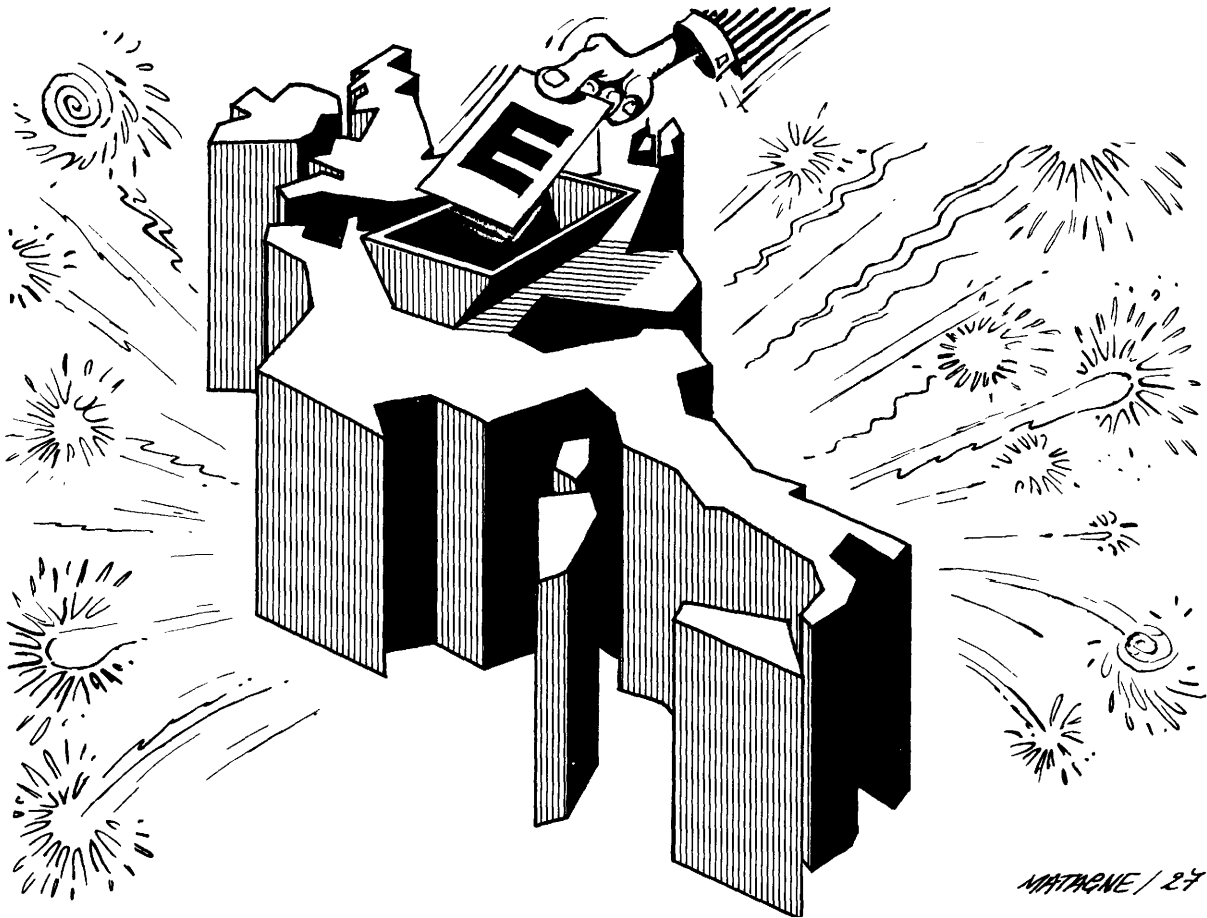


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What kind of Europe do Europe's 180 million voters want?
What mandate will they give their 410 directly-elected representatives?

X/425/76-E

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Commission of the European Communities
Directorate General of Information
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IN THIS ISSUE

- 180 million voters (p. 3)
- Anything to declare? (p. 3)
- Campaign to combat international terrorism (p. 4)
- Medium-term economic policy (p. 4)
- Consumers' Consultative Committee (p. 5)
- Equality before the law (p. 5)
- Nurses in the Nine (p. 6)
- Transport infrastructure (p. 6)
- Civilization diseases (p. 6)
- Swine influenza (p. 6)

****180 MILLION VOTERS**

Was it a sign that the gods were appeased? A long-awaited storm broke over Brussels as soon as the Community's Heads of State and Government reached agreement on the number and distribution of seats in the European Parliament to be elected by direct universal suffrage in the spring of 1978. The first drops of democracy to fall on the European political scene after the interminable drought were even more welcome than the torrential rain!

Each Member State with a population of 50 million plus - Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom - is to have 81 seats; the Netherlands will have 25, Belgium 24, Denmark 16, Ireland 15 and Luxembourg 6. Why 81 rather than 82 or 79? Now that the decision has been taken, the actual number matters little. Few of us could say how many Italian, Danish or Irish members of parliament there are, but democracy doesn't necessarily suffer as a result.

What happens next?

First of all the candidates will have to decide on the options they wish to put to the European voters. The major political parties - Liberals, Christian Democrats and Socialists - are already mobilizing at European level to draw up joint manifestos and combine forces in an attempt to win the voters round to their view of the Europe of tomorrow. The election campaign will obviously make demands on the combined resources and imagination of the political parties. In the last analysis it is this, rather than the vote itself, that will shape Europe's future.

Then, and this is the whole point of the exercise, the citizens of Europe will go to the polling booths, not to say "Yes" or "No" to Europe - we already know that the vast majority would say "Yes" - but to select the kind of Europe they want to live in. Europe is after all theirs: it is for them to choose.

****ANYTHING TO DECLARE?**

Something like 4 000 000 holidaymakers will be on the move on Community roads on the busy weekend of 30 July - 2 August. At 24 selected frontier posts they will go through the ritual of replying - in the negative of course! - to the age-old question put by weary customs officials and will then be handed a leaflet - rather pointedly entitled "Europe ... but still frontiers" - published by the European Commission's information service.

The leaflet, which will be distributed by a team of 106 girls wearing T-shirts with a European emblem, will urge tourists to prepare now for the new Europe and advise them to contact their local Information Office for further details.

Motorists who pick the wrong frontier post or travel at another weekend will be able to get copies of the leaflet from the European Commission, Directorate-General for Information, rue de la Loi 200, 1049 Brussels.

When it met earlier this month, the European Parliament adopted a resolution urging the Community's Council of Ministers to ensure that the decision to introduce a uniform passport is implemented by 1978.

****CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM**

The Olympic village in Munich, the French Embassy at The Hague, the London Underground: the European Community's experience of international terrorism explains the firm stand taken by the European Council in Brussels when it condemned as totally unacceptable "the inhuman method" of taking hostages to exert pressure on governments for whatever reason, political or otherwise.

The statement continues:

"It is in the interest of all governments vigorously to oppose such methods. It is in the interest of all governments to cooperate in combating the scourge of terrorism.

Once again recent events have shown that no country, no people and no government can hope to escape acts of terrorism, kidnapping and hijacking on its soil and against its citizens and interests unless all countries agree on effective counter-measures.

To this end the Member States of the European Communities declare that they are resolved to cooperate with other countries for the purpose of framing at world level effective counter-measures to eliminate and prevent international terrorism, kidnapping and hijacking. The Member States undertake to bring to trial or extradite takers of hostages."

The Community's Justice Ministers have been instructed to draw up a convention under which the nine Member States would undertake to prosecute or extradite terrorists who have held hostages to ransom. The European Council also agreed that everything possible should be done to ensure that as many other countries as possible accede to the convention.

****MEDIUM-TERM ECONOMIC POLICY**

One: an average annual growth rate of 5% between now and 1980. Two: inflation reduced to a level compatible with lasting stability and cut to 4 to 5% in all Community countries by 1980 at the latest. These are the targets set in the preliminary draft of the Fourth Medium-Term Economic Policy Programme recently produced by the Community's Economic Policy Committee.

The programme will now be examined by the European Commission which will consult both sides of industry before finalizing the draft for presentation to the Community's Council of Ministers towards the end of September.

The Economic Policy Committee considers that these objectives cannot and will not be achieved unless Community countries succeed in reaching a consensus and improving Community arrangements for joint discussions with both sides of industry on the main aspects of economic policy.

The recent European Council in Brussels recognized that there was a need for a greater degree of convergence in national policies and agreed that the emphasis must be on productive investment until further notice. Special attention would have to be paid to policy on budget deficits and short-term liquidity creation if renewed inflation was to be avoided. The European Council welcomed the results of the recent Tripartite Conference (see Euroforum No 26/76) and expressed the hope that the two sides of industry would play an active part in formulating and implementing the economic and social policy of the future.

****CONSUMERS' CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

At its meeting on 9 July the Consumers' Consultative Committee expressed concern at the possible consequences of the present drought for Europe's consumers and in an opinion forwarded to the European Commission called for concerted action by producers and consumers at Community level.

The Committee is currently working on its farm prices report to make sure that the consumer's case is put as forcefully as those of the producer and the distributor.

The recently-appointed working party on pharmaceuticals will report for the first time next January and the Committee's report on misleading advertising should be ready by October.

Before it broke up the meeting congratulated the European Commission on the first-ever survey of consumer attitudes in the Community (see Euroforum No 27/76) and on its attempt to analyse the anxieties, ambitions and awareness of Europe's consumers.

****EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW**

A question recently put to the European Commission by Mr Dondelinger, a member of the European Parliament, is a good illustration of how public interest in consumer protection is growing. It reads as follows:

"Despite the introduction into French legislation of measures to protect the consumer, such as the decree of 12 October 1972 on the labelling of products, numerous infringements have been observed, for example in supermarkets where many food products can still be found without the labelling required by law (which must specify, for instance, the ingredients of the product, its degree of toxicity etc.).

A number of complaints have been lodged with the courts by well-informed consumers who have had offences recorded by court officers (huissiers de justice).

Unfortunately such offences tend to be encouraged in that they are covered by a penal system which can only be described as scandalous. Thus, they are classified as 'economic' offences and offending companies may settle the matter by an 'arrangement', i.e. by signing a cheque for a sum fixed after bargaining with the financial authorities. In other words, a legalized form of bribery.

On the other hand, a consumer caught in a supermarket stealing a bottle of wine or two slices of ham is taken to court.

The consumer is thus the victim of unacceptable discrimination at the penal level.

1. What legislation is in force in the other Member States in this area?
Is an 'arrangement' applied to 'economic offences' or are offending companies liable to penal sanctions?
2. Are provisions similar to those contained in the French decree of 12 October 1972 in force in the other Member States? To what penal sanctions are offenders liable?
3. Could the Commission, as part of the programme for the protection of consumers, persuade the French Government to amend this item of its legislation and ensure that firms have penal responsibility for offences against the decree of 12 October 1972?"

Consumers will await the Commission's answer with interest.

****NURSES IN THE NINE**

The European Commission hopes that the Community's Council of Ministers will soon be able to adopt its proposal for two directives of interest to nurses in the Nine. They deal with:

- the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other formal qualifications in general nursing (this proposal includes measures to facilitate effective exercise of right of establishment and freedom to provide services);
- and
- the coordination of laws, regulations or administrative provisions governing the right to take up and pursue activities of self-employed persons in general nursing.

****TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

For "common market" read "goods on the move". On German roads alone the volume of long-distance international goods traffic increased eleven-fold between 1957 and 1973 although national figures merely trebled: the Community's transport infrastructure obviously needs to keep pace with economic development.

This is precisely why the European Commission recently presented a proposal to the Community's Council of Ministers to improve existing consultation machinery and step up coordination of investments in transport infrastructure.

The European Commission also proposes that financial assistance be granted to projects of Community interest. It is thinking in particular of schemes which could eliminate bottlenecks and streamline the flow of Community traffic and of cross-frontier projects which might not be a paying proposition for one country.

****CIVILIZATION DISEASES**

The 1976 Congress of the International Society for Research on Civilization Diseases and the Environment (SIRMCE) is to be held from 9 to 12 September at the Kirchberg Centre in Luxembourg under the auspices of the European Commission. Items on the agenda include industrial medicine, the effects of noise on man, civilization diseases and cancer.

Information and application forms can be obtained from SIRMCE, rue d'Idalie 10, 1040 Brussels.

****SWINE INFLUENZA**

Not a single case of swine influenza has been reported in Europe so far: this good news was announced by the working party of virologists and public health officials which met again recently at the invitation of the European Commission. By the end of the autumn stocks of vaccine should be in the region of 8.5 million doses, enough to vaccinate 3% of the population in the event of an epidemic. Meanwhile monitoring continues at national level in close collaboration with the London-based International Flu Centre.

PRESS AND INFORMATION OFFICES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

BELGIUM

1049 BRUSSELS
Rue de la Loi 244
Tel. 735 00 40

DENMARK

1045 COPENHAGEN K
4 Gammeltorv
Postbox 144
Tel. 14 41 40

FRANCE

75782 PARIS CEDEX 16
61, rue des Belles-Feuilles
Tel. 553 53 26

GERMANY

53 BONN
Zitelmannstrasse 22
Tel. 23 80 41

1 BERLIN 31
Kurfürstendamm 102
Tel. 886 40 28

IRELAND

DUBLIN 2
29 Merrion Square
Tel. 76 03 53

ITALY

00187 ROME
Via Poli, 29
Tel. 68 97 22 à 26

LUXEMBOURG

LUXEMBOURG
Centre européen du Kirchberg
Tel. 479 41

NETHERLANDS

THE HAGUE
29, Lange Voorhout
Tel. 070-46 93 26

UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON W8 4QQ
20, Kensington Palace Gardens
Tel. 727 8090

CHILE

SANTIAGO 9
Avenida Ricardo Lyon 1177
Casilla 10093
Tel. 25 05 55

GREECE

ATHENS 134
Vassilisis Sofias 2
Tel. 743 982/83/84

JAPAN

102 TOKYO
Kowa 25 Building
8-7 Sanbancho
Chiyoda-Ku
Tel. 239-0441

SWITZERLAND

1202 GENEVA
37-39, rue de Vermont
Tel. 34 97 50

TURKEY

ANKARA
Kavaklidere
13, Bogaz Sokak
Tel. 27 61 45/46

UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037
2100 M Street, N.W.
Suite 707
Tel. (202) 872-8350

NEW YORK 10017
277 Park Avenue
Tel. 371-3804

URUGUAY

MONTEVIDEO
Calle Bartolome Mitre 1337
Casilla 641
Tel. 98 42 42