

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE

Tuesday 25 September 2001
(*Afternoon*)

Session 1

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE **10th Meeting 2001, Session 1**

CONVENER

*Hugh Henry (Paisley South) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)
*Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West)
*Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
*Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
*Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP)
Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD)
*Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO ATTENDED:

Christine Boch (Scottish Parliament Directorate of Legal Services)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Stephen Imrie

ASSISTANT CLERK

David Simpson

LOCATION

Committee Room 2

Scottish Parliament

European Committee

Tuesday 25 September 2001

(Afternoon)

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 14:01*]

The Convener (Hugh Henry): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the 10th meeting in 2001 of the European Committee. I have received apologies from Nora Radcliffe.

I welcome a colleague, Russell Keith, to today's meeting. Russell is clerk to the European Affairs Committee in the National Assembly for Wales and we are delighted that he is able to spend some time with us. He is sitting in the corner—please do not draw any conclusions from that seating arrangement.

Items in Private

The Convener: Does the committee agree to take items 4 to 9 in private?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Convener's Report

The Convener: The first thing I have to report on is the response from the Scottish Executive to our request for additional information in relation to our seventh report, on infectious salmon anaemia and viral haemorrhagic septicaemia. I have discussed the text with the clerk and the legal adviser and I think it now responds to the points on which we wished to receive more information. Do we agree to copy the material to the Transport and the Environment Committee, the Rural Development Committee and Maureen Macmillan, a former member of the committee who was the reporter on the matter?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: The next item is to comment on the meeting held with Commissioner Wallström on 20 September. Unfortunately I was in Brussels that day, but I know that several members attended the meeting with the commissioner and had an informative discussion. Perhaps Colin Campbell or Helen Eadie want to comment.

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): It was a very informative discussion. I was impressed by the commissioner's professionalism and by the fact that she was prepared to express her personal opinions on certain issues, particularly when she was not in tune with others. She was very good.

Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab): I was extremely impressed by her. She was most committed and very enthusiastic about her remit. It was a real privilege to be there. I took advantage of the occasion to lobby her on a matter relating to the Rosyth ferry proposals. I was pleased to be able to do that.

The Convener: On the same day, President Rigol of the Catalan Parliament visited us and there was a highly useful exchange of views on some of the work that can be done between the two Parliaments in the run-up to the intergovernmental conference. Do Irene Oldfather and Dennis Canavan wish to comment?

Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab): The meeting was well attended and enjoyable. I was interested in President Rigol's views on interregional co-operation and the promotion of cultural diversity. The meeting was productive.

Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): I was not able to stay for the whole meeting, but I found the part I attended informative and well worth while. The committee should consider future opportunities for dialogue with our colleagues from Catalonia.

The Convener: Thanks. Does Colin Campbell wish to comment?

Colin Campbell: I went to a reception for the President of the Catalan Parliament that evening, at which many of the issues that have been mentioned were discussed. There was a co-operative and congenial atmosphere with regard to what we might do together as—what for the moment I am forced to call—sub-national Parliaments.

Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP): George Reid mentioned to me that an agreement on co-operation had been presented to the Parliament by the Catalans and the Flemings last week. Can we have details of that?

The Convener: I have not seen it, but we can make inquiries and examine it at a future meeting.

Yesterday, I spoke at a well-attended conference in Edinburgh on the future of Europe. A fair cross-section of Scottish life attended, with one or two exceptions. There was wide-ranging discussion. Do Colin Campbell or Lloyd Quinan wish to comment?

Mr Quinan: The convener alluded to the fact that the business community was represented in spades, as was the voluntary sector, but there were no representatives from the Scottish Trades Union Congress or individual unions. In addition, local authorities were not represented.

Some of the discussions operated in a tight bubble. The discussions were useful, in particular the contributions of the former, I think, Polish ambassador to the United Kingdom and the Czech ambassador. I hope that it will be possible to get the speed-reading Andalucian student's paper because, from what I could pick up, it was very interesting. Just as Andalucians tend to speak Spanish fast, he spoke English rather quickly. The paper would be useful for the committee's governance inquiry, because it was about asymmetrical federalism in Spain and its potential for development across Europe.

Colin Campbell: The whole conference was interesting, but the people who came from outside the box brought a different dimension from those who were trapped inside the box. The Czech ambassador was refreshing, in particular his assertion that there is no such thing as the man in the street in the Czech Republic; there is the man in the pub. He was not talking about Europe either, so that challenged us all.

Scrutiny

The Convener: Item 3 is scrutiny of documents. Before we begin the scrutiny process, I ask Stephen Imrie and Christine Boch whether they wish to make any comments.

Christine Boch (Scottish Parliament Directorate of Legal Services): SP 2225 is the Eurojust document and can be found at page 12 of the correspondence report. Members will note the questions that we put to the Executive, which has answered the committee's queries. We asked for details of the UK representatives on the provisional judicial co-operation unit. Although the Executive pointed out that there was only one UK representative at present—Mike Kennedy, a chief prosecutor from the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales—it has made representations for the appointment of a Scottish member to Eurojust, which will take over the provisional judicial co-operation unit. Members may wish to consider asking the Executive to keep the committee informed of the result of those representations.

The Convener: That is sensible advice—we will ask the Executive for that information. Do members have questions or comments?

Mr Quinan: We are all still trying to find the paper.

The Convener: A single-sheet document was circulated.

Stephen Imrie (Clerk): While members consider the document, they may also wish to consider whether it would be advisable for the committee to seek outside views on representation on the provisional judicial co-operation unit. If members were keen, I would be more than happy to contact bodies such as the Law Society of Scotland or the Scottish Human Rights Centre to take external views on the question.

The Convener: Do members agree with Stephen Imrie's suggestion?

Members indicated agreement.

Mr Quinan: I suggest that, as well as contacting the Law Society, we should also contact the judges and the Faculty of Advocates.

The Convener: There would be no harm in seeking their views.

Mr Quinan: I am struck by the comment in the note that

"Each Member State has sent one prosecutor or Judge".

Neither the Law Society nor the judiciary has access to the unit so I would prefer to contact those groups directly.

Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab): What about asking the Crown Office as well?

The Convener: Yes. Do members agree?

Members indicated agreement.

Christine Boch: On SP 2364, the stock recovery plan that is outlined in the Commission communication is not limited to cuts in fishing efforts. The Commission makes it clear that further reductions in total allowable catches are necessary. Members may wish to consider asking the Executive to keep the committee informed of the substance of any further measures that it introduces to address the social and economic impact of the sets of measures that are envisaged under the stock recovery plan.

The Convener: A further note from Christine Boch has been circulated to members. Christine's notes are helpful, concise and clearly laid out.

Stephen Imrie: I will make a minor point. Credit where credit is due is a good policy to adopt, so it is worth while placing on record our thanks to certain officials in the Executive for their speedy and informative response to our questions about two documents. SP 2230 and SP 2265 can be found in the correspondence report and are exemplary Scottish cover notes. They provide members with a lot of information about the Executive's activities prior to and at Council meetings.

The Convener: Do members endorse those comments?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: As there are no further comments or questions, we will move on to the scrutiny process.

The recommendation is that the committee consider the following document, on page 1:

SP 2461 (EC Ref No 7408/4/01 EUROJUST 7)

Do members agree that recommendation?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: There are no documents on page 2 to be referred to other committees.

Page 3 lists the documents for which we await further information. Those documents are:

SP 2129 (EC Ref No 7408/01 EUROJUST 7)

SP 2225 (EC Ref No 7408/1/01 EUROJUST 7 REV 1)

SP 2310 (EC Ref No 9044/01 COM(2001) 221 final)

SP 2400 (EC Ref No 10372/01 COM(2001) 259 final)

SP 2242 (EC Ref No 6873/01 COM(2001) 166 final)

SP 2295 (EC Ref No 8812/01 COM(2001) 247 final)

SP 2332 (EC Ref No 8632/01 ADD 1 REV 1)

SP 2364 (EC Ref No 9874/01 COM(2001) 326 final)

SP 2458 (EC Ref No 11161/01 COM(2001) 410 final)

SP 2467 (EC Ref No 10536/01 COR 1 ENFOPOL 71)

SP 2468 (EC Ref No 11088/01 ENFOPOL 82)

SP 2473 (EC Ref No 11199/01 WTO 82)

SP 2207 (EC Ref No 8242/01 DROIPEN 39)

SP 2208 (EC Ref No 8115/01 DROIPEN 37)

SP 2466 (EC Ref No 10912/01)

Do members agree the recommendation that decisions on those documents should be taken at a future meeting?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: The recommendation for the following documents, on page 4, is that we copy them to another committee for interest only:

SP 2470 (EC Ref No 11190/01)

SP 2471 (EC Ref No 11204/01)

Do members agree that recommendation?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: The recommendation for the following documents, on pages 5 to 7, is that no further action be taken:

SP 2218 (EC Ref No 7983/01 COM(2001) 186 final)

SP 2230 (EC Ref No 6268/01 COM(2001) 87 final)

SP 2232 (EC Ref No 8194/01 SEC(2001) 609)

SP 2265 (EC Ref No 7887/01 COM(2001) 201 final)

SP 2271 (EC Ref No 8191/01 COM(2001) 234 final)

SP 2424 (EC Ref No 10703/01 COM(2001) 274 final)

SP 2452 (EC Ref No 11055/01 COM(2001) 348 final)

SP 2453 (EC Ref No 11073/01 COM(2001) 399 final)

SP 2454 (EC Ref No 11061/01 COM(2001) 383 final)

SP 2455 (EC Ref No 11027/01 COM(2001) 409 final)

SP 2456 (EC Ref No 11151/01 COM(2001) 405 final)

SP 2457 (EC Ref No 10286/01 PESC 266)

SP 2459 (EC Ref No 9616/01 COM(2001) 389 final)

SP 2460 (EC Ref No 10996/01 COM(2001) 398 final)

SP 2472 (EC Ref No 11231/01)

SP 2474 (EC Ref No 11130/01 COMER 75)

SP 2475 (EC Ref No COM(2001) 419 11273/01)

SP 2476 (EC Ref No COM(2001) 390 11208/01)

SP 2477 (EC Ref No COM(2001) 411 11203/01)

SP 2478 (EC Ref No COM(2001) 402 11202/01)

SP 2480 (EC Ref No COM(2001) 212 6405/01)

SP 2481 (EC Ref No COM(2001) 427 11038/01)

SP 2462 (EC Ref No 10807/01)

SP 2463 (EC Ref No 10168/01)

SP 2464 (EC Ref No 10809/01)

SP 2465 (EC Ref No 10810/01)

SP 2479 (EC Ref No 9961/01 ADD 1)

Do members agree that recommendation?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Irene Oldfather: I do not seem to have received the documents with my papers. Were they sent separately? A number of members are struggling today.

Stephen Imrie: The papers were circulated separately, for which I offer my apologies. We were able to send them only late on Friday, although they were circulated by e-mail. Additional sets are available today.

The Convener: The problem for members who live on the west coast is that a number of offices were closed for the Glasgow September weekend and the postal service was not operating.

We can circulate papers now if members so wish. Failing that, members can pick up a set of papers at the end of the meeting.

Mr Home Robertson: Is this the normal scrutiny list?

The Convener: Yes.

Mr Quinan: I go along with the recommendations.

The Convener: We agreed to take items 4 to 9 in private. I thank members of the public for attending.

14:15

Meeting continued in private until 15:55.

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