, moreover, should vastly increase the numbers of refugees they were prepared to accept.

Marie-Madeleine Dienesch, (Fr,EPD) said it fell to the European Parliament to provide evidence of the Community’s compassion and generosity.

Marco Panella, (It,Ind) said it had just been reported on French television that only 30 MEPs were in the Chamber listening to the debate on the Indochina refugees. This was due to the last minute change in the timing of the debate, at the instigation of the leader of one political group.

Independent Member Francesco Petronio, (It) said the blame for the entire Indo-Chinese situation had to be borne by the Communist governments of the area.

Alf Lomas, (UK,S) said the Chinese invasion of Vietnam earlier this year had clearly exacerbated the problems for the ethnic Chinese living there.

The Socialist Group was insistent that food aid to Vietnam should not be stopped – that would be ‘not only inhuman, it would be barbaric’.

Robert Battersby, (UK,ED) called for EC officials to be sent to the area to administer Community aid.

Motion agreed

A number of motions on aid for the Indo-China refugees were then put to the vote but only one was carried. This was the one tabled by Mr Klepsch for the EPD, Mr Bangemann for the Liberals and Mr Scott-Hopkins for the European Democrats. (Ref: Doc. 1-223/rev.II)

Changes in rules

The House then discussed a report by Mr Luster calling for changes in the European Parliament’s rules of procedure. The main effect of the motion he was tabling, he said, would be to increase to 21, the number of members needed to form a political group. At the same time the House considered at motion tabled, for their various groups, by Mr Glinne, Mr Klepsch and Mr Scott-Hopkins. This motion urged that adequate provision be made for minorities in the European Parliament, particularly facilities regarding speaking time, secretariat and rapporteurships.

Mrs Ewing, (UK, EPD) spoke against the motion asking what good reason there was for changing the rules. She pointed out that there were properly constituted parties in the House of Commons of far fewer than 21 members, even though the Commons had 635 members. Mr Ferri, (It,S) agreed with her but various other speakers felt the second motion before the House would offer adequate guarantees for the rights of the minorities in the European Parliament. Opposing the motion, Mr Maher, (Irl,NA) said that he had been told that unless a member joined a political group, it was not possible for him to have a meaningful position in the European Parliament.

FRIDAY, 20th July 1979

Rules changes

The House began its business this morning with a decision to refer the Luster report on changes in Parliament’s rules to the Committee on the Rules of Procedure.

New committees

A motion setting up 15 parliamentary committees and two delegations was carried.

The committees set up were as follows:

1. Political Affairs Committee
2. Committee on Agriculture
3. Committee on Budgets
4. Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
5. Committee on Energy and Research
6. Committee on External Economic Relations
7. Legal Affairs Committee
8. Committee on Social Affairs and Employment
9. Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning
10. Committee on Transport
11. Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection
12. Committee on Youth Affairs, Culture, Education, Information and Sport
13. Committee on Development and Cooperation
14. Committee on Budgetary Control
15. Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Petitions

Two delegations, consisting of 18 members each, were set up to the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the EEC-Greece Association and to the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the EEC-Turkey Association.

The Community's budget for 1980

The narrowing gap between the Community's spending and the ceiling on its income from 'own resources' was Christopher Tugendhat's main theme when he presented the Commission's proposals for the 1980 EC budget to Parliament. He stressed the way that rising agricultural expenditure was accelerating the rate at which the gap closed.

He recalled that the agreement on 'own resources' (revenue coming direct to the Community from customs duties, agricultural levies and the yield from a rate of up to 1% on a common base of VAT) went back to April 1970, but it had only come into full effect this year – and even now three Member States had still not adopted the common VAT base. Thus the Community's budgetary resources were being limited by a ceiling imposed nearly ten years ago.

This year, however, only 14.9% of the resources potentially available for the support of Community policies were left unused. In other words, the point at which resources were exhausted was near.

Beyond belief

The Commission did not believe that this 1970 limit 'should be allowed to hold back the development of the Community', but meanwhile agricultural spending – far and away the largest component of budget expenditure – was rising. This year expenditure on one surplus sector alone – milk – accounted for 27 % of the whole budget – a figure which Mr Tugendhat described as 'beyond belief'.

Having estimated that existing own resources would last until 1982, the Commission had made farm price proposals which would have held the increase down to 3%, compared with some 20% in recent years, but the Council had set farm prices at a level that involved an increase of 1,300 million EUA in budgetary expenditure for 1980 – or some 8.6% of the total budget.

The question of own resources would therefore be high on the agenda for both Commission and Parliament, as early as next year. If the own resources ceiling was maintained and agricultural spending was nevertheless allowed to go on rising, all the Community's other policies would be 'pushed out of the window'.

Other points: proposed Regional Fund spending for 1980 was 1,200 million EUA, compared with the 650 million envisaged for next year at the end of 1977; a rise in Social Fund spending from 767 to 1,000 million EUA was planned to help tackle youth unemployment, migrants, women and the handicapped.

Speakers in the ensuing debate welcomed Mr Tugendhat's statement. There was particular concern about the possibility that limited own resources might stand in the way of budget growth, and several speakers gave a clear warning that any fresh attempt by Council to usurp Parliament's budgetary rights – as it had done over the regional fund in 1978 – would not be tolerated.

Czechoslovak dissidents

In its final item of business, the European Parliament agreed to a resolution put down by Lord Bethell on the arrest of ten members of a Czechoslovak civil rights group. The resolution called on the Czechoslovak Government to release the ten, who face up to ten years imprisonment if convicted.

Abbreviations used in this text :

Countries :

Be	Belgium
Da	Denmark
Fr	France
Ge	Germany
Ir	Ireland
It	Italy
Lu	Luxembourg
Du	Netherlands
UK	United Kingdom

Political groups :

S	Socialist
EPP	European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group)
ED	European Democratic Group (European Conservative Group)
CA	Communist and Allies
L	Liberals
EPD	European Progressive Democrats
Ind	Technical Coordinating Group for the Defence of Groups and Independent Members
NA	Non-attached (ie not belonging to any political group)