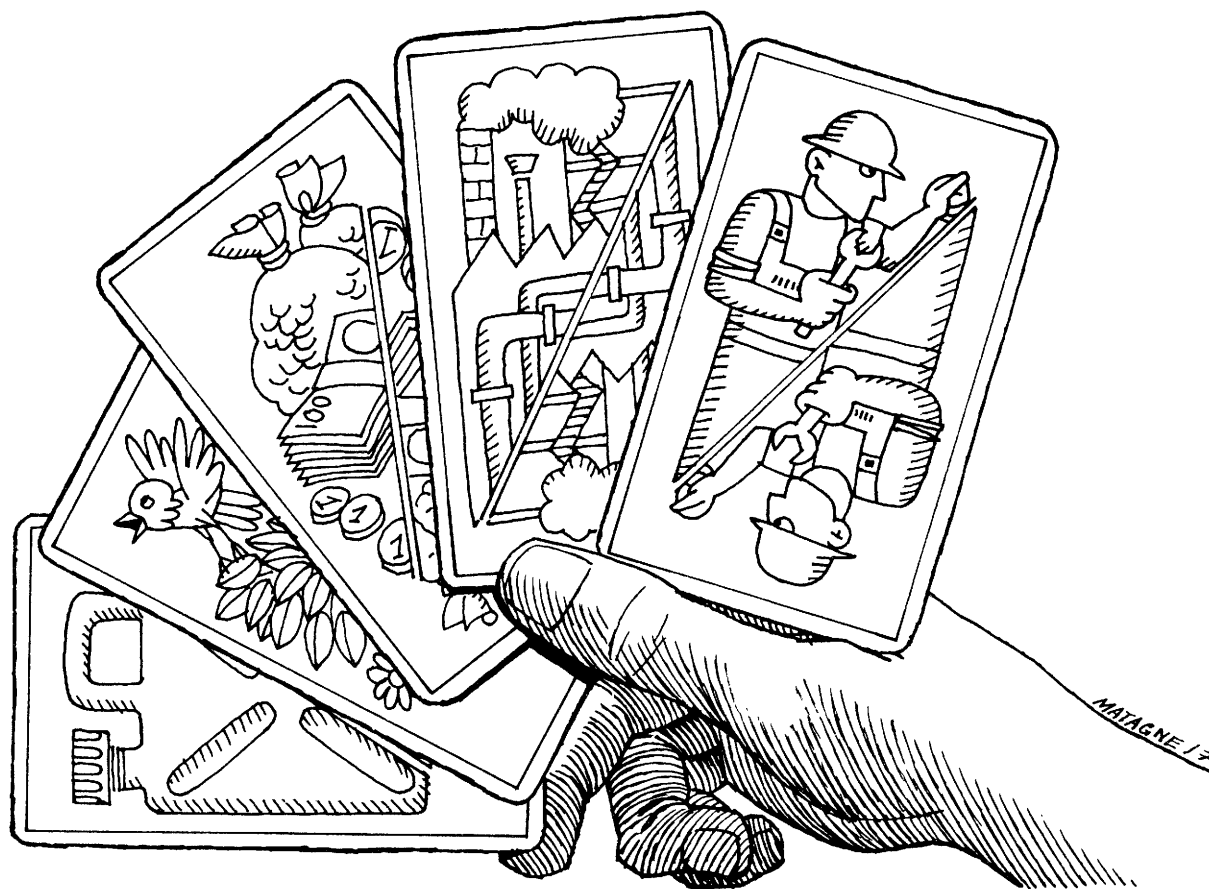


euroforum

europa day by day

Brussels, 15 February 1977

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Unemployment, inflation, environment, energy, the economy :
a difficult hand for the Commission in 1977 (see page 3)

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++ LESS TALK MORE ACTION

Less talk and more action was the key note of the presentation to the European Parliament of the European Commission's programme for 1977. In ANNEX 1 Euroforum presents other prominent points of the Roy Jenkins team plan for the coming year.

++ ROUND UP OF COMMUNITY SOCIAL POLICY

In October 1972 the leaders of the Nine gave a great new boost to the Community's Social Policy. A round up of more than four years of work concerning employment, working conditions and worker participation since then is presented in ANNEX 2.

++ EUROPE'S HEALTH

Food in Europe has been subject to various Community directives for some 15 years. In ANNEX 3 Euroforum sets out all the directives published that are vital to the health of the European consumer.

++ UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

Around 5.4 million people in the Community were registered as unemployed at the end of December 1976, according to the latest figures from the Statistical Office of the European Communities. This compares with some 5.3 million in December 1975.

Unemployment in the United Kingdom and Belgium rose by 14 % while Denmark and France saw increases of 3 % and 1 % respectively. By contrast Germany saw a drop of 11 % in its unemployment figures and Ireland and the Netherlands reduced their unemployed by 4 % and 5 % respectively.

But compared with the month before, unemployment rose by 5 % in both Ireland and the Netherlands, by 10 % in Denmark and 11 % in Germany. France and Belgium saw a slight reduction of less than 1 %.

++ THE EUROPEAN CITIZEN AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Europe's attitude towards fundamental reform of society is changing. The results of the opinion poll "Euro-Barometer" periodically undertaken by the European Commission reveal certain interesting facts. In 1970, and again in 1976, the following question was put to representative number of people in the nine countries of the Community.

"Do you think that it is necessary :
- to radically change the whole
structure of society through
revolution ?

- to improve society little by little through reform ?
- to steadfastly defend society as it stands against all subversive forces ?

The "reformist" formula gained the majority in the Community of 1976 with 60 % of replies behind it. But it had diminished in some countries compared with 1970, notably in the Netherlands (-19 points), Germany (-18 points) and France (-14 points).

The "fight against subversion" formula represented 26 % of the replies for the whole of the Community. But this was more in Germany (39 % - an increase of 19 points compared with 1970) and in the Netherlands (32 % - an increase of 17 points).

The "revolutionary" formula only got 8 % of the vote in 1976. But it had increased strongly in some countries, notably France, where it reached 13 % (compared with 5 % for 1970), and in Italy where it also reached 13 %, compared with 7 % in 1970. In summary, the attitude of "social defence" clearly seems to have increased in Germany and the Netherlands, while the "revolutionary" attitude to society has increased in France and Italy.

++ CONSUMER PROTECTION AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Consumer protection is a topic that took up some time at the last session of the European Parliament in Luxembourg. Richard Burke, the Commissioner in charge of consumer affairs, was questioned by Mr Malloy of the European Parliament. In his reply he indicated that Commission activity in the consumer field in 1977 will be centred on the protection of health and consumers' economic interests.

The Commission will continue to attach great importance to the consumer's need for information. Talks between the Commission and consumer associations will be broadened and intensified during the course of the year. The Commission was pleased with the results of the Consumer Colloquium held in Brussels in December 1976, where representatives of consumer associations were able to state their views directly to the services of the Commission. Next, the Commission intends to participate in organising a colloquium on consumer education with a number of European universities, to compare the methods used in this field and possibly develop the techniques being used.

During the debate that followed, Lord Bruce for the Socialist Group, stressed how necessary it was for the European Commission to have a Commissioner dealing exclusively with consumer protection. Mr. Meintz for the Liberal Group maintained that it was preferable to fully complete the preliminary consumer protection programme already adopted rather than develop a new range of supplementary measures. Mr Couste intervened for the European Progressive Democrats to recommend that consumers drop their "perpetually attacked" stance and begin to show that consumers and producers can be complementary. Other speakers underlined the importance of the war on waste which requires consumers

to be kept seriously and fully informed.

++ EDUCATING EDUCATORS

Education administrators in the Community should do a bit more studying themselves according to the UK's Society of Education Officers. At the request of the European Commission this body has been examining the possibility of exchange visits between Community countries of local education officers. Such exchanges could take the form of study visits to other countries in which the education officers could take a close look at the education system of his host country. He could also get an idea of the relationship between the educators and local, regional and national bodies both official and informal, relations with other educational establishments and with employers and trade unions.

++ THE EUROPEAN DIET

Europeans ate an average 98 kilos of vegetables each in 1974/5. But there were strong divergences in consumption. It reached 155 kilos in Italy, while the average in Denmark was less than 48 kilos. The eating habits of the "newcomers" to the Community (the British, Irish, and Danish) has reduced overall averages. Average vegetable consumption per head per year in the Europe of the Six had been 107 kilos.

Consumption per head per year of fruit was 79 kilos in 1974/5, of which 23 kilos were citrus fruits, and 56 kilos were fruits other than the tropical variety - such as bananas and pineapples - or dried fruit. As for vegetables, eating habits varied strongly from one country to the other, with 102 kilos in Germany compared with 33 kilos in Ireland.

These figures come from the 1976 report on agriculture in the Community just published by the Commission.

++ DUAL CITIZENS

The President of the European Parliament has drawn attention to an irregularity that could occur when European citizens finally go to the polls in 1978. Some Member States intend giving citizens of any Community country living on their territory the right to vote in the election of their representatives to the European Assembly. Other countries intend giving the vote to their nationals irrespective of where they live within the Community. The lack of coordination of the two systems would allow some people the right to vote twice, contrary to the Act of the Council of Ministers which is organising the direct elections and according to which no-one is allowed to vote twice. In his capacity as President, Georges Spénale has therefore asked the Council of Ministers to examine the anomaly as soon as possible.

++ FERTILISER AND FREE COMPETITION

Calcium ammonium nitrate, the most commonly used simple nitrogenous fertiliser in the European Community, has been involved in a reciprocal delivery agreement between producers in Belgium and Germany that the European Commission regards as reprehensible. The Belgian producer FISON-UCB, and the German producers Ruhrstickstoff and Hoechst, were selling each other quantities of fertiliser that were given direct to the German firm's clients in Belgium and the Belgian firm's clients in Germany respectively, instead of being delivered to the factories. The Commission felt that this system restricted trade between Belgium and Germany. It seemed unlikely that such long-term deliveries between competitors would exist if one of the enterprises effectively began to compete in the market of the other. Following the Commission's intervention, the two firms have put an end to the arrangement.

++ ON THE RIGHT FOOT

A common problem in the Community shoe industry is the upper. How can it best be made and what is the most rational use of the material used in its manufacture. Because these problems confront most manufacturers in the Community the European Commission has decided to subsidise two research programmes devoted to shoe uppers produced in Member States. This Community aid of 235,000 units of account (1 ua = approx US \$ 1.1) is welcome since the shoe industry is essentially composed of small and medium-sized firms without sufficient means to carry out the research themselves.

++ 10th GENERAL REPORT

The 10th General Report which covers the European Commission's activities in 1976 has hit upon an innovation : for the first time it sets out right in the first chapter exactly what the Community is doing or intends doing for the European citizen himself. The paragraphs devoted to this discuss direct elections to the European Parliament, the protection of fundamental rights, the importance of Community action in the field of external relations (European work, on average, one day a week towards exports), the protection of the environment and finally the progressive opening up of our frontiers. Euroforum will return to this document in the near future.

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LESS TALK MORE ACTION

Less talk and more action was the key note in the presentation of the European Commission's programme for 1977 to the European Parliament and its General Report for 1976.

Practical reality

"A sense of common European identity cannot be fostered by exhortation. We must make the Community a practical reality in terms of everyday life" stated the Commission's President Roy Jenkins before outlining the programme for this year. In the coming year, the Commission will either be preparing new proposals or pursuing proposals already made to combat water pollution and protect aquatic life, to see that international conventions against the pollution of the Rhine and the Mediterranean are put into effect, to improve safety standards in nuclear power stations, to protect consumers against misleading advertising, to eliminate unjustified restrictions on the rights of migrant workers to receive social security benefits, to safeguard the interests of employees whose firms go bankrupt, to provide vocational training for young workers threatened by unemployment, to make it easier for professional people to exercise their skills in Community countries other than their own, to secure minimum housing standards for handicapped workers and to encourage worker participation in industry. Mr. Jenkins stressed that these details had not been presented at random and that he believes that certain common principles running through them should guide us. "We have a duty to ensure that the Community lives up to the ideals on which our civilisation is based - to protect the environment against the dangers of unregulated growth, to protect the weak against exploitation, to safeguard individual freedom and enhance opportunity" he said.

The European Parliament

Mr Jenkins underlined the importance of direct elections to the European Parliament by universal suffrage. "The old principle of no taxation without full representation cannot be fully honoured by an indirectly elected Assembly, however, scrupulously it discharges its responsibilities. To deny the need for direct elections at this stage of the Community's history is in fact to deny one of the fundamental axioms of representative democracy."

Unemployment

"We should do all in our power to persuade (Member States) to coordinate their policies so as to achieve a balanced economic recovery which does not feed inflation throughout the Community."

This is a priority objective but the main responsibility lies with the Member States. The European Commission can only do all in its power to persuade the Member States to coordinate their economic policies. "Structural unemployment is a different matter" Mr Jenkins continued. Full employment cannot be achieved simply by stimulating demand, and an unacceptably high level of unemployment may well persist in the more vulnerable areas and among the vulnerable groups of workers, even when economic recovery is running strongly. Here we shall try to provide

coordinated labour market policies through the Community, said Mr Jenkins working closely with the Member governments and both sides of industry. It will be necessary to use the Permanent Committee on Employment to prepare for the next Tripartite Conference (of government, employer, and trade union representatives) which should neither be hastily prepared nor too long delayed."

Economic Divergence

The gap between the (weakest and strongest) Member States is certainly wide and so are the gaps between the richest and poorest regions of many of the Member States themselves. Mr Jenkins stressed that the richest region of Schleswig-Holstein, the poorest of the German Democratic Republic is at some level of Hamburg, the richest in the Community is the Dublin region. Ireland's income per head is 60% of that of the richest region. The Commission will continue to study the implications of these divergences and will continue to work with the Member States to find ways of reducing them.

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Concrete Decisions

"There would be something seriously wrong if the Commission, after two decades of life, was primarily thrashing around in the abstract and not dealing with items of practical business and decision ... Our ability to command respect and support for our longer-term plans will depend considerably on how effective we are in helping to provide solutions to immediate problems."

ROUND UP OF COMMUNITY SOCIAL POLICY

At Paris in October 1972, the leaders of the nine Member States of the Community gave a new stimulus to Community Social Policy. A document recently drawn up by the European Commission summarises Community action since then within three broad areas. It covers the problems of unemployment, the improvement of living and working conditions, and the participation of employers and trade unions in economic and social decisions as well as in the running of firms.

EMPLOYMENT

As far as employment is concerned the European Social Fund has seen its resources increase along with greater opportunities for intervention. Its credits increased from 222.95 million units of account (lua = approx US \$ 1.1) in 1973 to 4441 million units of account in 1976.

The implementation of the principle of equality between workers of both sexes has been the subject of three draft directives sent to the Council on wages, access to employment, education and professional training, and social security. The European Commission has drawn up a draft recommendation for governments on the professional training of the unemployed youth or those threatened with losing their jobs. The Council has passed a resolution for an action programme to help migrant workers; the Commission has recently presented the Council with a draft directive on illegal immigration. Finally, a mechanism of concertation of national employment policies has been formulated at the Community level.

Living and Working Conditions

The Council of Ministers has adopted a recommendation on the implementation of the 40 hour week and four weeks paid holiday, as well as two directives on collective dismissals and on ensuring the rights of workers in the case of company mergers, or relocation of firms, premises, or part of the premises.

The Commission has also been concerned with extending social protection for categories of people not covered by existing social security or who are not sufficiently covered. It has also implemented a programme of projects or pilot studies to help reduce poverty. After having worked out and revised the first European Social Budget (1970-75), the Commission has undertaken the preparation of a second to cover the period 1976-80.

Participation

One of the most important events in industrial relations was the "Social Conference" of December 1974 in Brussels, involving Community employers, trade unions and government representatives which was followed in November 1975 and June 1976 by two tripartite conferences where the Ministers for economic affairs participated for the first time. Cooperation between both sides of industry has helped unite their efforts in facing up to the economic and social problems of the moment. It is in this spirit that the social conference of 1974 came up in favour of reviving the Permanent Committee on Employment which has since met several times in 1975 and 1976.

EUROPE'S HEALTH

For almost fifteen years foodstuffs have been subject to numerous Community directives with the aim of protecting the health of Europe's consumers and facilitating the free movement of foodstuffs within the Community. Colourants, preservatives, emulsifiers - a dozen directives have already been adopted and subsequently adapted to scientific and technical progress. Euroforum presents a detailed list of these together with the references in the Community's Official Journal (OJ).

1. Council Directive of 23 October 1962 on the approximation of Member States' rules concerning colouring matters authorised for use in foodstuffs intended for human consumption - OJ 115 of 11.11.62

The following modifications have been made in :

OJ 178 of 26.10.1965 pp 2793/65
OJ 263 of 30.10.1967 pp 4
OJ L 309 of 24.12.1968 pp 24
OJ L 157 of 18. 7.1970 pp 36
OJ L 73 of 27. 3.1972 pp 14
OJ L 108 of 26. 4.1976 pp 19

2. Council Directive of 5 November 1963 on approximation of Member States' legislation on preservatives authorised for use in foodstuffs intended for human consumption - OJ 12 of 27.1.1964 pp 161/64.

Modifications have been published in :

OJ 222 of 28.12.1965 pp 3263/65
OJ 233 of 20.12.1966 pp 3947/66
OJ 148 of 11. 7.1967 pp 1
OJ L 309 of 24.12.1968 pp 25
OJ L 157 of 18. 7.1970 pp 38
OJ L 87 of 17. 4.1971 pp 12
OJ L 2 of 4. 1.1972 pp 22
OJ L 73 of 27. 3.1972 pp 14
OJ L 298 of 31.12.1972 pp 48
OJ L 38 of 11. 2.1974 pp 29
OJ L 208 of 30. 7.1974 pp 25
OJ L 126 of 14. 5.1976 pp 30
OJ L 223 of 16. 8.1976 pp 3

3. Council Directive of 26 January 1965 laying down specific criteria of purity for preservatives authorised for use in foodstuffs intended for human consumption - OJ 22 of 9.2.65 pp 373/65

A rectification was published in OJ 126 of 12.7.65

Modification have been published in :

OJ 148 of 11.7.67 pp 10
OJ L 126 of 14.5.76 pp 33

4. Council Directive of 27 June 1967 on the use of certain preservatives for the surface treatment of citrus fruits and on the control measures to be used for the qualitative and quantitative analysis of preservatives in and on citrus fruit - OJ 148 of 11.7.1967 pp 1.
5. Council Directive of 13 July 1970 on the approximation of Member States' laws concerning the antioxidants authorised for use in foodstuffs intended for human consumption - OJ L 157 of 18.7.1970 pp 31.

A rectification was published in OJ L 18 of 22.1.72 pp 12

Modifications have been published in :

OJ L 73 of 27.3.72 pp 14
OJ L 221 of 12.8.74 pp 18

6. Council Directive of 24 July 1973 on the approximation of laws of the Member States relating to cocoa and chocolate products intended for human consumption - OJ L 228 of 16.8.73 pp 2

Modifications have been published in :

OJ L 221 of 12. 8. 1974 pp 18
OJ L 349 of 28.12. 1974 pp 63
OJ L 61 of 11. 3. 1975 pp 21
OJ L 223 of 16. 8. 1976 pp 1

7. Council Directive of 11 December 1973 on the approximation of laws of the Member States concerning sugars intended for human consumption - OJ L 356 of 27.12.73 pp 71.
8. Council Directive of 18 June 1974 on approximation of laws of the Member States concerning emulsifiers, stabilisers, thickeners and gelling agents for use in foodstuffs - OJ L 189 of 12.7.74 pp 1.
9. Council Directive of 22 July 1974 on approximation of laws of the Member States relating to honey - OJ L 221 of 12.8.74 pp 10
10. Council Directive of 17 November 1975 on the approximation of laws of the Member States concerning fruit juices and certain similar products - OJ L 311 of 1.12.75 pp. 40.
11. Council Directive of 18 December 1975 on the approximation of laws of the Member States relating to certain partly or wholly dehydrated preserved milk for human consumption - OJ L 24 of 30.1.76 pp 49.
12. Council Directive of 20 July 1976 relating to the fixing of the maximum level of erucic acid in oils or fats and such intended for human consumption and in foodstuffs containing added oils or fats - OJ L 202 of 28.7.76 pp 35.

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