

MEETING BETWEEN A DELEGATION FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

On the afternoon of 27 July a meeting took place between the Council and a delegation from the European Parliament headed by Mr DANKERT, President of the European Parliament, and composed of Mr LANGE, Chairman of the Committee on Budgets, Mr NOTENBOOM, 1st Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Budgets, Mrs BARBARELLA, 2nd Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Budgets, Mr Robert JACKSON, Rapporteur for Section III of the 1983 Budget, Mr SABY, Rapporteur for other sections, Mr ANSQUER and Mr BONDE, Members of the Committee on Budgets and Mr AIGNER, Chairman of the Committee on Budgetary Control.

This meeting, which was characterized by an atmosphere of openness inspired mainly by the statement on budgetary matters signed by the Presidents of the three institutions on 30 June 1982, provided the opportunity for a wide-ranging discussion on both the preliminary draft supplementary and amending budget No 1 to the 1982 budget and the preliminary draft general budget for the financial year 1983.

The discussions between the Parliamentary delegation and the Members of the Council on the two preliminary drafts enabled the Members of Parliament to highlight the political choices they wished to see reflected in the budgets.

The Members of Parliament referred in their comments to the Resolutions adopted on 8 July 1982 on the two preliminary drafts and to the Resolution of 22 April 1982 on the European Parliament's guidelines for the 1983 budget. In particular, they thought that the two branches of the budget authority should give the highest priority to appropriations for Community policies which directly or indirectly enabled the Community to make a contribution to the fight against the ever growing problem of unemployment. In this connection they

also emphasized the need to develop or strengthen Community policies with an **impact on restructuring and innovation in economic activities** within the Community. They also stressed the importance they attached to increasing resources aimed at solidarity with the developing countries. With more specific reference to the preliminary draft supplementary and amending budget for 1982, the Members of Parliament supported the Commission's proposal to use - in line with the general guidelines mentioned above - a proportion of the savings made in the sphere of management of the agricultural markets for specific projects in the social sector and for aid to the most needy developing countries.

Although the members of the Council shared the aims mentioned by the Members of Parliament, particularly with regard to the need to combat unemployment effectively, they took a more qualified view of the means to be chosen and the budgetary consequences to be drawn. Several Council members underlined the major importance of reconciling the need to develop Community policies with the constraints arising from the economic situation which dictated strict austerity in spending both at national and Community level.

With regard to co-operation in general between the two branches of the budget authority - Parliament and Council - all the participants stressed their high hopes that the tripartite statement of 30 June would in future settle the co-operation problems which had bedevilled relations in the past.

Winding up the discussion, the President of the Council assured the Parliamentary delegation that, when considering the two preliminary drafts in detail, the Council would bear in mind the guidelines and views submitted by Parliament.

DRAFT GENERAL BUDGET FOR 1983

After studying in detail the preliminary draft budget submitted by the Commission, the Council established the draft general budget for 1983.

The total budget figure will be approximately 21,098 MECU (\*) in the form of payment appropriations and approximately 22,399 MECU (\*) in the form of commitment appropriations.

The Council's discussions were focused more especially on the appropriations to be entered for non-compulsory expenditure.

For such expenditure the Council decided on an overall increase of 6.7% in the case of commitment appropriations, which gives a total of 5,984 MECU, 1,910 MECU of which will be for the Regional Fund, 1,442 MECU for the Social Fund and 2,632 MECU for other non-compulsory expenditure. The corresponding figures for payment appropriations are an overall increase of 8.2%, which is equivalent to about 4,776 MECU, 1,175 MECU of which will be for the Regional Fund, 1,090 MECU for the Social Fund and 2,511 MECU for other non-compulsory expenditure.

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(\*) subject to final calculations and on the understanding that the guidelines arrived at by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 25 May with regard to compensation for the United Kingdom and related problems are not reflected in this draft.