

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

From Rome to Lomé – and beyond?

In our last Editorial Comments we adverted to some objective reasons for optimism in the outlook for the European Community in 1985 deriving from recent progress over the achievement of budgetary discipline. Optimism has also been widespread over the conclusion, in December last, of the negotiations for the Third ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé. These negotiations had opened with a ministerial-level meeting in Luxembourg in October, 1983. They were conducted for the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (the ACP States) by their ambassadors, led by the representative of the country currently holding the presidency of the group. The Commission negotiated on behalf of the Community (with the meetings also being attended by the representatives of the Member States) on the basis of directives adopted by the Council in September, 1983, which were themselves based on the Commission's communication to the Council of March, 1983, and a recommendation for a decision adopted in May of that year. The European Parliament, it will be recalled, had also produced a report on the conditions for the future convention, and, after a debate, had adopted a resolution in September, 1983.

Seventy-six countries were involved in these negotiations. They included, at the outset, (i) the ten Member States of the Community, (ii) sixty-three ACP States, and (iii) three applicant States – Mozambique, Angola, and St. Christopher and Nevis. The negotiations brought to-

gether all of the independent countries of black Africa south of the Sahara – including Mozambique and Angola, who were not parties to the Second ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé, which expired on 28 February of this year. This, it should be remembered, was an essential, objective of the Commission at the beginning of the post-Yaoundé period of relationships between the Community and the developing countries.

Despite the high expectations that were aroused by the outspoken and innovative position paper on development submitted by M. Pisani before their outset, the negotiations were both prolonged and difficult. The search for what M. Pisani called “... a lasting, collective, but politically neutral Lomé Convention” could have led to the negotiation of a convention of unlimited duration, with perhaps a renewal of the provisions on financial grants every five years. It did not – and that, in present political and economic circumstances, is hardly surprising. It could have led, as M. Pisani had argued, to a radical rethinking of the style of aid offered under the new convention and of its impact upon the ACP societies and their local life. It did not.

The negotiations were scheduled to reach a conclusion at the fourth ACP-EEC Ministerial Negotiating Conference which was held in Luxembourg in June, 1984. They did not, but, at a meeting held very soon after the Fontainebleau summit, there was both relief and optimism in the air. At that time M. Pisani was quoted as observing “... there will be a future Convention; it will be another Lomé Convention *not because we have been condemned to it but because we want it that way* – and we want it that way because we are co-operating well and because, in our hearts, we hope that in this way we are sketching out ... the possible blueprint for the vital North-South dialogue”. Certainly, the publication of the Trivelli Report on the implementation of the Second ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé, and the debates at the meetings of the ACP-EEC Consultative Assembly and Joint Committee dramatically underlined the deterioration of the economic situation of many developing countries in the Southern Hemisphere and the deficiencies of the Convention.

At the final stage of negotiations, as on previous occasions, it was the global sum for financing the new Convention that proved the major stumbling block. The demands from the ACP side, taking Lomé II as

their starting point but adjusting those figures to take population growth into account as well as inflation and the substantial increase in co-operation projects, could not be met. An analysis of the negotiations as a whole and of the terms of the settlement eventually arrived at in the new Convention will appear in a later issue of this *Review*. The Convention cannot, of course, be assessed in isolation from the other aspects of the Community's development policies and objectives. In particular, the Community's links with the Maghreb and Mashreq Mediterranean countries, since the co-operation agreements of 1976 and 1977, and the annual aid programmes with the non-associated developing countries of Asia and Latin America, which have been in effect since 1976, must come under renewed scrutiny. The questions asked by M. Pisani – many of which are left unanswered by the new ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé – are equally relevant in determining new policy directions there. It is difficult to believe that these matters will figure largely on the Community's agenda in the next few months, with enlargement problems now at such a sensitive point.