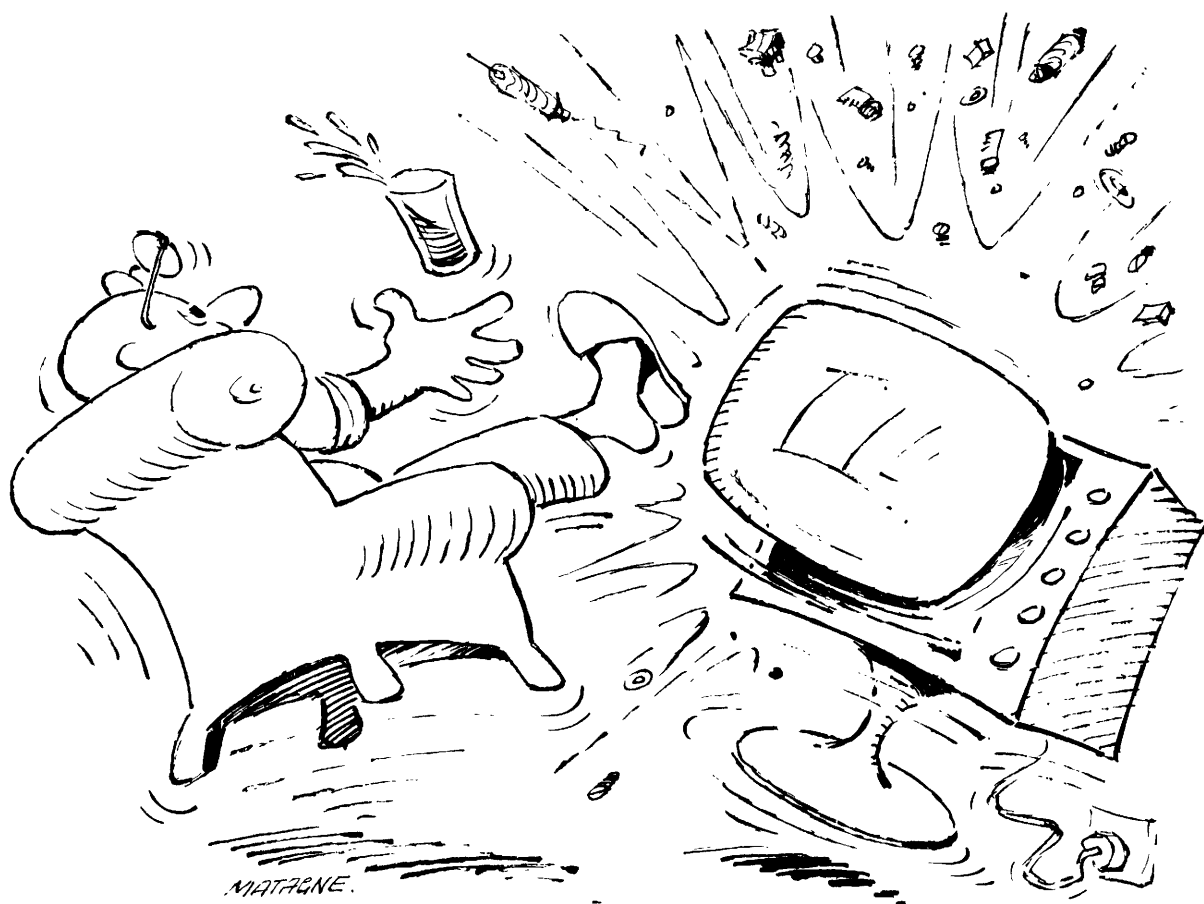


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• Home is not so sweet a refuge for 5 million European  
accident victims (see page 3).  
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#### IN THIS ISSUE

- ++ Accidents in the home - five million victims (p. 3)
- ++ Public research expenditure rises (p. 3)
- ++ Prospecting for rubbish (p. 3)
- ++ Roll up - new butter sales! (p. 3)
- ++ Income tax in the Nine (p. 4)
- ++ Nuclear energy takes its time (p. 4)
- ++ Consumers and farm prices (p. 5)
- ++ Drinking water - a lot goes into a glass (p. 5)
- ++ Third world energy cooperation (p. 5)
- ++ Steel - Commission targets (p. 6)
- ++ Energy crisis teaches us a lesson (p. 6)

**++ ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME - FIVE MILLION VICTIMS**

Accidents in the home - from do-it-yourself to the kitchen and involving furniture, toys and glass - cause four to five million injuries and 25 000 to 30 000 deaths in the Community each year.

Annex 1 outlines Commission plans for a record of casualties to put Community citizens on guard against "silly" accidents as well as dangerous products.

**++ PUBLIC RESEARCH EXPENDITURE RISES**

Between 1970 and 1976 European public expenditure on research increased by 3.2% per year. This increase in outlay mostly benefited the general promotion of knowledge and the study of human and social phenomena.

Annex 2 presents a breakdown of where the money went.

**++ PROSPECTING FOR RUBBISH**

The Community produces more than four million tonnes of rubbish a day. Up until now it has mostly been concerned with getting rid of it - an expensive and unproductive operation since recycling rubbish can produce energy and secondary raw materials.

Annex 3 shows the waste research programme proposed by the European Commission.

**++ ROLL UP - NEW BUTTER SALE!**

Britain is the only country in the Community which will not be offering cheap "Christmas" butter at the end of the year. Consumers elsewhere in the Common Market will be able to buy butter at the reduced "EEC sale" price at the end of the year. Community aid for butter consumption in the UK has yet to be decided by the Nine.

++ INCOME TAX IN THE NINE

Income tax rates in the Nine, in order of volume,  
February 1978.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Minimum rate</u>	<u>Maximum rate</u>
United Kingdom	34	83
Netherlands	20	72
Belgium	10	72
Italy	10	72
Denmark	41.2	66.4
Ireland	20	60
France	5	60
Luxembourg	18	57
Germany	22	56

± 98% tax where income is derived from investments.

++ NUCLEAR ENERGY TAKES ITS TIME

The following table shows the percentage of nuclear energy used in the total net production of electricity in the Nine:

	<u>In 1976</u>	<u>In 1977</u>
France	7.7	8.4
Germany	7.3	10.8
Italy	2.3	2.0
Netherlands	6.6	6.3
Belgium	21.1	25.2
United Kingdom	<u>12.1</u>	<u>13.2</u>
Community	8.2	9.6

++ CONSUMERS AND FARM PRICES

A delegation from the Consumers' Consultative Committee recently met Mr. Finn-Olav Gundelach, the Danish Commissioner in charge of agriculture, on the question of farm prices in the EEC. Mr. Gundelach confirmed that the Commission intends to follow its "prudent" pricing policy, especially as regards cereals. The Commission intends to consult the Committee before it puts forward price proposals for the 1979/80 agriculture year.

++ DRINKING WATER - A LOT GOES INTO A GLASS

The European Commission has just proposed that the Council of Ministers accept a directive on the quality of drinking water in the Community. The proposals outline methods of measuring the quality of water intended for human consumption, frequency of sampling and analysis, depth at which samples should be taken and their storage and transport, etc. The analysis methods proposed by the Commission should help define the physical, chemical and microbiological characteristics and level of pollution in water intended for human consumption.

++ THIRD WORLD ENERGY COOPERATION

Current energy consumption in developing countries is relatively low : 0.3 tonne oil equivalents (toe) per head. That is 27 times less than the average American (8.2 toe) and ten times less than the average European or Japanese (3.5 and 3.2 toe respectively). Yet assuming reasonable economic growth, people in the Third World will be consuming energy at a rate of 0.5 to 0.7 toe by the year 2000. Energy consumption will rise by three or four times present rates to meet demand.

The European Commission wants developing countries to avoid making the same mistakes as Europe did before the energy crisis - such as too much dependence on oil imports. So the Commission plans to work with non-oil producing countries of the Third World to assess and develop their energy resources. It is a question of helping the Third World achieve as high a degree of self sufficiency in energy as is possible. The Community will help develop solar and geothermal energy, wind power and the use of trees and organic waste (biomasses), etc. If the Council of Ministers gives the go-ahead to the project, the Commission will make an inventory of supply and demand in the third world and set up pilot projects.

**++ STEEL - COMMISSION TARGETS**

The European Commission has proposed that Community steel output for the last three months of this year should not exceed 31 million tonnes of crude steel as against 29 million tonnes in the previous three months. Twenty three million tonnes of the target tonnage will be for the Community market; eight million tonnes is allocated for export. Production over and above this could seriously harm efforts to improve the situation in the steel market. Commission forecasts show a real consumption will amount to only 29 million tonnes for the fourth quarter in 1978.

**++ ENERGY CRISIS TEACHES US A LESSON**

The energy crisis has shown how vulnerable the Community is to heavy increases in the price of energy as well as interruptions and restrictions on supply. For instance, a tonne of petrol imported by the Community cost 15.3 US dollars in 1966 compared to 93.6 US dollars ten years later in 1976. After the initial shock of the crisis, the Community applied itself to drawing up a definite energy policy - more diverse forms of energy, security of supply, energy saving and the rational use of resources.

These objectives have just been published by the European Commission in a brochure called "The European Community and the Energy Problem", available from Community offices listed at the end of Euroforum, price £0.25p.

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ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME : FIVE MILLION VICTIMS

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Lawn mowers which maim, household chemicals which poison, windows which shatter into pieces, synthetic clothes which burst into flames, bicycles which fall apart, aerosols which turn into fire torches, pressure cookers which explode - this may sound like the story line of a horror film but these are just some of the simple household accidents which injure 4-5 million people in the European Community every year and kill a further 25 000 to 30 000. By way of comparison, injuries and deaths on our roads only amounted to 1.6 million in 1976.

Home Sweet Home - a thousand perils

The figures are shocking and indeed difficult to believe, but the facts are there. One British survey indicated that more than 5 000 people die each year in the UK alone from accidents in the home. More than 100 000 people are admitted to hospital and around one million receive treatment from the family doctor. Another report identified some 9 million accidents in the USA in 1976 linked to goods used in the home. Two and a half million accidents were caused by sports and leisure equipment, a further two million were caused by building materials, another million by household furniture and decoration, household appliances account for a further 500 000 and toys for around 300 000 cases.

Information for better protection

How can the number of accidents amongst European consumers be reduced? The most important factor in the European Commission's view is information. The USA has precise statistics because it has been operating a data collection system for many years. The Community should also set up such an accident information system to establish a demarcation line between accidents due to defective or dangerous products, to a fault in production or bad storage, and accidents due to misuse - because users are either ill-informed or insufficiently cautioned. As a result of this, certain products could be rapidly withdrawn from the market, or stricter product safety standards imposed on manufacturers, or more information supplied to the consumer (labelling and safety notices).

With this in mind, the European Commission has sent a proposal to the Council of Ministers on the introduction of a Community information system on accidents in and around the home (including gardens, back yards, garages etc.) including playgrounds, camp sites, etc.

Some countries - the United Kingdom and Denmark in particular - have already set up their own information systems but as goods and products can travel so easily from one Common Market country to the other, it is essential that these schemes be extended throughout the Nine so that common safety measures can be introduced.

Public results

The information gathering system will be decentralised with each country collecting national data which will be subsequently processed and interpreted by the European Commission's Computer Centre and the Community Statistical Office. The Commission expressly wishes the results to be available to all interested parties : consumers, of course, and consumer protection organisations; public services, manufacturers, research bodies etc. Naturally, medical secrecy will not be infringed : each accident case will only be identifiable by a serial number and not by name.

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PUBLIC RESEARCH EXPENDITURE RISES

Has the economic crisis hit scientific research as well? Will European researchers be forced to close down their labs and join the unemployment queues? As far as research financed by the State or subsidised directly by the Community is concerned, the answer appears definitely no.

A statistical report recently drawn up by the European Commission confirms that between 1970 and 1976, public expenditure on research in the Nine increased on average 3.2% per year (in constant terms, i.e. taking into account the rise in the cost of living).

This increase has most benefited basic research and the general promotion of knowledge as well as the study of human and social phenomena. By contrast, defence and technology research have been less favoured than in the past. For the Nine as a whole, the breakdown of research expenditure is as follows:

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1976</u>
Human and social objectives	7.5	10.8
Technological objectives	27.6	24.5
Agriculture	3.1	3.7
Defence	25.9	22.2
General promotion of knowledge	36.2	38.4
Total in million statistical units of account (similar to US dollar)	6 million	7.5 million

Well financed research

Tax payers will certainly be curious to know what the State actually does with its research budget. For the Nine as a whole military research has been less abundant than in the past: in 1970 expenditure represented a good quarter of the total research budget but dropped to 22% in 1976. In the UK, by contrast, military research absorbs an increasing share of the research budget, no less than 48% in 1976 - a percentage comparable to the USA.

Increases in civil research expenditure have varied greatly from country to country. Ireland has the highest average annual increase with 9.4%, followed by Germany (6.4%) and the Netherlands (5%). Following up the rear come France (1.6%), Italy (1%) and the United Kingdom (0.7%).

#### Basic research - energy priority

In the civil research budget, the lion's share is allocated to the "general promotion of knowledge", a vague title which encompasses research into natural and physical sciences, medical, social and human science etc. Half of public research expenditure in the Nine has gone in this direction though this area only received a small percentage of Community funds (0.2%).

The research budget managed by the European Commission has concentrated mostly (64%) on energy - an area judged essential by governments of the Nine who have allocated an average 12.6% of their own national research budgets in 1976. Greatest expenditure on energy research is to be found in Italy (22% of public funds) and lowest allocations in Ireland (0.9%). The budgets in Denmark and the Netherlands are also somewhat modest (5%).

#### Health and space research equal

Industrial research (productivity and technology) takes third place with a European average close to 11%. In 1976 and 1977 subsidies were reduced throughout the Community with the exception of Belgium. Fourth place is shared by space research and exploration (5.7%) and health protection with a slightly higher 5.9%. Greatest expenditure on health research is to be found in Denmark and the Netherlands.

Different priorities are accorded to the funds managed by the European Commission. However, after energy, the next in line of importance is health research with 16% of funds, followed by industry with 12%. Other objectives only manage percentages below 2.5%.

For the Nine, the research areas which receive less than 5% of public funds are, in order of importance, agriculture (4.8%), human environment - town planning, civil engineering, transport and telecommunications, water supply etc. (4.1%); social problems - education and training, improvement of working conditions, industrial management, hospital organisation, cultural problems etc. (3.9%); earth exploration and exploitation - prospecting, hydrology, meteorology etc. (2.5%).

#### Telecommunications or education

Nevertheless, some countries have a stronger than average interest in certain of these objectives. Ireland spends no less than 40% of its research budget on agriculture. France, Ireland and the Netherlands all spend 7% on improving the human environment. Public funds are allocated differently however according to country: telecommunications takes priority in France, whilst construction and transport takes priority in Ireland and the Netherlands. Ireland and Belgium favour research into social problems (8%) but here again there are different interests: Ireland concentrates on education and organisation of leisure time, Belgium on social conflicts and labour relations. As regards terrestrial research, only France comes close to the 5% mark.

PROSPECTING FOR RUBBISH

In 1976 the nine Community countries produced 4.2 million tonnes of waste every day. For the whole year, that represented a modest one and half billion tonnes of rubbish of all descriptions. The waste is composed of:

- household rubbish	90 million tonnes
- industrial wastes	115 million tonnes
- waste from the extra-active industries	150 million tonnes
- sewage sludge	200 million tonnes
- agricultural wastes	950 million tonnes

This "output" is increasing at a regular rate of 3% each year.

A wealth of raw materials

Until a short while ago, the principal problem in our hyper-consumption society was how to get rid of waste. Increasingly, however, the Community is thinking of ways of recuperating the resources tied up in the mountains of rubbish - a question of exploiting excessive wastage to prevent the drain on energy and raw materials resources. Being largely dependent on outside countries for raw materials, the advantages of becoming less dependent through recycling resources is evident. The ecological benefits are also quite clear - recycled waste paper can spare our trees, waste recycled into compost can be used as agricultural fertiliser, etc.

This is why the European Commission has proposed a new four year research and development programme to the Council of Ministers. The cost will amount to 24 million European units of account (1 EUA = + 1.3 US dollars) of which 14 million EUA will be borne by the Community budget. The programme covers four research areas:

- Recuperation of energy and goods in household waste

This can take two forms : separation at source by householders - the refuse services can then collect waste paper, bottles,

plastic containers etc. separately. It will be interesting for researchers to compare the effectiveness of the various schemes operating in Community countries. Large scale sorting and separation is a question of technological processes : pneumatic separation, gravity separation, optical methods etc. Research will be able to raise the yield of these processes and improve the quality of recuperated materials (paper, plastics and non-ferrous metals in particular). Finally, a proportion of the household wastes, crushed or compacted, could be used as supplementary fuel for electricity production.

- Recuperation by thermal processing of waste

Whilst incineration of household wastes is widely practiced, other techniques for industrial waste such as pyrolysis (a chemical decomposition under heat) have not been developed as rapidly. This could offer two advantages : more rapid and cleaner elimination (sterilisation); recuperation of energy, metals and glass found in pyrolysis and incineration residues.

- Fermentation and hydrolysis of waste

Agriculture, the food industry, forestry and households produce very large quantities of organic wastes (one billion tonnes per year in the Community). These wastes are disposed of by supervised dumping and by thermal processes. It could be much more beneficial to recuperate useful organic materials and energy through fermentation or hydrolysis (chemical decomposition through the action of water). For example, micro-organisms (anaerobia) can digest waste and produce methane gas. There again fermentation of organic wastes as compost can produce a fertiliser for farm land and restore the humus content.

Methods for removing undesirable substances (hydrocarbons, plastics, pathogenic germs, etc.) still have to be researched.

- Recuperation of waste rubber

To make new (or almost new) tyres from old, the best known method is retreading. This technique could be more widely used if their quality and safety coefficient could be precisely tested. On the other hand, a tyre recycling industry already exists to take the tyres rejected by the retreading establishments.

A research programme could investigate new ways of using rubber powder.

These four research projects have been drawn up following preparatory studies undertaken since 1975 by European Commission experts.

If the programme and the budget are accepted by the Council of Ministers, research work could begin on January 1st, 1979.

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