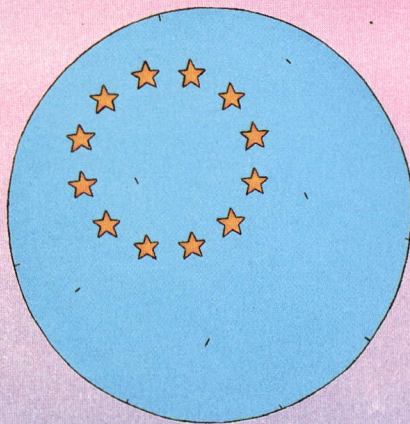


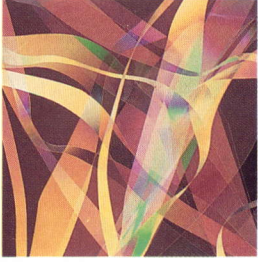
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



L. KROEGER



Europe
on the move



Scatzenreiu

The Community has too many complicated procedures, too many Byzantine arguments, too many sophisticated regulations.

This is why citizens have lost interest and are distancing themselves from it.

Right now the Community is trying to make things clearer and to make itself more democratic.

'Make no mistake. Everyone is needed to build Europe. We must all care, feel involved.

This means really making Europe a people's Europe ... and of course it means that our joint venture must be better established if it is to be efficient and open.'

*Jacques Delors,
President of the
European Commission*

The creation of a frontier-free market, the abolition of border controls, new EC legislation affecting all our lives, the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, moves towards a single currency: these events are focusing the attention of ordinary people on the European Community as never before. Even after 40 years of existence, the EC is still not something with which the average European is familiar. But he or she is keen to find out more. For its part, the Community is endeavouring to respond to their information needs. The present brochure replies to some of the questions most frequently asked about the EC. It cannot claim to provide answers on everything; it has to be selective.

The basic replies given in this text must be brief. However, more substantial information on each of the themes is available in other brochures and booklets in the current series. More information can be obtained from the addresses given on the back cover of this leaflet.

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'There is no one "European people", but the peoples of Europe and a joint European destiny, which can be seen from the desire of all those countries that want to belong to Europe for far deeper reasons than just wealth or standard of living. It is these reasons that stand the test of time.'

Jacques Delors

WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY?

Created from the ruins of World War II, the European Community's goal is to bring about peace and prosperity for its citizens in the framework of an ever-closer union. This process is a gradual one with economic, political and social dimensions. It started with the liberalization of trade between Member States and of related economic policies. Then came the construction of a single frontier-free market in which people, goods, services and capital can move as freely as within one country. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty on European Union launched the move towards political union, economic and monetary union (EMU) and the creation of a single currency. The founding members of the EC, who signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957, are Belgium,

Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark joined in 1973, Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986.

WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY DO FOR THE ORDINARY CITIZEN?

Without limiting the cultural and linguistic diversity of its peoples, the Community provides them with a common identity and a structure for greater solidarity and mutual support. Community citizens have new opportunities and new freedoms. The EC enables them to live and work in the country of their choice. They can bring social security and pension benefits with them. The removal of internal frontiers makes it possible for people to shop where goods and services are most competitively priced. Within their own country, the EC provides them with a wide range of



products from across Europe that might not otherwise be available. The EC funds training programmes for the jobless and sets minimum standards for working conditions. The Maastricht Treaty creates a common European citizenship in addition to national citizenship and nationals of one country living in another will be able to vote in local elections in their host State.

IS THE EC A RICH MAN'S CLUB NEGLECTING POORER COUNTRIES?

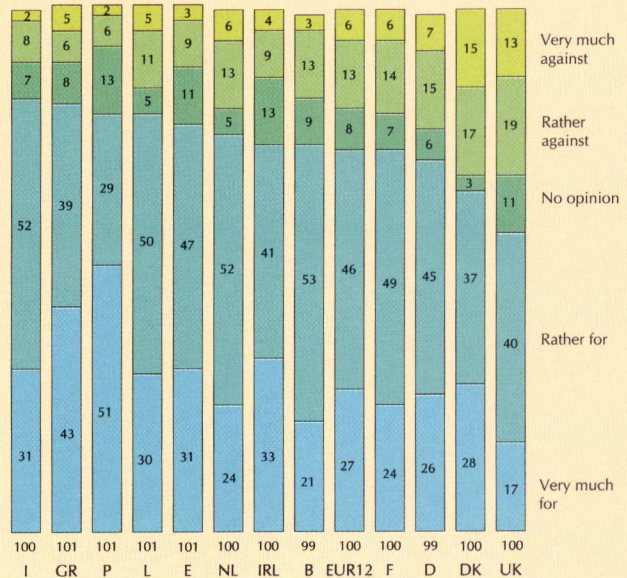
The Community already includes less wealthy States like Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland whose national wealth is less than half that of the richest members. But these poorer countries, with support from the EC's so-called structural Funds, are able to withstand the economic impact of membership. The Community is ready to welcome democracies from Central and Eastern Europe as soon as they can accept the economic challenge of joining. The first candidates from the former Communist States are expected to be Poland, Hungary and the Czech and Slovak Republics. In the meantime, the Community has concluded special co-operation agreements with them and other Eastern neighbours to help their transition to market economies. The Community also maintains a sense of responsibility towards developing countries. It provides 40% of total official aid to the Third World, a much larger contribution than either the United States or Japan.

How Europe's citizens feel about the unification of Europe

Three Europeans in four (73%) are in favour of what is being done to unify Western Europe. The Italians are most in favour (83%), followed by the Greeks (82%), Portuguese and Luxembourgers (80%), Spaniards (78%), Dutch (76%), Irish and Belgians (74%), French (73%), Germans (71%), Danes (65%) and the British (57%). On the other hand, 19% of Community citizens are opposed to the unification of Western Europe. Eight per cent have no views on this latter question.

These are some of the views expressed in an opinion survey throughout the 12 countries of the European Community in autumn 1992.

How Europe's citizens feel about the unification of Europe (%)



Source: Eurobarometer No 38, autumn 1992.

IS THE COMMUNITY STILL COMMITTED TO THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY?

The common agricultural policy (CAP) has made sure that the Community has become self-sufficient in most basic food products. The EC has not only attained security of supply, it has become a major exporter and supplier of food aid to needy populations throughout the world. But the CAP needed to be reformed to cut back surplus production and to reduce the cost of stocking these surpluses and subsidizing their sale on world markets. The principles of the CAP – single prices, Community preference and financial solidarity – will be maintained. However, the cost will be trimmed to concentrate on those farmers most in need of support. Prices will be reduced to make European agriculture more competitive on international markets.

IS THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION A BLOATED BUREAUCRACY BENT ON CONTROLLING OUR DAILY LIVES?

If you take away the number of staff required to translate and interpret in its nine official languages, the Commission is no larger than a single ministry in a large Member State. Yet it has responsibilities in nearly 20 policy areas, ranging from external relations, industrial

affairs and transport to social affairs and the environment. The Commission employs 15 000 civil servants. The Commission is therefore not bloated. Nor is it out to harmonize and control everything – even if it could. The Commission has some operational responsibility for the common agricultural policy and has wide powers for combating anti-consumer cartels. In all other areas, the Commission initiates policies which then go to Member States who decide whether or not to adopt them.

WHO PAYS FOR THE EC AND WHO BENEFITS FROM ITS BUDGET?

Roughly speaking, EC countries contribute to the budget according to their ability to pay. Direct payments for agriculture distort this structure. This is why the United Kingdom gets an annual rebate on its budget contribution. Germany, the strongest EC economy, pays the biggest net share, followed by the United Kingdom and France. On average, each EC citizen contributes less than ECU 200 a year to finance the

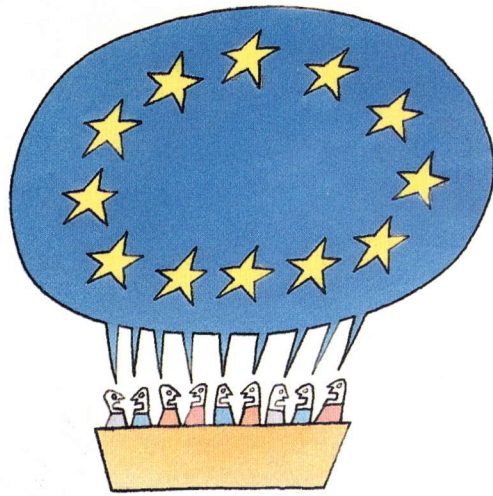
'No one can be unaware of the fact that our Community has become the cornerstone of what is generally referred to as the new architecture of the European continent. It might be tempting to gaze into a crystal ball and try to forecast where we are going. But the end is less important here than the means, the concrete and practical steps that the Community must take, day in, day out, to fulfil its mission of creating stability and peace.'

Jacques Delors

EC. The Community budget, ECU 65 billion in 1993, covers policies like the CAP and research and development programmes. More than one-quarter of the budget goes to redistribute wealth from the richer to the poorer countries via the EC's so-called structural Funds. A new Cohesion Fund, designated to accelerate this process further, was agreed as part of the Maastricht Treaty.

WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY DO FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

For young people, the Community is a fact of life. They have grown up in an environment of mobility and contacts their parents did not know. The Community organizes and funds a number of programmes for young people, including the learning of languages and student exchanges. The most popular of these is the Erasmus programme that enables university students to spend part of their time at a university in another Member State. There are five applicants for every place available under Erasmus. The EC also offers vocational training opportunities and the acquisition of new skills by young



people who are out of work. It also makes it easier for young farmers to take over from older ones who are giving up active farming.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE SINGLE MARKET?

The frontier-free single market came into effect formally on 1 January 1993. Preparation began in 1985 and many of its benefits began taking effect before the official launch date. For business, the single market means firms

can sell their goods and services throughout the EC as easily as in their home country. Companies also benefit from the economies of scale made possible by the creation of a huge integrated domestic market. This in turn increases their competitiveness on world markets. More growth and more jobs should result. For the consumer, the single market brings economic and personal benefits. Increased competition within the single market ensures a wider range of goods at keener prices. Limits on tax-free allowances for travellers have virtually disappeared. Mobility is enhanced with the disappearance of border controls at land frontiers and soon – for flights within the EC – at airports too. Some exceptions have been requested by the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark.

HOW DEMOCRATIC IS THE EC?

The Community is a union of democratic States. It is run by four principal institutions, representing the executive and legislative branches of government and the judiciary. They are the Council of Ministers, made up of representatives of Member States, which takes most decisions, the European Commission, the main executive institution, the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice. The ministers who sit in the Council are directly responsible to their national governments. The European Parliament is directly elected by EC citizens. The president and the 16 other members of the European Commission are nominated by their governments and approved by the Council of Ministers. The Maastricht Treaty provides for the president and the full Commission to be subject to a vote of investiture from the



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The unification of Europe is well under way. It started with the declaration by Robert Schuman on 9 May 1950 and continued with the European Coal and Steel Community and then the European Economic Community. It has come a long way, although not far enough, and it points the way ahead for the future. However, this all depends on one condition: that the citizens of Europe can and really want to join in and support the venture.

'A great work is under way. It concerns, I repeat, the future of our concept of society, whose values we must maintain at all costs.

May the European Community continue along the way that has been laid down for it. May Europeans realize what must be done before it is too late.'

Jacques Delors

European Parliament. The Council and the Commission have responded to criticisms that their deliberations lack transparency and openness. Changes have been made. There will be more public debate of Commission initiatives. Television cameras are being admitted to some Council sessions.

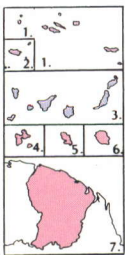
WILL THERE BE A SINGLE CURRENCY? WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

The move to economic and monetary union is the logical follow-on to the creation of the single market. Currency fluctuations can cause distortions to the price of goods traded internationally. This creates uncertainty for

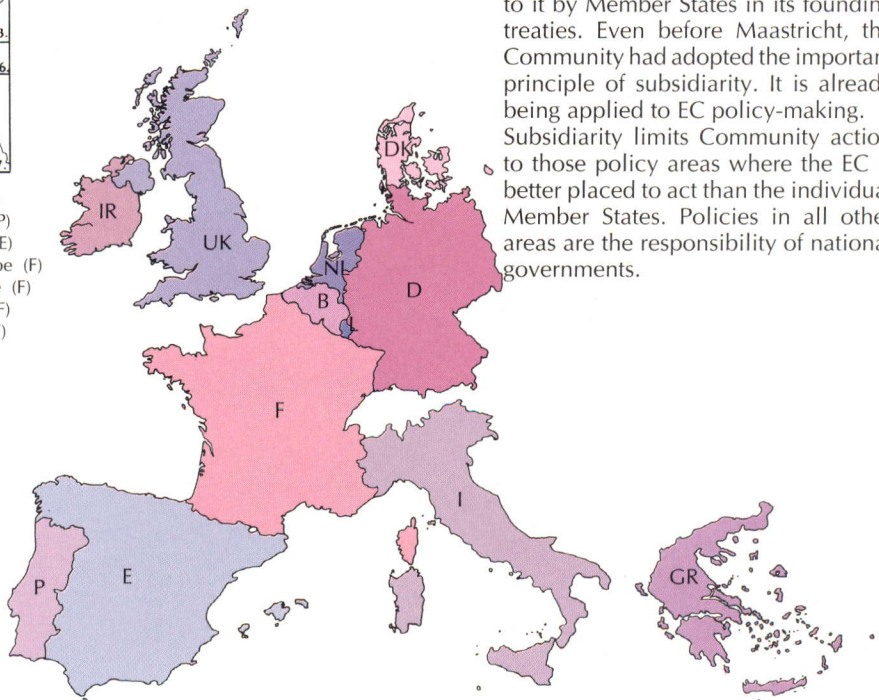
both buyer and seller. The elimination of tariffs and technical barriers to trade needs to be consolidated by the removal of price differences provoked by currency uncertainties. For the citizen and traveller, the single currency removes the need to change money (and the cost of doing so) when travelling within the Community. The EC citizen also gets a strong and stable currency, backed by the combined economic power of the Community and its Member States.

WHAT POWERS DO MEMBER GOVERNMENTS RETAIN?

The debates in all EC countries at the time of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty highlighted the public's uncertainty about the balance of power between the Community, on the one hand, and the national governments on the other. In fact, the Community can only act on the basis of powers granted to it by Member States in its founding treaties. Even before Maastricht, the Community had adopted the important principle of subsidiarity. It is already being applied to EC policy-making. Subsidiarity limits Community action to those policy areas where the EC is better placed to act than the individual Member States. Policies in all other areas are the responsibility of national governments.



1. Açores (P)
2. Madeira (P)
3. Canarias (E)
4. Guadeloupe (F)
5. Martinique (F)
6. Réunion (F)
7. Guyane (F)



WILL OPEN FRONTIERS INCREASE IMMIGRATION PRESSURES?

The removal of internal frontiers within the Community is being matched by a corresponding strengthening of controls at the EC's external frontiers. These are aimed at preventing terrorists, drug smugglers and other criminals as well as illegal immigrants from entering the Community. In addition, spot identity checks will still be possible inside the territory of the Member States. Community countries have drawn up a common list of States whose nationals will need visas to enter the Community. In addition, the conditions for granting asylum to political refugees will be tightened to make it more difficult for so-called 'economic' migrants to settle in the EC. National police forces will cooperate through a new body called Europol.



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WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY?

The Community is at a watershed. The single market has just come into being. The next enlargement phase is under way with candidate countries Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway. The EC is moving to implement the Maastricht Treaty which provides for political union among the Twelve, on the one hand, and the creation of an economic and monetary union with a single currency, on the other. The deadline for the introduction of a single currency is 1999 at the latest. The Community is preparing for the next phase of EMU, due to start in 1994. The Member States are also developing their joint foreign and security policy, often in difficult circumstances. The EC has had only limited impact on the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Coordinating and implementing successful policies in other areas will raise considerable challenges.

The Community wants its decisions to be more open. It must try twice as hard to explain what it is doing and to find valid and acceptable answers to the question of the sovereignty of individual Member States.



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This booklet appears in all the official Community languages – Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

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