



*European Communities
Commission
Press Release*

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July 23, 1974

ADVISORY COUNCIL URGES FRESH COMMUNITY START

Rejects "Narrow, Constricting Legalism"

The Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities has issued a new call for a return to effective Community solidarity.

While it notes recent positive signs that a fresh start is being made it feels the difficulties are far from overcome, and lists a series of measures for swift action.

The Economic and Social Committee is an advisory body set up under Article 193 of the Treaty of Rome. In some areas it must be consulted by the Council of Ministers or the Commission. In other areas it may be consulted.

Its members include a wide variety of people, ranging from farmers and craftsmen to members of the general public. Under the Treaty, Britain has 24 members.

The following is a press notice published by the Committee explaining its call for fresh action:

In face of the difficulties confronting the European Community, and taking advantage of its right of initiative, the Economic and Social Committee unanimously adopted at its plenary session of July 17 and 18 an opinion on the situation of the Community. This opinion, together with another adopted last March on the Committee's future role, will serve as a basis for the action which the professional and trade union organisations will undertake, together with their members, with a view to interest public opinion in the necessity of relaunching the Community's activity.

At the plenary session, Mr. Alfons Lappas, Chairman of the Economic and Social Committee, presented the opinion to Mr. Michel Durafour, President of the Council, whose participation in the meeting marks a new stage in the relations between the two institutions.

In the opinion, the Economic and Social Committee notes with satisfaction the recent positive signs that a fresh start is being made and the initial concerted efforts to re-establish equilibrium. It feels, however, that the difficulties are far from being overcome and calls for a return to effective Community solidarity, which should take the form of swift, tangible action to:

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- bring about European monetary solidarity with a view to a return to system of fixed parities
- set up Community machinery for effectively combatting inflation
- implement the regional policy without delay by allocating resources to the regional fund
- implement with all due despatch, the social policy programme laid down at the Paris Summit Conference
- define a common energy policy which aims at guaranteeing sufficient supplies at reasonable cost and at reducing the Community's dependence on external suppliers.

It considers that the need for Community political action makes it essential to reject any narrow, constricting legalism and precludes alleged institutional weaknesses being used any longer as an excuse for a lack of decision.

An improvement in the decision-making process should be accompanied by:

- a strengthening of the powers of supervision of the European Parliament and the election of its members by universal suffrage
- increasing participation of the economic and social groups in the Community's decisions, in particular through development of the role of the Economic and Social Committee.

Lastly, it stresses the need for a sustained flow of objective information to the public: instead of using the Community as a scapegoat by laying unpopular measures at its door or, on the other hand, presenting the progress which had been made as national victories, politicians have the duty to point out to public opinion the progress made in Community work. The professional organizations and trade unions should assume the same responsibility vis-à-vis economic and social circles.

The Economic and Social Committee considers that the provision of honest information to the public and the active participation of Community citizens are the only means capable of awakening a European consciousness. This is currently lacking in the building of Europe, without it Europe will make no progress.

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