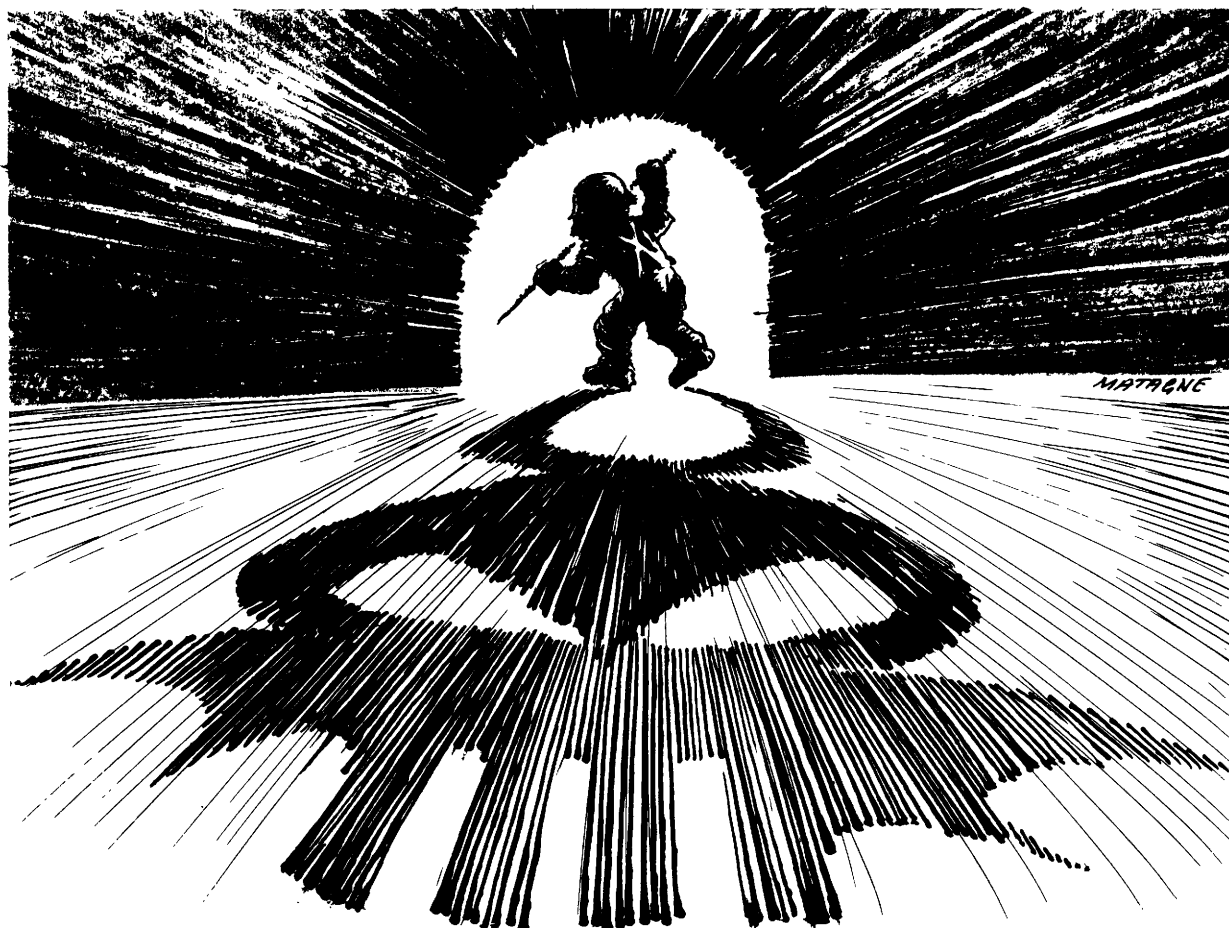


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N° 26/78



Despite technological progress, night work, noisy factories and dangerous jobs are still with us (see page 3).

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FRANCE OPPOSES YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

"Young people have the right to work and we have to fight against the unemployment which they face - it's a question of justice" stated Mr. Henk Vredeling, Vice President of the European Commission in condemning France's opposition to the programme to help unemployed youth proposed by the European Commission to the Nine's Ministers for Social Affairs.

This programme (cf Euroforum N° 14/78) has two aspects:

- offering employment premiums to employers who take on young people;
- giving subsidies for programmes employing young people in the public interest.

The Community should, in the Commission's view, contribute as much as 50-55% of these employment aids. The objective of the programme should be:

- to respond to real and unsatisfied social and ecological needs;
- to offer jobs at low cost - the wages received by young people would only be slightly higher than the unemployment benefit which the person would receive in any case;
- to let them work for the public good instead of leaving them idle;
- to give them professional experience which would increase their chances of finding a job in the future.

France rejected these proposals and took the view that the way to solve youth unemployment was essentially to re-establish economic growth and in particular through projects financed from public funds.

The reply of Mr. Vredeling and the Social Affairs Ministers was that economic growth will not be strong enough to help young people. For this reason, most Community countries have launched job creation programmes for young people. Programmes in Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom, Holland have already

enabled, within two or three years - jobs to be found for a large number of young people. In Belgium the "Spitael's plan" has already enabled 33 000 unemployed to be taken off the dole list in six months.

In Ireland and in Italy, programmes of this sort are just getting off the ground and Luxembourg is also preparing schemes. In the USA for example, 80% of job creation programmes are public projects.

Mr. Vredeling adds that "Economically profitable projects - what does that mean? Training women, giving young people jobs, can one really say that this is not productive?"

The Nine's Social Affairs Ministers have nevertheless adopted the action programme drawn up by the European Commission on health and safety at work. They also adopted a directive to protect workers' health from vinyl chloride monomer (VCM). This directive which restricts exposure to VCM to 3 parts per million VCM per year, will come into force in 18 months time for new factories and in 2.5 years for existing plants.

++ THE SEAMY-SIDE OF WORK

Fifteen percent of Europe's Labour force work nights. More than half of wage earners in industry complain about the noise they are subjected to. One third of Dutch and two thirds of German workers have jobs which they feel are dangerous.

These and some of the other results of a survey conducted on working conditions in the Community (1975) are presented in Annex 1.

++ 300 DIRECTIVES FOR THE FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS

The Community has just adopted the 100th directive on the removal of technical barriers to trade in the Nine, i.e. to standardise technical regulations in Community countries which would otherwise prevent producers from having free access to all Community markets.

This diligent and painstaking aspect of the Commission's work is discussed in Annex 2.

++ EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN ARMAMENTS

The cost of military research is increasing and Europe is currently completely dependent on the USA for its armaments.

In Annex 3 Euroforum discusses the rationale for developing a common industrial policy for armaments.

++ UNEMPLOYMENT : SEASONAL DROP

The number of registered unemployed in the Community at the end of May stood at 5.6 million as against 5.8 million the month before. This drop in unemployment is essentially due to seasonal factors however. And unemployment recorded in May 1978 is 6.1% higher than in the same month last year. In three countries - Ireland, Holland and Germany - the number of registered jobless in May 1978 was in fact less than 12 months before.

Unemployment amongst male workers in May 1978 rose 3.3% on the year before and the number of women out of work rose 10.2%. Unemployment among women deteriorated badly in Denmark, Italy, Holland and the United Kingdom.

++ TEETH IN EUROPE

Doctors and nurses have benefited from Europe and now dentists are to be ensured the freedom to practise freely in any Community country. Last week, the Council of Ministers recorded its agreement to a directive which will be finally approved at their next meeting.

The directive affects nearly 100 000 Community citizens : 85 000 dentists in 8 countries and 18 000 general doctors and Italian specialists who practise dentistry. A specific certificate of dentistry will be created in Italy. The directive also covers the study of dentistry and requires at least five years of higher education and students within the Nine will have to study a number of identical subject areas.

For many years now, the European Commission has been trying to facilitate free movement within the Community, since the liberal professions are strongly regulated in Community countries by very complex professional statutes which frequently differ from country to country.

The Commission however has already pushed through directives covering the free establishment of doctors, nurses and lawyers apart from the recent decisions concerning dentists.

Other Community regulations have been proposed by the Commission and are being discussed by the Nine (veterinary surgeons, architects, accountants, tax consultants and professionals involved in research or consulting in

technical areas such as engineering, chemistry, physics, geology, etc.)

A Commission proposal dealing with pharmacists is currently being modified to fit in with recent changes in pharmacy statutes.

++ INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION : WHO FOOTS THE BILL

The equipment necessary to prevent the environment becoming polluted from industrial wastes is a burdensome expense to industry. But in times of economic crisis, can the European Community not help out by sharing the cost, asks Mr. Pierre Bernard Couste of the European Parliament.

The Commission does not necessarily agree with the principle and there is no evidence to make it think that anti-pollution equipment is likely to be any more expensive in the future than in the past.

There is also nothing to indicate that such expenditure can cause difficulty to an industrial sector. On the other hand, the Community did in fact adopt the "polluter pays" principle in 1975 to encourage industry to research and develop less polluting products and technologies and to use environmental resources more rationally. The Community has of course made a few exceptions to this principle, particularly regarding assistance to industries for investment projects to adapt plant to new environmental protection requirements, or to industries in particular difficulties.

++ STEEL : REDUCING CAPACITY

Production capacity for crude steel currently exceeds market requirements for 1985 by more than 25 million tonnes (13%) - assuming favourable economic growth. The steel industry itself has already reduced capacity by 10 million tonnes compared with expectations three years ago. The European Commission thinks that capacity has to be rapidly reduced by a further 25 million tonnes which would make the industry sufficiently profitable in terms of supply and demand.

The Commission still maintains the view that success in re-organising the steel industry is directly linked to a labour reconversion policy to be able to find jobs for workers who are laid off from the industry.

The second quarter 1978 showed overproduction in the European steel industry of the order of 4 million tonnes. The

months of July, August and September constitute a trial period. The programme adopted by the Commission for the third quarter stipulates that production be restricted to 29 million tonnes (as against 35 million tonnes in the second quarter). The Commission is particularly concerned about the lack of solidarity among steel producing companies, which harms the essential objective of its steel anti-crisis plan - the reorganisation of the steel sector.

++ FOREIGN MINISTERS DISCUSS OIL POLLUTION

At the recent Council meeting of the Nine's Foreign Ministers, the green light was given to the action programme proposed by the European Commission to control and reduce sea pollution from oil (this programme was already agreed to in principle by Environment Ministers last May).

The Council was not disposed to agree to other measures proposed by the Commission : the ratification of the conventions on maritime transport safety, the adhesion of the Community to conventions on the protection of the Mediterranean and the North Sea.

++ EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM

Roy Jenkins, President of the European Commission recently expressed the view that young people should be involved in the development of the European Community, and this could well be assisted by the fact that the international youth organisations and national youth committees have decided to set up a European Youth Forum. This Forum would serve as a political platform in regard to Community institutions. Once the elections and the nominations are completed, the Secretariat of Forum will begin work before the end of the year.

++ MORE POLITICAL DEBATE FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS

Mr. Colombo, President of the European Parliament has made an official visit to the European Commission to discuss plans for the run-up to direct elections next year, and has discussed ways of making debates at the Parliament more political. He stated that the Parliament now intends to organise a major political debate at each session (for example on economic growth, economic and monetary union, enlargement of the Community, external relations etc.).

++ TOO MANY BUILDING REGULATIONS

The diversity of national and regional regulations on construction (particularly regarding safety, hygiene and comfort) are hindering free competition within the European Community:

- at the product level, due to differences in technical specifications, norms, testing methods and controls;
- at the construction level, particularly regarding residential building.

To remedy the situation, the European Commission has undertaken a number of actions:

- it has drawn up directives to eliminate technical barriers concerning building materials and free trade between Community countries, and has also prepared a proposal on the classification and fire-resistance of construction materials and shock resistance of glass products;
- the Commission has undertaken work to standardise national regulations concerning the buildings themselves, particularly with regards to fire, stability and thermal isolation.

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THE SEAMY-SIDE OF WORK

Charlie Chaplin, trapped in the middle of a giant set of gear wheels was how modern industrial progress was portrayed in the old film "Modern Times". The question now is whether working conditions have in fact improved as rapidly as technical progress, and perhaps things are not as good as we may think.

In the Community, fifteen percent of the labour force works nights. More than fifty percent of industrial workers complain about the noise they are subjected to in their factories. Forty percent feel they work in an unhealthy atmosphere, and finally one third (Netherlands) and two thirds (Germany) have jobs which entail serious risks (accident, illnesses, etc.). These results have emerged from an enquiry undertaken in 1975 on working conditions in Community countries which has just been published by the Community's statistical office. The figures show working conditions to be an area where a great deal of progress still has to be made.

The samples for the enquiry were taken from people between the ages of 14 and 65 years who were wage earners, self-employed, employers, etc. All nine Community countries took part in the survey, though only five of them (Germany, Belgium, Holland, Ireland and the UK) included questions on the working environment : noise, health and safety.

The complete results of this survey are available from the Community book shops listed on the last page of this publication. Price £5.

Non-stop factories

Some 15% of Europeans do nightwork regularly or occasionally. The proportion of women (7%) is less than that of men, though still amounts to 2.3 million. Three quarters of these women are employed in the service industry, 14% in agriculture and only 10% in industry. 46% of male night workers are employed in the service sector, 43.6% in industry and only 10% in agriculture.

The countries which sleep least at night are Denmark (19.3% night workers), Ireland (21%) and Luxembourg (22.6%). Just counting people who regularly do nightwork, the highest rates are found in Holland, Ireland, Denmark and Belgium (over 8%). Only 13.4% of German and 14% of Italian workers

are subjected to night work. In the UK and Italy, there are fewer women working nights than in other EEC countries.

No day of rest

Almost 30% of people with one principal job state that they regularly work on Sundays and holidays. The countries with the least respect for the day of rest are Ireland and Denmark (40% work on Sundays or holidays), followed by the United Kingdom (34%).

More than 50% of women who work Sundays are self employed (agriculture and service industry) or are family helps. 47% of men working Sundays are to be found in the service industry and 35% in industry.

Noisy jobs

The percentage of people who feel they have a noisy job varies from 22% in Ireland to 37% in Belgium (only five countries included questions on this). The level is somewhat lower for women (20%) and the highest noise problems are felt in Belgium (25%). Naturally enough, it is workers in industry who suffer most from noise : more than 50% of industrial workers from nearly all industrial sectors find this a problem. Factory workers aren't the only people to suffer from a deafening environment. 30% of people working in transport, commerce, restaurants, or undertaking repair work complain about this as well.

Dirty hands

In the five countries which included questions on hygiene, between 10 and 20% of all workers complained about this aspect of their job. Most are to be found in industry, and in Germany and the UK, 40% of wage earners (in construction, civil engineering, water and energy) regard their job as dirty or unhygienic.

Professional dangers too high

With regard to occupational safety there are wide differences between countries. Serious occupational dangers (accidents, illnesses linked to work) seem to follow national frontiers. Two thirds of German workers feel they have a dangerous job as against only one third of Dutch workers.

These differences between countries are also apparent for wage-earning women, who are well protected in Holland (10% dangerous jobs) but not in Germany (52%). Amongst those who have a job "with many risks", Germany again leads the

the field with 24.4% of the total labour force as against 3.2% in Holland. The reasons for these differences need to be examined carefully.

Benelux commuters

Curiously enough the highest proportion of people living far from their work (more than 50 km) is to be found in Belgium and Holland. In terms of time, 75% of European lose less than half an hour getting to work, 96% less than one hour and in France 7% of workers are unfortunate in having to lose between 2 and 4 hours getting to and from their job every day. 1% of Belgians lose more than four hours per day travelling.

For the Nine as a whole, 17.5% of workers - and 25.5% of working women - go to work on foot though the most frequent means of transport in Europe is the car (44%) followed by public transport (19%) tram, underground, bus. 50% of men go to work by car as against 30% of women who tend to use public transport twice as much.

Part-time women

Out of nine million Europeans working part time, 8 million are women. Most of the 1 million male part timers are senior citizens over 60 years. For women, part time work mostly interests women over 30 years (12%), and most are 35-39 years (15%), and 40 to 44 years (13.6%). Female part time work is rather marginal in Belgium, Italy and Ireland (10%). The survey does not reveal whether part time work is their preference or whether it is forced on them by the labour market.

More than 40% of British and Danish women opt for flexible working hours.

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300 DIRECTIVES FOR THE FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS

The bottles of milk drunk by European schoolchildren at play-time may contain 20 centilitres or 25 centilitres of milk. Belgian doctors consider 20 cl sufficient and they think that more might cause childrens' bones to calcify too quickly. French doctors think milk helps children grow, and they much prefer 25 cl bottles.

Bottle manufacturers naturally enough have to produce both, though they could doubtless achieve great economies of scale by producing just one size for sale throughout the Common Market. Standardising the size of bottles used in the EEC could consequently achieve this. It can also save wine producers the problem of having to transfer their wine into different sized bottles according to country of sale. Standardising bottle sizes also helps consumers from being deceived by, for example, a 10% reduction in price, when in fact the quantity has been reduced 15% - it is not always easy to tell by looking at the bottle.

All are prepared to standardise the technical standards of goods in the European Community to facilitate trade, but everyone wants their own standard to become the Community norm.

The example of the bottle of milk is a case in point and shows the difficulties facing the European Commission which has to cater for differing customs and viewpoints, particularly regarding health and consumer protection. It also faces well-defended industrial interests.

Setting up a Common Market, however, implies that goods can move between Community countries without hindrance, just as they move within national regions. Removal of customs duties is not sufficient in itself to accomplish this. Technical barriers resulting from different national regulations fixing the conditions of "acceptability" for products in given national markets, also have to be removed.

On June 27th, 1978, eleven years to the day after the first directive to remove technical barriers to trade was adopted, the Nine signed the 100th directive dealing with industrial products.

In total (industrial goods and foodstuffs), close on 140 directives have been adopted by the Community. Each of these defines the physical, chemical or biological properties which a product must have to be permitted for sale in all Community countries. Some fifty proposals are awaiting decision by the Council of Ministers, and another fifty are being drawn up by the services of the European Commission.

Reconcilable consumer-producer interests

In the early days of the Common Market, the customs union was the principle idea to ensure the free movement of goods. Once customs duties were removed, it was thought, goods could move freely in a single market. Producers would then have an enormous market of 260 million and could benefit from economies of scale which could make them competitive with, for example, American products. Consumers would have a wider range of goods at their disposal and would benefit from the sharper competition between manufacturers.

Customs duties have now been abolished within the Nine but it is clear they are not the only obstacle to intra-Community trade. To be able to sell in another EEC country, a manufacturer must ensure his product conforms to the technical standards imposed by national authorities which are in many cases very different from his own.

For example, when, before cars were harmonised, France's Peugeot had to sell in other Community countries, they had to produce several series of cars with different variations (lights, brakes, etc.) according to each country of destination. This entailed keeping extra stocks of parts and consequently higher costs. All this was inconvenient for the manufacturer and for the consumer as well.

The Community has begun to remove these technical barriers to trade by harmonising - for each product - the required technical characteristics.

New needs, new directives

In 1969, the Community defined the categories of goods for which common norms were necessary (reviewed in 1973). Amongst these were industrial products : motor vehicles, (directives adopted), tractors and agricultural machines (ten directives adopted), measuring instruments (over 20 directives adopted), foodstuffs (cocoa, chocolate, sugar, condensed milk, and additives such as colourants, preservative agents, emulsifiers etc.) used in food. All these products now have to correspond to safety and purity standards

made compulsory by the Nine. The Commission has consequently adjusted its work programme according to these needs. Whilst the free movement of goods was initially the main motivation for its action, environmental and consumer protection and more recently the energy crisis has encouraged the Commission to redirect its efforts and look at areas not included in its initial programme : biodegradability of detergents, pre-packing of goods, materials in contact with foodstuffs, hot water meters etc.

Only harmonising what's necessary

It is not just a question of harmonising for its own sake and the Commission has two basic approaches.

Community directives which are drawn up for public health protection or user safety require in general Community norms which are universally valid. All national products either have to conform or disappear. This is total harmonisation as is used for example to ensure that detergents are biodegradable or that pesticides or household goods are clearly labelled.

However, there is no point harmonising production standards for goods which will only be used in local markets and will not be exported, particularly when they meet local or regional requirements. In such cases optional harmonisation is applicable. This is the case for most industrial goods. Community directives stipulate that goods conforming to common standards should be accepted in all member countries but national governments reserve the right to accept or refuse other types of manufacture.

Safety and safety

In adopting common norms, the determining criteria are user safety for industrial goods, or consumer health for foodstuffs. The safest or healthiest standards are adopted as Community standards though this is not always so simple. Technical specifications for goods differ from country to country and often reflect divergent national conceptions of safety and health.

One example out of many : in Belgium, national safety standards require lifts to be fitted with a "stop" button. This permits the lift to be stopped very precisely at the required floor, preventing accidents (scarves trapped in between doors, etc.), or prolonging a stop for handicapped people, enabling them to leave easily and in safety.

In the UK by contrast, the "stop" button is strictly forbidden both for safety reasons (to stop lifts being stuck between floors with a view to attacking young girls or robbing old aged persons). Stop or not to stop, which is the best solution?

Safe cooking

Another example is gas cookers. No one wishes of course to have a dangerous gas cooker, but what is in fact a non-dangerous cooker?

In the UK, a safe cooker is one with four or six rings the same size. British experts think that a housewife could absent-mindedly put a small pan of hot water on a large ring, the water could overflow and - theoretically - asphyxiate the housewife. Other countries take the view that the risk of this is slight and that the use of different sized rings saves energy and makes for a better cooker.

Patience and time

These different view points are often legitimate, but they sometimes have less noble industrial interests, particularly when differing national standards can be used to keep out foreign competition.

Under such conditions, the suppression of technical barriers to trade in the Community is a long drawn out business : it takes the Commission a good two years to draw up a proposal for a directive and get the agreement of national experts, industrialists and consumers. Once the proposal is ready, it has to be approved by the Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee before going to the Ministers of the Nine. There it usually has plenty of time to accumulate dust : nine months at the best, ten years at the worst before being adopted.

Technical progress does not wait however. For this reason, the Commission has created a Committee for Adaptation to Technical Progress. This Committee is composed of national experts and updates existing directives.

A positive balance

Though the introduction of common technical standards for products is not without problems, the balance sheet is nevertheless positive : between 1969 and 1978, some 140 directives have been adopted.

Fortunately the political will of national governments to make European progress is often stronger than the resistance to change of national administrations. This step by step harmonisation does not scare vested interests, though each directive mounts up. On the other hand, industrialists often exert a certain pressure to open up markets. When in a particular sector exports are vital to manufacturers, the Community directives are applied even before being adopted. Automobiles are a particularly good example of this.

The Community has just adopted two directives dealing with the heating and driving compartment of cars, and another on tyre coverings. Only four more directives need to be approved (windows, headrests, maximum axle weights, tyres) and our cars will be completely European.

As soon as the last four directives enter into force, any car entering a Community country for sale will have to obtain EEC type approval. At the present moment, cars in Community countries are not as standardised as they are in the USA.

Community standards body

It currently requires 300 directives to control Community trade. 140 directives have been adopted over the last 10 years, so it would require another ten at least to complete the programme. But by that time, how many new technical barriers will have been set up?

Is the method used for removing technical barriers to trade too heavy and badly adapted? Should it really require the agreement of the Council of Ministers to remove a technical barrier when it only requires one national official in his own office to draw up a technical regulation?

In the Community today, there are nine organisations drawing up standards on the physical, chemical and biological properties of their national products. Often influenced by the industrialists who manage them, they are powerful. Each body creates some 1 000 new standards each year. A Community standardisation body could be useful in replacing them. It would be sufficient for the Commission to draw up broad directives embodying the standards set by this body. Is this the solution? Many consumers, many industrialists and the European Commission, of course, think so.

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EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN ARMAMENTS

Calls for a common industrial policy for armaments have been frequently heard in recent times, and at the European Parliament, Mr. Egon Klepsch, Chairman of the Christian Democrat Group, has presented a report on European cooperation in armaments supply which was approved by the Parliament. Mr. Etienne Davignon, European Commissioner responsible for industrial affairs gave a press conference together with Mr. Klepsch.

Mr. Davignon stressed that the Commission was not intending to become involved in national defence which is the special domain of Member States. The Commission does not wish to encourage policies which are in any way militaristic, increase armaments expenditure or boost the armaments business to solve the economic crisis.

The European Commission does aim however to reduce the proportion of national expenditure devoted to the military sector by using more rational production methods. Several reasons justify the introduction of common industrial policy for armaments:

- Community countries spend large sums of money on research and development in industries linked to military technology : aerospace, transport, telecommunications, etc. The nationalistic way industries currently operate in the Nine causes a duplication of effort and consequently wastage. The rise in basic costs can be offset by cooperation at the European level;
- Civil technology and military technology are closely linked. All aircraft engines - medium or long haul - have had support from military technology. The microelectronics industry was in fact developed through military-space research. Lacking a single military market, Europe has lagged behind the USA (military orders only account for 7% of the European electronic components market).

There is also the question of reducing Europe's dependence on the USA for armaments. Sales of military equipment is a one-way flow. According to Mr. Davignon, it is in the Community's interest to start a flow in the other direction and this requires competitive industrial capacity.

Arms trade in the West

The USA sells its armaments to Europe who sell little in return, though it has a good trade with third world countries. The principal European arms exporters are (1974):

- France : 3 billion dollars
- UK : 1.5 billion dollars
- Italy : 240 million dollars
- Germany : 180 million dollars

President Carter has recently demanded a limitation on arms sales to third world countries. Europeans take the view that before they do this, the US market should be opened up to European exports.

Before making proposals on the armaments industry, the European Commission will consult with interested parties : the nine Community partners and representatives from industry as well as the European Parliament. Mr. Klepsch of the European Parliament will propose at the next meeting of the Parliaments Political Committee that a working group be set up including representatives from the Commission and the Parliament to examine the question.

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