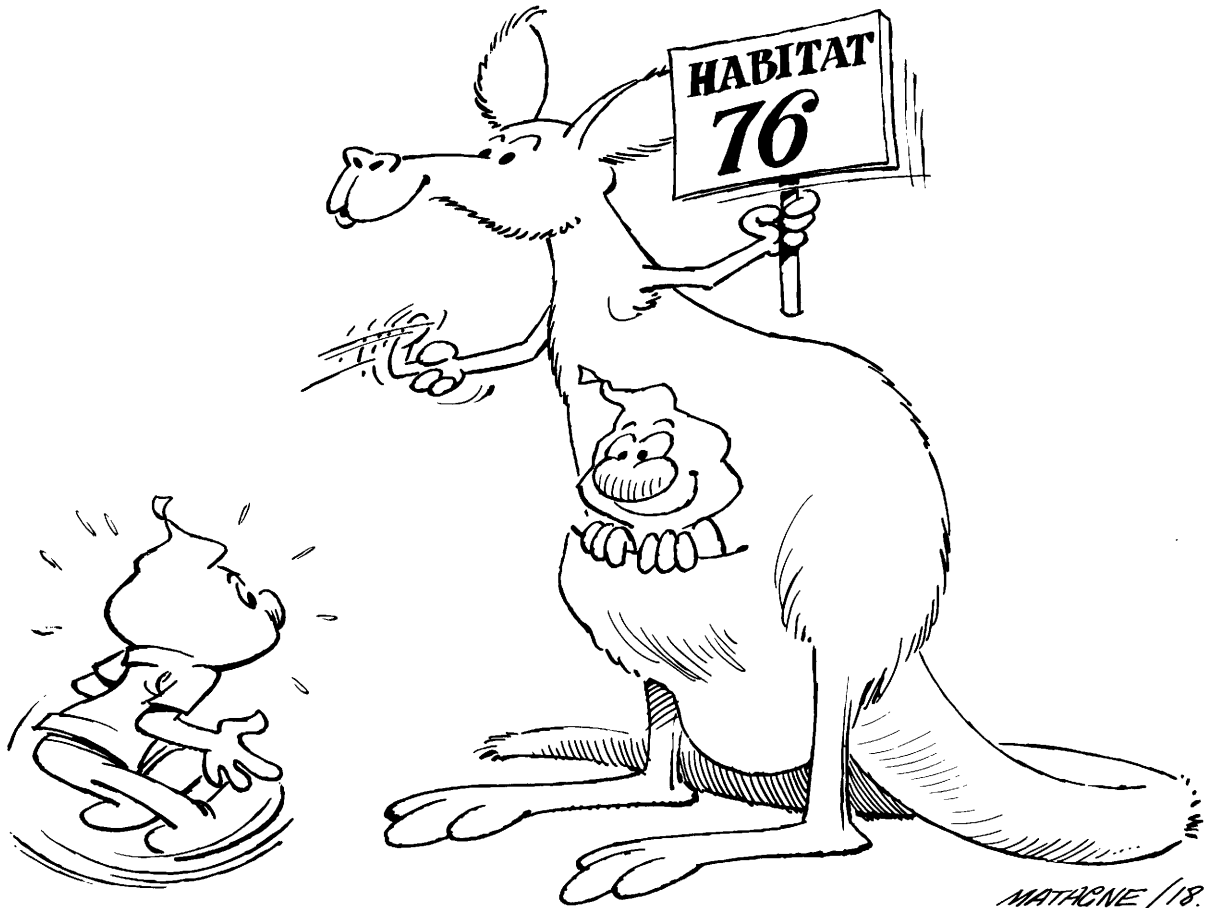


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** THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

We begin with some introductory remarks about the Community for the benefit of those who are not regular readers of Euroforum. Nine countries, with 255 million inhabitants, are now members of the Community. Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands first established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. The same countries created the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) by treaties signed in Rome in 1957. In January 1973, the Six were joined by three new members, Denmark, Ireland and United Kingdom.

In law there are three Communities but they share the same institutions: the Commission, independent of governments and private interests, which ensures the application of the treaties and prepares proposals for the Council of Ministers, composed of the representatives of the Member States; the European Parliament, the members being appointed by the nine national parliaments from among their own members; and the Court of Justice. The Community is much more than an intergovernmental organization, since its institutions have power to make law on matters falling within their competence under the treaties.

** SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The European Community has a surface area of 618 000 square miles* which makes it one-sixth the size of the United States and one-twelfth the size of the Soviet Union. However its population of 255 million is larger than either of the two superpowers and its population density works out seven times greater than that of the United States and fifteen times greater than that of the Soviet Union.

On the world scale the European Community lives within comparatively narrow frontiers yet it is one of the most advanced economic groupings of the world. It has great industrial centres, some of which were founded in the industrial revolution of the last century, yet has also areas which have been virtually passed by in the march of industrial progress and suffer the problems of underdevelopment.

At the top end of the scale there are the great focal points of economic progress, which have all the advantages and problems of major metropolitan areas. The figures speak for themselves: Greater London comprises 18% of the population of Britain; Paris comprises 20% of the French population and Copenhagen accounts for 35% of the population of Denmark. Concentrations such as these breed problems qualitatively different from those in areas of underdevelopment and in declining centres of industrial activity.

Already in this vast interrelated field much action has been initiated and is slowly, almost imperceptibly, taking effect throughout the Community. In preparation or awaiting the approval of the Council of Ministers are a wide variety of vital measures which when

*Excluding Greenland.

fully in effect will change the quality of the urban setting and bring to the ordinary citizen the advantages which an advanced industrial civilization is capable of providing.

The scope of the European Community's field of action is not limited however to the selfish pursuit of its own citizens' welfare. The Treaty of Rome (signed in 1957) founding the European Community also gave associate status to a number of overseas territories which since the signing of the Lomé Convention in February 1975 have increased in numbers following the agreement with the 46 African-Caribbean-Pacific group of countries. In the original Article 131 of the Treaty of Rome the Community committed itself to giving aid to the associated countries to promote their economic and social development and to "further the interests and prosperity of the associate countries in such a way as to lead them to such economic, social and cultural development as they expect". The Third World with its richer and, more importantly, less developed and underdeveloped countries, has a particular place in the overall philosophy of the European Community and over the years, notably in the field of accommodation, infrastructure and welfare aid, Community aid has been substantial.

** REGIONAL APPROACH TO HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

The Community lives within comparatively narrow frontiers yet has a wide variety of climate, landscape, peoples and activities. The full diversity in terms of economic development and underdevelopment and of population concentration and dispersion shows up mainly at the regional level.

Balanced regional growth in the Community implies finding ways of encouraging the development and improving the quality of life in areas as diverse as the broad farming plains of the Beauce or the Po valley, the industrial concentrations of the Ruhr, the English Midlands or Lombardy, the coal mines of Lorraine, the Saar and Wales, the textile areas of Lancashire, Flanders, the Rhone, the tourist regions of the Atlantic and Mediterranean shores. The contrasts in the Community are striking and policies for human settlements have to cope with vast conurbations with 12 000 inhabitants per square mile and regions like the Alps with 45 persons per square mile or less.

The aim of the European Community's regional policy is to develop the regions located in Europe in a balanced way or more exactly to narrow the gaps that exist between the levels of development of the various regions.

The great disparities in standards of living are usually reflected in the quality of human settlements. In the Community the income per head differs by a factor of five between the cities of Brussels, Paris, Hamburg and the rural areas of Calabria in Italy or Donegal in Ireland. A Community whose very existence implies a strong degree of mutual support between its members simply cannot accept such major inequalities in living standards between its peoples.

One approach is through industrial investment. Until the end of 1974 the Community was able to use financial resources only in specific and limited fields in order to support national regional policies. Loans were made for industrial modernization and conversion,

mainly in the coal and steel industries, and grants were given for the modernization of agricultural areas, with special provision made for the retraining and resettlement of workers. Since 1971 the Community has also operated a scheme for coordinating national regional aids in order to avoid the abuse of financial incentives to attract investment. To give due weight to the needy areas a ceiling to aid levels has been fixed on a sliding scale to correspond with the relative gravity of economic conditions in the different regions of the Community.

Since 1975 however a new instrument has been introduced into the Community to make a direct contribution towards reducing the Community's regional imbalances and resolving regional problems as they affect the standard of living and the quality of human settlements in the Community, namely the European Regional Development Fund.

** EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

For its first three years of operation (up to 1977) it was endowed with 1 300 million units of account* to be a source of grants for industrial, handicraft and service activities and for infrastructure.

The Community recognizes that it cannot take the basic regional policy role from the individual Member States and regards its fund as a supplement and inspiration to national efforts.

The Regional Policy Committee set up at the same time was given the important task of considering the problems of regional policy as a whole and was given particular responsibility for coordinating the regional policies of the Member States.

Before the introduction of the Regional Fund, the European Investment Bank was the main source of loans to the less prosperous regions. Recently the Commission has encouraged the Bank to diversify the range of its regional activities, particularly by financing infrastructure and public services provided by the local and regional authorities, so that they can take advantage of the generous terms and low rates of interest offered by the Bank.

In 1975 also, the Regional Policy Committee was established, to help coordinate the regional policies of the Member States and to be a forum for consultation on problems of regional policy and on the measures to be taken at Community level. It has begun its work by defining in detail, what the Regional Development Programmes to be drawn up by the Member States should contain.

Accurate information and careful evaluation of facts and policies are basic prerequisites for any Community action in this field. A number of studies have been made for the Commission, or are now in progress, on concentration of population and economic activities and/or the effects of policy measures to deal with it. The growing megalopolis in North-West Europe has also been studied.

*One unit of account is equal to about US \$1.2.

A Community urban research programme is also being planned by the Commission. This programme is focussed on the growth of urban concentrations and it is proposed that a coordinated research programme be undertaken by the Member States. Guidance, coordination and communication of research findings will come from a committee of the national representatives and European Commission experts. At the end of this two-year programme, the Commission will synthesize and disseminate the results to all interested parties and draw its own conclusions as to future action.

**** HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND MODERNIZATION**

To an Englishman (so it is said) his home is his castle. To the European Community housing is a vital link in the Community's social and economic development. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) established in 1952 recognized from the start that the availability of sufficient modern housing for workers in these two basic industries was essential if the social and economic aims of its own founding Treaty of Paris were to be fulfilled. By the end of 1975, the ECSC had participated in the construction or modernization of more than 140 000 dwellings for miners and steelworkers, at a total cost of some 1 689 million units of account.

ECSC assistance is supplemental in character - it is given to enable a larger number of dwellings to be built than would otherwise be the case. This assistance takes the form of low-interest (1% p.a.) loans with long repayment periods. These loans serve to lower the break-even point of the building operations and thus to subsidize indirectly the rents payable by workers. ECSC also assists the building of dwellings for owner-occupation. The easy terms on which loans are granted to those building on their own account represent an appreciable saving for them.

The ECSC realized that it would have to take account of differences in living habits and climate, building and planning regulations, and methods of financing to be found in the Community. It therefore decided to set up regional committees in the mining and iron and steel sectors, consisting of representatives of central and local authorities, trade unions and employers' associations, with cooperation invited from all bodies and departments having to do with housing. These committees, from their detailed knowledge of local conditions, advise the Community's officials in the preparation and execution of the housing schemes, make proposals as to the allocation of the funds available, and exercise some measure of supervision to ensure that dwellings built with Community assistance are in fact acquired by miners and steelworkers only.

In 1958 ECSC organized an international architectural competition and dwellings were built to some of the prizewinning designs as part of an experimental programme. There have been three such programmes to date, carried out as applied research on better housing from the technical, economic and sociological points of view.

The first experimental scheme, for 1 000 one-family dwellings in the six member countries, was aimed at encouraging more use of steel in building, and at comparing building costs in the different countries and establishing the reasons for any disparities.

Another programme, for five housing estates of 400 dwellings each, in five member countries, featured the building of the necessary communal facilities and amenities in parallel with the actual dwellings and was intended as a forward look at how subsidized workers' housing might be in twenty years' time when with their higher standard of living workers would be able to spend more on their accommodation.

In the experimental modernization programme launched in 1970, the principal aims were to reduce the time and cost of the work by streamlined organization and by the use of industrial prefabrication methods. One main feature of this was the development of prefabricated units such as bathrooms and kitchens which could be inserted in existing dwellings with the minimal time, expense and structural alterations. The programme showed how it is possible to create modern living conditions at 25-40% of the cost of constructing new dwellings. A comprehensive report on this programme has been published by the European Community's Office for Official Publications, Luxembourg.

**** HOUSING FOR MIGRANT WORKERS AND FOR THE HANDICAPPED**

One of the principles establishing the European Community is the free movement of labour among the Member States. The operation of this principle has however not been without significant problems in the social sphere. The migrant population whether from Member States or from third countries is generally found to live and work in conditions substantially inferior to those of the indigenous population. The Social Action Programme adopted by the Community in January 1974 gave priority to improving the situation of migrant workers. Community action is based on the principle of achieving equality in living and working conditions in wages and salaries and in economic and social rights. Owing to the lack of systematic and comparable information about the social conditions of migrant workers the European Community has initiated a programme of studies and in particular has been conducting a major survey of the housing conditions of migrant workers in the Community.

Priority was also given to handicapped people in the 1974 Social Action Programme. In the field of housing of handicapped persons, the European Commission has been preparing an ambitious programme of pilot schemes ranging from the rehabilitation of handicapped persons to the removal of architectural obstacles and barriers, so that the handicapped may be able to resume normal productive working life.

**** A THRIVING BUILDING INDUSTRY**

To solve long-term housing and other construction needs, an efficient, independent and stable building industry is vital. In a Community where land itself has become a scarce resource and population levels are still climbing, an effective construction industry has to be assured.

The construction industry already employs 8-10% of the Community's working population and has great influence on Member States' economies particularly in terms of investment and of its influence on other sectors of the economy which provide its supplies.

To try and bring stability and efficiency to the industry, the European Commission has devised an action programme, the basic aims of which are to improve productivity and quality in the industry whilst at the same time developing a unified market.

Consistent forecasting of construction requirements is a recognized necessity and the Commission has taken the first steps towards developing statistical methods and procedures so that Member States' forecasts - medium- and long-term - can be usefully compared, especially in the fields of housing, non-residential buildings and civil engineering works. Other aims of the action programme are to harmonize national regulations and standards for construction and materials so as to remove technical and legal barriers to trade and last, but in many ways the most important of all, to coordinate the building industries' research and development efforts.

**** THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

The cardinal importance of human settlements has been recognized and given due place in the Community's environment policy. In 1973 the Community adopted an ambitious environmental action programme, which is due to run until the end of 1976 when it will be continued and extended by a second action programme for the period 1977-81.

**** MAIN AIMS OF PROGRAMME**

In approving the action programme on the environment the Council of Ministers stated that the aim was "to improve the setting and quality of life and the surroundings and living conditions of the peoples of the Community". To achieve this they laid down a programme with the following objectives:

- . to prevent, reduce and as far as possible eliminate pollution and nuisances;
- . to manage the use of natural resources properly, maintain a satisfactory ecological balance and protect the biosphere;
- . to guide economic growth in accordance with quality requirements by improving working and living conditions;
- . to ensure that environmental aspects are taken into account in town planning and land use;
- . to seek joint solutions to environmental problems common to Member and non-Member States.

The Community also adopted the principle that as far as anti-pollution measures are concerned the "polluter pays". Where the pollution arises from production processes, the producer is liable for the cost of anti-pollution measures. Where it arises from the use of certain products, the user pays.

Since the adoption of the programme the European Commission has been working out the implications and the details of these principles and a number of proposals have been adopted by the Council of Ministers and have entered into force throughout the Community.

**** PROTECTING THE CITIZENS' WATER**

Rivers like the Thames in London and the Seine in Paris are recreation areas as much as industrial dumping grounds and need protection. The first Community-wide directive to be adopted under the action programme set itself the task of banning the discharge of waste oils into inland watercourses or on the land whilst at the same time prohibiting any processing of waste oils causing excessive air pollution. 2.5 million tonnes of waste oil are produced a year in the Community and the new measures which have to be complied with by June 1977 should help improve the quality of Europe's rivers and water resources while encouraging recycling and re-use of oil which should be of economic benefit to the Community.

The Community has also adopted measures to reduce the pollution caused by dangerous and toxic substances. The principle was adopted in December 1975 of setting limit values for undesirable substances discharged into watercourses. The most dangerous substances are set out in a "black list" and in due course physical quantitative discharge limits will be prescribed for each substance. Member States will either have to adhere to these physical limits or prove that if they are exceeded the water maintains a continuous minimum quality level (this provision is to take account of fast-flowing waters such as the North Sea and the Atlantic).

**** BATHING WATER**

With the current pollution load in the Community's waters, people are possibly at risk when bathing outdoors. To give the Community citizens a certain amount of protection, minimum water quality standards for sea water and fresh water used for bathing have been adopted. Over the next ten years, Member States will be obliged to introduce measures to comply strictly with the standards laid down.

**** PLIGHT OF THE RHINE**

The great river Rhine which traverses five of the Community's Member States has suffered drastically over the years as a recreational area through the discharge of tons upon tons of pollutants from the wealth of industry along its banks and from its extensive use by ships and barges transporting their wares along one of the great arteries of the Community. The degree of pollution is already very severe and to preserve the river as a source of drinking water, a recreational area and an important link in the industrial process, the Community has mounted action on a number of fronts. The Community is in the process of setting pollutant discharge limits as mentioned above and has agreed to be an active participant in the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Chemical Pollutants set up by five states, France, West Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and Luxembourg in 1963. The direct participation of the Community agreed in December 1975 will hopefully throw some weight behind the efforts of the five states in reaching an agreement on a Convention on the Protection of the Rhine.

**** DRINKING WATER**

The Rhine and other rivers are sources of drinking water for various areas of the Community. The requirements for good-quality water for drinking and use in foodstuffs are constantly increasing, the purification costs are also increasing, and the Community is worried that standards may not be maintained sufficiently to protect public health, especially as water can be one of the main carriers of germs and elements noxious to man. Proposals laying down minimum standards for the quality of waters from which water for human consumption will be drawn, are at present being considered.

**** THE URBAN ATMOSPHERE**

The use of energy in its many forms gives rise to various forms of pollution. The greatest consumption of such energy sources is to be found in urban areas where the fumes of motor cars - producing carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, lead, etc. - are frequently combined with the sulphur dioxide emissions from other oils to pollute an already overloaded atmosphere. To improve the quality of the air in urban settings the Community has taken action on a number of levels.

The maximum sulphur content of certain liquid fuels (gas oils) was agreed in October 1975 and measures were adopted requiring Member States to reduce the maximum sulphur content of gas oils to 0.3% by 1980. Areas without serious sulphur dioxide atmospheric pollution will be permitted a slightly higher maximum.

On top of this, the European Commission has proposed that the sulphur content of fuel oils be limited within "zones of special protection" (areas with a high degree of atmospheric pollution from sulphurous emissions). If the Council adopts the proposal, Member States will only be able to use low-sulphur fuel oils or equivalents in such areas after October 1978.

Up to a certain point sulphur dioxide in city air is unpleasant; beyond this it can become a serious danger to the lungs and respiratory system. The Commission has prepared proposals to set specific limits to the concentrations of sulphur dioxide and suspended particles (black smoke) in the urban atmosphere. Both pollutants predominate in urban areas on account of the higher fossil fuel consumption. The Council is considering whether to adopt specific short-term and long-term population exposure limits. If it does so, the Member States will have until 1982 to bring in the appropriate measures to protect the health of the citizen. Delays will be tolerated only in exceptional circumstances.

The volume of traffic in our cities has similarly pushed up the concentrations of lead, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, etc. to levels where city dwellers' health is put at risk. The Commission has had controversial proposals under discussion over the last two years aimed at restricting lead content of petrol in two stages, eventually to 0.15 gr/litre for regular grades of fuel. The German Government has already introduced this 0.15 gr/litre limit of lead in petrol from the beginning of 1976 and their experience should help the introduction of harmonized lead content limits through the Community.

** THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT. LAND USE PLANNING

The environmental problems specific to city centres, to coastal areas and to open spaces have all been studied by consultants and the Commission, with the assistance of national experts, will examine the conclusions and recommendations of these studies to see what action should be taken at Community level to relieve the pressures which threaten these areas. In addition, these studies will be discussed at a conference of elected representatives and officials from local and regional authorities throughout the Community, which will be held in 1977.

The results of work in progress on two fronts will be of particular significance for land use planning. The first is aimed at developing a method of mapping the basic ecological characteristics of the Community territory. By the use of this method, planning authorities will be able to base their overall plans and their decisions concerning proposed developments on an accurate knowledge of the suitability of the territory for various uses.

The best environmental policy consists in preventing the creation of pollution or nuisances at source rather than subsequently trying to counteract their effects. In a number of countries, a procedure for evaluating in advance the effects on the environment of proposed legislation and developments has been established. The Commission is considering how this procedure, known as environmental impact assessment, might be introduced in the Community. The scope of such procedures, the content of the assessments and the organizational and financial aspects are all being studied.

** TRANSPORT

In transport two different activities with an impact on human settlements may be distinguished. First, there is the Commission's proposal to charge for the use of transport infrastructure; second, various initiatives of the Commission to diminish the negative environmental impact of road transport.

As regards infrastructure charging the Commission has proposed a system under which not only the direct cost of using the infrastructure would be charged to the user, but also the "external" costs of his use of it. In this way congestion costs, the costs of air and noise pollution as well as the costs of accidents would be taken into account.

To diminish the negative impact of road transport on the environment the Community has already introduced several measures and others have been proposed. For example, the Council of Ministers has adopted legislation on motor vehicle noise levels and on air pollution from internal combustion engines; proposed regulations on maximum weights and dimensions for lorries, strengthening noise level regulations, and (as mentioned earlier) on the lead and sulphur content of fuels, are on the Council of Ministers' table.

**** FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH**

To get a broader perspective of the problems involved in living and working conditions, the Community has recently set up an independent organization to undertake and promote research, produce publications, organize conferences etc. on a wide range of subjects related to men at work and to the human environment. This "European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions" is located in Dublin, Ireland.

**** IMPROVING HUMAN CONDITIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

The Community's responsibilities are not just restricted to the nine Member States. In the founding Treaty of Rome, provision was made for a special associate relationship between the Community and the overseas territories linked to members of the original Six. The link with the Community was established in the form of trade (preferential trade relations with EEC countries) along with access to Community capital and aid.

In 1957 the number of associated countries stood at 31 with a population of about 55 million. With the signing of the Lomé Convention in 1975, the number rose to around 60 (with more possibly to sign), encompassing a population of nearly 250 million - similar to the Community population.

The original Article 131 of the Treaty of Rome - repeated in the preambles to the two Yaoundé Conventions (1964 and 1969) and the Lomé Convention - states the Community's basic objectives as the promotion of the economic and social development and the furtherance of the interests and prosperity of the inhabitants of the associated countries in such a way as to lead them to such economic and social and cultural development as they expect.

The main preoccupations of the associated states in the field of human settlements are not so much the problems of congestion and pollution except in a few glaring examples. They suffer the absence of basic facilities which are taken for granted in the Community. The root cause of their problems is underdevelopment. The quality and quantity of growth of human settlements for such countries is dependent on overall national development.

**** EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND**

The Community's activities over the years have consequently focussed on the overriding problem of improving the basic living standards and have attempted to make progress possible through financial aid. The main instrument of the Community's development aid policy is the European Development Fund (EDF). Already in its sixteenth year of operation, the Fund has been the spearhead of the Community's efforts to raise the living standards of the developing countries.

The 1957 implementing Convention laid down that the Fund should be used for "economic investment of general interest directly connected with a programme of definite and productive development projects and to finance various social institutions such as educational and technical research establishments and institutions for the vocational guidance and promotion of the population".

The Fund provides its assistance in the form of non-repayable grants which should be supplementary to expenditure by the responsible authorities in the territories concerned.

During the early years the EDF came to be regarded as somewhat of an "engineers fund" concerned more with economic projects than social projects. With the signing of the Yaoundé Convention the Fund turned into a more general Fund, dealing predominantly with rural and agricultural problems, and showing more concern for human well-being and social facilities.

A substantial proportion of the Fund has in recent years been allocated to the improvement of living conditions and the provision of educational and welfare services. In the third EDF (1970-75) for example, 21.4% of the total has been invested in social development including construction of hospitals and schools, provision of water supply and drainage systems.

The town of Korhogo in the Republic of Ivory Coast for instance, has recently been granted a loan of 1 million units of account on special terms for an extension of the drinking water supply system for its 40 000 population. An important centre in the northern part of the country the work is aimed at ensuring drinking water supplies for practically the whole population.

In the People's Republic of Benin (formerly Dahomey) over 2.5 m.u.a. are being provided to improve the health facilities at Abomey.

In the future the Community will be turning its attention to the fast growing urban centres in some of the states which are already experiencing problems of severe congestion and urban squalor. Slum clearance schemes are already overdue for some centres and the Community will be prepared to lend its support to projects proposed by the countries concerned. Technical advice and assistance for setting up building societies in the developing countries is another means that will be favoured by the Community to bring modern solutions to the "modern" urban problems the developing countries are now beginning to experience.

With the signing of what many consider to be a revolutionary pact - the ACP-EEC Convention of Lomé - the EDF has assumed a greater financial potential and new lines of action have emerged. Its powers of intervention and aid are now extended to a number of additional countries with various kinds of development experience. The latest European Development Fund (the fourth in the series) will have 3.500 million units of account at its disposal for distribution as in the past, in the form of non-repayable grants aimed at the development of production infrastructure, social services, trade promotion etc.

Under the Lomé Convention the aid available (3.150 m.u.a. from the EDF and 400 m.u.a. from the European Investment Bank) will be given on a priority basis to the 24 least developed of the ACP countries. This will result in a significant increase in the financial aid granted to the poorest among the former African and Malagasy States (AASM) compared to their aid under the Yaoundé Convention.

**** CONCLUSION**

This sketch of some of the Community's activities shows it at work to promote the improvement of the living and working conditions of its people, which the founding Member States declared to be the essential objective of their efforts. It also shows that the Community is making its contribution to the common effort to achieve "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" for all mankind.

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