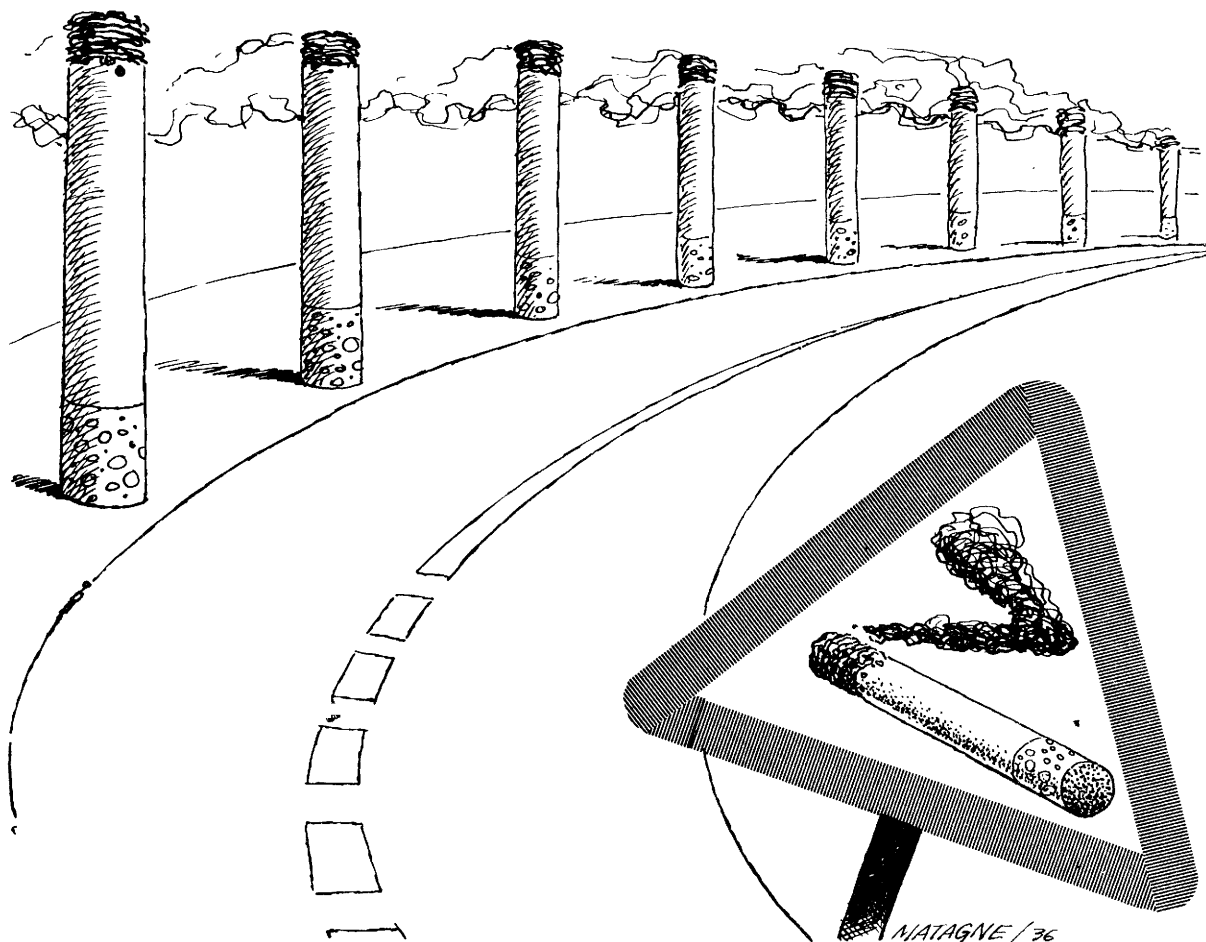


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europa day by day

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Cigarettes kill four times as many people as road accidents
(see page 3)

X/591/77 -

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Commission of the European Communities
Directorate General of Information
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Editor and coordinator : Jean Pirlot

++ KILLER IN EVERY PACKET

Cigarettes kill four times as many people as road accidents do and the Community's Consultative Committee wants to put an end to the slaughter.

The views and proposals of the CCC are outlined by Euroforum in Annex 1.

++ WATER KNOWS NO FRONTIERS

It will take several decades to remove all the pollution from our rivers.

In Annex 2, Euroforum takes a look at what the Community has done so far to clean up our water.

++ WINE LABELS SHOULDN'T LIE

Good or bad, the 1977 grape harvest will not be like any others. The labels on the wine bottles will no longer be able to tell lies.

In Annex 3, Euroforum reviews the new labelling requirements for wine bottles.

++ PROOF OF THE PUDDING 1978

In 1978, the rate of growth to be aimed at should be 4% according to European Commission Vice-President François-Xavier Ortoli. In presenting the Community's economic policy guidelines for next year, he stressed the need to prepare the ground well in order "to make the right jump at the right time". Other objectives are to stabilise and reduce unemployment, and to reduce the disparity between the different levels of inflation and balance of payments in Community countries. This is the course which should enable us to "jump" out of the economic crisis.

If no such action is taken, the GDP growth rate in 1978 will only rise by 3.5% in real terms. This increase would be insufficient to reverse the current unemployment situation which currently affects 5.6% of the working population.

Inflation will probably still be running at around 8% to 8.5% on average in the Community. The downward trend in raw material prices, generally satisfactory harvests and a slowdown in the rise in wholesale and industrial prices, constitute a backcloth of favourable factors which could possibly lead to a great improvement. It is still dependent on moderation in wage increases.

The Community's balance of payments will probably be in surplus in 1978, partly due to reduced domestic demand in the deficit countries and partly due to the growing contribution of North Sea oil.

++ ENLARGEMENT : KEEP PARLIAMENT INFORMED

In complete unanimity, the political groups represented at the European Parliament have requested the European Commission to report regularly to Parliament on the state of the accession negotiations which are taking place between the Community and Portugal, Spain and Greece.

Egon Klepsch (Germany, Christian Democrat), stressing the political nature of enlargement, stated that our political objectives should fully take into account the difficulties raised by the accession of these three countries. Enlargement should be prepared for by reinforcing the internal cohesion of the Community, as we do not want to become simply a free trade area.

Italian Socialist Sr. Lezzi supports the accession of three Mediterranean countries on the grounds that it would bring a certain amount of stability to a sensitive region. It would enable the Community to have political influence in an area where it is currently absent. In addition, the presence of Spain in the Community could be a pole of attraction for Latin America.

With an unequivocal yes, Jean Durieux, French Chairman of the Liberal and Allies Group, declared himself in favour of enlargement. It will also be necessary, however, to prepare well the conditions of accession. Recalling the current economic difficulties of the candidate countries Monsieur Durieux took the view that "the Community would lose all credibility if, in time of need, it turned it's back (on the candidate countries) for financial reasons."

French Communist Marcel Lemoine was more reserved. According to him neither the Common Market of the Six nor the Nine has satisfied the interests of workers, and enlargement would not change the situation, quite on the contrary. Denmark's Progressive European Democrat Jensen is no longer in favour of enlargement. In his opinion we should have the courage to give the three candidate countries a clear negative response rather than keep them waiting in vain hope.

++ EUROPEAN HEALTH

All Europeans are interested in their health but curiously enough there has never been a Council of Ministers meeting of the Community's health ministers.

The number of health problems which could be resolved by cooperation and solidarity among the Community's Member States are numerous : combatting epidemics, drugs, health education, consumption (and over-consumption) of pharmaceutical products, etc. A number of fields reveal a potential for fruitful action which could be taken at the Community level.

Work is currently being undertaken to examine what could be on the agenda for a possible future Council of the Community's health ministers. To be continued.....

++ PRIMPERAN'S LONG JOURNEY

Willi Dondelinger of the European Parliament has been telling the European Commission a strange story about the journey through Europe of Primperan - a medicine for the stomach.

"The principal ingredient of the medicine, known as Metaclopramide, is produced at Cain (France) by the Delaire laboratory and is sold at 100 French francs per kilo, wholesale. However, it is not transformed into Primperan straight away. Travelling from subsidiary to subsidiary, it passes through Belgium and ends up in Switzerland close to Zurich at the Zofingen laboratories. It is then officially sold to the Delagrang laboratories who pay some 4,000 French francs per kilo. They then prepare, package and distribute it to chemists where it is sold to the public at a price admitted by France's Ministry of Health to be 8,000 French francs, i.e. eighty times more expensive than its production cost."

The European Commission has informed Mr. Dondelinger that the facts he has revealed are now the subject of an enquiry which intends to verify the reality of the prices mentioned, and to see whether they are the result of a company occupying a dominant position in that particular market, or whether it is the result of an agreement between companies.

++ WET CHICKENS

The Community produces around 2,500,000 tonnes of chicken per year of which some 150,000 tonnes are exported, but European exporters are worried that they are being put at a disadvantage on the international market. European chickens have to respect European standards and only have a 6% to 7.4% water content whilst their competitors' chickens contain 10-12% water.

It can be argued that European chickens are of better quality, but this carries little weight in a price competitive market.

Should we waive the Community regulations for chickens that are to be exported? The European Commission thinks not, and recommends that the Community regulations be respected. Instead we should try and defend the quality of Community products vis à vis international competitors in the markets of third countries (particularly the Middle East which is a large consumer of chilled and frozen chickens). The Commission is particularly worried that waiving the Community regulations would make it difficult to control the quality of chickens in the Common Market and that we might unwittingly find 12% water chickens ending up on our own tables.

++ ENVIRONMENT AT SCHOOL

Children from a dozen Community schools will be helping to develop environmental lessons with the help of the European Commission's Environment Service. At present a number of teaching courses are being prepared which could one day be distributed to primary and secondary schools in the Community. Two important subjects being covered are drinking water, and wastes.

These projects result from preliminary studies undertaken by Mr. Anton Trant at Trinity College, Dublin, on environmental education for 9 - 14 year olds, and the other by Dr. Horst Bongardt of the Gesamthochschule in Wuppertal, Germany, on an environment curriculum, teaching material and model lessons.

++ BAN ASBESTOS IN WINE?

Mr. De Grave of the "Wine" advisory committee to the European Commission (in which he represents consumer interests) has made known his fears about the use of asbestos filters in wine production.

For several years now, asbestos has been of major concern to industrial doctors and toxicologists. The asbestos industry has contested the results of medical research for many years and even now tries to pass off the campaigns against asbestos as being politically motivated.

The cancer producing aspect of asbestos is no longer contested however. With regard to the possible effects of asbestos residues being found in drinks, the European Commission has stated that no increase in health risk has yet been proven, but the harmlessness of the asbestos filters has, also not been proven. Research is continuing.

As other filtration processes exist, consumers have requested that asbestos ones be dispensed with. The Commission has not yet supported this demand but new facts have emerged which may change things.

The Canadian authorities in Ontario have let it be known to certain German exporters that white wines filtered using asbestos will no longer be permitted after January 1 1978. It seems that these restrictions may be generalised throughout Canada.

Italy's Health Institute has also issued an opinion discouraging the use of asbestos filters and it seems that the Italian government may well ban them altogether.

In Germany the wine cooperatives have abolished asbestos filters for the last filtration, at least.

Elements used in the clarification of wine also contain asbestos and the World Health Organisation has decided to undertake a study of the problem.

Recently, consumers and the wine industry (with a certain reticence on the part of the French) have requested the European Commission to examine the public health aspect of this question. The Scientific Committee for Human Foodstuffs will be requested to accelerate its work and present its findings to the Commission as soon as possible.

Even before the need for banning asbestos filters has been agreed, a certain number of vintners have already modified their equipment.

A formal ban will probably only be imposed, as often happens, when it is no longer necessary.

++ HOT WATER METER

Hot water meters are becoming more widely used throughout the Community. So much so, in fact, that the European Commission has proposed to the Council of Ministers that they follow a certain number of common technical specifications to enable them to be freely sold throughout the European Community.

They should be easy to read, consistent, unambiguous about volume measures, expressed in cubic metres, and provide certain other information (manufacturer, maximum service pressure, maximum operating temperature, etc.) They should also have EEC type-approval. The harmonisation of national legislations covering hot water meters should encourage the rational use of energy, which is a constant concern of the Community governments.

++ DIRECT ELECTION REFERENCE BOOK

The European Parliament has just published a brochure containing all the recent texts dealing with direct elections to the European Parliament. Entitled "The Election of Members of the European Parliament by Universal Direct Suffrage", its aim is to provide basic documentation to members of national parliaments in their debates on the electoral laws which have to be passed for direct elections to take place, and also to those people preparing discussions and providing public information on the subject.

++ ECONOMIC SURVEYS

Every year, some 240,000 questionnaires are returned by industrialists who participate in the business survey conducted among Community companies, whilst some 80,000 households are questioned in consumer surveys. In the Community's budget, the business survey is allocated 242,415 units of account (1 u.a. = 1.1 US dollars approx.) whilst the consumer survey is allocated 1,121,000 u.a. The difference is explained by

historical reasons. The European Commission has simply been coordinating and standardising national surveys of the business community whilst at the same time making a contribution to costs. The consumer survey was, however, originated by the Community.

The value of the consumer survey lies essentially in the information it provides about consumer motivation and probable future behaviour when the economic situation is uncertain. Other information provided dealing with consumer demand gives considerable assistance in assessing future demand since private consumer expenditure accounts for more than half of total demand.

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KILLER IN EVERY PACKET

Tobacco kills four times as many people as car accidents. This astonishing fact which has been established by Britain's Royal College of Physicians should change our attitude towards smoking which, though less dramatic in its impact than multiple pile-ups on our motorways, is far more dangerous. Whereas in recent years drivers have been persuaded by threat or reason to drive more carefully, the war against smoking is only in its infancy.

Seeing as the European Commission has already proposed 43 directives on road traffic, is it not perhaps time to attack tobacco?

This is the view of the Bureau of the Consumers' Consultative Committee which has taken the initiative in presenting its opinion on the use of tobacco. It takes the view that the European Commission should give priority to a vigorous campaign against the harmful effects of smoking.

High social cost

Cutting back cigarette consumption is not an easy objective in times of economic crisis, since it would also involve a cut-back in government tax revenue. Asking Member States to strangle the goose that lays the golden egg would perhaps be difficult for the European Commission.

The figures involved are, however, astonishing. In the UK for example, the tax derived from tobacco amounts to some 1,600 million pounds per year. But the full social cost of smoking comes to around 4,500 million pounds. Social cost is composed of sickness benefit payments, medical care and medicines, the number of work days lost (50 million) and the damage caused by fire.

Cigarette beds

A survey in a UK general hospital revealed that some ten percent of the beds were 'cigarette beds' i.e. were occupied by someone whose illness was principally the result of smoking.

The situation in the UK is, however, far from exceptional. In Germany, tobacco taxes bring in some 9 billion DM but the social cost of smoking is as high as 20 billion DM. In the USA the damage caused by smoking has been calculated at 77 million work days lost, 88 million days spent in bed, 306 million workdays partially lost.

Cancer, bronchitis

On top of the heavy bill paid by society for the consequences of smoking, there is also the direct effect on the consumers themselves. Between one third and a half of smokers will die

from illnesses linked to smoking, according to two British academics, Doll and Peto. In France, tobacco kills about 35,000 people per year prematurely - 15,000 of these through cancer. It reduces the life of a normal smoker by about nine years. The main causes of death in order of priority are : lung cancer, bronchitis and emphysema, and cardiovascular illnesses.

Finally the use of tobacco during pregnancy can have disastrous consequences : twenty percent of miscarriages can be attributed to smoking. Even if the child succeeds in reaching daylight, he may show signs of addiction to tobacco, slower growth rate and even learning difficulties. It is not enough that a pregnant woman stops smoking however. She must also avoid the smoke of her neighbours.

One encouraging note is that once one has given up smoking, there is always a gradual decrease in the cancer risk. And after an attack of coronary thrombosis, the risk of a further attack can be reduced by half, simply by avoiding tobacco.

No more advertising

With such a list of the evils attributable to smoking, the obvious question is what should be done. The C.C.C. has proposed a number of measures and the first concerns advertising. They recommend that tobacco advertising should be strictly banned; no more tempting adverts in newspapers or on billboards, no more radio and TV spots; no more disguised publicity in the form of attractive hostesses who give away mini-packets of cigarettes in promotional schemes.

The survival of the media is a serious problem, but in those countries where cigarette advertising has been banned or restricted (Italy and the UK for example) the free press does not seem to have suffered too badly. In all Community countries, however, there are an increasing number of artistic and sporting events being sponsored by cigarette companies and the CCC recommends that these be banned as well.

Gold medal for Italy

The Community's champion in the fight against smoking is Italy. In June 1976 the country passed legislation totally banning the use of tobacco in the majority of public places. Tobacco advertising has also been banned since 1962.

Second in the league after Italy come Belgium and France, but amongst all 20 European countries they only rank eleventh.

Only in the UK, however, must the tar content of tobacco be clearly marked on the packet. Due to research undertaken in the UK, the average tar content has decreased by ten percent for all tobacco products sold.

Another lead taken by the UK and the Netherlands has been to persuade the majority of doctors in these countries not to smoke. In place of sermons, setting the right example is the best way of getting results.

Non-promotional information

The only exception to the advertising ban should be in the tobacconists shops themselves where the consumer should be able to inform himself as to the various characteristics of tobacco products in relation to standards set at the Community level. Information should however be complete. Each packet of cigarettes should carry an indication of the tar, nicotine and carbonic acid content as well as mention of the risks which the product presents to the consumer.

In addition to the preventive measures, the CCC has proposed others which will discourage smoking and reduce the level of pollution for non-smokers. To realise this double objective, smoking in certain public places should be banned (buses, underground, cinemas, museums, public libraries, food shops, clinics, doctor's waiting rooms, public offices, etc.) In other places, no smoking areas should be established (trains, coaches, planes, airports, hotels, restaurants, bars, cafes, shops, etc).

A further useful way of dissuading smokers is to remove automatic cigarette machines, ban cut-price sales of cigarettes to soldiers and strictly ban the sale of cigarettes to minors.

To help people to give up smoking, there are a number of clinics and anti-smoking centres in operation, and there are a variety of products available on the market. The consumer should be informed on their degree of effectiveness, and further research should be undertaken to increase the number of aids available to people wishing to give up the habit.

Immediate campaign

Consumer awareness would seem to be a good starting point for an anti-smoking campaign. The CCC has consequently proposed a series of health information campaigns directed not only towards smokers, but also to people likely to dissuade them (doctors, teachers, parents). For the present the CCC requests the European Commission to launch a major information campaign involving the representatives of consumer organisations.

WATER KNOWS NO FRONTIERS

According to the old testament it took a mere day to separate the land from the flood waters. But this was doubtless at a time when the waters weren't polluted. Today, Europeans are not so lucky. It takes several decades to separate what is water from what isn't.

Urgent action

Back in 1971, the European Commission remarked that the purification and management of rivers such as the Rhine are problems which are 'immediate and urgent'. Urgent indeed, but the problem of water pollution had to be tackled from scratch. Each country had tried to introduce its own solutions in one way or another with more or less willingness and more or less success. At the Community level, everything had still to be done.

At the end of 1973 the protection and improvement of marine and fresh waters was written into the Community's environmental action programme as a priority objective. Three approaches were envisaged:

- + firstly, to fix the scientific criteria, i.e. to determine the relationship between the presence of a pollutant and its effect on the environment (man, fauna, flora, etc.)
- + secondly, to establish quality objectives, i.e. to determine the standards which the environment should attain at a given moment. In the case of water, for example, the quality objectives related to the intended usages. Requirements vary for irrigation water, industrial water, water for fish-breeding, and water to make the morning tea with. Regarding sea water, a certain minimum quality is required for bathing, and another for growing oysters.
- + finally, to fix the standards and regulations for areas where the environment needs to be protected, and where the functioning of the common market could otherwise be adversely affected by polluted water.

The Community consequently has two main interests in removing pollution : because it harms the environment, and because it adversely affects trade within the Community.

On the international scene, all organisations, conventions and conferences in this field have found a willing supporter in the European Community and its Member States.

Scientific criteria

Evaluating the damage to health caused by certain pollutants is a long drawn-out task. There are numerous difficulties such as sparse non-existent scientific information and insufficient statistical evidence. All the experts have their own methods

of measuring the various risks, and these methods are not always comparable. And even when they are, how should we choose between one and the other?

The European Commission undertook to examine a whole range of pollutants which are frequently to be found in water. These include lead, organo-halogenic and organo-phosphate compounds, hydrocarbons, inorganic micropollutants and phenols. It is possible to determine the human health risks presented by organophosphoric compounds, mercury and cadmium, and work is proceeding on this at the moment. But it is impossible to establish scientific risk criteria for the other pollutants mentioned.

Of course, rigorous and complete criteria are precious, but if we have to wait until the scientists have finished their work before any measures can be taken, it may be a long time. The Commission wishes to take immediate action and certain measures could now be taken to prevent pollution, and then revised in the light of future scientific progress.

Quality objectives

The Community has laid down quality standards for bathing water and Member States are obliged, where they authorise bathing either in rivers, lakes or coastal waters, to ensure the water does not contain more than 10,000 coliforms for every decilitre of water. This is the objective. Each country has to take the necessary measures to respect this objective. But the Community insists that the ideal to aim for is to have a quality standard of 500 coliforms maximum, per decilitre. In a similar way the quality objectives for surface waters to be used for drinking, have been laid down. Quality standards are now being worked out for drinking water, water for fish breeding, for shellfish breeding and for irrigation.

The intention is to improve the overall quality of water and Member States are free, of course, to set even stricter standards than those laid down in the Community directive. In the same spirit, Member States will not let a relatively pure river become polluted under the pretext that the degree of pollution has not yet reached the maximum set down in the Community directive.

Solidarity is not an empty word in the Community, and Member States have been invited to apply these quality standards also to the waters which cross into the territory of other Community countries. The Dutch are particularly sensitive on this point. Their problem is that the Rhine discharges into the North Sea and dumps all the pollution it has picked up in all the countries en route from its source, along the Dutch coastline.

To ensure that the Community directives are effectively put into practice, a network of monitoring stations is required, to

test the quality of fresh water and sea water. Such a network already exists in the majority of countries, but to enable it to be of use at the Community level, all the information received should be presented in a comparable form and then circulated throughout the Community. The European Community is aiming initially for 18 quality parameters to be used throughout the Community and additional ones could be considered at a later date, in the light of experience gained.

Back to the source

The word "source" conjures up nice images of fresh mountain streams. But when it concerns a source of pollution, the reality is quite different. Most frequently, it is the outlet from a factory discharging its waste water into the nearest river. It is this source of pollutants which has to be stopped.

With this in mind the Community's environmental action programme requested the European Commission to study the pollution caused by the principal industrial sectors and to transmit its findings to the Council of Ministers with appropriate proposals for action. The first of these studies dealt with the production of paper pulp and titanium dioxide (the famous red sludge).

The pollution caused by the paper pulp industry can be reduced to an acceptable level within ten years, in the Commission's view. Its proposals have consequently taken into account the various production methods being employed, the age of factories and the size of the factories involved.

As regards titanium dioxide, the Commission has proposed four stages over a ten year period to enable industry to adapt to these standards. During the first phase, the old factories and new could dump their wastes into the sea with prior authorisation. During the second phase, the factories should be equipped to reduce their pollution load by 30%. In the third phase, a 70% reduction of pollution will be required from old factories, and 30% from new ones. In the final phase, pollution should be reduced to 95% of its original level.

Dangerous substances

A directive of great political importance was adopted in May 1976 by the Council of Ministers concerning the reduction of pollution caused by the discharge of certain dangerous substances into the aquatic environment. This directive concerns inland surface waters, territorial sea waters, inland coastal and underground waters. A number of substances selected on account of their toxicity, persistence, bioaccumulation, may not be dumped in water, without official authorisation fixing emission standards.

In comparison with other measures taken at the Community level, the fight against pollution is strikingly committed. The delay between measures being proposed by the European Commission and adopted by the Council of Ministers is relatively brief. Member States appreciate the importance, for once, of action taken at the Community level.

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WINE LABELS SHOULDN'T LIE

The labels stuck on the billions of wine bottles filled from the 1977 grape harvest will have to conform to the Community regulation which was finalised in 1974 and is now coming into force.

No longer will the unwitting wine lover be deceived by the dusty old wine bottle purporting to have been produced by an old established monastery in the heart of France's prime vineyards, only to find he has a bottle of plonk he could just as easily have bought down at the local supermarket.

To end this type of deception once and for all, the Community now has measures to regulate the description, labelling and presentation of wines (and grape must). These measures which were agreed by the Council of Ministers in 1974, then modified in 1975, 1976 and 1977 have been detailed in an application regulation developed by the European Commission in 1976.

Compulsory declaration

In the first place, the wine labels should contain the minimum amount of information that a consumer needs to make a fair choice.

Wines for current consumption produced in the Community should be designated "table wines". The label should also display the volume and the name and location of the bottler.

The Community's "quality wines" have to display the terms AOC (guaranteed place of origin) or VQQS (superior quality wine), or VQPRD (quality wine produced in a specified region) together with the volume and details of the bottler.

A wine which is exported outside the Community, or sold in another Community country should carry the name of the producing country. If the wine has been blended, it should clearly state that it is a 'wine from different Community countries'.

Imported wines should mention the term "table wine", or where necessary, the area of production, the country of origin, the volume and the name of the bottler.

These items of information should be grouped together on the same label and not hidden in a wealth of other information.

Avoiding deception

The second objective of this regulation is to avoid indications which could cause the consumer to be misled. There are a number of provisions to avoid this. The mention of the alcoholic content is covered by this. In Holland and Italy it is

compulsory to mention the alcoholic content though this poses a problem of harmonisation with other Community countries. The matter is to be rediscussed in five years time.

Supplementary indications are subject to precise regulations, particularly those concerning the place of bottling. Producers will be able to keep their traditional inscriptions but within well defined limits.

This Community regulation will help uncover the dealers responsible for the spate of dubious wines. The information required on the bottles will also have to be carried on the accompanying documents and bills.

The European consumer will finally not only have all the basic information he requires to make his purchase of wine, but will have the opportunity to bring the matter to court if he does not receive satisfaction, thanks to the provisions drawn up in Brussels.

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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. 430 11

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. 238 6464

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, N.Y. 10017
245 East 47th Street
1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
Tel. (212) 3713804