

euroforum

europa day by day

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Eurobarometer has been taking Europe's temperature.
(see page 3)

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++ THE COMMUNITY'S ECONOMY

The deteriorating economic situation in the Community seems to have ended in Autumn 1977. This is the conclusion of the European Commission's quarterly report on the economic situation.

In Annex 1 Euroforum outlines the main points of the report.

++ NUCLEAR HEARINGS : HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The second session of public hearings on nuclear energy organised by the European Commission will take place 24th - 26th January 1978 in the Parc des Expositions at Heysel, Brussels.

Euroforum examines in Annex 2 the main problems to be discussed.

++ EUROBAROMETER : GREEN LIGHT FOR ECOLOGY

The latest Eurobarometer opinion poll reveals that Europeans are more in favour of ecology than women's liberation. They are in favour of direct elections to the European Parliament though only half have definitely decided if they will vote. One-third of them are in favour of Spain, Greece and Portugal joining the Community.

Euroforum analyses the thoughts of the European citizen in Annex 3.

++ COMMUNITY BUDGET FOR 1978

The agricultural sector will continue to take the largest share (72.4%) of the Community budget in 1978 whilst the European Commission's own personnel expenditure will only represent 3%.

In Annex 4 Euroforum presents the Community's budget for 1978 which for all institutions will total 12,679,642,084 EUA (1 EUA = + 1.2 U.S. dollars).

++ COMMUNITY UNEMPLOYMENT

At the end of November there were close to six million unemployed people in the European Community - an increase of 52,000 on the preceding month. And it is essentially men who are being added to the dole queues. The proportion of women among the registered unemployed has slightly decreased.

In November 1977 the proportion of registered unemployed out of the working population amounted to 5.7% for the whole Community. This percentage is much higher than that of the previous year (5.1%).

In relation to the preceding month, the increase in the number of jobless was 49,000 in Germany, 33,000 in Italy, 7,200 in Denmark, 3,700 in the Netherlands, 1,800 in Belgium, 1,300 in Ireland and 181 in Luxembourg. In the United Kingdom by contrast, the number of registered unemployed decreased by 19,000 and in France, for the first time, there was a drop of 24,400 in people looking for work.

For the Community as a whole, the number of jobless has increased by about 12% between November 1976 and November 1977.

++ SOCIAL FUND HELPS JOB HUNTING

The European Commission has approved a second and final 1977 allocation of 383 million units of account (one u.a. = ± 42 pence) from the European Social Fund.

The main group to benefit from the money are those workers threatened with unemployment, particularly those affected by technical progress and rationalisation. Close to 210 million u.a. has been set aside and the main countries to benefit will be the UK and Italy.

The second part of the allocations, 174 million u.a., will go towards vocational retraining (particularly for those leaving farming or the textile industry), to young people looking for work, to migrant workers and to handicapped workers. In addition, other subsidies and loans will be given for pilot schemes concerning the housing of handicapped people, improving migrant worker housing, and improving reception services for immigrants.

The country-by-country distribution of the total Social Fund allocations in 1977 (in two successive tranches) is as follows:

(in million units of account)

Belgium	9.05
Denmark	14.30
France	125
Germany	61.2
Ireland	49.05
Italy	119.9
Luxembourg	0.007
Netherlands	13.1
United Kingdom	208.3
Total	599.907

++ WHISKY OR NO WHISKY?

The European Commission has decided that the UK group "Distillers" should put an end to the restrictions it had imposed on exporting its whisky in the Community.

The group Distillers Company Limited (DCL) is the largest producer and distributor of spirits in the UK and of Scotch whisky in the Common Market and DCL had been applying differential prices to its customers in the UK which had restricted the export of Scotch whisky, gin, vodka and Pimm's. DCL's price terms had been the subject of complaints by UK spirits dealers.

On behalf of 38 of its subsidiaries which deal in spirits, DCL had notified the Commission of the conditions of sale which had been applied to spirit sales to UK customers. Export prohibitions to other EEC countries which had originally been contained in these conditions of sale were subsequently withdrawn by DCL in June 1975. This should have enabled continental spirit drinkers to rejoice had not the DCL introduced another system consisting of allowances and rebates which was more effective in restricting exports. Rebates and allowances could be withdrawn if the spirits were exported to Common Market countries and, as a result, a UK dealer would have to pay twice as much at the outset if he wished to export spirits than if he kept them for the UK market.

The European Commission has banned this practice which it considers contrary to the free movement of goods provisions of the Treaty of Rome and, more importantly, against the interest of consumers. The Commission regards it as essential for consumers that no limitation be put on the supply of products of the same brand which may be available in other Community countries at more favourable prices.

The Commission did not accept DCL's reasoning that their sole distributors in other EEC countries bore higher distribution costs and that such a partitioning of the market was necessary to protect them from re-sales (parallel imports) by others.

The Commission has ordered DCL to end these practices.

++ EUROPEAN DRIVING LICENCE

A Community driving licence valid for all EEC countries will be created in 1980. This was the decision reached by the Nine's transport ministers at their latest meeting in Brussels.

It only remains to work out the practical means of issuing these licences and discussions are still continuing on the subject.

++ THE COMMISSION AND FREE COMPETITION

In enforcing the rules of competition laid down in the Community treaties, the European Commission has been recently more vigilant than ever and six cases concerning the abuse of dominant positions, restriction of competition and technical

co-operation agreements have been dealt with.

The first concerned a Swedish firm - Hugin Kassaregister AB of Stockholm - who have been fined 50,000 units of account for abusing its dominant position in the supply of spare parts for its products. Hugin AB, one of the five major producers of cash registers used in the Common Market, had prohibited its various EEC subsidiaries and distributors from selling its spare parts outside the Hugin network and had refused to supply spare parts to another company, Lipton Cash Registers & Business Equipment Ltd., a former distributor of Hugin cash registers. The case illustrates the fact that a company can occupy a dominant position in one market - the spare parts market - even though it does not have such a position in the principal market which, in this case, was for cash registers.

In another case, six European manufacturers of parchment paper have also been fined. These companies had kept each other mutually informed of their commercial practices and had colluded to fix price increases. Some of them had also agreed to restrict supplies to the UK market. As in the case of COBELPA (September 1977), the Commission reaffirmed its opposition to such collusion.

Manufacturers of video cassettes and video cassette recorders have also been infringing the rules of free competition. The Dutch company, N.V. Philips' Gloeilampenfabrieken, and seven German companies, had taken part in agreements to apply uniform technical standards to the VCR systems (Philips' patented video cassette system) and had undertaken not to manufacture or sell any video cassette or video cassette recorders except those conforming to the system licenced by Philips.

The Commission is generally in favour of agreements whose purpose is to establish and apply uniform standards but, in this case, the restrictions to competition were excessive and, in view of Philips' dominant position in the field, the Commission decided to ban the agreements at the end of 1977.

In the fourth case, the restrictions to competition which were banned, directly affected the consumer. The principal producer of spices in Belgium (Liebig) had obtained agreement from its three main distributors in Belgium that they could only offer Liebig spices in their areas. This agreement not only restricted access to the market for other spice producers, but also limited consumers to a choice of only Liebig products at prices higher than other brands. The moral of the story : certain restrictions which are practiced in the distribution field run the risk of being banned, particularly when they restrict the market.

On the other hand, the Commission has given its approval to certain other agreements, particularly to one technical

co-operation and distribution agreement between a British and a French company producing microscopes. The Commission had to weigh two facts against each other: the restriction of competition on the one hand and the technical progress possible on the other (which is of benefit to consumers). The second argument was stronger in this case.

In the field of clocks and alarm clocks, a French manufacturer (JAZ), and a German manufacturer (Peter-Uhren), have been permitted to continue a specialisation agreement concluded in 1967 for a period of ten years. The Commission was impressed by the positive results obtained by the companies: rationalisation and better productivity, improvement in technical quality, more competitive prices (lower than general prices) - the agreement was to the benefit of the consumer.

++ SOCIAL SECURITY AND MIGRANT WORKERS

Self-employed migrant workers and their families should benefit from the same social security advantages as wage-earning workers. This is the basic argument of a Community regulation proposed by the European Commission to the Community's Council of Ministers.

Since 1959 employed migrant workers have been able to benefit from a Community regulation assuring them equal treatment and rights under the different national social security systems. No such provisions have yet been laid down for the self-employed migrant worker.

The Commission proposes to extend the Community regulation to cover them also by giving them, for example, exemption from, or reimbursement of, the costs incurred in connection with an accident sustained, or an illness contracted during a stay in a Community country other than the one where they are insured.

++ SCIENTIFIC COSMETOLOGY COMMITTEE

A Scientific Cosmetology Committee composed of scientists and experts in the field of cosmetics, has been set up and attached to the European Commission.

This Committee will permit the Commission to carry out its work in harmonising Member States' legislation relating to cosmetics. The Committee can be consulted on all scientific and technical problems relating to cosmetics and, particularly, on the substances used in the preparation of cosmetics and the composition and conditions of use of these products.

TRADE UNIONS AND NUCLEAR ENERGY

In issue No. 42/77 of Euroforum we indicated that the energy group of the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) had declared itself in favour of nuclear energy with certain reservations. The Dutch delegation in this energy group wish to make it clear that it was a majority decision and that they, in fact, declared themselves against this decision.

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THE COMMUNITY'S ECONOMY

The deteriorating economic situation in the Community - evident at the beginning of 1977 - seems to have come to an end, according to the European Commission's Autumn 1977 quarterly report on the economic situation in the Community.

Though the situation seems to have improved, in general terms, the improvement is only very modest. The only element of overall demand where signs of increasing dynamism could be detected, was consumer demand. Unemployment was on the increase up until September, and parallel to this there was an increase in the number of young people coming on to the job market. A favourable trend was detected in prices, and the rate of inflation for the Community as a whole dropped below that of other leading industrial countries.

Despite the economic measures already taken in certain Member States, the economic trend in the Community during the first half of 1978 will be marked by a weak expansion of demand and production and possible worsening conditions on the labour market. Due to progress made in combatting inflation and reducing external trade imbalances, the margin of manoeuvre for implementing further economic measures should be greatly increased over the coming months.

Belgium

Due to weak demand both domestic and external, economic expansion stood still during 1977 and even seems to have taken a step backwards since last Summer. Unemployment has worsened whilst price and cost increases have slowed down. The balance of payments has remained in deficit.

No improvement in the economic climate is foreseen over the coming months, though unemployment could be reduced slightly in 1978 by the implementation of a job creation programme.

Denmark

In recent months the performance of the Danish economy has been mediocre. The level of economic activity has declined and unemployment has increased. Prices have continued to rise and the balance of payments situation has only improved slightly.

The economic trend over the coming months will be a low increase in demand and production, but the balance of payments deficit could be reduced appreciably.

Germany

Economic activity has stagnated in Germany since last Spring, though private consumption has shown a revival in recent months. Investment, whilst being hesitant overall, has increased slightly. By contrast, external demand has continued

to wane. No improvement is expected on the job market. Price increases should continue their downward trend.

The outlook for expansion in 1978 depends on whether the reluctance to increase private and public investment can be overcome. Progress in reducing unemployment implies that both sides of industry should adjust their behaviour to the needs of the economy and are moderate in wage and price increase demands.

France

Growth in production was sluggish in the second quarter and figures available indicate it is only picking up very slowly. External balances improved greatly but the measures taken to contain inflation have not yet made their impact on prices.

Though a number of specific measures taken during the year have managed to reduce the number of jobless, unemployment is still at a disturbingly high level.

During the coming months, consumer demand should benefit from a more rapid increase in real disposable income, whilst the strengthening of foreign markets should help exports. The rate of inflation should come down and external balances improve further. In current conditions the possibility of a substantial reduction in unemployment is highly uncertain.

Ireland

Economic growth has accelerated in recent months, boosted by a continued increase in exports and a rapid growth in private consumption.

Also, for 1977 as a whole, the rate of increase in gross national product (GNP) could, in real terms, be in excess of 5%, which would make it the highest in the Community. Unemployment has improved slightly and inflation has slowed down. The trade balance, however, has deteriorated.

Demand and production seem likely to expand in the future.

Italy

The current-account balance of payments had a large surplus during the summer months and the slow-down in price increases was only temporary. In August and September a slight acceleration was detected. In the third quarter, economic activity was on the downward trend and the increase in unemployment, present since the beginning of the year, continued.

An upturn in economic activity is anticipated for the end of 1977 and for 1978. The current-account balance of payments is likely to remain in surplus and the slow-down in price rises will be less pronounced.

Luxembourg

The persistent weakness in external demand, combined with slower than expected growth in domestic demand, are the main features of Luxembourg's economic situation. Little change is expected over the coming months, which could have adverse effects on unemployment.

Netherlands

Exports are expected to recover somewhat from the weakness apparent during the first half of 1977. Domestic demand, however, seems likely to lose some of its dynamism whilst growth in production will be slight in the months to come. The recent decrease in unemployment is likely to be only a temporary phenomenon. An improvement is expected with regard to prices.

The outlook for growth appears quite limited for 1978, even though the appropriate measures to stimulate the economy have been taken by the Dutch authorities.

United Kingdom

In 1977, the UK's economy did not improve as expected and unemployment increased. Nevertheless, current-account operations have produced a large surplus and the rate of increase in prices has dropped considerably.

The absence of agreement between the government and trade unions on future wage increase levels could give rise to accelerated increases in wage levels in the future. This factor, combined with reductions in direct taxes, will doubtless contribute to a strengthening of private consumption and an expansion of production during the first half of 1978. The high level of unemployment is likely to persist.

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NUCLEAR HEARINGS: HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

To work out a common energy policy corresponding both to real needs as well as popular aspirations, the European Commission has been organising public hearings on the Community's energy problems and outlook for the future. In this debate the Commission has tried to give priority to discussing the energy source which is the most controversial: nuclear energy. It offers the greatest expectations, yet presents the greatest fears The first session of public hearings was held in Brussels, 29th November to 1st December 1977, and involved 600 people, a third of whom were journalists and the other 400 from interested parties: energy producers and consumers, industry chiefs, trade unionists, environment protection groups, etc.

The second session of hearings on nuclear energy organised by the European Commission will be held 24-26 January 1978 at the Parc des Expositions at Heysel, Brussels.

The hearings will deal with the consequences to health, safety and the environment of the various energy options.

Some six hundred people representing various interested parties will be present (industry, trade unions, ecological associations, etc.) and the discussions will be chaired by Dr. Guido Brunner, European Commissioner responsible for energy. The panel will consist of Ms. Dorte Bennedsen (Denmark), Mr. René Bonety (France), Mr. Giulio Cesoni (Italy), Mr. Albert Coppe (Belgium), Mr. Jean Couture (France), Mr. Robert Hirsch (France), Mr. Gerald Leach (Great Britain), Mr. William Miller (Great Britain), Dr. Gerrit Vonkeman (Netherlands), Ms. Hanna Walz (Germany), Mr. Basil de Ferranti (Great Britain).

The discussions will focus on the elements which underlie the decision to use nuclear energy: economic growth, energy consumption and the possible contribution of the various sources which already exist or can be developed. If agreement of opinion could be reached on the positive contribution of these other energy sources, then recourse to nuclear energy would no longer be necessary.

A profound difference of views exists between the partisans and adversaries of the development of nuclear energy, particularly with regard to the risks involved and the dangers inherent in alternative sources of energy.

This problem of risk will naturally enough be the focal point of discussion at the second session to be held 24, 25 and 26 January, 1978, where the participants will be virtually the same as those at the first session.

The differing views on the consequences for human health, safety and environmental protection of the energy options will be confronted. Their acceptability to workers and the general public will also be discussed.

The points under discussion are vital. Some take the view that over the long term, the multiplication of nuclear installations and the accumulation of by-products such as radioactive wastes, will endanger the survival of man on earth.

Without doubt, the production and use of energy poses inconveniences for man and for the environment. Some are spectacular, such as the catastrophes which regularly befall workers in coal mines. Others are less dramatic but have longer term effects, such as the damage caused by pollution discharged into the atmosphere (sulphur derivatives and carbon monoxide) by installations burning fossil fuels. Even the "new" sources of energy are not exempt from these inconveniences. For example, a large solar energy power station involves covering hundreds of square kilometers with mirrors with which to supply the sunlight.

It is practically impossible to find a common unit of measure for the multitude of effects of varying severity which result from satisfying our energy demand. They affect workers in the industries concerned, the general public and the natural environment. Even an unresolved discussion in Brussels should at least establish a fairly complete inventory of all the possible risks and dangers which result from the production, processing, transport, storage and use of these various forms of energy, nuclear or not. Further studies could draw up comparative balance sheets for the various long-term energy scenarios.

Following the main theme of discussion, attention will focus on the problems of nuclear safety, particularly with regard to evaluating the risk of accidents in installations, or during the transport of fissile material and irradiated fuel. The strict regulations governing the nuclear activities greatly reduce the probability of accidents. The industry, up until now, has a good record with regard to safety, and accidents are comparatively rarer than in the majority of other industries. It is also quite evident however that a serious accident in a reactor or in a reprocessing plant would expose a large number of people to danger in addition to the workers in the plant. The precise numbers depend on a number of factors (density of population, etc.) but could be very considerable. Some estimates have even calculated the figures in millions.

These risks, which the discussions will attempt to evaluate, are linked to the peaceful use of the atom and nuclear energy can always be put to violent uses. And since an American student has shown that a gifted enthusiast can construct a rudimentary atom bomb as long as he has a few pounds of plutonium, the possibility of terrorists making nuclear bombs has descended from the world of fiction.

Reducing these risks requires strict surveillance of nuclear installations and the transport and storage of fissile material. Some people fear that this would involve a considerable increase in regulations and in the powers of the police, which could, in itself, be a threat to liberty and democracy. The second session of nuclear hearings will discuss ways of avoiding the theft of fissile material for non-peaceful uses without introducing a police state. It will also look at the conditions for a world consensus on the non-use of nuclear weapons.

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The discussions on these various subjects confirm that meeting energy demand by nuclear techniques poses many difficult problems. The solutions will also become more complex as demand increases.

During the December session, delegates envisaged reducing these difficulties either by voluntary restriction of energy demand or by accelerating recourse to renewable sources of energy which will not use up our limited reserves, i.e. solar energy, wind power, wave power, geothermal energy, etc. These types of energy have generally little impact on the environment.

These attempts to limit the need for recourse to nuclear energy will not be without difficulties and uncertainties. In addition to saving energy by reducing loss and wastage which will certainly have a positive effect, it is feared that the voluntary holding back of energy consumption could have adverse effects on economic expansion and social progress. The introduction of new techniques presupposes an intense research development and promotion effort and would require rapid changes in industrial production systems. These changes would doubtless have an impact on the nature of society.

EUROBAROMETER : GREEN LIGHT FOR ECOLOGY

Ecology is in favour with most Europeans, according to the latest Eurobarometer public opinion poll conducted throughout the European Community at the end of 1977. Out of every 100 persons, 78.5 had positive feelings towards the ecology movements.

Top of the ecology list, with 94.5 out of every 100, was Denmark, confirming its reputation as the most environmentally conscious country in the Community. In second and third place are to be found, surprisingly, Luxembourg and Belgium. France only managed seventh place despite the great gains made by ecology candidates at the last elections. The ecologists came worst off in green Ireland, who doubtless feel no environmental threat to their renowned green pastures. It could be that to be ecologically minded is a luxury of the rich countries, which is a fairly widespread view amongst those interviewed.

There is no close correlation between political parties and the ecological movement, it would appear. It is neither exclusively left, right nor centre. It would appear to be more closely linked to the level of education. Amongst women particularly, the higher the level of education, the greater the interest in ecology.

Luke-warm women's lib

With regard to the feminist movements, opinions were generally luke-warm. Faced with the question "What is your opinion of movements whose objective is women's liberation?", 46% replied with "A very good opinion" or "Generally good". 38% had "A bad opinion". There is, surprisingly enough, little difference between the views of the two sexes except in the UK and Belgium where the men (who are more numerous than the women) would seem to have taken women's lib to their hearts.

Another question asked for the first time was the attitude of the European general public to the possible entry of Greece, Portugal and Spain into the Community. A positive yes was absent, though the degree of reticence varied according to candidate country. Spain was generally most favoured and four people out of ten thought it would be a good thing. Portugal only managed to find 33% to support its cause, and Greece 32%.

The Germans, Italian and Irish are most inclined to accept such an enlargement of Europe, though the admission of Mediterranean agricultural countries such as these would be likely to cause problems for Italy. The most reserved are the Danes.

Regular pulse

With regard to Europe as it is, the pulse of the nine countries is still beating regularly and is little different to the last "check up" in April-May 1977.

The Netherlands, with 74%, are the most satisfied in the Community - ahead of the Luxembourgish and the Italians. Throughout the whole of the EEC, 56 people out of every 100 regarded the Community as a good thing, against 14% who saw it as a bad thing. In the UK, the match is still pretty even, with the pro-marketiers keeping a slight advantage (37% to 35%) and in Denmark, where the anti-Europeans are slightly in the lead, (37% to 33%).

Faced with the prospect of direct elections to the European Parliament, six countries are 70% in favour, the UK is 69% in support, but Belgium only musters 63% in favour and, worst of all, Denmark only scores 54% (which, nevertheless, is a large improvement on the 44% recorded six months ago).

Pre-election fever absent

Europeans seem to be approaching these elections with more thought than passion. Only one person in two regards it as an event of great significance which will necessarily advance the political unification of Europe. One person in three sees it as an event of little importance.

The prospect of voting did not induce any traces of excitement. Only half of the people interviewed stated that they would "certainly vote". Most positive were the Italians and the Dutch, and the most reserved were the Belgians and the Danish, though the latter seem to be moving in the affirmative direction. For the Community as a whole, the 15 - 24 age group are the least enthusiastic, and the 40 - 54 group the most in favour. Does the taste for Europe come with age? Amongst the over-55 year olds, 60% of the men and 47% of the women said that they certainly would vote.

Horizon clears

Despite the crisis, Europe's mood is becoming more optimistic. In seven Community countries, public opinion has, since May-June 1977, swung towards the view that conditions are going to improve. France is less optimistic however and Belgium has not changed. The most optimistic are the Irish (73%) and the British (65%), followed by the Germans. The Community average is 54%.

In comparison to the survey of May-June, there is little change in views concerning the functioning of democracy. The Baader-Meinhof / Schleyer affair has not affected German confidence in democracy and they responded with a positive 78%. In Italy, on the other hand, the continued violence has reduced satisfaction with democracy to a mere 19% of those interviewed. It's not the threat of world war which is giving Europe nightmares. Only 24% give more than a fifty-fifty chance for such an eventuality. Europe's nightmares are more socially, than war orientated. 54 people out of every 100 are worried that the increase in social tension will lead to serious troubles over the next ten years.

The two countries most worried, currently stand at opposite ends of the spectrum: Italy, which has violence on the streets, and the Netherlands, which seems to be a haven of peace from such troubles.

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COMMUNITY BUDGET FOR 1978

Sectors	ALLOCATIONS	
	in E.U.A.	in %
I. <u>Commission</u>		
A. <u>Intervention credits</u>		
. Agricultural sector	9,181,743,700	72.40
. Social sector	592,653,000	4.67
. Regional sector	581,000,000	4.58
. Research, energy, industry and transport sectors	316,138,795	2.49
. Development and co- operation with develo- ping countries	537,150,000	4.24
. Other	n.a.	n.a.
	11,218,685,495	88.40
B. <u>Operational credits</u>		
. Personnel	387,433,000	3.05
. Administration	105,740,200	0.83
. Information	13,018,000	0.11
. Various aids and subsidies	45,308,100	0.36
	551,499,300	4.35
C. <u>Reserve</u>	5,000,000	0.04
D. <u>Reimbursement to Member States of 10% of own resources</u>	689,600,000	5.44
TOTAL COMMISSION	12,454,784,745	98.23

II. Other institutions

(European Parliament,
Council of Ministers,
Court of Justice,
Court of Auditors)

224,857,289 1.77

TOTAL GENERAL

12,679,642,084 100.

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