Kinnock, Nell, Member of the Commission. - Mr
President, I wish to add my voice to those Members
who, in the course of this debate, have offered their
tribute to Mr. Pim Corneliussen for the way in which he
has chaired the Committee on Transport and Tourism
over the last two and a half years and, particularly in
my case, the way he has done it over the last two
years. Before I met Mr. Corneliussen I had been known
to use the phrase that we employ sometimes in
English "double Dutch" and to use it in a rather derogatory
fashion in order to signify confused communication.
Having met Mr. Corneliussen and had the pleasure
of working with him for two years, I can say that
"double Dutch" will also mean to me from now on
twice as clear and twice as wise as any other state-
ment - or almost all the time, in any case. I reserve
the right to make an exception to my own rule on
some occasions.

I must say immediately that, of course, my view of
"double Dutch" also applies to Mr. Florus Wijzenbeek.
How could it be otherwise?

I value the judgement of Mr. Corneliussen and his
colleagues on this issue, as on others, and I am,
therefore, particularly pleased that the report they have
produced has given strong and broad endorsement to the
Commission White Paper on air traffic manage-
ment, which we called "Freeing Europe's airspace".
As I do not have to tell the House, the development
and modernization of air traffic management is a vital
issue to the millions of travellers in the European
Union and, indeed, from elsewhere who use our
airspaces, to airlines, to airports and, indeed, to every-
one associated with the industry. I hope, therefore, that
we can look forward to substantial and speedy pro-
gress with the necessary improvements for all the
reasons that have been outlined in such an effective
way by Members who have contributed to the debate
tonight.

Since civil aviation in the Union has grown, is grow-
ing and will grow with great vitality over the next ten
of fifteen years, it is essential that airspace manage-
ment is continually improved to combat congestion, to
sustain and indeed to advance safety in civil aviation
and to reduce the environmental and economic costs
that are very substantial and that, as several honour-
able Members have said, result from delays both on
the ground and, indeed, in the air over the European
Union.

Members will recall that the efforts of recent years
have secured some commendable changes since the
crises of the late 1980s. The fact is, as Mr. Corneliussen
rightly reminded us this evening, that the number of
delays has risen again over the last year and that must
alert everyone against complacency and it must also
spur all responsible authorities, including Member
State governments, into working for sustained
improvements in the management of European airspace.

As part of the effort to achieve such improvement, the
Commission has argued for several years that the
European Community should have greater direct
involvement in air traffic management affairs and this
argument has been put forward at all times - so far
as the Commission is concerned and this House is
concerned - not because of aspirations to power or
anything so small-minded but simply to provide
practical solutions to chronic problems. That approach
is clearly evident from the tone and the content of the
White Paper which we produced in March last year, as
it is indeed clear from the report we are considering
tonight.

In summary, the White Paper which we produced outlined
various widely-acknowledged shortcomings in the air
traffic management arrangements at European level; it
considered a variety of possible solutions and it came
to the pragmatic conclusion that Eurocontrol - the
organizational body which is currently primarily a
provider of air traffic management services - should be
given significant, new, additional legislative and
regulatory responsibilities. The White Paper also
emphasized that since many of these new responsibil-
ities would cover areas of established Community
competence, the Community itself should become a
member of the new Eurocontrol in its own right.

The major question of Community membership of
the new Eurocontrol, which itself raises issues of compet-
ence, has, of course, not yet been resolved - as some
honourable Members have noticed. However, this
discussion will, we hope, be further progressed in the
Transport Council under the current Dutch presidency
and the Commission has recently produced draft
negotiating directives which would give effect to the
two main recommendations of the White Paper that I
mentioned earlier in my contribution.

I know that this Parliament, like many others, will
maintain a very close interest in the Council decisions
on the issue and I am, therefore, all the more grateful
for the thorough and supportive report which Mr.
Corneliussen and his colleagues have made on the
Commission's proposals. The least I shall do by way
of reciprocation is, as Mr. Corneliussen requested, to
keep the House and the Transport Committee fully
informed on all developments that take place, knowing
that we have Parliament's support in our efforts to
ensure the significant and urgent improvements that
are necessary in air traffic management over the
European Union.