

PAPANDREOU

does not set a threshold, allows it to be understood that the thresholds currently in force in the member countries could remain in being.

Without getting overly involved in detail I want now to mention the question of the maximum duration of fixed-term employment contracts. I believe that we should view the Commission's proposal in the context of the overall programme of proposals to be presented for debate in Parliament during this year and 1991. We never promised to submit all of the proposals in 1990. That is quite out of the question, even though I personally, and I am sure I can speak for the whole Commission on this, would have preferred it. There is a genuine problem, however, and I feel that the honourable Members recognize this. But certainly we are working extremely hard to ensure that we meet the target we set for ourselves, namely to have completed the preparation of the proposals by the end of 1991. The Commission's proposal will reach Parliament shortly I hope, and we shall then have the opportunity to discuss it. From our standpoint there is every willingness to cooperate, and I think that we have demonstrated this. But, of course, as I have said already, this cooperation has to respect certain principles which are binding on all of us. Whether we like it or not, there is a division of powers and we are all subject to certain constraints. I too am not happy with the framework within which I have to operate, but I have to comply. Having said that, we have a duty together to consider what changes are necessary for much faster promotion of the European social area given the poor rate of progress that has been achieved on this compared with the economic sector. An excellent opportunity for discussion of these changes and for decisions to be taken that place less emphasis on the large market and more on moving us nearer to a people's Europe will, I feel sure, be provided by the two intergovernmental conferences due later this year.

PRESIDENT. — The debate is closed.

The vote will take place at 6.30 p.m. this evening.

5. *Relations between the EEC and China*
(continuation)

PRESIDENT. — The next item is the continuation of the joint debate on three oral questions on relations between the EEC and the People's Republic of China.¹

PAPANDREOU, Member of the Commission. — (GR) Mr President, one year ago we were all deeply dismayed by the events in Tiananmen Square. The Community took immediate action which reflected the anger felt by all of the Member States. Now, a year later, our thoughts are once again focused on those who suffered and died during those events.

The dismay we felt at the time was so much greater on account of the fact that in the 10 years prior to those events China had been engaged in economic reform and had begun to emerge from its shell with excellent results for economic growth and the living standards of its people. Despite the Chinese leadership's assertion that it has no intention of changing direction or of relaxing its efforts we believe that the events of last June have put these achievements at risk.

The Commission is keeping a close eye on developments in China in this policy sector. We get the impression that as the country emerges from its period of severe crisis the situation is stabilizing somewhat. Within the framework of this relative stability some measure of recovery may be possible. Looking at the political situation, however, the Commission feels obliged to make it clear, in keeping with the Member States, that on the question of human rights — which is crucial as far as the Community is concerned — things are anything but satisfactory, as the recent violations on the occasion of the events of June 1989 have shown.

Even so, the Commission feels that the Chinese authorities have made certain moves in the right direction. A number of political detainees have been released and martial law has been lifted in Peking and in Tibet. I must emphasize that in carrying through its relations with China the Commission is being guided totally by the 1989 Madrid Summit statement which was of the same tenor as the resolutions that your Parliament has passed.

Two, principally, of the steps taken by the Madrid Summit have a bearing for the Commission: high-level contacts and cooperation initiatives. Since the events of last June the Commission has had no high-level contact, at the political level that is, with the Peking authorities, and no new cooperation initiatives have been launched. For the most part those initiatives which were already under way have been continued with, as have those of our projects which, to quote the Madrid stipulation, continue to make sense under the present conditions. The Commission has no mandate to initiate a change of policy away from that adopted by the Member States at the heads of government level. I merely note therefore the assertion in one of the questions tabled by the honourable Members that it is clearly in Europe's interest to have friendly relations with the Chinese nation. It would not be in our interests to adopt any policy which could lead to China's becoming isolated and cut off from contacts that can beneficially influence the thinking of its leaders concerning the country's future.

Allow me to say that I look forward to the situation improving to an extent that will make it possible for the Community to resume the friendly relations which it long formerly had with China and which we consider to be the norm given that improved situation.

HINDLEY (S). — Mr President, like the Commission I would point to the anniversary of a bloody and

¹ See Verbatim Report of Proceedings, 13. 6. 90.

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unnecessary massacre in which innocent people and bystanders were killed in Tiananmen Square and in the surrounding areas. That terror has not ceased. Many innocent people are in gaol. China remains a country which carries out the death penalty and often for the flimsiest of reasons. It is also significant that the death penalty has been carried out on young workers, people who could be seen as the organizers and therefore capable of future opposition.

Human rights are indivisible. I am not a libertarian who would defend free speech without limit. I would not, for example, extend the right of free speech to those who pursue racist, fascist or bellicose ideas. But I do believe that people have the fundamental right of peaceful dissent and peaceful dissent is all that those people in Tiananmen Square were about. If people are denied access to democratic institutions and democratic forms of expression they have no other remedy but to take to the streets, as we have seen in Eastern Europe. And I would argue that the right to take to the streets in peaceful demonstration is a basic human right.

If the mood in Tiananmen Square could be described as hysterical that was not the fault of the demonstrators. It was because communication between the government and its people had broken down.

Nor, if I may digress for a moment, should our concern be simply with China. We have responsibilities to Macao and Hong Kong and those events in Tiananmen Square created a great problem of confidence in those two territories. We have responsibilities up to the handover of those territories back to China way beyond 1997 and 1999.

Can I come to the Commission's point about dialogue. The Chinese Government's line is always to argue that China is somehow a special case. They do not interfere in other countries' internal relations nor should we interfere in theirs. On the left of this Parliament many of us have had great sympathy with the People's Republic. That sympathy has been undermined by continued abuses of human rights and that sympathy is now forfeited by the bloody events of last year.

But there are other considerations too, mainly the question of trade. The European Community and Europe as a whole continue to see China in the old nineteenth century way as nothing other than potential customers, 1 000 million in fact. As long as we regard China as a place for our exports we will constantly make concessions to the Chinese Government on human rights, and this we must not do. I would remind the Commission that in a recent agreement with Argentina we rightly stipulated that human rights would be part and parcel of a trade package. China should be subject to the same requirement. I would urge the Commission to view its relations with China in that light.

CASSANMAGNAGO-CERRETTI (PPE). — *(IT)* The relations between the European Community and the People's Republic of China are based on a cooperation

agreement concluded in 1985. Unfortunately, following the bloody events of Tiananmen Square last year, relations with China were suddenly restricted, which was reflected mainly in a reduction in the execution of the planned cooperation projects. On the basis of constant respect for Chinese sovereignty and in a sincere spirit of friendship with the Chinese people, we hope that the process of reform that began in recent years will now be followed up effectively and, above all, we hope that human rights and fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression and information will be established. The economic and political openness that is emerging at international level must also and above all involve that country with its thousands of years of civilization, which must as soon as possible recover the role it should play during this new stage of openness and international reform, avoiding, as the Commission said, any form of isolation.

I had intended to ask the Commission about the effects of our provisions, but the Commissioner has already informed us of them. I note that in its analysis of the progress of the situation of China, the Commission has already seen signs of change for the better within the People's Republic.

In the hope that the Chinese authorities too will follow the right road, we must now consider further forms of cooperation, above all in the economic, scientific, cultural and university field, given that it is enormously in Europe's interest to maintain friendly relations and constant cultural exchanges with China. So we would ask the Commission to formulate guidelines on the policy to be pursued towards China in future and to keep Parliament regularly informed of it.

We will therefore endorse the compromise text which basically reflects our views.

BETTINI (V). — *(IT)* Mr President, we must ask, and Parliament must ask what sort of interlocutor China is for us given the general condemnation of its lack of respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the individual. The bloody defence of a system in China that was in a state of greater structural crisis and crisis in terms of its direction than we had realized also has extremely complex and contradictory facets if we remember that some of the opponents of the regime were recently released.

Parliament seems unable to go beyond a rather sterile a priori condemnation which is disregarded by the Chinese leaders and their diplomatic representatives whose sole concern appears to be that of flooding our desks with propaganda material. The Chinese for their part accuse us as follows, and I quote a letter to Barón Crespo: 'Interfering in the internal affairs of others on the pretext of protecting human rights can only cause great confusion in international relations'. Certainly, at a time when photographs are published in the West of summary executions showing scenes and methods dating back to Saló's republic, with the aggravating circumstance of a chromatically faithful image, we

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cannot get out of this nightmare simply by condemning it in this House, since that just bounces off a wall of rubber. It is therefore essential to proceed along carefully defined roads which in our group's view are the following: firstly, to resume the activities of the delegation concerned with relations with China, which have apparently been frozen, for which hibernation I too am responsible as its vice-chairman; the committee, the delegation, wants to conduct an inquiry on respect for human rights in China on the basis of a form of cooperation still to be defined. Secondly we call for a Commission inquiry into the firms that do not observe the trade embargo, of which there are quite a few. Thirdly — and here we do not agree with Mrs Cassanmagnago — we must review the forms of cultural cooperation and exchanges, which are not confined purely to scientific and university exchanges, that already exist to some extent between Europe and China.

PANNELLA (NI). — (FR) Mr President, coincidence sometimes organizes things well. This honourable Assembly decided this morning that the sanctions applied against the conservatives in South Africa needed to be confirmed against the reformers in South Africa.

I called that a craven, cowardly policy, and the same words spring to mind all the more readily when it comes to China and the anniversary of Tiananmen Square, or the situation in Tibet — when the Dalai Lama visited Parliament, he was practically let in through the back door, so shamefaced was the House about receiving him here! This Assembly bears comparison with the Council in the decisions it takes when facing important problems. I maintain that we need to tell the Council and the Commission in the clearest terms, at the very least, that any act of goodwill towards China has to be linked to specific guarantees regarding oppression in Tibet or the provinces whose names we do not even know, where there are no laws, not even the law of apartheid, where the very principles of the rule of law are flouted, where we do not know whether 10 000 people have been exterminated, although perhaps we shall years from now.

That, Mr President, is what the response from the Community, the response from our Parliament, amounts to. We should not be surprised if we fail to grasp the opportunities that history offers us, or if perhaps in the not too distant future we face the prospect of losing our own freedom and the rule of law at home, for which we shall have this bad Parliament and the decisions it takes to thank.

PRESIDENT. — The debate is closed.

We shall now proceed to the request for an early vote on the four motions for resolutions to wind up the debate on the oral questions on relations between the EEC and the People's Republic of China.

I put the request to the vote.

(Parliament agreed to an early vote)

The vote on the motions for resolutions will take place at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

6. Competition in the air transport sector

PRESIDENT. — The next item is the report (Doc. A3-106/90) by Ms McIntosh, on behalf of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, on

the proposals from the Commission to the Council (COM(89) 417 final — Doc. C3-149/89) concerning the application of the competition rules to air transport:

- I. a regulation amending Regulation (EEC) 3975/87 laying down the procedure for the application of the rules on competition to undertakings in the air transport sector;
- II. a regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 3976/87 on the application of Article 85(3) of the Treaty to certain categories of agreements and concerted practices in the air transport sector;
- III. a regulation on the application of Article 85(3) of the Treaty to certain categories of agreements and concerted practices in the air transport sector.

McINTOSH (ED), rapporteur. — Mr President, I have great pleasure in presenting to the House the first McIntosh report but I must say that I deeply regret the lax way in which this report has been dealt with and the consequent disruption of this House's and the Commission's arrangements.

This report considers three Commission proposals, the objectives of which are to extend the scope of the measures contained in the two regulations of 14 December 1987, that is to say, the first package of measures on competition in the air transport sector, to include domestic air transport within Member States and international air transport between EEC airports and the airports of third countries. The report effectively approves the enabling legislation to apply Articles 85 and 86 of the EEC Treaty to these areas which were omitted from the first package.

There is currently a gap in the law and therefore uncertainty following judgments handed down by the Court of Justice. In the 'Nouvelles frontières' case the Court of Justice ruled that Article 86 of the Treaty was directly applicable by the national courts. In the Ahmed Saeed case the Court ruled that Article 85 of the Treaty was also directly applicable.

The Commission therefore calls on the Council in these proposals to authorize it to clarify how Articles 85 and 86 will apply to domestic and extra-Community air transport, thus ending the present legal uncertainty.

Mr President, turning to the individual amendments to the first proposed regulation. Amendment No 1 from the Committee on Transport and Tourism calls on the