

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1979 - 1980

18 December 1979

DOCUMENT 1-612/79

ORAL QUESTION (0-106/79)

with debate pursuant to Rule 47

of the Rules of Procedure

by Mr CAROSSINO, Mr DE PASQUALE, Mr LEONARDI,
Mr BONACCINI, Mr IPPOLITO and Mr GOUTHIER

to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject: Crisis facing the shipbuilding industry -
restructuring and conversion programmes

Considering that:

- the deepening of the crisis facing the shipbuilding and ship repair industry described in the six-monthly report which the Commission of the European Communities has presented to Parliament has given rise to serious concern;
- there is increasing recognition of the fact that it is not simply the future of a few shipyards which is at stake nor merely short-term difficulties which are involved, but that a whole wealth of experience, preparation and technology accumulated over many decades is at risk. This situation has forced various Italian shipyards to stop recruiting workers and recently to lay off large numbers of workers, now obliged to seek unemployment benefit and as a result tension has

./.

increased in the Castellamare di Stabia, Palermo, Taranto, Trieste, La Spezia and Pietra Ligure yards;

- further reorganization in addition to that carried out in the 1960s at the Community's request appears to be totally unacceptable for economic and social reasons as it would increase the already serious imbalance of employment and income between the most highly-developed and the least-favoured regions of the Community. This would have an adverse effect on a country like Italy where the shipbuilding and ship repair industry is of strategic importance, particularly in the southern regions where it is the main industry;
- medium- and long-term forecasts for this industry are unreliable as was demonstrated in the 1960s when the European shipbuilding industry was forced to rationalize just before the greatest boom in the industry's history;
- the energy crisis, the growth of short and medium-range traffic, the radical new developments in marine engines and the carriage of goods by sea, the need to modernize fleets on grounds of safety and cost-saving have led a number of countries to reconsider their forecasts and to plan programmes of aid for this industry.

Does the Commission not feel that it should:

1. review its own programme and forecasts, the criteria governing the granting of assistance for the restructuring and conversion of shipbuilding and ship repair yards;
2. enter into fresh negotiations with individual Member States with the aim of improving the efficiency and competitiveness of shipyards to enable them to overcome the serious crisis facing them and give fresh impetus to their activities?