

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

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SERIALS UNIT

1976 INFORMATION PROGRAMME

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It is difficult at present to form a precise picture of the political circumstances in which the 1976 programme will be carried out. However, the most significant internal objectives of the European Community are likely to include European Union, direct election of the European Parliament by universal suffrage and a number of measures to give fresh stimulus to Community activities (particularly in the economic and social fields). In external relations the main concern will probably be the Community's ability to adopt and defend a common position on major world issues.

Consequently, the decisions taken at the European Council in Rome should make it possible, especially during the North-South dialogue, to define in more detail the Community's policy on energy and raw materials.

1. INFORMATION IN THE MEMBER STATES

As the main aim of the information policy is to interest and involve the general public in the building of Europe, most of our efforts should therefore be directed at the Member States. In view, also of the planned election of Parliament by universal suffrage, these efforts should be aimed at making the man in the street more aware of how the Community affects his particular region, work and social group, in particular by supplying information with as strong a regional bias as possible.

In addition to making information clearer, more down-to-earth and interesting for priority groups (mainly political circles, trade unions, consumers, teachers, young people) which, in different ways, have a decisive influence on opinion and decision-making, the activities aimed at the general public must be extended and improved. The need for this has become clear as a result of recent surveys and opinion polls and the experience gained in the second half of 1975 in connection with the complementary programme approved at the suggestion of the European Parliament. In carrying out these activities greater use was made of the mass media (press, radio, television, audio-visual, exhibitions, etc.), which in many cases meant calling on the services of outside organizations, in particular specialized firms.

It is therefore planned to encourage this trend towards informing the general public in 1976 (large-scale campaigns are already planned in all the Member States within the limits imposed by the 1976 budget), while continuing to provide a

sufficient volume of information for the decision-makers and those who influence opinion. To this end greater selectivity and rationalization will be introduced.

Information policy will still be based on the principles of decentralization and flexibility geared to the particular needs of public opinion in the different countries and regions. Consequently, the Information Offices in the capitals of the Member States will have a major role to play, while the headquarters departments will concentrate on providing guidance, stimulus and coordination.

Themes

In addition to making the Community more down-to-earth and "visible" to the man in the street (in particular by means of more practical and concise information on the use of the various Community funds), emphasis must also be placed on the need for greater cohesion in the Community with the aim of reducing its dependence, giving it its rightful place in the world and improving economic and social conditions within the Community.

The European development cooperation policy formulated by the Commission on several levels (Lomé Convention, generalized preferences, food aid, etc.) and in different parts of the world (Mediterranean, ACP countries, etc.) is satisfying public opinion, which, having been made aware of the seriousness of the problems (interdependence, cooperation, the new economic order, etc.), wants to know whether or not Europe is adopting a common approach to these matters.

The basic theme, of course, will still be information about the Community's different policies, which must be adapted to keep pace with current developments and future projects both internal and external.

Special care will be taken in preparing information to follow up the publication of Mr Tindeman's report.

The new measures of flexibility brought about by the recent reorganization of the Directorate-General for Information will make it possible to introduce rapidly and efficiently activities necessitated by current developments in the Community; some projects launched in 1975 will be continued, notably in connection with the "Green Paper".

Target audiences

The main aim is to reach the general public. In this context greater use will be made of the mass media such as television, radio and the press. Nevertheless, priority should still be given to political circles, trade unions, consumers and consumer organizations, teachers and youth organizations, in their dual role as "multipliers" and opinion formers.

Political circles

The Offices in the capital cities will continue to be the main sources of up-to-date information for these circles, concentrating primarily on Members of Parliament in the Community countries, regional assemblies and political party organizations.

They will also continue to organize briefing sessions on specific subjects geared to individual national situations.

They should also ascertain the requirements of these circles in order to provide comprehensive information for them.

Trade unions

The crucial importance of this group has once again been highlighted by the dialogue between the Community institutions and the two sides of industry.

There is an even greater need than in 1975 for decentralized information activities aimed at individual industries or groups of industries at local and regional level with the close cooperation of trade union organizations at Community level.

European studies will continue to form part of the training courses offered at trade union centres and colleges. This will be backed up by more intensive training for trade union organizers and lecturers.

In view of the excellent response of trade unionists to the audio-visual information specially prepared for them, this material will be improved, updated and extended.

Consumers

According to the definition given in the Community consumer protection programme adopted by the Council on 14 April 1975, a consumer is not merely a person who buys goods and services but also someone who is affected by the various aspects of life in society. Consumer information will therefore be aimed at highlighting the Community's efforts to bring about real improvements in the living and working conditions of Europeans.

This information will be extended by methods already being used with encouraging results, such as the weekly "Industry and Society", regular meetings with the

mass media from the various countries and preparation of information filed or audio-visual sequences for consumer protection organizations.

It will also be extended by means of a number of specific information campaigns on subjects of special interest to the public, which will be chosen with reference to Community events and issues uppermost in the minds of the public.

Teachers

Secondary schools

In 1975 a number of new measures were taken by the Information Offices in conjunction with teachers' organizations to extend and improve European studies, notably in secondary education. New programmes will be prepared and implemented on the basis of progress made in this area.

For instance, the European Centre for Education will work, with our support, on projects to coordinate and promote national schemes.

At the same time it is planned to provide teachers with teaching material (teaching notes, audio-visual material, video-cassettes, etc.) which will be prepared with the help of those concerned.

Active cooperation with schools radio and television will continue.

Universities

The programme for 1976 will be devoted mainly to encouraging the interest of universities in European Union. This will involve informing university teachers of Community developments and encouraging them to formulate their own views on the subject and make them known to the institutions concerned.

Attempts must also be made to develop multinational contacts more systematically, by disciplines and areas of interest, and to achieve closer cooperation between university circles and the Community institutions.

These two proposals are aimed at giving a more European aspect to the traditional programmes of the past: networks of documentation centres, teachers' associations, surveys, research and teaching, visits, scholarships, grants, etc.

Youth

The guidelines of The Hague summit (associating the younger generation in building Europe) remain the basis of the Commission's activities here.

This aim must be achieved first of all by setting up the European Youth Forum and Committee on Youth Questions. Second, it means that young people must be informed in depth about matters connected with European integration. It is becoming increasingly clear that young people will be interested in European integration only to the extent that the Community manages to take practical steps to resolve the problems of particular concern to young people: youth

employment policy, development aid, reducing the gap between the rich and poor parts of Europe (social policy, regional policy), educational and vocational training policy.

It must be noted, however, that the current range of information material for youth organizations is insufficient. A series of dossiers on the various aspects of Community activities must therefore be prepared. They should be used above all by the "multipliers" (organizers of trade union, political and educational activities with young people).

These dossiers will also take account of modern teaching trends and be presented in an original and attractive manner.

Other groups

Although they cannot be given the same priority, other groups also deserve attention, mainly because they are affected by Community activities.

These include business executives and management (small and medium-sized business included), for whom a number of projects are planned but who are in any case well equipped to follow Community activities regularly. Priority must also be given, however, to farming and rural circles. Here the main objective is to involve and integrate those concerned fully in a genuine Community.

They must be encouraged to participate in defining their role and position in European society, and the Community must pursue an information policy enabling them to establish close links between the common agricultural policy and the practical aspects of Community activities in various other areas (institutional, social, economic and monetary, regional and environmental).

With this in mind, the main emphasis of our activities should now be placed on providing information for the mass media which reaches these circles - notably radio, television and the regional and agricultural press - and for the organizers of audio-visual programmes, and to prepare suitable material for and with them. As regards information specifically addressed to agricultural leaders, this will be provided increasingly at multinational level by relay agencies outside the Commission.

Media

Radio and television must be given first consideration here, together with audio-visual media (slides, video-cassettes, etc.) for group information. Written material remains important for information in depth.

Audio-visual media

Television. There will be better opportunities soon for coverage of Community news in Brussels when colour-television recording facilities come into operation.

This will make it possible for short sequences on activities and events in Brussels to be recorded and transmitted rapidly, in cooperation with RTB/BRT, to the television stations of Community and other countries.

There are also plans to put together material on Community subjects for the use of television correspondents. More frequent meetings will be organized with specialist television producers, with particular reference to schools programmes and broadcasts to consumers.

The policy of promoting television broadcasts on Community subjects will also be continued.

Radio. The "EURADIO" bulletins will continue to be published, supplemented where appropriate by weekly telexes. Other measures will be taken to interest the producers of specialized programmes.

Films. The Community itself will produce films only in exceptional cases. The main effort will be directed at making a limited contribution to the production of documentary films on the Community for commercial distribution.

Steps will be taken to organize events in cooperation with film producers.

Other audio-visual methods. The measures taken in 1975 to organize audio-visual slide-shows with soundtrack, aimed mainly at trade union training centres, secondary schools and consumer protection associations, will be extended. A careful study will be made of the feasibility of contributing to the distribution of this kind of programme by commercial networks.

Publications

Efforts to rationalize publications arrangements will continue next year. The main publications for distribution will be newsletters, monthly magazines, basic booklets and booklets on individual subjects.

In this context, distribution and publicity have become at least as important as the conception and completion of a work. Distribution lists will therefore be revised systematically and distribution methods kept under constant supervision.

Selective distribution methods will be accompanied by active publicity on publications, for example by information and publicity schemes.

Visits

Visits must become more selective and planned more closely in line with priorities.

Priority will be given to inviting the following groups from Member States to Commission headquarters:

- (a) national parliamentary committees and groups under a coordinated scheme organized in liaison with the European Parliament;
- (b) political parties and movements;
- (c) representatives of national and regional political administrations;
- (d) representatives of the national, regional and specialized press.

Exhibitions

This method of information in the Community countries will consist mainly of travelling exhibitions, of which there have been an increasing number this year under the complementary programme, and they will serve in particular to back up regional information. Contacts will be taken up for this purpose with Member States' national and regional information services in order to study how far such projects could be organized jointly.

Participation in international fairs or exhibitions will be limited to a few exceptional cases.

2. INFORMATION FOR NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

In 1975 the European Community's external relations became more extensive and they are likely to grow further in 1976. This entails new flows of information.

One hundred and three countries have accredited representatives to the Community. Seventy-five States have agreements with the Community - the forty-six Lomé Convention States, the twenty-five States which have negotiated trade agreements and the four European States associated with the Community (Greece, Turkey, Malta and Cyprus). The Community's generalized preferences system covers a hundred and four countries.

These few figures give an idea of the dimensions of the Community's external relations and of the interest with which an increasing number of non-member countries regard the Community. A recent example of the international impact of the European Community was when the People's Republic of China accredited its first ambassador in September 1975.

Some thirty countries were added to this number by the United Kingdom's accession to the Community. The British referendum campaign was an important publicity factor in those non-member countries having special historical ties with the United Kingdom and increased the demand for information on Community matters.

The economic difficulties the Member States have been experiencing for more than two years as a result of the world-wide economic recession and energy crisis and the realization by Member States of the Community's influence in the world at large have led them to search more and more for a common denominator in their relations with non-member countries.

The Community now tends increasingly to speak with one voice in international gatherings, such as GATT, the UN and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Community's observer status at the UN has enabled it to play a world role, both in the General Assembly and in the specialized agencies.

Now prospects are opening up for the Community in its relations with developing countries. While respecting their policy of non-alignment, the Community is offering third-world countries substantial trading opportunities through the growing number of agreements that are being concluded with them, the system of generalized preferences and the technical, financial and food aid it provides.

In the countries which are signatories of the Lomé Convention (ACP countries), information policy will be developed through the usual means (press, radio and TV) on the basis of the experience gained in the AASM countries. Measures will be taken to give the public in the ACP countries a clear idea of what Europe is about and of the various aspects of Community policy towards developing countries. Information will be provided on the institutions set up under the Lomé Convention meetings held, financial arrangements agreed, visits arranged and statements made at Commission headquarters, etc. This information will be relayed to the ACP countries through the Commission delegates who will be on the spot from next year.

In overall terms, increasingly urgent requests for documentation and information are being received from private citizens and government departments of third-world countries and from the embassies of Member States in these areas. The Community must satisfy these needs and redouble its efforts in this direction all over the third world, whether in Africa, Latin America or Asia.

The growing interest of certain Latin American countries has been shown by the

number of bilateral agreements concluded. In addition to the information regularly provided by the Delegation, seminars on generalized preferences will still need to be organized. More discussions, visits and contacts will be arranged with Latin American regional organizations such as the Andean Group, SIECA and LAFTA.

In Asia, seminars on generalized preferences will form the basis for information campaigns using both written (general reviews) and oral (symposia and press conferences) means of communication. In developing countries which are not signatories of the Lomé Convention, the accent must be placed on providing better information about the generalized preferences system.

The Community's information policy towards the third world must not lead to a slackening of efforts vis-à-vis its main industrial trading partners - the United States, Canada and Japan - which must remain a priority, at both bilateral and multilateral level (IMF, UN, UNCTAD, energy, third world).

Developments in the Mediterranean and the recent events in Portugal and Spain also call for more extensive information operations. The Information Offices set up in Ankara (1975) and to be established in Athens (1976) will provide a better on-the-spot service.

In Europe bilateral agreements with EFTA countries are developing in a generally satisfactory manner. Information services must be maintained and based mainly on visits by Members of Parliament and journalists and on contacts with "multipliers" in these countries. The Community will continue to contribute as far as possible to seminars on specific themes by providing documentation and speakers.

The dialogue begun in 1974 with the countries of Eastern Europe has not progressed, and an active information policy towards these countries is hardly possible. Visitors will, however, be received when this is requested, and a positive response be given to requests for European documentation centres to be set up in universities and public libraries.

In general, information projects will be adapted directly in areas where the Community has set up Information Offices, has a Delegation or, as in the ACP countries, will be able to use Commission delegates as relay channels.

In non-member countries where the Commission has neither a Delegation nor an Information Office, the diplomatic representatives of the Member States must be kept aware of the problems arising in relations between the Community

and the countries to which they have been posted, so that they can act as intermediaries. With this aim new procedures are being adopted to improve the supply of information on recent developments and basic textual documentation to embassies in non-member countries. Close cooperation has been established between the services of the Commission and the Council in this context, particularly through the work of the Council's Information Group.

The topics dealt with will be both general - emphasizing the increasingly clear role of the Community in the world - and specific - relating to the particular interests of each of the regions concerned.

In view of the modest financial and staff resources available, particular efforts must be made to reach experts at political, economic, social and academic level as well as the "multipliers". Briefing visits and publications will play an important role. The Community will take part in international trade fairs only where its participation appears particularly desirable.

Lastly, the Directorate-General for Information will give further support to the 'Journalists for Europe' training scheme for young journalists from non-member countries.