NOTE BIO(79) 305 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
C.C. AUX MEMBRES DU GROUPE ET A MM. BURGHARDT, DG I, LECOMTE,
DG VIII, COLMANT, SECRETARIAT GENERAL

SUBJECT : COMMISSION EXPENSES : COURT OF AUDITORS REPORT

PRESIDENT JENKINS APPEARED YESTERDAY BEFORE THE BUDGETARY CONTROL COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT. THE FOLLOWING WERE HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND SAID ABOUT THE COURT OF AUDITORS REPORT, SOME OF IT MISCONCEIVED, SOME OF IT A LEGITIMATE AND NATURAL EXPRESSION OF PUBLIC CONCERN. I FEEL THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CONCERNED IS THE RIGHT PLACE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE REPORT. THE COMMISSION, LIKE THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF OUR COMMUNITY, IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS ACTIONS TO THE CITIZENS OF EUROPE SWHOM YOU REPRESENT.

YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE COMMISSION'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE COURT OF AUDITORS REPORT AND THE NEW RULES WE HAVE ADOPTED. I WILL NOT REPEAT THEM. BUT AT THE PRESENT STAGE OF OUR DISCUSSION I WANT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO FOUR GENERAL POINTS.

FIRST THE COMMISSION HAS ACTED PROMPTLY AND, IN MY VIEW, EFFECTIVELY TO PUT RIGHT THE DIFICIENCIES OR WEAKNESSES OR ABSENCE OF RULES REVEALED IN ITS ARRANGEMENTS BY THE COURT. WE
RECEIVED THE REPORT FORMALLY FROM THE PARLIAMENT ON 28 AUGUST;
WE CONSIDERED IT IN DETAIL IN EARLY SEPTEMBER; WE DECIDED UPON
A COMPREHENSIVE REVISION OF OUR PROCEDURES ON 19 SEPTEMBER; AND
WE BROUGHT THOSE NEW PROCEDURES INTO EFFECT ON 1 OCTOBBEER. AS
YOU WILL HAVE SEEN FROM LOOKING AT OUR NEW RULES, WE HAVE ACCEPTED MOST OF THE COURT'S RECOMMENDATIONS. WHERE WE HAVE NOT
DONE SO WE HAVE EXPLAINED IN A GOOD DEAL OF DETAIL WHY.

SECONDLY I WANT TO UNDERLINE THE TOTAL INACCURACY OF THE STORY WHICH HAS BEEN WIDELY REPORTED IN THE PRESS AND IS STILL LODGED IN SOME PEOPLE'S MINDS THAT THE COMMISSION OVER-SPENT ITS BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENDITURE FOR 1978 BY 23 O/O. THE TRUTH IS THAT ON THE FIGURES PRODUCED BY THE COURT WE UNDER-SPENT OUR ALLOCATBION BY 1.5 O/O. SINCE THEN WE HAVE LEARNT THAT THE COURT ITSELF MADE A MISTAKE IN ITS FIGURES. AS A RESULT THE CORRECT PERCENTAGE FOR OUR UNDER-SPENDING WAS 3 O/O. HERE INT IS WORTH REPEATING THAT OUR EXPENDITURE IN THIS REPRESENTATIONAL CATEGORY HAS INCREASED BY ONLY 16 O/O SINCE 1973. COMPARE THIS WITH AN INCREASE OF 64 O/O IN THE COMMUNITY COST OF LIVING. COMPARE IT ALSO WITH

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THE INCREASE IN REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENDITURE BY OTHER COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS UNDER THIS HEAD OF 86 0/0 FOR THE COUNCIL AND 167 0/0 FOR THE PARLIAMENT.

THIRDLY I WANT TO SAY A WORD ABOUT OUR EXPENDITURE ON TRAVEL. CRITICISM HAS BEEN FOCUSSED ON OUR USE OF AIR TAXIS. WHILE WE AGREE WITH THE COURT'S RECOMMENDATION THAT THE RULES GOVERNING USE OF AIR TAXIS BUSHOULD BE TIGHTENED UP AND RIGOROUSLY APPLIED, MAND INDEED GO FURTHER TO ABOLISH THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN JETS AND NON-JETS, WE MREPUDIATE THE NOTION THAT THE USE OF AIR TAXIS IS A FORM OF LUXURY. I WOLL NOT GO INTO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THIS MODE OF TRANSPORT, WHEN IT HAS TO BE USED, IS COMFORTABLE. LET ME ASSURE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE THAT IT IS NOT. MORE IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT AIR TAXIS ARE ONE OF THE MEANS BY WHICH COMMISSIONERS, LIKE MINISTERS FROM OUR MEMBER GOVERNMENTS, DO THEIR JOB. WITHOUT THEIR OCCASIONAL USE WE, AGAIN LIKE MINISTERS, WOULD BE UNABLE TO DO IT.

THIS BRINGS ME TO MY FOURTH POINT. THE ONLY GENERAL CRITICISM WHICH I MAKE OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COURT OF AUDITORS REPORT IS THAT IT CONTAINS ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION AND ITS MEMBERS WHICH ARE NOT WHOLLY WELL CONCEIVED. INDEED THE PROTOTYPE OF THE IDEAL COMMISSIONER WHICH EMERGES FROM ITS PAGES WOULD BE A CARICATURE OF THE REMOTE BRIDE BRUSES BUREAUCRAT, WHO STICKS TO A PARTICULAR FUNCTION, STAYS IN BRUSSELS AS MUCH AS HE CAN, AND BESCHEWS EXCESSIVE CONTACT WITH ORDINARY PEOPLE, ABOVE ALL THOSE FROM HIS OWN COUNTRY. THIS WILL NOT DO FOR THE ROLE OF A COMMISSIONER. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION FORM A COLLEGE AND TAKE COLLECTIVE DECISIONS. THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE COMMISSION'S — AND THE COMMUNITY'S,— VIEWS AND POLICIES BOTH WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND OUTSIDE IT. THEY HAVE PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY AND ESPECIALLY THOSE FROM — IN THE JARGON — THE COUNTRY WHICH EACH KNOWS BEST.

I END AS I BEGAN. THE REPORT OF THE COURT OF AUDITORS THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF WHOSE RECOMMENTATIONS WE HAVE ACCEPTED AND THE COMMISSION'S RESPONSE TO IT SHOULD BE SEEN AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF MAKING THE COMMUNITY'S INSTITUTIONS MORE ACCOUNT ABLE. I WELCOME IT. I NOW LOOK FOR WARD TO A MORE DETAILED AND SPECIFIC DISCUSSION WITH YOU."

IN ANSWER TO SOME TWO HOURS OF QUESTIONS AND COMMENT, THE PRESIDENT ADDED THE FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST:

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- 1. THE COMMISSION'S DECISIONS REPRESENT A FULL AND MAJOR RESPONSE TO THE COURT OF AUDITORS REPORT. NO OTHER INSTITUTION HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO SUCH AN UNPRECEDENTED DEGREE OF EXAMINATION. EVEN SO, THE GREAT PART OF THE FUNDS IN QUESTION HAVE BEEN SPENT IN A PROPER MANNER, AND THE WEAKNESSES BREVEALED BY THE COURT ACCOUNT FOR A MINUTE PART OF THE TOTAL BUDGET. I AGREE THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN ABSENCE OF RULES THAT HAS NOW BEEN PUT RIGHT. WE SHOULD NOW BEEN BEEN MOVE TOWARDS COMMON RULES FOR COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AS A WHOLE.
- 2. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION IN EUROPE THAT COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS ARE EXTRAVAGANT. IT IS NOT IN PARLIAMENT'S INTEREST TO GIVE CURRENCY TO THIS IMPRESSION WHICH IN GENERAL IS NOT JUSTIFIED. ALL THE INSTITUTIONS ARE HARMED BY IT.
- 3. AVION TAXIS: I FEEL IT IS RIGHT THAT THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF SHOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR AUTHORISIUM THE USE
 OF AIR BURNER TAXIS. THERE WILL BE A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN
 EXPENSES THIS YEAR BUT USE OF AIR TAXIS CANNOT BE CUT OUT WITHOUT AFFECTING THE COMMISSION'S ABILITY TO OPERATE. NO GOVERNMENT OR MAJOR BUSINESS ENTERPRISE WOULD REGARD SUCH A SITUATION
 AS TOLERABLE. THE COMMISSION HAS TO WORK WITH GOVERNMENTS,
 AND IT IS NOT IN PARLIAMENT'S INTEREST TO PUT IT AT A DISADVANTAGE.

NOTE TO NATIONAL OFFICES: WE SHALL SEND YOU COPIES OF THE REPORT AND THE COMMISSION'S RESPONSE AS SOON AS THEY ARE AVAILABLE.

REGARDS, M. SANTARELLI COMEUR NNNN