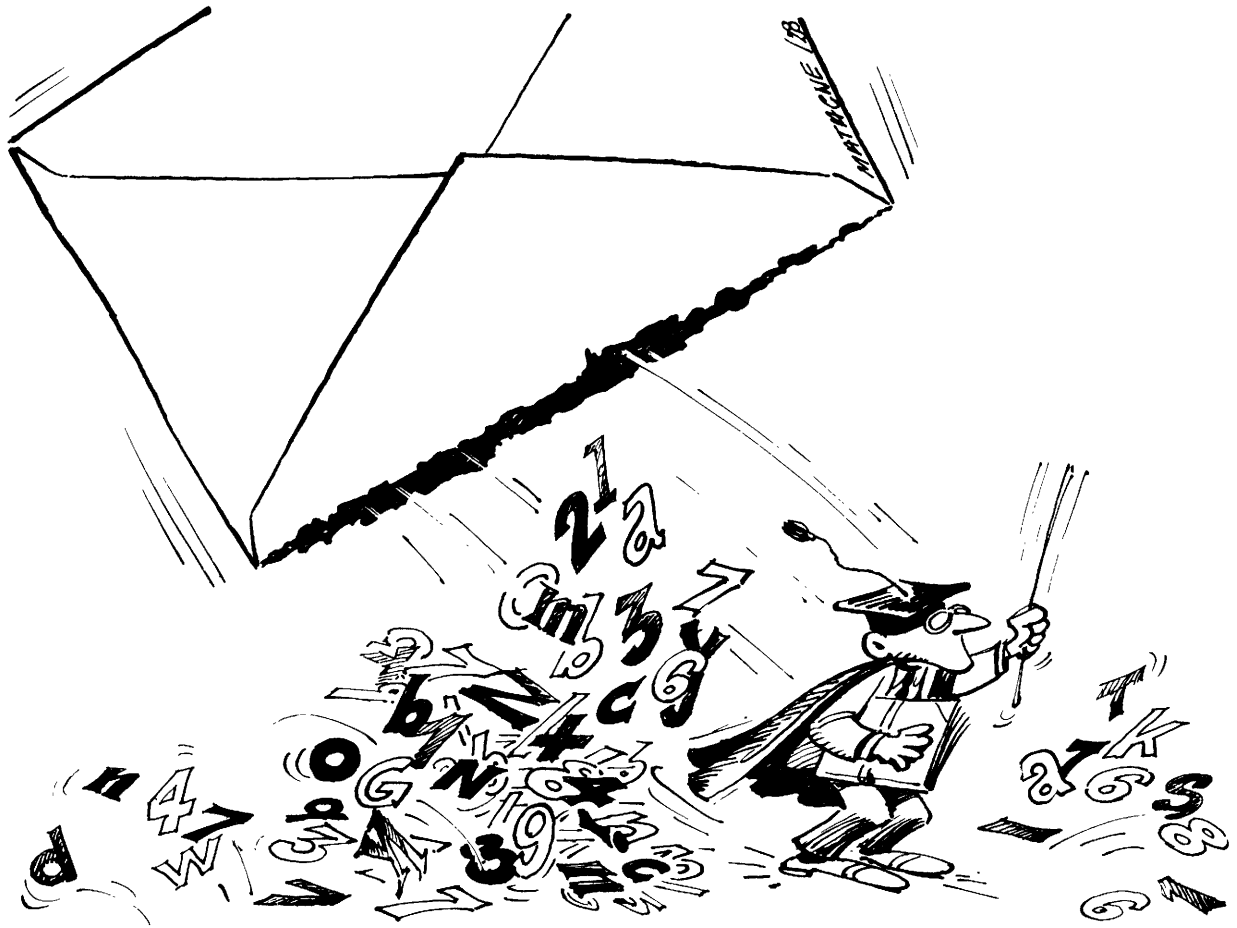


euroforum

europe day by day

Brussels, 5 September 1977

Nº 31/77



Correspondence courses should lift your mind, not your wallet

This bulletin is published by the

Commission of the European Communities
Directorate General of Information
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 - Brussels - Tel. 735 00 40

Further information is available from the Commission's press and information offices in the countries listed on the back page.

This bulletin, which is produced with journalists in mind, gives an informal account of Community activities. It does not necessarily reflect the official position of the Commission.

The Commission disclaims all responsibility for the use made of material published in this bulletin.

IN THIS ISSUE

- ++ Correspondence courses : better student protection (p. 3)
- ++ Community unemployment (p. 3)
- ++ Fluorocarbons and the environment (p. 3)
- ++ Social Fund aid in 1976 (p. 4)
- ++ Urban sprawl (p. 5)
- ++ Sail for Europe (p. 5)
- ++ Community forests (p. 6)
- ++ What colour medicine? (p. 7)
- ++ Prospects for agriculture (p. 7)
- ++ The Business Cooperation Centre (p. 7)
- ++ Stocks and shares : a European code of conduct (p. 8)

++ CORRESPONDENCE COURSES : BETTER STUDENT PROTECTION

Hundreds of thousands of knowledge-hungry people throughout the Community, USA and Canada further their education through correspondence courses. Most are adults and prefer this form of instruction to returning to the school benches. But there are risks involved.

In Annex 1 Euroforum outlines what the European Commission has proposed to ensure that correspondence courses are conducted on a sound footing, and to ensure that students do not risk any intellectual, not to mention financial, disappointments.

++ COMMUNITY UNEMPLOYMENT

At the end of July there were 5.6 million people out of work in the Community - an increase of 360,000 on the month before. Though this can partly be explained by seasonal factors and the new batch of school leavers coming onto the job market, this does not account for all of the increase.

In July 1977 the proportion of registered unemployed in the working population stood at 5.4% for the whole Community, which was significantly higher than the June '77 figure of 5.1%, and much greater than the 4.8% jobless of the year before.

During this month, unemployment increased by 164 000 in the U.K., 52 000 in Belgium, 48 000 in Italy, 42 000 in Germany, 37 000 in France, 15 000 in the Netherlands, 3 000 in Denmark, 300 in Ireland, and 100 in Luxembourg.

In the Community as a whole, the number of jobless increased 12% between July 76 and July 77. Female workers, however, suffered most with an increase of 19%. The percentage of **women** among registered jobless increased from 39% in July 76 to 42% in July 77.

++ FLUOROCARBONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Research into the effects of fluorocarbons on man and the environment should be intensified and pursued on a Community basis, something the European Commission has recommended to the Community's Council of Ministers. Fluorocarbons are mainly used by the aerosol industry as a propellant in household or personal hygiene products, but are also found in refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment and are used in the production of polyurethane foam. International studies have suggested that fluorocarbon emissions may have an effect in reducing the ozone layer in the stratosphere.

The danger here is that more short-wave radiation would be allowed to reach the earth's surface and increased ultra-violet radiation is thought to be associated with a rise in the incidence of malignant melanoma and skin carcinoma. A rise in the earth's surface temperature is also possible.

Among fluorocarbons, the chlorofluoromethanes F-11 and F-12 are of greatest concern. These compounds are very stable and not broken down in the troposphere. They filter into the stratosphere where they are broken down by short-wave radiation and they release chlorine atoms. It is these atoms which produce a chain reaction with ozone and have the potential to destroy the ozone layer.

The Commission wishes governments to encourage industries using the chemicals chlorofluoromethane F-11 and F-12 to step up research into alternative products and devices. Industry and other users should also be encouraged to eliminate all leakage of these chemicals. Any increase in production should be prevented.

The Commission, for its part, is also undertaking a comprehensive study of the economic and social impact of measures which could be taken to regulate fluorocarbons and aerosols. The Commission will make the results available towards the end of 1978 with a view to developing a Community policy in the light of the information then available.

** SOCIAL FUND AID IN 1976

In 1976, 650,000 people in Europe benefitted under the European Social Fund's vocational training programme. The impact of this training programme, which is 50% financed by non-repayable Social Fund aid, is much greater than the figures below would lead one to believe. Ten thousand of these Europeans who have received supplementary training are themselves teachers or social workers. Their new knowledge and skills will be transmitted on to others through a variety of their own educational and training programmes.

An estimated 73% at least of the 1976 Social Fund budget went to programmes in the Community's least developed regions, where social needs are the greatest.

Below are figures, by sector and by country, of allocations by the European Social Fund in 1976 (in million units of account 1 u.a. = 1.1 US dollars approx.)

	B	DK	D	F	IRL	I	NL	UK
a)	0.13	-	4.71	13.31	3.28	5.43	0.35	4.33
b)	0.54	-	4.41	0.70	0.13	3.23	2.30	5.36
c)	1.75	0.61	7.18	15.32	1.86	14.04	0.56	25.67
d)	0.18	-	11.22	0.71	0.15	2.30	-	2.42
e)	0.06	0.08	3.84	3.55	0.05	10.99	1.74	1.13
f)	4.21	5.62	10.65	34.28	19.22	91.85	3.14	60.27

- a) Agriculture
- b) Textiles
- c) Youth
- d) Handicapped
- e) Migrants
- f) Regions

++ URBAN SPRAWL

The uncontrolled expansion of our towns is an environmental problem with serious social consequences. Research into the growth of large urban concentrations is already underway in many Community countries and various bodies have been studying aspects such as the motivation for location of offices or industries in this or that town, and the consequences they may have on social organisation and town and country planning. The conclusions, and even perhaps the methodology of these studies, are of sufficient general interest that the European Commission has proposed that some of the research being undertaken should be coordinated at the Community level. Research into the environmental aspect of city development is already written into the Community's environmental action programme.

In two years time the European Commission will do a stocktaking of the results obtained from this first attempt to coordinate research at the Community level, and on the basis of these results, may draw up proposals for expanding the research programme.

++ SAIL FOR EUROPE

EUR I is the unique registration number emblazoned on the sails of "Traite de Rome", a 50 foot aluminium sloop which set sail from Portsmouth at the end of August as a competitor in what is recognised as the hardest round the world race, organised by the British Royal Naval Sailing Association

and Whitbread Breweries.

It is the first time that the European Community as such is being represented in an international sporting event, alongside national entries. More than 200 people from all over the Community applied to join the crew. The relatively large team chosen will allow some rotation during the nine months of the race and will ensure that all nine countries are represented on board.

The boat, fitted out by the "Sail for Europe" organisation is "Pinta", which has been chartered from a German industrialist. It has already proved its form in the Admiral's Cup where it took the German team to second place out of 19 countries represented. It should stand a good chance in the Whitbread Round the World Race because of its compact size and speed.

"Sail for Europe" was the inspiration of a group of sailing enthusiasts who have turned what seemed like a crazy idea a year ago, into reality. Their aim is to promote European integration and publicise the forthcoming direct elections to the European Parliament.

Symbolically, the Community, in the form of "Traite de Rome", will be pitted against the most fearsome seas of the world. And for the first time the people of Europe will have a chance to support and encourage a European team instead of a national here - a good portent for the future.

++ COMMUNITY FORESTS

One fifth of the Community's territory is forest. Out of 152 000 000 hectares, 30 975 000 hectares are forest and woods. The country by country breakdown is as follows (in thousand hectares).

<u>Country</u>	<u>Total area</u>	<u>Wooded area</u>	<u>%</u>
Belgium	3 050	617	20%
Denmark	4 300	470	11%
France	54 910	14 000	25%
Italy	30 120	6 193	20.4%
Ireland	7 030	275	3.75%
Luxembourg	260	83	32%
Netherlands	3 670	290	7.35%
Germany	24 860	7 207	29.3
UK	24 400	1 840	8%

++ WHAT COLOUR MEDICINE?

Community regulations already strictly control colourants used by the food industry. But which colourants should medicine be allowed to contain? Some countries apply the same foodstuff regulations to medicines whilst others have established separate, quite distinct lists. Such differences do in fact restrict trade in medicines within the Community without, in effect, giving consumers any great protection. To overcome this, the Council of Ministers has adopted a proposal from the European Commission, to make all colourants authorised for use in foodstuffs also authorised for use in medicines.

The only exception are materials used to colour medicines for external use. These will be examined at a later date.

++ PROSPECTS FOR AGRICULTURE

Increased profitability in the meat producing sector and continuing surpluses in the milk, sugar and wine sectors. These are the prospects for the Community's agriculture over the coming 12 to 24 months according to the European Commission's latest forecasts.

Despite the measures taken to limit milk surpluses, butter stocks will increase during 1977 to reach at least 300,000 tonnes, and will increase even more towards the end of 1978. There might, by contrast, be a slight reduction in skimmed milk powder stocks for 1977 - 1 million tonnes compared with 1.3 million in 1976. As for cheese, production will increase more rapidly than consumption. Milk surpluses will be difficult to dispose of on the world market and several non-member countries will be faced with the same over-production of milk as the Community.

The problem will be similar for sugar and the structural surplus may reach 3 million tonnes in the coming years. Production of beef and veal will fall by about 4% in 1977, and to about 6.1 million tonnes in 1978. As regards pigmeat, a downswing in the pig production cycle will cause prices to reach their peak in the winter of 1978/79. A slight decrease is however expected in poultry production but prices should remain steady.

++ THE BUSINESS COOPERATION CENTRE

Since the Community's Business Cooperation Centre was set up in 1973 it has replied to more than two thousand requests for information and, as was the intention, has promoted some fifty cooperation or integration agreements between firms based in different Community countries. To increase the effectiveness of the Centre even more, the European Commission

has decided that its efforts should be concentrated on a certain number of priority sectors.

In its industrial policy, the European Community should take full account of international competition and technological development, and the Commission sees that in the transport sector, chemical process sector and computer peripherals sector, among others, links between European enterprises would be beneficial.

The Commission wants the European Business Cooperation Centre to play a more active role since it now has accumulated specialist knowledge relating to the needs and opportunities for cooperation in a variety of sectors. The companies themselves are sometimes not fully aware of the opportunities and advantages to be gained by establishing cross-frontier links.

Finally, the European Commission has decided that in certain cases the European Business Centre could establish contacts with companies in third countries, in particular those countries which already have cooperation or free trade agreements with the Community.

++ STOCKS AND SHARES : A EUROPEAN CODE OF CONDUCT

The European Commission has issued a recommendation to the Community's Member States concerning a Code of Conduct for transactions in securities. By establishing a common set of basic principles for all transactions on organised securities markets, disparities should gradually be removed in dealing techniques and contribute to the growth of public confidence in Stock Exchanges.

This is the Commission's first initiative in the field of securities transactions and the Code is addressed primarily to professional operators and intermediaries on stock markets. Most of the principles involved are already recognised in most Member States but the interpretation given to them and the effectiveness of the way they are applied, varies from one market to another.

The Commission's main proposals are that information affecting any securities should be made freely available to the public in good time and in a form which is accurate and readily understood; all shareholders should be treated alike in any given situation; company supervisory boards, directors and managers should shoulder a special responsibility to ensure fair dealing, even if observance of the objectives of the Code results in them having to forego short term gains; all persons professionally involved in securities transactions should avoid conflicts of interest between themselves and their clients - in circumstances where such conflicts unavoidably arise, they should not seek to gain personal

advantage from the situation. In addition, financial intermediaries should neither undertake operations which could disrupt the normal operation of the market, nor encourage such action by others.

An important aspect of the Code is that each Member State should designate an authority to watch over the interpretation and observance of the Code on its national markets.

The recommendation is the result of especially far-reaching consultation of the national and international professional associations most closely involved and forms part of the programme for integrating the Community's capital markets.

X

X X

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES : MORE STUDENT PROTECTION

Since the end of the Second World War correspondence courses have become increasingly popular and the students - mostly adults - now number in their hundreds of thousands throughout the Community, the USA and Canada. All of them want to further their education without having to go back to school.

Their motives for taking up correspondence courses vary widely : some aim at job promotion and others want to change jobs. Some want to extend their knowledge of various subjects. The material available through correspondence courses is indeed very extensive and covers the full range from sciences to arts and languages.

Shady courses

As varied as the subjects offered, is the quality, competence and honesty of the organisations supplying the courses. The large majority of them do provide their students with worthwhile knowledge and organisational skills. But inevitably, there are some less scrupulous operators who may well be excellent electronic circuit designers or good linguists, but not good teachers or good organisers.

It is simply not enough to know a subject well to be able to teach it properly. This problem is particularly important regarding the relatively new form of teaching through correspondence courses, since the student does not see his teacher and vice versa. Adapting teaching methods to this type of education is particularly delicate and difficult and is complicated even more by the fact that the students are adults of greatly varying intellect and studying capacity. They are far removed from the conventional teaching environment where the tutor knows each pupil individually and is able to gauge standards by means of conventional examinations.

Modern home students wish to organise studies that correspond with their needs and educational capacities. They also want to make the best use of any available spare time. But how should a prospective student choose between the various correspondence courses available? The problems are numerous.

Teaching material is normally only sent in parts, which prevents the student from having an overall view of the course. Before actually signing the contract, the student has little chance to judge his chances of successfully completing the course.

It frequently happens that students are persuaded by various forms of advertising and promotion, by door-to-door salesmen, by receiving part of the teaching material through the post or by other means, to sign a contract for a correspondence course which is not suited to his educational level or capacity. The result can be loss of time, money, energy and even the desire to continue further education.

Various laws

In five Community countries, correspondence courses are controlled by special laws. These laws regulate the quality of teaching and the contractual relations between the organiser and the student and ensure that the latter is suitably protected. The general objective is to eliminate rogue operators and ensure that the student does not come up against unscrupulous or unqualified organisers.

Correspondence courses are officially controlled in France and private organisations who wish to operate them must be declared. In Germany, the situation is similar and all courses have to be officially approved.

In the Community

The Community's Consumer Protection and Information Programme specifically aims at protecting the consumers' economic and legal interests. Students using correspondence courses do seem to need protection.

Back in 1975 the European Parliament demanded a Community directive to control correspondence courses based on a few basic principles:

- all courses should be officially controlled and approved by the State
- teaching personnel should be suitably trained with appropriate qualifications
- canvassing should be forbidden
- student protection should be guaranteed, particularly with regard to any contracts they are obliged to sign.

Community intervention has become increasingly necessary since some correspondence course 'schools' offer their wares to people in other countries. Education has thereby become a product which, like any other, should be able to circulate freely within the Community and should therefore be subject to the rules of free competition.

The Commission's proposal

As is usual, the Commission held discussions with experts from the nine Community governments and then consulted with representatives of interested professional bodies and consumer organisations. The draft directive submitted by the European Commission to the Council of Ministers has defined correspondence courses as any form of teaching or training during which the organiser and the student are normally distant, and contact between students and organisers takes place, entirely or principally, by printed, written, audio, visual, audiovisual or other forms of communication.

The Commission proposes that each State designates a specific body to approve the correspondence course organisations, without making such approval compulsory. The information which applicants would have to supply for approval would cover their legal and financial situation, detailed information on the professional and educational qualifications of the study director and those responsible for courses and even the teaching methods to be used - nothing has been forgotten.

Approval is given for a period of three years only, and can be withdrawn if the school does not satisfy the prescribed criteria. In addition to this, States will be in the position to ban or restrict on their territory the activities of all course organisers who are not approved.

It has also been proposed that all promotional visits by course organisers be banned, except where they are at the written request of the prospective student, and even then only if he has already received information about the courses and teaching offered. It will also be prohibited for course organisers to offer financial incentives to promote their courses. A free lesson, however, is not, in this case, regarded as a prohibited financial advantage and organisers may also award scholarships or special prizes in recognition of a student's performance in an organised examination.

Publicity

Competition between some of these schools has been so strong that the European Commission has found it necessary to regulate their publicity activities. These activities according to the Commission, should be 'complete' which means they should cover the system of admission to a course, the basic level required, the nature and average length of the course, the principal opportunities that it offers, possible official approval of the course, description of the course, details of the most recent updating of the course, the size and location of the organisation as well as the number and professional qualifications of its staff, etc.

The student should know exactly what he is letting himself in for. The contract made between the school and student should be written and contain details such as the total cost of the course, with itemised cost of expenditure on books or materials. And the contract should contain the spirit of articles 10 and 11 of the Community directive which permit the student to cancel a contract within seven days of receipt of the teaching material after the signing and commencement of a contract (article 10). The student may also cancel the contract under serious circumstances such as serious illness or unemployment. Under article 11, the student may cancel the contract after six months by giving a maximum of three months notice.

The Commission has also specified certain types of clause which may not be included in such contracts : penal clauses, compensatory payments for termination of contract, and the exclusion or limitation of damages which the student can demand from the organisers of the courses.

With effective Community protection, adult Europeans will be able to commit themselves to the hard task of studying once again, and at home, without any risk of wasting their financial or intellectual resources.

PRESS AND INFORMATION OFFICES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

BELGIUM

1049 BRUSSELS
Rue Archimède 73
Tel. 735 00 40/735 80 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. 8 92 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
Bâtiment Jean Monnet B/O
Plateau du Kirchberg
Tel. 43011

NETHERLANDS

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

UNITED KINGDOM

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

CARDIFF CF1 1WF
4 Cathedral Road
P.O. Box 15
Tel. 371 631

EDINBURGH EH2 4PH
7, Alva Street
Tel. (031) 225.2058

CANADA

OTTAWA, Ont. K1R 7S8
350 Sparks St.
Suite 1110
Tel. 2386464

CHILE

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

GREECE

ATHENS 134
Vassilis 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, N.Y. 10017
245 East 47th Street
1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
Tel. (212) 3713804