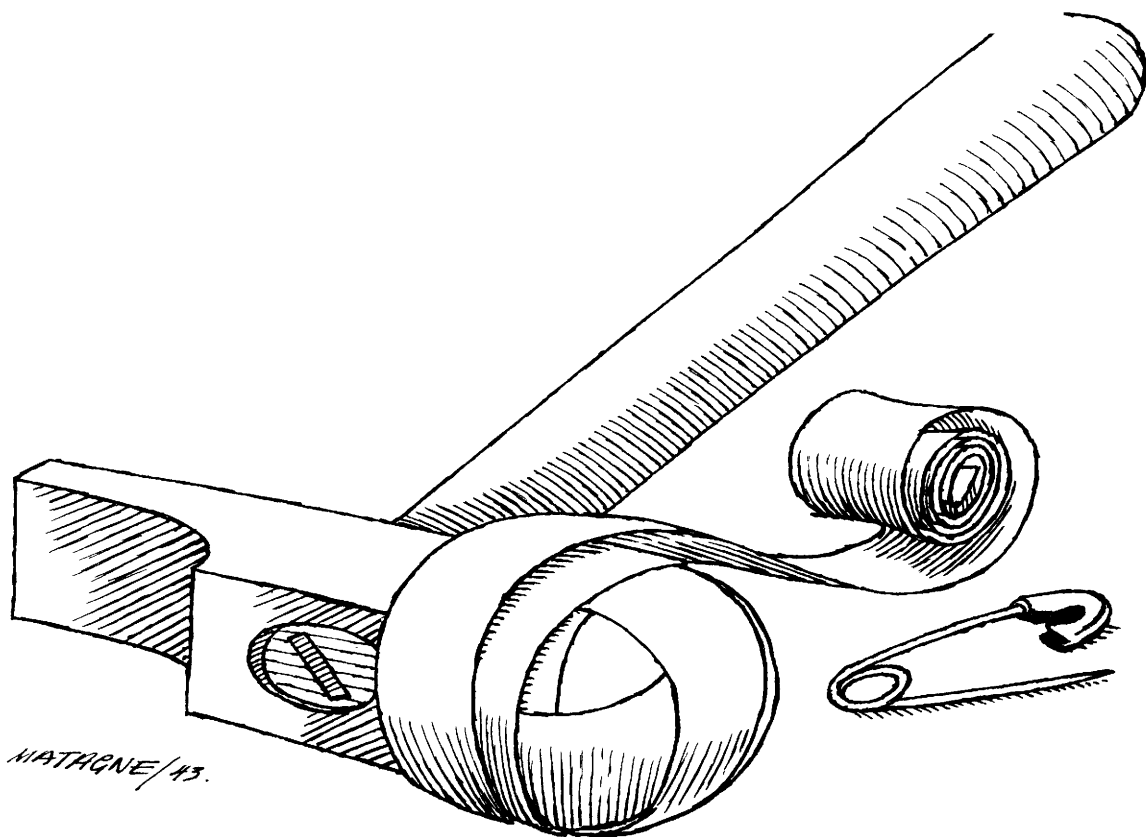


# euroforum

## europa day by day

Brussels, 13 December 1977

N° 45/77



Something has to be done to improve industrial  
safety (see page 3)

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This bulletin is published by the

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B-1049 - Brussels - Tel. 735 00 40

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IN THIS ISSUE

- ++ Workmanlike summit (p. 3)
- ++ Industrial accidents (p. 3)
- ++ Environment and consumer proposals at the Council (p. 3)
- ++ French quality of life plan (p. 3)
- ++ 1978-79 farm prices (p. 4)
- ++ Forty hour week plus holidays (p. 4)
- ++ Tilting the balance for consumers (p. 5)
- ++ Dangers of alcohol (p. 5)
- ++ The cost of beating pollution (p. 6)
- ++ Controlling medicines (p. 6)
- ++ Free competition and electronics (p. 6)
- ++ Oil in the back year (p. 7)

++ WORKMANLIKE SUMMIT

The Community's leaders recently met in Brussels for perhaps the most productive meeting for some while.

In Annex 1, Euroforum presents the results of the Summit.

++ INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

Ten industrial accidents per minute, eight deaths per day - these figures which come from Italy are dramatic indeed. Without waiting for the figures to be published for other Community countries, the European Commission has drawn up a Community-wide action programme to deal with health and safety at work.

Euroforum outlines the principal points of the Commission's plan in Annex 2.

++ ENVIRONMENT AND CONSUMER PROPOSALS AT THE COUNCIL

Thirty-one proposals drawn up by the European Commission dealing with the environment and five dealing with consumer protection were sitting before the Council of Ministers on December 1, 1977 awaiting decision.

Euroforum details these proposals in Annex 3.

++ FRENCH QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN

To follow the peaceful Europe which was set up at the end of the war, together with the economic Europe which is still being built, now is the time to build the "quality of life Europe" according to France's President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing who spoke at the first European meeting on the quality of life organised by France's Ministry for Culture and Environment in Paris, December 5-7.

According to the French President, one of the difficulties of the last quarter century has been for Europe to win the battle for the quality of life. For the future, the President proposes that a strong boost be given to implement Europe's environment policy.

A four point action plan was put forward by the French leader:

- more frequent and less formal meetings of the Community's ministers responsible for environment and the quality of life;
- energetic action to prevent the deterioration of the environment, particularly by implementing generalised studies of the environmental impact of all major investment projects to be undertaken on Community territory;

- signature of "European quality of life conventions" in those branches of industry particularly involved with environmental nuisances (chemical industry, paper pulp industry, steel industry, etc.)
- a resolute European anti-waste policy.

In addition, France is prepared to participate in the creation of a European environmental documentation centre with branches in each Community country.

"What Europe now needs", concluded the President of the French Republic, "is a new ambition, which should be the construction of a Europe with a better quality of life".

#### ++ 1978-79 FARM PRICES

An average increase in farm prices of 2% (expressed in units of account) has been proposed by the European Commission to the Council of Ministers. The average effect of this on food prices will be about 0.5% and the net effect on the Community's cost of living will be about 0.1%.

The Commission's proposal for the 1978-79 marketing year reflect its prudent policy. According to the Commission, the modest increase in prices they have proposed responds to both consumer interests and the need to ensure a well-balanced Community farming industry in the longer term, and also to develop a coherent common agricultural policy - to which the Commission attaches great importance.

The definitive decision on the price increases will be taken by the Council of Ministers around the end of March 1978.

#### ++ FORTY HOUR WEEK PLUS HOLIDAYS

In July 1975, the Community's Council of Ministers recommended Member States to reduce the working week to 40 hours and increase annual paid holidays to 4 weeks before December 31, 1978. How are events progressing after one year?

The principle of the 40 hour week is already being applied in most industrial sectors in the Community either because a law to this effect has been introduced, or because the working week is subject to collective/union agreements.

Such progress has not been made with regard to paid holidays, according to the European Commission, and the situation varies from country to country. In Ireland for instance, all workers have three weeks paid holidays by right, but some have longer holidays due to collective agreements.

In the UK, the length of paid leave depends on collective agreements which vary from sector to sector. In the textile sector, paid leave amounts to three weeks and two days; in the steel industry it is 26.5 working days including national holidays; in certain major sectors such as the car industry, coal and mechanical construction, paid leave amounts to four weeks.

++ TILTING THE BALANCE FOR CONSUMERS

"We have to tilt the balance in favour of the consumer" asserted Richard Burke, European Commissioner responsible for consumer affairs, in a speech to the European League for Economic Cooperation.

Mr. Burke explained that the balance between consumers and manufacturers always had a tendency to favour the manufacturers. The discovery of new materials, the invention of new manufacturing processes, the development of new means of communication, the enlargement of markets, new distribution methods, etc. - many factors have enabled production to expand and supply the market with an immense variety of goods and services. This has had the net effect of reducing the individual consumer to a simple unit in a mass market, subject to the pressures of advertising and the will of strongly organised groups of manufacturers and distributors. This latter group are in a much better position than the consumer to determine market conditions.

"Our philosophy regarding consumer policy is quite simply to take all measures which can change the balance of the market to reinstate the consumer to his legitimate position in the economic system."

++ DANGERS OF ALCOHOL

Since 1952 alcohol consumption in the Community has been continually on the increase. And for several years, alcoholism has been increasing seriously among women and young people. To take a closer look at the situation, the European Commission has just held a seminar on the socio-medical risks involved in alcohol consumption. The seminar was organised in collaboration with the World Health Organisation and the International Council on the problems of alcoholism and drug addiction.

For three days, the participants (who included Professor D. Bovet, the Nobel prize winner for medicine) examined the biological and psychological aspects of alcoholism and their consequences at the medical and social level. The participants expressed a desire for the European Commission to implement - as rapidly as possible - a study programme and concerted research into the epidemiology of alcoholism and extend knowledge of the factors which cause alcoholism to spread.

++ THE COST OF BEATING POLLUTION

It is not enough simply to want to combat pollution, the cost of doing so has to be known and taken into account. This is a major concern in the Community's environmental action programme, adopted in 1973. The European Commission has consequently just sent to the Council of Ministers a proposal for a recommendation to Member States concerning environmental costing.

To gather together information and data on the cost of the anti-pollution battle, different methods are used in Member States. Some undertake surveys of particular sectors by means of questionnaires, others take their information from the manufacturers of anti-pollution equipment, others again study "representative" installations in a given sector or combine these different methods. The Commission has not given preference to any one of these methods but has simply specified the information which needs to be obtained (cost of investment, operating expense, etc.)

So that as much comparable data as possible can be available throughout the Community, the results of all the evaluation studies available to Member States should be communicated to the European Commission.

++ CONTROLLING MEDICINES

Manufacturers and importers of specialty pharmaceuticals will find one of the coming issues of the Official Journal of the European Community, of particular interest. The Commission has in fact just decided to publish the procedure which has to be followed to enable specialty pharmaceuticals to be placed on the Community market.

Manufacturers and importers will from now on be able to address themselves to the "Committee for Specialty Pharmaceuticals", which is linked to the European Commission in Brussels. To be able to benefit from this procedure, the product should already have received authorisation to be put on the market of one Community country and be intended for sale in at least five other Community countries.

For further information, contact the secretariat of the Committee for Specialty Pharmaceuticals - Rond-Point Schuman 3 - 1049 Brussels.

++ FREE COMPETITION AND ELECTRONICS

The European Commission is favourably disposed to cooperation between high technology industries, as long as they do not infringe the rules of free competition.

This attitude has been illustrated once more by the case of the UK's EMI Electronics, and the German company H. Jungheinrich & Co. The two companies had made an agreement

concerning the joint development of electronic control devices, for use by Jungheinreich with driverless tractors and forklift trucks. Under the agreement, Jungheinreich was to make financial contributions to mutually agreed development projects to be undertaken by EMI with Jungheinreich assistance. The Commission did not object to this and was delighted at the cooperation being displayed. Another part of the agreement, however, was vetoed by the Commission. This section specified that Jungheinreich was bound to order all its requirements for electronic elements for driverless tractor and forklift systems from EMI. This has the effect of depriving Jungheinreich of access to products from other sources. The parties have now agreed to abandon these restrictive provisions.

++ OIL IN THE BACK YARD

If you find oil in your back garden, you may be able to obtain financial support from the European Commission. The Commission has set aside 35 million European units of account (1 EUA = 1.2 US dollars approx.) to technological development projects directly linked to exploration, development, storage and transport of hydrocarbons. The aim of this scheme is to improve the safety of the Community's energy supply.

Community support is in the form of reimbursable subsidies covering up to 49% of the cost of a project. In 1975, 21 projects received support and in 1976, this rose to 34. In 1977 it was up to 40. Together they have received more than 120 million EUA.

All requests for support need to be accompanied by detailed information on the project in view, on the techniques it will involve, the costs, the risks and the advantages of the project for the Community.

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WORKMANLIKE SUMMIT

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The Summit meeting of Europe's leaders in Brussels adopted a workmanlike approach to its final session for 1977 and took three decisions which will particularly affect the functioning of the European Community : these concern the contributions of Member States to the European budget, the European Regional Development Fund, and new Community operations on the international capital market.

1978 Budget

The budgetary decision involved the calculation of the "basket of currencies" which is the basis of the new European Unit of Account (EUA) - see box below. In the 1978 Community budget, the EUA, which is based on the value of the national currencies on the foreign exchange markets (see Euroforum N° 5/76) is to replace the current gold-based unit of account established in 1972. Use of the new EUA should bring greater fairness to the share out of contributions by Member States to the Community budget. The old system greatly favoured the currencies which had become much weaker since 1972.

The EUA (European Unit of Account) on December 7 1977 was worth 65 pence, 40.63 Belgian and Luxembourg francs, 2.57 Deutschmarks, 2.79 florins, 5.57 French francs, 7.15 Danish Kroner, 1,043.51 lire. At that same moment, the EUA was worth 1.19 US dollars and 286.74 yen.
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The implication of the new agreement is that the UK will contribute about 15.4% of the Community's budget instead of the present 12.5%. But for the devaluation of the pound since 1972, the UK would have been contributing the intended 18%.

Regional Fund

A fifty percent increase in the European Regional Fund was agreed at the Summit. The Fund which was introduced at the Paris Summit of 1974, will increase progressively to 580 million EUA in 1978 (see box above); then to 620 million EUA for 1979 and finally 650 million EUA in 1980. Greater financial effort in this field will not only help keep down inflation but will also help the most impoverished of the Community's regions (see Euroforum 23/77).

The Nine's leaders have nevertheless not heeded the advice of the European Commission and the European Parliament who recommended that the Regional Fund budget be increased to 750 million EUA for 1978.

The affair is not yet closed however. The Community's 1978 budget (including the Regional Fund) is to be resubmitted to the



European Parliament at its next session. The Parliament has the final say in expenditures which were not specified in the founding treaties of the European Community, and this is the case with the Regional Fund. Theoretically the Parliament could increase the allocation for 1978.

#### New Community loans

The economic situation in the Community was given long and detailed attention by the Community's leaders and during the discussions, Roy Jenkins, President of the European Commission stressed the need to give the economy a fresh boost. Growth is insufficient and unemployment is still extremely high. Over the next eight years the potential work force in the Community will have increased by nine million young people all looking for jobs. They will be in addition to the six million who are already looking for work. To reduce unemployment, the rate of economic growth in the Community has to be increased from 5.5 - 6% over three to five years. Current forecasts assess anticipated growth at only between 3 and 4.5%.

President Jenkins argued in favour of economic and monetary union (see Euroforum N° 40/77) emphasising that it would benefit both the strongest countries as well as the weakest. It would, however, require discipline from all.

Returning to the more immediate future, the European Commission requested the Summit's support for launching a scheme of Community loans through which it would be possible to finance major projects particularly in the energy sector, industrial restructuration and European infrastructure projects. This proposal was favourably received by the national leaders and they authorised the Community to borrow from the international capital market and offer loans to stimulate investment. This new instrument of industrial policy can only be used "on an experimental basis" to start with in order to assess its effectiveness. Certain experts fear that a new injection of capital could fuel the fires of inflation.

#### Attitudes

In concluding the Summit, the national leaders expressed their satisfaction with the results of the meeting. Italy's Andreotti stated categorically that the Nine are playing an active role to beat inflation. Denmark's Jorgensen affirmed that we can expect favourable developments in the monetary field. Gaston Thorn of Luxembourg commented that the Summit made no fanfares, just produced concrete results, and Belgium's Leo Tindemans stressed that the meeting had been very fruitful and had demonstrated the capacity to take decisions and shown willingness to make progress.

Certain commentators noted however that the Community could have saved a few weeks or even months if the national leaders had authorised their foreign ministers to take these positive decisions themselves. The Summit could then have been devoted to discussing more ambitious European issues.

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## INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

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Ten industrial accidents a minute, eight deaths a day, 2,800 fatal accidents a year - this is what lies behind the 1,300,000 industrial accidents which take place in Italy every year. Though figures are not yet available for the other countries of the European Community, a similar picture is expected and the European Commission does not wish to wait until the figures are calculated before action is taken. The Commission has consequently drawn up a Community-wide action programme covering health and safety at work.

### Incalculable consequences

Apart from the financial aspect, the human and social consequences of industrial accidents and illnesses are incalculable. It is also difficult to assess all the secondary effects - on the family, the home, etc. - of accidents or illnesses arising at work.

New processes and technology are constantly being introduced and these bring with them new dangers and risks. New chemicals are being employed whose effects on human health are frequently insufficiently tested.

In the Commission's view all the chemical, physical, mechanical, biological and socio-psychological factors which affect the place of work should be fully researched so that they can be suitably controlled. The reduction, prevention and elimination of risks at work is the principal way to protect our health and ensure our safety.

### What can the Community do?

Individual Member States have of course a long tradition of work in the field of safety and accident prevention. It would, however, be highly beneficial for them to work on a programme together which would not only coordinate their ideas and operating principles but would also develop and orientate further technical progress and the organisation of work in function of the demands for health and safety.

The European Commission has already amassed invaluable experience in this field through being active in the coal, steel and nuclear industries. Research programmes have been undertaken for many years now which have involved coordination and standardisation of procedures to deal with a variety of special risks encountered in these industries.

The action programme proposed by the European Commission would also benefit by being carried out in collaboration with other organisations, particularly the European Foundation for the

Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dublin), as well as the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Berlin).

### Objectives

The three objectives which the Commission considers essential for a Community action programme are : the improvement of work methods; improvement of knowledge; and improvement of human behaviour.

To improve work methods, the Commission not only envisages improving existing tools and machines, but wishes to ensure that technological developments take into account the principles of health and safety at the design stage. Health should also be fully considered at every stage in the production and use of chemicals.

The Commission also considers that health and safety conditions at work should be inspected and monitored in function of the latest medical knowledge.

To improve knowledge, the Commission intends to give priority to examining the causes and origins of accidents and illnesses, since so many diverse and complex factors are involved in today's industry. The research already being undertaken should be coordinated, and valid and comparable statistics drawn up.

Human behaviour should essentially be improved by promoting and developing the awareness of safety considerations. Apart from measures of a technical nature, it is necessary to establish a veritable science of safety and develop health education. Both of these should be directed towards different educational levels to take into account the different levels in an industry where people have responsibility and control over safety.

### Schemes

To achieve the objectives proposed by the Commission, concrete schemes for a number of problem areas are already evident. These concern transportation within factories, transportation on farms, the use of cancer-risk substances, the special risks of the construction industry, and the communication of information within industry. One particularly interesting area for action is the production and use of machines and tools. In addition to the work already accomplished through eliminating technical barriers to trade, it is necessary to introduce common rules to be employed in the following sectors : agricultural machinery, lifting gear, construction machines, metal scaffolding, wood-cutting machines.

A further delicate problem is the handling of dangerous substances. In this field common regulations may be proposed for Member States. This would require an essentially practical approach. In the first instance, action will be concentrated on the use of pesticides and herbicides in agriculture. Problems of this sort arise with other substances such as arsenic, lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium, nickel, biological pollution etc.

Practical guides should be drawn up covering the toxicological effects of these substances as and when research information is available.

The Commission also attaches great importance to setting down exposure limits for workers subject to various types of pollution and nuisances at their place of work. Four years of work and research in the Commission's "Environment" programme - particularly concerning environmental pollutants - now enables the Commission to present concrete proposals for action to deal with pollutants which specifically affect the work place. Examples of these are vinyl chloride monomer, asbestos, lead, mercury, carbon monoxide, noise and vibration.

There are also special cases, for instance where particular jobs are more dangerous than the average. There again there are jobs such as rescue work, repair and maintenance, virology laboratories, serum and vaccine production, etc. where higher exposure to risk is encountered than in normal jobs.

The Commission aims to ensure that all information and experience gained at the national level be communicated at the Community level so that all can benefit from the work undertaken by others.

The measures proposed by the European Commission will be of little use unless the general public makes an active contribution. The Community action programme consequently specifies that general information be distributed to particular groups such as women's associations, professional organisations, parents' associations, etc. who can play an active role in ensuring the prevention of accidents and sickness at work.

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ENVIRONMENT AND CONSUMER PROPOSALS AT THE COUNCIL

Thirty-one proposals drawn up by the European Commission concerning the environment, and five dealing with consumer protection are currently (as of December 1st 1977) before the Council of Ministers awaiting decision. Below, Euroforum lists these proposals and the date of transmission from the Commission to the Council:

I - ENVIRONMENT PROPOSALS

- Directive on the approximation of the laws of Member States relating to the composition of petrol. Problem of lead content of petrol. 7.12.73
- Directive on forestry measures. 20. 2.74
- Decision concluding a European Convention for the Protection of International Watercourses Against Pollution. 9.12.74
- Directive on the approximation of the laws of Member States relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of pesticides. 20.12.74
- Directive on the approximation of the laws of Member States relating to the permissible sound levels for pneumatic concrete-breakers and jack-hammers. 20.12.74
- Directive on the reduction of water pollution caused by wood pulp mills in the Member States. 20. 1.75
- Directive on air quality standards for lead. 21. 4.75
- Directive on the approximation of Member States laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of paints, varnishes, adhesives and similar products. 26. 6.75
- Directive on the reduction of pollution arising from the production of titanium dioxide. 18. 7.75
- Directive relating to the quality of water for human consumption. 31. 7.75
- Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound levels and to the exhaust systems of motorcycles. 12.12.75
- Directive on permissible sound levels for current generators for power supply. 18.12.75

- Directive on permissible sound levels for current generators for welding. 18.12.75
- Directive on permissible sound levels for tower cranes. 18.12.75
- Directive on the use of fuel-oils with the aim of decreasing sulphurous emissions. 19.12.75
- Directive concerning the dumping of wastes at sea. 12. 1.76
- Resolution concerning the determination of criteria for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulate matter in the urban atmosphere. 25. 2.76
- Directive relating to the limitation of noise emissions from subsonic aircraft. 26. 4.76
- Communication relating to the objective evaluation of risks to human health caused by pollution from persistent organo-chlorinated compounds. 29. 6.76
- Directive concerning toxic and dangerous wastes. 28. 7.76
- Directive concerning the placing of EEC-accepted plant protection products on the market. 29. 7.76
- Directive prohibiting the placing on the market and the use of plant protection products containing certain active substances. 29. 7.76
- Directive on the quality requirements for waters capable of supporting fresh-water fish. 2. 8.76
- Directive for a sixth modification of the directive of 27.6.67 concerning the approximation of the laws of Member States relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances. 21. 9.76
- Directive relating to the quality of water used for shellfish breeding. 3.11.76
- Communication from the Commission to the Council concerning the determination of criteria for acoustic nuisances. 3.11.76
- Directive concerning the conservation of bird life. 20.12.76
- Resolution on actions for the prevention, control and reduction of pollution caused by the accidental discharge of hydrocarbons into the sea. 9. 6.77

- Regulation concerning concerted research action on the growth of large urban concentrations. 3. 8.77
- Recommendation on fluorocarbons in the environment. 29. 8.77

II - CONSUMER PROPOSALS

- Directive relating to the approximation of the laws of Member States concerning the labelling and presentation of foodstuffs intended for the final consumer, as well as the publicity made in this respect. 29. 3.76
- Directive relating to the approximation of legislative, regulatory and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to liability for defective goods. 9. 9.76
- Directive concerning the protection of consumers in the case where contracts are negotiated outside business premises. 17. 1.77
- Directive relating to the protection of consumers in the indication of the price of foodstuffs. 26. 6.77
- Directive relating to the protection of participants in correspondence courses. 11. 8.77

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