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# europe day by day

Brussels, 2 March 1976 No 9/76

EUROPE

AND YOUR DAILY BREAD

Many Europeans have the impression "Europe" is developing without them, far away from them, with little consideration for their interests and well being.

Yet the numerous decisions taken in Brussels affect and benefit them in almost every aspect of their lives. In the following pages we show you how ...

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The information published in this bulletin covers, very freely, different aspects of the European Communities' activity. It is, therefore, not limited to recording official Commission decisions or opinions.

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During the last few years you have doubtless noticed when out shopping a great change in the range of foods, electrical goods, clothes etc. on the shelves. Shoes to delicatessen from Italy, alcohol to toys from Britain, towels from Belgium, cars and conserves from Germany — you can now find all these in the shop round the corner at prices comparable to those in the country they came from.

## IN THE SHOPS

Why then do we have this great choice? Essentially because today the frontiers are open. Now that customs duties between the Common Market countries have gone, manufacturers have to make considerable efforts to sustain the competition from their neighbours. Now they are forced to compete among each other and offer their customers products of the highest quality at the lowest cost.

This has been no less than a godsend for consumers in Europe. Back in 1958, a TV set cost around £300. Today, even including the 60-70% rise in the cost of living a TV set can cost as little as £100.

And don't forget refrigerators! At the beginning of the sixties French manufacturers suffered heart attacks in the face of a sudden invasion of Italian 'fridges at unbeatable prices. At the time it was necessary to take temporary measures to prevent French producers from going bankrupt. Then they had to adapt and modernize to support the competition. They recalculated their prices, raised the quality and now French 'fridges are some of the best and the least expensive.

This example will probably not convince you. Consumers of electrical domestic appliances have probably benefited from the opening of frontiers and the formation of the Common Market, but what about the rest? Well, 'fridges have to be filled with something. Now every time you or your wife work out the food for the week you get the same result: prices are going up — meat, vegetables, sugar, rice ... More and more you have to use imagination to prevent your hard—earned cash being swallowed up by the food budget.

No-one can deny this, not even the European Commission. The rise in prices has affected all European countries. Perhaps they would have been a little less affected if the Governments had harmonized their anti-inflation plans more closely. It is the absence of European solidarity in this area which can be said to be damaging and not the opposite.

## AT THE TABLE

At one time or another you have probably heard it said "The reason we're paying so much for our food is the Common Agricultural Policy, i.e., the Community's organization of European agriculture". Now in fact the opposite is true and the figures speak for themselves: in 1974 the retail price of foodstuffs rose by 10.4% in Europe compared with 14.6% in the USA and 29% in Japan. In recent years the European agricultural system has actually protected

the Community countries from the soaring agricultural prices on the world market, i.e., outside the Community's frontiers. Judge for yourself: in 1972/73 wheat prices rose around 70% on the world market; in Europe they only increased 4%. The difference was just as marked for sugar which jumped 62% on the world market and scarcely rose 3% on the European market. For meat the most perceptible difference was recorded in the price of veal: 33% increase on the world market and 2.5% in Europe.

Now then, are you one of those people who fill up their cupboards with supplies: sugar, jam, tinned food, for fear that tomorrow some of the essential goods may not be available? In Europe anyway, unlike some other countries, this is an unnecessary precaution. The security of your food supply is almost 100%. Community solidarity enables possible shortages to be dealt with by means of sophisticated European intervention and stockpiling mechanisms. In the 1974 "sugar crisis" for example, this solidarity was exercised to the full: Italian and above all British consumers were able to get sugar supplies at the Community price (less than a third of the world price) thanks to imports financed collectively by the Nine.

"Green Europe", apart from the gains it has brought to farmers (farm modernization aids, income guarantees etc.) has also been a factor in stabilizing prices. And that affects you directly.

One of the aims of European Union is to make sure that prices do not increase in a haphazard fashion. There are numerous products: knitting wool, records, perfumes, glass packaging, wall-paper, quinine, sugar, etc. which have not always been sold at their proper prices. Certain firms who manufacture and market those products have infringed the Community's rules of competition and have conspired among themselves to artificially force up the prices agreed with their customers, and standardize the terms of sale and delivery. The European Commission as watchdog of the big firms and protector of the consumers' interests, reacted forcefully. £5 million worth of fines were imposed on the Community's main sugar companies who, by collaboration, had managed to dominate the European market and impose their own selling terms. This had led, for example, to the price of sugar in Italy being 50% more expensive than in France.

## PROTECTION OF YOUR HEALTH

Is the free circulation of goods, all goods, across frontiers Europe's only aim? Obviously not. You also want to buy goods that are healthy and you also want to know exactly what you are buying, its composition, its origin, possibly its expiry date ...

All Community countries have taken measures in recent years to protect consumers from abuse by manufacturers and give them the right to clear and precise information on the products which they consume. But did you know that in Brussels, the home of the Community's administration, an ambitious consumer protection programme has been drawn up with the help of the European consumer protection organization. Harsh standards have been set, strict regulations have been adopted, consumers' rights have been scrutinized — all to protect

#### Europe's consumers.

In this area the Germans, the Danes, and the Italians have experienced exactly the same problems as the English. The advantage of studying the problems at the European level is that some countries have already found solutions. Some countries have found ingenious systems to deal with misleading advertising, others for informing the citizen of his rights, others again for regulating mail—order selling. Thus the job in Brussels of finding a solution is made much simpler. The specialists can meet and combine their imaginations, their experience and of course their know—how. Certainly not all the problems have been solved though. This is a colossal task but it is up to the consumers, i.e., you or your representatives to call for still more action. We shall content ourselves with giving you a few examples of what has already been done and what is planned for the future.

You distrust new products and products which you do not know. You have good reason. How do you choose from a range of products which is getting larger every day?

In recent years accidents, some of them serious, have demonstrated, as if it were necessary, that consumers cannot rely solely on the good faith and competence of the manufacturers. Remember the children who died in France, victims of a talcum powder with an excessive hexachlorophene content. Since then the use of the substance has been severely regulated and the European Commission (whose job it is to propose measures to benefit all Europe so that each of the Community's governments will translate them into law) placed hexachlorophene on a list of substances whose use in cosmetics is subject to supervision at the Community level. This ensures that other children in other countries will not be the victims of a similar accident.

There's not only hexachlorophene to deal with. Europeans are using more and more cosmetics, sun-tan lotions, make-up, shampoos, shaving products, and the compounds used are not always harmless. To ensure maximum precautions are taken and to avoid waiting for further accidents before banning this or that substance, the European Commission has decided to draw up a list of authorized substances. To be on the list a substance will have to undergo a whole series of tests and experiments. All substances not on the list will be forbidden. New substances will have to conform with the prescribed standards to be admitted. Europe's consumers will have a very high degree of protection when the Ministers of the Nine adopt the list.

## ONE MAN'S COLOURANT IS ANOTHER MAN'S POISON

The basic aim is to arrive at one identical legislation for all of Europe by taking the best from each of the countries. Well, certain chemical products are banned in some countries and authorized in others. Just as if a product could be dangerous on one side of the frontier and harmless on the other!

For example, 18 main colourants are presently used in Europe in tinned food, cooked dishes, jams and syrups. But the national legislations of the European countries do not see eye to

eye. At the European Commission's request Community experts have been studying the question and arrived at the conclusion that seven of these colourants could be dangerous to health and that their use ought to be severely controlled or even in certain cases forbidden. Thus once again it was not necessary to wait for serious accidents to get action.

The Community's Scientific Committee for Foodstuffs made up of thirteen "wise men" - scientists and experts in toxicology - examine many other questions as well, such as the contamination of fish products by mercury, the effects of rapeseed oil on human health, the substances used in processing fruits etc.

## PROTECTION OF YOUR JOB

Your shopping is done. Thanks to the Common Market you have been able to benefit from lower prices, better quality, and much better protection ... Now you have to go to work like the other 115 million active persons in Europe.

What time do you leave your office or factory in the evening? Today that depends on the country: in Belgium the legal length of the working week is 45 hours, in Germany 48 hours and in France 40 hours. In the United Kingdom and in Denmark no legislation exists. From next year however these differences will disappear as a forty hour week will be generalized throughout the Community. Hours worked after that will be accountable as overtime.

At the moment you are particularly anxious. Every day firms in the Community are merging or being taken over. If such a change in the structure of your company took place what would happen to you? Is your job safe?

In France, Italy and Luxembourg workers are protected to a point: they can at least enjoy some of their rights if their company is taken over or merges. In the other five countries, legislation is still unclear.

The regulation proposed by the European Commission ought to guarantee that no European workers will lose any of their rights through structural changes in their firms. This means that in the new work contract, the new employer will be obliged to retain all the benefits that the workers had in their original contracts due to their length of service (bonuses, compensation, length of notice of dismissal, supplementary holidays, etc.).

And if your firm finds itself obliged to give notice of mass dismissal? Your trade union representative has probably recently mentioned that the European Commission has proposed a Community regulation to assure better protection of threatened workers: obliging employers to consult workers' representatives to try and find ways of avoiding dismissals, obliging employers to notify the dismissals to the public authorities who would then have the right to intervene and postpone the dismissals.

In spite of everything some people are obliged to change their jobs once in a while. It is still necessary to have a professional qualification. Europe can help them in this. More than 1 600 000 people have been able to obtain professional qualifications thanks to the European Community. The workers at the Sunderland steel works in North-East England, the fishermen in Greenland retrained to stone-masons, the miners in the Netherlands, the employees at Olivetti in Italy, some of the groundstaff at Dublin airport who were formerly in agriculture, the handicapped workers who make television tubes in a sponsored workshop in Belgium and many more in all the countries of the Common Market who have been retrained with the assistance of the Community.

## ROADS, TRAINS, TELEPHONES

Maybe you live in one of the richer areas of the Community, in green countryside or in a rapidly expanding town. But perhaps you live in a particularly underdeveloped region, without many resources which is being slowly depopulated. If nothing happens, you yourself may be obliged to leave the region for one of the big towns where you will have more chance of finding a job and opportunities for your children. You wish all the same that your region could be "started up" again so you could stay there, and your children as well.

Your region could be one of the underdeveloped regions earmarked by the Community for financial assistance from the European Regional Fund. £730 million are to be administered by the Fund over the next three years for the development of areas like yours, to finance industrial and handicraft activities, to revive these neglected areas. Of course Community action will not be enough. The state authorities themselves will still continue to help their own regions and the Fund is not a substitute for their efforts. The Fund is a way of complementing State intervention. It should enable them to do more. It will add to their initiatives.

Even before the recent creation of the Regional Development Fund the Community was active in encouraging the development of the regions thanks mostly to the European Investment Bank. This bank is "unlike the others", it lends funds to national organizations on very advantageous terms to help the execution of national or regional projects.

During the first ten months of 1975 the Bank lent over £400 million for projects within the Community. Three-quarters of this was for investment in the needy areas of the UK and Italy. To build the second Dartford road tunnel under the Thames £7 million was lent by the Bank at a special low rate of interest. Just before Christmas British Rail got a loan of over £6 million to build more goods wagons for its streamlined "Merry-Go-Round" system for a continuous coal transport shuttle from the mines to the power stations. The system will save the power stations a lot of time and money which in turn will be reflected in lower generating costs.

The Italians and the French, thanks to aid of this sort are digging a new road tunnel at Frejus in the Alps 7.5 miles long at an altitude of 3 700 feet. More than one million cars

a year will benefit from it after 1978.

#### A SAFER CAR

Traffic on the motorways in increasing. Whether it is regrettable or not, Europeans spend a great deal of time in their cars. You are no exception. But every ten minutes a member of the Community is killed on the road. A large part of this slaughter can be explained by simple abuses and indiscretions. Too often it is forgotten however that if certain measures of a technical nature were applied to the vehicles the number of accidents and the number of victims could be considerably reduced.

The European Commission holds this belief and has already brought some measures into force to increase traffic safety. The earliest of the measures dealt with international road haulage. Since 1969 all of the lorries have had to be fitted with speedometers. Witnessing the progress of the vehicle, the use of speedometers is intended to change and moderate the behaviour of the driver and encourage more care from him on the road. Again with safety in mind a minimal level of professional tuition has been set for drivers under 21 years of age to enable them to transport passengers.

This is not all however. Whenever the Community harmonizes the Nine's legislations on the technical characteristics of vehicles, it adopts the national legislation on each aspect which is adjudged to be the most efficient for protecting the users. Twenty regulations have already been adopted and are in force in the Community: these deal with brakes, steering, anti-shock devices, vehicle doors, interior lay-out of the cab, etc. Twenty other measures dealing notably with speedométers, the fixing of seatbelts, foglamps, etc., are about to be adopted. This will bring about the development of a European car safer than any in individual Community countries. Whether it's the Fiat of a Sicilian, the Renault of a Breton, or the Morris of a Mancunian, the safety of the vehicle will have been enhanced.

Following the efforts made in the technical sphere the European Commission is planning other measures for future drivers - compulsory teaching of road safety in schools (code of the road, principles of good driving, vehicle mechanics). A European driving licence valid throughout the Community will be issued in every country under the same conditions. On drinking and driving, the regulations and their enforcement will be strengthened. Uniform limits will be decided on for various European roads along with standard penalties for offenders. Cars will be subject to a regular road worthiness test, etc.

## HOLIDAYS ABROAD

This year for your holidays you have decided to follow the sun. More precisely you're going to Italy. But is this really abroad? Not really. The inhabitants of the Common Market benefit from many advantages when they're staying in any of the nine countries of the European Community.

But first of all Customs. Of course you don't understand why the Customs officer still asks you that traditional question "Anything to declare?". One of Europe's objectives is in fact to do away with all such formalities, but it's a long drawn out business. It would be necessary for example for all the indirect taxes such as VAT to be harmonized first throughout all the Common Market countries, and this has not yet come about. But big progress is being made. Now you can go through Customs with more cigarettes, alcohol and perfume and still have a clear conscience. Now you are not even asked for your green insurance card. Since July 1974 this formality has been abandoned. And one day, not too far into the future, you will be able to travel from Copenhagen to Rome without any formalities, just as simply as an American citizen crossing the United States.

Thus for example Europeans will have the same type of passport. This is no longer just an idea but has been given the go ahead by the heads of government of the Nine. This standardized passport will be a document issued by each State to its nationals, will have the same presentation throughout Europe and will bring out the Community link as well as national ties.

Now you're through the frontier, without hindrance. You're having a nice holiday in Italy. But if you fall ill will you have to return home to benefit from social security? No, by virtue of the regulations of the European Community, people who are insured, salaried workers or pensioners who are staying in a Community country other than where they reside, will be able to benefit (along with members of their family) from health insurance if they need immediate treatment.

There are of course a number of formalities to go through: before going on holiday don't forget to get an E lll form certifying your right to health insurance benefits. The cost of the illness will be taken care of (medical care, medicines, hospitalisation, etc.) in the place where you are staying, according to the system in force in the Community country where you are spending your holidays.

# WHAT ABOUT THE WATER!

Don't talk about bad luck! If you have chosen the Adriatic coast for your holidays it is without doubt to please your children who cannot conceive of a summer without going swimming ... unfortunately the beaches aren't always as beautiful and the water so pure as the pictures in the travel brochures may make out.

In 1971 for example, it was estimated that the towns along Europe's coast were dumping some 781 tons of waste a year into the sea. This gave rise to bacteriological pollution almost as disturbing as it is invisible. And this is only one of the many aspects of coastal pollution. Added to this are the pollutions caused by industries actually on the coasts, the pollution carried into the sea by rivers, not to mention of course the oil dumped out at sea. You remember without doubt, the Torrey Canyon catastrophe in 1967: 117 000 tons of oil spilled at sea off the coast of Cornwall. What can the national authorities do to combat

such problems? Every country can of course issue laws and regulations but these measures will largely be ineffective if the individual countries do not work jointly with its neighbours to fight against sea pollution and to protect them against further new contamination. With this in mind the European Commission drew up objectives for bathing water. These were adopted along with measures to be taken throughout the whole Community to fight against pollution of bathing waters.

For all Europe this was a notable step forward as none of the countries had legislation as stringent as that adopted by the Community. That alone as if by magic is not going to bring back the purity of our holiday beaches. It will take eight years before bathing waters, rivers and seas conform to the standards laid down by the Community.

## AT HOME IN EUROPE

Despite the small disappointments over the beauty and cleanliness of the beaches, your holidays were quite pleasant. You met some friends, an English couple who have been living in Italy for several years working for the subsidiary of an English firm. They explain to you how here, more than in any other foreign country they feel a little bit at home.

Indeed European law stipulates that European workers ought to be able to move freely within the Community. The application of this law is however sometimes complex. Thus a citizen of the Netherlands who studied and obtained his "doctorate" in law in Belgium was refused admission to the bar in Brussels on the pretext that he wasn't Belgian. Admission to the bar was necessary for him to operate as a lawyer in Belgium. The refusal was based on a Royal Belgian decree limiting access to the legal profession to Belgian nationals. The affair came before the European Court of Justice. The verdict was clear: the refusal of the Belgian bar to accept a European citizen who had fulfilled all the conditions demanded of nationals, concerning his education and diploma, was against Community law.

For the freedom of establishment — in the nine Common Market countries — of the Community's self—employed workers, this decision by the European Court of Justice was a decisive step forward. The architects, engineers, and doctors — members of the liberal professions — can always refer to this ruling if they are refused the right to exercise their profession because of their nationality.

The 500 000 Community doctors themselves will not even have to refer to this judgment after the end of 1976 as they will formally be allowed to exercise their profession in any of the countries of the Common Market.

By opening up the frontiers in this field the level of medicine in Europe could be improved, particularly in those countries who have a shortage of specialists. The free establishment of doctors should become a "model" applicable to all the other liberal professions: lawyers, architects, engineers, veterinary surgeons, midwives, etc.

But you may ask, what about the diplomas and certificates issued by the Community countries? Are they equivalent and recognized throughout the Community? Not yet. But the services of the European Commission are working in close collaboration with education specialists of the different countries to enable diplomas issued in each field of education to be recognized in all the Common Market countries. Useful progress has already been made: for several years now the equivalent of the General Certificate of Education has been recognized. On top of that the ministers have already agreed on the basic principles which will govern the mutual recognition of diplomas. Also in concrete terms, the work being carried out by the specialists is quite well advanced.

## THE STORY OF MADAME CHRISTINI

What about your friends' life in Italy, being English do they feel citizens "apart"?

Yes, but not for long. The Europeans who live in a Community country other than their own will soon be able to benefit from "special rights". These are essentially the right to vote, and eligibility and access to public functions in all the States of the Community. For the first stage voting rights and access to public functions at the local level are envisaged. The actual means of implementing these principles are being worked out at this moment.

And the social advantages? The workers who have come from a Community country ought to benefit from the same social advantages as the nationals. That is a law which the French railways learnt the hard way. Madame Christini, the widow of an Italian migrant worker was refused by French Railways (S.N.C.F.), a card giving her the right to fare reductions for large families. It was claimed that such advantages were exclusively for French citizens. Madame Christini's lawyer did not interpret the matter in the same way. He brought a complaint before the European Court of Justice who supported him: Madame Christini had the right to her reduction card.

Coming back to your holidays. Now they are nearing their end. You start your preparations for going home, you say goodbye to your friends, you exchange addresses. You will write to them.

Now writing to them will be as simple as writing to someone who lives a few kilometers down the road. No need to go to the post office yourself to have the letter weighed for posting, or to consult complicated tables to know the proper tariff scale: it will soon be the ordinary tariff, the same one used for ordinary letters in England. And this won't just be for England and Italy of course, but for all the Common Market countries. Soon this uniform tariff will also apply to small parcels as well.

## THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Holidays are over. Despite everything you're not too sad. You're even quite pleased to see your family again, your friends, your house, your garden. Now, talking about the garden,

suppose for a moment that an unscrupulous neighbour were to use too many harmful chemical products (insecticides, herbicides, etc.) and that prevented you from harvesting your first Spring vegetables.

Now exactly the same thing happens between countries: on one side of the frontier there is a fight against pollution being waged, this doesn't stop the country being polluted ... by his neighbour. The rivers, the wind, the seas, do not recognize national frontiers. It is therefore at an international level and for example a community level that an overall coherent system for improving the environment has to be developed. Community countries have already adopted uniform regulations on the quality of surface waters used for human consumption. Numerous other measures are being examined: the management and storage of radioactive waste, a regulation on drinking water, packaging, detergents.

There you are, no shortage of examples.

In October 1975, a baby was murdered, poisoned by some lead-based ointment. This is a tragic example of the noxious effect of lead. The Community consumes one million tons a year. It is contained in certain paints, varnishes, petrol additives, printing ink, plastics, pipes, insecticides, etc. Measures have to be taken at the European level. The European Commission has proposed that biological norms for the Community be fixed to preserve Europe's health. Samples are already being taken in urban areas of more than 500 000 inhabitants.

Here you are again back home, back in your home town. You rediscover all the same old everyday problems: traffic-jams, public transport which never works very well. A town which, all in all, doesn't look as nice as you would like.

It's quite true that industrialization in Europe has encouraged the development of gigantic urban zones where living is not always easy. Traffic problems and transport problems. An increasing crime rate. The growth of areas which have become veritable ghettos. Where it's better not to go at night ... The population tends to move towards the outskirts of the town leaving a deserted centre, occupied only by the banks and commercial organizations. The suburbs continue to grow and develop into small cities of high rise blocks and housing estates. These problems are to be found around all the capitals and the big industrial cities and it's quite obvious that it's only a scientific approach and not an emotional or purely political approach which is going to solve the problem. That is why action at the Community level is necessary, on research into town planning, rural planning, architecture, to enable the fastest progress possible. A special group has in fact been set up to work out at the Community level ways of putting such a research programme into effect. This programme would be worked out jointly with the Community's nine member countries. Its execution, financing, and development will be undertaken at the national level and the results made available to the other Community countries.

## EUROPE OF THE EUROPEANS

There are a thousand more things we could say. But we have simply tried to give a few examples showing that the developing Community is not just for the businessman, but involves every single person in Europe.

As you well know, there is much more to Europe than we have mentioned here. But it is no minor aspect of its activities which are devoted to improving the quality of the Europeans' everyday life.

Europe with its hesitations, its set-backs, but also with its exemplary successes is first and foremost, our Europe.

Albert D., is Belgian, works in a modern packaging factory in Charleroi as a specialist welder. In 1965 the little metal construction firm he worked for became severely threatened by German competition. The factory where Albert D. worked therefore had to be converted to produce packaging material for which there was an expanding export market. During the reconversion process Albert D. was able to claim temporary compensation and take a professional retraining course, half of which was paid for by the European Social Fund.

Georges M., was pulled out of a collapsed mine-shaft at Pas-de-Calais where he was working back in 1973. He was rescued using techniques developed in the mines of Germany and made known through the information exchanges organized by the Community's Mines Safety and Health Commission.

Betty F., British citizen, had her arm seriously injured in an accident in a textile factory in the Midlands and in 1974 started an intensive rehabilitation course enabling her to find a job once again. The course was financed by the rehabilitation programme of the European Social Fund.

For twenty years now <u>Giuseppe S.</u> has been working in a steelworks in Saarbrucken. When he arrived in Germany from Tarente (southern Italy) to find work he had to live in an unheated room with five other people. He sent most of his earnings to his wife who stayed at home until the day in 1957 when she joined him along with the two children. They moved into a modern apartment close to the factory, specially built for steel workers out of Community funds. By the end of 1973 the Community had participated in the financing of 127 000 new houses or apartments for workers to live in.

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