

THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

ATHENS

4-6 DECEMBER 1983

Documents in the dossier include:

Preparations for the Athens European Council

Reproduced from the Bulletin of the European Communities, No. 9/1983

Preparations for the Athens European Council

Reproduced from the Bulletin of the European Communities No. 10/1983

Agriculture: Proposals for Rationalizing the Common Agricultural Policy

Reproduced from the Bulletin of the European Communities, No. 9/1983

The Athens European Council

Reproduced from the Bulletin of the European Communities, No. 12/1983

The Failure of the Athens Summit Does not Mean the Failure of the Community

European Community News No. 23/1983

European Community Information Service

Washington DC

Summary of the Statement by Prime Minister Papandreou to the European Parliament

Greece: The Week in Review

19 December 1983

3. Preparations for the Athens European Council

1.3.1. The fourth special Council meeting was held on 20 September with Mr Grigorios Varfis in the chair.¹ Preparations had been made for it, as for previous meetings, by the *ad hoc* working parties and the single preparatory group.

1.3.2. The single preparatory group held its second meeting on 12 September, again with Mr Varfis in the chair. With the special Council meeting in mind, it discussed the two aspects of the Commission's proposals drawn up in preparation for the Athens European Council which had not yet been dealt with, i.e. new policies and financing.

The discussions on financing revealed a large majority, at this stage, in favour of increasing Community own resources.

With reference to the development of common policies other than the agricultural policy, the French, German and British delegations

presented memoranda relating respectively to the creation of a common industrial and research area, economic convergence and new policies. No real discussion took place, but it is important that new policies should have been included as a significant element in the negotiations.

The group also continued its discussion on changes in the common agricultural policy,² devoting itself largely to procedural matters and, notably, specifying a number of issues to be put to the *ad hoc* working party on agriculture. The group held a relatively short discussion on the structural Funds,³ primarily about the ERDF, to pinpoint matters to be put to the *ad hoc* working party on the

¹ Bull. EC 7/8-1983, point 2.4.3.

² Bull. EC 7/8-1983, points 1.1.2 to 1.1.12.

³ Bull. EC 7/8-1983, points 1.1.13 to 1.1.20.

structural Funds (technical examination of matters such as concentration of assistance, quota/non-quota assistance, and the working of indicative ranges).

1.3.3. In addition to memoranda from various delegations, the special Council meeting held on 20 September also had before it a communication from the Commission relating to the development of Community politics other than the common agricultural policy.¹

This communication, devoted to the improvement of the international competitiveness of European firms, recommends, with an eye to the Athens European Council, that a number of priority decisions should be taken with respect to economic and monetary policy, strengthening the internal market, energy and research policy and the development of advanced technologies.

The decisions in question would be selected from the numerous Commission proposals already transmitted to the Council. They would be, firstly, horizontal decisions on broad policy and, secondly, more specific decisions that would bear witness to the European Council's desire for progress, e.g. in the economic and monetary spheres and with regard to new technologies.

1.3.4. Much of the Council's time was devoted to hearing each delegation's views on Community financing. Some Member States considered the priority to be correction of budgetary imbalances, with the possibility of later developments once this problem was solved, whereas others put the emphasis on Community dynamism and the launching of common policies which would in themselves correct these imbalances.

In conclusion, the chair observed that while all the approaches outlined in Stuttgart should be explored, raising the VAT ceiling was the only system which the delegations viewed as capable of ensuring the availability of new own resources to the Community. He urged the delegations to look closely into the feasibility of a hybrid system, combining the modulation of part of revenue (VAT) with an adjustment mechanism for expenditure (Danish proposal for a convergence fund).

All the options—including the safety net proposed by the United Kingdom (an automatic mechanism combining the notions of a Member State's net transfer and its GDP)—are still open and will be considered again at the Athens meeting on 10-12 October.

With regard to new policies, all the delegations emphasized the very great importance they place on this aspect of the negotiations. The special Council meeting discussed at length the procedure to be followed, with a view to establishing a parallel relationship between the decisions to be taken by the European Council in December on reform of the CAP and budgetary matters on the one hand, and those to be taken on other common policies on the other. The meeting stressed the need to ensure that the decisions taken in Athens were not a mere litany of pious hopes but were feasible measures set within a logical framework. The meeting asked the Commission to bring forward a proposal on the priority decisions to be selected for inclusion in the Athens package.

To prevent its agenda becoming too crowded, the special Council meeting asked the Council, in its various regular compositions, to examine certain items. A number of informal meetings of Ministers took place in September for this purpose.²

1.3.5. In September the Commission put up several papers for the special Council meeting. First, it transmitted its second communication on the international competitiveness of European firms, at the request of the September meeting. This document indicates priorities on which decisions should be taken before or during the European Council in Athens: according to the ECU the status of a convertible currency; European standardization, opening up access to public contracts, cooperation between firms; scientific research and the development of advanced technologies (framework programme, Esprit programme,

¹ COM(83)547 final.

² Points 2.1.1, 2.1.38, 2.1.75 and 2.1.136.

telecommunications and biotechnology) and energy policy.

The Commission also sent two communications on biotechnology and telecommunications,¹ supplementing those transmitted to the Stuttgart European Council in June.

In agriculture, the Commission presented proposals for Regulations on the milk sector,² and on the introduction of a tax on consumption of oils and fats other than

butter,³ and its suggestions for changes in structures policy.⁴ These proposals are currently being examined, as regards the technical problems they pose, by the *ad hoc* working party on agriculture and the single preparatory group.

¹ Points 2.1.23 and 2.1.25.

² Point 2.1.80.

³ Point 2.1.95.

⁴ Points 1.2.1 to 2.2.10.

4. Preparations for the Athens European Council

1.4.1. The fifth special Council meeting was held from 10 to 12 October, attended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Agriculture, and with Mr Thorn, Mr Ortoli, Mr Davignon and Mr Dalsager representing the Commission.¹ This was the first real negotiating session: now that the Member States' positions on the four main subjects covered by the mandate have all been presented, the second task of these special meetings is to work out agreements on the various points.

Despite urgent appeals by the chairman, Mr Grigorios Varfis, and the contributions made by Mr Thorn and his colleagues, the discussions produced little in the way of progress since the delegations mainly contented themselves with restating established positions. Expressing his disappointment at the delegation's refusal to run the risk of making concessions, Mr Varfis indicated that the chair would try to put together a package which would be sufficiently balanced to form a basis for comprehensive negotiations at the November meeting.

It emerged from the discussions concerning the reform of the common agricultural policy that there was no convergence of views on the milk question. However, there was some measure of agreement on two basic issues in connection with cereals—a cautious prices policy and the stabilization of imports of cereal substitutes. Finally, most delegations agreed that the MCAs should be eliminated as soon as possible but two aspects were still at issue: the German delegation was opposed to ending the MCAs in two years since it considered that the resulting price reductions for German producers were unacceptable; in future, it recommended that MCAs should be calculated by reference to the green rate of the strongest currency. The only real outcome of the discussions was the creation of a high-level group to review agricultural questions prior to a discussion at political level in November.

No progress was made on the future financing of the Community. Some Member States consider that the restoration of balance between national contributions is a high priority, while others feel that the Community must adopt new objectives in response to the challenges facing the European economy and hence must provide itself with the necessary funds. No unanimity could be reached on any of the solutions proposed by the delegations, e.g. the safety net proposed by the United Kingdom or the convergence fund proposed by Denmark. The Commission was asked to rework its evaluation of the budgetary situation up to 1986.

All the delegations confirmed the need for progress with the common policies. Since the special Council was not in a position to adopt the requisite operational measures, it called upon the regular 'technical' meetings of the Council to obtain results on the following matters before the next special meeting in November:

- (i) Economic and financial affairs: role of the ECU; EMS and convergence; capital markets; international economic and monetary cooperation; finance for innovation.
- (ii) Internal market: Community certification of products from non-member countries; simplification of formalities at frontiers; standards; temporary tariff protection for infant industries.
- (iii) Research: adoption of Esprit; multi-annual JRC programme; guidelines for telecommunications and biotechnology.
- (iv) Energy: solid fuels; timetable for the work programme.
- (v) Industry: improvement of the competitiveness of firms and cooperation between firms.

1.4.2. The single preparatory group met several times in October to prepare for the fifth special meeting of the Council and the

¹ Bull. EC 9-1983, points 1.3.1 to 1.3.5.

sixth meeting due in November. At its 28 October meeting it gave a progress report on three subjects: structural Funds, future financing of the Community and new policies. Some progress was made on the structural Funds, in particular the ERDF, with the beginnings of a consensus on the Commission's ideas on coordination, a large measure of agreement on the guidelines for reforming the ERDF and a favourable reception for multiannual planning. Faced by the extreme complexity of the various aspects of the future financing of the Community, the inevitable interlocking between them and the inflexibility of certain positions, the Commission representatives stressed that only a general political solution could succeed in Athens. As regards new policies, following the favourable reception given on the Commission's proposals for European cooperation in the industrial sector,¹ it was decided to set up a new *ad hoc*

working party to draft conclusions for the European Council.

1.4.3. The Commission presented the special Council meeting with further papers on the CAP: proposals for amending the system of monetary compensatory amounts² and two proposals for the introduction of a guarantee threshold for durum wheat and sunflower seed.³ It will give particular consideration to the Council's request that it look again at its evaluation of the budgetary environment up to 1986 and to the new proposals for the review of the Regional Fund which will reflect its previous ideas on defining the role of the structural Funds.

¹ COM(83)578.

² Point 2.1.102.

³ Point 2.1.110.

methods in question were developed by the Commission in cooperation with experts from government and industry.

Agriculture

Proposals for rationalizing the common agricultural policy

2.1.75. After sending a general communication on this matter to the Council in July,¹ the Commission put up proposals for a Regulation on milk and milk products,² the introduction of a tax on the consumption of food oils and fats other than butter, irrespective of their origin,³ and changes in the policy on agricultural structures.⁴

Council

2.1.76. At its meeting on 26-27 September the Council resumed⁵ work on the adjustment of the Community rules on Mediterranean products, fruit and vegetables and olive oil, but little progress in the alignment of the various standpoints was achieved. The link between this work and the current review of the common agricultural policy was stressed.⁶

As it wound up its discussions, the Council agreed to take up the matter again at its next meeting.

2.1.77. Other items on the agenda included the proposal for an amendment of the general rules for the aid scheme for dried grapes and dried figs for 1983/84,⁷ which the Council again considered, without reaching agreement. It discussed various ways and means of introducing transitional measures pending the adoption of a definitive scheme.

The Council also continued its work on three proposals for Directives recommending amendments to the Community lists of less-favoured areas within the meaning of Directive 75/268/EEC in Italy, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands,⁸ and on the proposal to implement at Community level a number of coordinated and joint agricultural research projects between 1 January 1984 and 31 December 1988.⁹ No agreement on

the amounts to be allocated to this five-year programme has yet been reached.

2.1.78. As decided at its meeting on 16 and 17 May when it discussed farm prices for 1983/84, the Council, subject to Parliament's opinion, endorsed four proposals for Regulations on structural matters,¹⁰ one concerning the development of agricultural advisory services in Greece, one amending Regulation (EEC) No 1054/81 establishing a common measure for the development of beef cattle production in Ireland and Northern Ireland, a third establishing a common measure to speed up collective irrigation schemes in Greece, and a fourth setting up a special emergency measure to assist livestock production in Italy. These Regulations will be formally adopted simultaneously once Parliament has delivered its opinion.

Informal meeting of Agriculture Ministers

2.1.79. On 7 September the Ministers of Agriculture held an informal meeting in Athens to discuss new directions in structures policy, on which the Commission presented proposals at the end of the month.⁴

Market organizations

Adjustments to basic Regulations

Milk and milk products

2.1.80. On 14 September the Commission sent the Council the first three detailed proposals for implementing a system of production thresholds in the milk sector.¹¹

¹ Bull. EC 7/8-1983, points 1.1.2 *et seq.*

² Point 2.1.80 to 2.1.84.

³ Point 2.1.95.

⁴ Point 1.2.1 *et seq.*

⁵ Bull. EC 6-1983, point 2.1.136.

⁶ Point 1.3.1 *et seq.*

⁷ OJ C 94, 8.4.1983; Bull. EC 3-1983, point 2.1.119.

⁸ OJ C 206, 2.8.1983; OJ C 224, 22.8.1983.

⁹ OJ C 27, 2.2.1983; Bull. EC 12-1982, point 2.1.128;

Bull. EC 6-1983, point 2.1.147.

¹⁰ Bull. EC 7/8-1983, point 2.1.144.

¹¹ COM(83) 548 final.

These proposals link up with earlier ones made in July on the rationalization of the common agricultural policy.¹ They concern the introduction of an additional levy on quantities produced in excess of an annual reference quantity, the introduction of a special levy on milk from intensive production units and amendments to the basic Regulation² to incorporate these new concepts and to suspend, periodically, buying in of skimmed-milk powder.

Parallel measures include provisions on the consumption of butter and processed milk.³

At producer level

2.1.81. The additional levy will amount to 75% of the target price for milk and will be payable by undertakings or groupings whose purchases of milk, cream and butter exceed the reference quantity (101% of the quantity bought in 1981); it will be passed on by them to farmers (and only such farmers) whose deliveries exceed the quantity delivered during a reference period corresponding to that used for fixing the reference quantity for the purchaser.

This measure should stabilize milk deliveries without affecting the incomes of small diary farmers. Failing implementation of this measure, the effect of the provisions approved in May 1982⁴ would be to bring down the price of milk by 12% in 1984/85 in order to offset the additional expenditure generated by the excess beyond the guarantee threshold in 1983. If the additional levy system were not introduced, milk deliveries would exceed the reference quantity (1981 + 1%) by 8 million tonnes.

In terms of farmers' incomes, the proposed additional levy will be far less damaging than a drop—albeit by only 2%—in the common price for milk in 1984/85.

2.1.82. The special levy, put at 4% of the target price, will be payable by any milk producer delivering more than 60 000 kg of milk a year, and producing 15 000 kg of milk annually per ha of fodder area. This levy is charged in addition to the existing co-responsibility levy.

2.1.83. Lastly, amendment of the basic Regulation should enable the Commission to restore sound production in this sector. The fact that no one will be exempt from the levy and that intervention buying of skimmed-milk powder will be suspended for several months of the year should stem the tide of milk production fairly rapidly.

At consumer level

2.1.84. The four proposals on consumption of milk and milk products concern the cessation of aid for direct butter consumption, the extension of aid towards the use of butter, the introduction of special aid for concentrated milk and the increase of butterfat consumption by raising the fat content of milk.⁵

Gradual phasing out of the scheme for direct consumption of butter. This measure has had little impact at consumer level (it is estimated that it yielded an increase in consumption of 20 000 to 30 000 tonnes/year out of an internal total of 1 692 000 tonnes/year in 1981 and will be phased out in two stages, by 50% on 1 April 1984 and the rest on 1 April 1985.

Use of butter. The Commission proposes that the aid scheme for butter used in the manufacture of pastry products and ice cream should be extended to butter used for other foodstuffs.

Aid for concentrated milk used as animal feed. The purpose of this measure is to reduce the quantities delivered for intervention by instituting aid for the use of whole concentrated milk for feeding calves and skimmed concentrated milk for other livestock. Aid for concentrated milk would be adjusted to take account of the situation on the butter market; initially it could increase milk consumption by about 440 000 tonnes.

¹ Supplement 4/83—Bull. EC; Bull. EC 7/8-1983, points 1.1.6 and 1.1.7.

² OJ L 148, 28.6.1968.

³ Point 2.1.84; see also the reference to oils and fats other than butter at point...

⁴ Bull. EC 5-1982, point 2.1.76; Bull. EC 5-1983, point 2.1.93.

⁵ OJ C 289, 25.10.1983; COM(83) 611 final.

Oils and fats. The fourth measure proposed by the Commission consists in increasing the fat content of standardized whole milk and semi-skimmed milk. This should increase consumption by 20 000 tonnes of butter equivalent.

Prices and specific measures

Fresh fruit and vegetables

2.1.85. The Commission sent the Council and Parliament the sixth annual report¹ on the estimated clearings and new plantations of certain types of fruit trees (apples, pears, peaches and oranges) in the Community, covering 1980/81. The report shows that areas contracted by 4 500 hectares — a little under 1% of the total area of commercial orchards. Since 1977, areas planted with pear trees have declined steadily whereas those planted with apples, peaches and oranges have remained fairly stable. The largest acreages for the first three species are in Italy (50%), France (30%), Germany (8%), the Netherlands (5.3%) and the United Kingdom (5.2%).

2.1.86. On 7 September the Commission fixed the reference prices for sweet oranges, mandarins, tangerines and clementines for 1983/84 and the Community offer prices applicable for these products *vis-à-vis* Greece.² On the same day it fixed the minimum purchasing price for oranges delivered to industry and the amount of the financial compensation after processing.²

Wine

2.1.87. On 9 September the Commission sent the Council a proposal for a list to be drawn up of quality sparkling wines produced in specified regions for which, on account of their fragile nature and properties, the duration of the preparation process may be six months instead of nine months (sparkling wines produced in southern Italy).³

2.1.88. On 26 September the Commission sent the Council two other proposals for Regulations, one to amend the rules for the description and presentation of wines and grape musts, making it compulsory to indicate

the ingredients used during preparation and the actual alcoholic strength, and one concerning special wines, for which it is proposed that, in the interests of fair competition, indications likely to mislead consumers should be prohibited.⁴

2.1.89. On 9 September the Commission laid down detailed rules and instituted the application of additional measures applicable to holders of long-term storage contracts for table wine for the 1982/83 wine-growing year.⁵ These additional measures, known as the 'special price support guarantee', allow distillation of 100% of the quantity provided for in the basic Regulation,⁶ i.e. 18% of the quantity of table wine produced during the 1982/83 marketing year by each long-term storage contract holder, and a four-month extension of storage contracts for the quantity of wine under contract in excess of this threshold.

Milk and milk products

2.1.90. On 23 September the Commission sent the Council a proposal for a Regulation increasing by 10% the volume of imports into the Community of Emmental cheese from Finland,⁷ following the agreement signed by Finland and the Community on the development of trade.

2.1.91. At its September part-session Parliament adopted a resolution on the sale of Christmas butter at reduced prices.⁸

Beef/veal

2.1.92. On 26 September the Council fixed the Community import quota for high-quality fresh, chilled or frozen beef and veal for 1984 at 29 800 tonnes, in accordance with the Community's commitment under GATT.⁹ The CCT duty for the quota is 20%.

¹ COM(83)515 final.

² OJ L 248, 8.9.1983.

³ COM(83)467 final.

⁴ COM(83)529 final.

⁵ OJ L 250, 10.9.1983.

⁶ OJ L 54, 5.3.1979.

⁷ COM(83)549 final.

⁸ Point 2.4.12; OJ C 277, 17.10.1983.

⁹ OJ L 267, 29.9.1983.

2.1.93. Because of high prices and heavy demand on the markets, the Commission authorized Greece to extend until 31 December the suspension of customs duties on beef/veal imported from other member countries.¹

Processed fruit and vegetables

2.1.94. On 28 September the Economic and Social Committee adopted an opinion² on a series of proposals for measures concerning products processed from fruit and vegetables.³

Oils and fats

2.1.95. Among its various proposals for the rationalization of the CAP, the Commission adopted on 30 September a proposal for a Regulation introducing a tax of 7.5 ECU per 100 kg on vegetable oils and animal fats other than butter with the exception of those intended for use other than for food or feed.⁴ This is to supplement the measures to control production of butterfats through co-responsibility levies.⁵ It is designed to reduce the imbalance between butterfats and other oils and fats. The scheme should come into force on 1 January 1984 and apply to all relevant products, whether produced in the Community or imported. Revenue from the tax is estimated at 524 million ECU for one year, in addition to which there would be a saving of 56 million ECU on aid to olive oil consumption. The tax would help to finance expenditure under the common organization of the oils and fats market.

The impact of this tax on consumer prices should be 3-8%, depending on the type or quality of the oil or margarine in question. On average it would represent a cost of 0.8 ECU per month for a family of four.

The tax would reduce the disparity between the price of butter and that of other oils and fats, also reducing the cost of aid for the use of butter in the food industry (pastry products, ice cream). It would not affect competitive relations between imported products and Community products, nor would it significantly reduce Community consumption or, consequently, imports. The proposed measures constitute a corollary to the meas-

ures proposed for stabilizing the butter market.⁶

Hops

2.1.96. On 16 September Parliament expressed a favourable opinion⁷ on the proposal for a Regulation fixing the amount of aid to producers for the 1982 crop.⁸ It urged the Commission to approach exporting non-member countries to discourage them from extending their acreages under hops.

Structures

New measures and amendments to Directives

Review of policy on agricultural structures

2.1.97. At the end of September the Commission adopted and on 7 October sent to the Council several proposals for the revision of the 1972 socio-structural directives (72/159, 72/160, 72/161), the 1975 Directive on mountain and hill farming and farming in certain less-favoured areas (75/268), and the 1977 Regulation on the improvement of conditions under which fruit and vegetables are processed and marketed (355/77).⁹

*

2.1.98. On 12 September Parliament adopted a resolution⁷ on the implementation of the 1975 Directive on mountain and hill farming and farming in certain less-favoured areas,¹⁰ on the basis of the 1980 Report of the Court of Auditors.¹¹

¹ OJ L 264, 27.9.1983.

² Point 2.4.26.

³ OJ C 94, 8.4.1983; Bull. EC 3-1983, point 2.1.119.

⁴ OJ C 289, 25.10.1983.

⁵ OJ L 131, 26.5.1977; OJ L 90, 4.4.1981; OJ L 140, 20.5.1982.

⁶ Points 2.1.80 to 2.1.84.

⁷ OJ C 277, 17.10.1983.

⁸ OJ C 221, 18.8.1983; Bull. EC 7/8-1983, point 2.1.135.

⁹ Point 1.2.1 et seq.; COM(83)559 final.

¹⁰ OJ L 128, 19.5.1975.

¹¹ OJ C 358, 31.12.1980.

The Athens European Council

1.1.1. Despite intense preparations during the six months between the Stuttgart and Athens European Councils, the 10 Heads of State or Government, meeting in Athens on 4 December, broke up two days later without achieving any progress on any of the Community's vital problems.

They failed to reconcile their differences over the reform of the common agricultural policy, thus stalemating any possibility of decision on revitalizing the Community and the accession of Spain and Portugal.

At his final press conference Mr Andreas Papandreou, who chaired the meeting, announced that no communiqué and no statement on political cooperation would be issued, saying:

'We felt that in view of the failure, it would not be worthy of the seriousness of the moment or of the Commission or the Council to make political proclamations. That would have simply betrayed our nakedness...'

1.1.2. After presenting his colleagues with a final draft compromise on 6 December, Mr Papandreou had to admit that the meeting was a failure and that nothing positive had been achieved by the discussions. At his conference he made the following comments:

'I do not intend to attribute the responsibility to any one country. But I must tell you that what struck me most is that we failed to secure unanimity on any of the subjects which relate to the Community's economic activity...'

And now about the proposals I made. There is a proposal for a new Messina, for a new beginning. I do not know whether anything will come of it. We agreed, though, that all the issues which remained open will be resolved by the new Presidency, which takes over on 1 January—the French Presidency. We wish it luck and hope that it will succeed where we failed...'

Answering journalists' questions, Mr Papandreou said:

'What I know is that if the French Presidency too, does not manage to find answers to the vital problems of the continent, then the end of the Community would be in sight'

Mr François Mitterrand said that Europe now knew for sure that it was in a crisis; they must now make the best of it. During a press conference the French President noted that the major crisis which had long been bubbling under the surface had now boiled over; he undertook to find remedies during France's Presidency of the Community in the first half of 1984.

For this task Mr Mitterrand would be guided by a few simple principles: Europe must remain true to itself, Europe needed to clear away the detritus of the past and open up new paths. He hoped that a political resolve would carry these countries towards the goal of an all-embracing political construction, which would give a tall historical dimension to the endeavour. France would not neglect any of its European commitments and was ready to accept sacrifices and make concessions provided that the Ten honoured the obligations of the Treaty of Rome. For Europe to remain true to her ambition, he reaffirmed the 'exporting role' of European agriculture and insisted that Europe negotiate an equitable contract with the United States so as not to leave the field wide open to American products.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl declared that despite the serious breakdown at Athens, for the Federal Republic of Germany there was no alternative to the Community. He was disappointed; it was a hard knock for Europe; the Community had no future if it could not pay its way. Chancellor Kohl believed that the next European Council, due to be held in Brussels in March, with France in the chair, 'had no alternative but to succeed': it must be meticulously prepared by many bilateral meetings and contacts, for they could not afford another fiasco.

The British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, told reporters that the Community might have to wait until it actually ran out of money before showing willingness to reform its finances; some people often got down to dealing with their problems only when they neared the brink.

