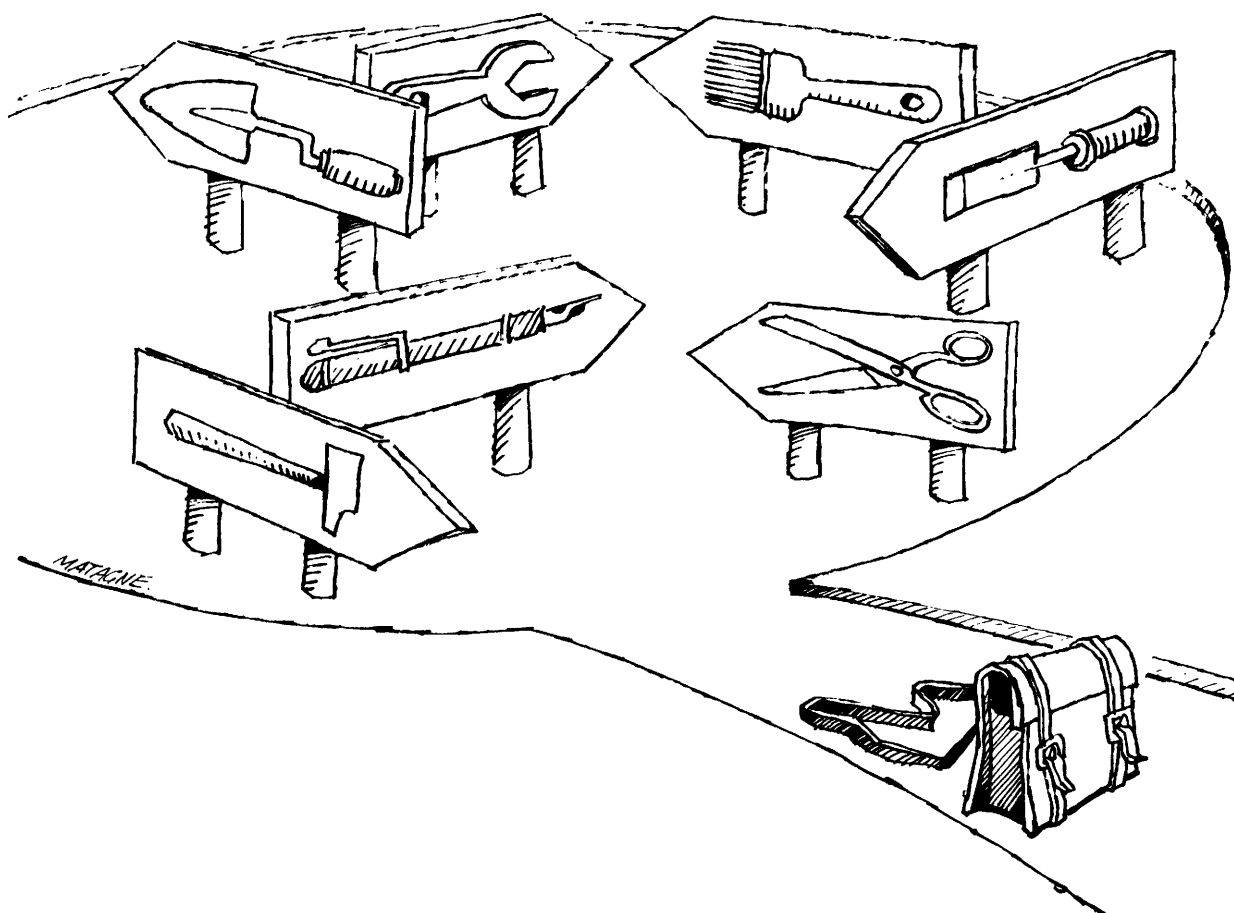


Brussels, 24 October 1978

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Lots of directions but nowhere to go. Can school help? See page 3.

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IN THIS ISSUE

- ++ A trade under the belt (p. 3)
- ++ At the European Parliament (p. 3)
- ++ Textile menace (p. 3)
- ++ Hospitality dangers (p. 4)
- ++ Automobile technology (p. 4)
- ++ Milk and cheese champs (p. 5)
- ++ ID card for lawyers (p. 5)
- ++ Productivity and the working week (p. 5)
- ++ Free movement of medical bags (p. 6)
- ++ Compulsory crash helmets (p. 6)
- ++ Jobless handicapped (p. 6)
- ++ Data Processing and farming (p. 7)

++ A TRADE UNDER THE BELT

The teenagers most affected by unemployment are those leaving school without suitable vocational preparation. To give them a second chance, the European Commission has recommended that the Nine make a special effort to improve their initiation into working life and improve career guidance.

Annex 1 outlines the problems of vocational preparation and a few successful examples.

++ AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Equal treatment for men and women, the Tripartite Conference, employment, illegal immigration, arms supplies, energy and the steel industry were debated at the latest session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The highlights are presented in Annex 2.

++ TEXTILE MENACE

The problems of cheap textile imports are causing great concern to Hermann Schwörer of the European Parliament: "According to the World Bank", he states, "imports from the southern hemisphere will remove 846 000 jobs in Germany alone between 1974 and 1985 whilst the increase in exports will only create 400 000 jobs. According to the report from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployment will hit 1.6 million textile workers in W. Europe between now and 1985", and Mr. Schwörer has asked the European Commission if it sees any possibility of preventing this development.

According to the Commission, cheap imports are not the only cause of the crisis in the European textile sector and the consequent unemployment problems, and it has sent the Council of Ministers proposals for a Community policy covering the textile and clothing sector. These aim to turn the Community's textile sector into a high performance industry capable of facing international competition and securing a large number of jobs over a long period.

To stave off the impact of these cheap imports, the Community has negotiated export limitation agreements with more than thirty countries. These agreements cover some 80% of imports of extremely sensitive goods. The Commission cannot, however, influence the prices practiced by developing countries whilst normal rules of competition are respected. These prices are principally due to

the labour conditions in these countries and, in particular, very low wage levels and the fact that some of these countries supply their own raw materials. The Commission is keeping a careful watch, however, to ensure that anti-dumping regulations are being respected.

++ HOSPITALITY DANGERS

Mrs. Elisabeth Vermeil lives in the small French village of Vaucluse, Saint Saturnin d'Apt, and has just been convicted by the local court and fined FF 80 for what appears to be a curious misdemeanor. Her "crime" is that she had been putting up one of her parents who was of German nationality and had not declared her stay to the authorities. The court based its ruling on a law dating from 1945 which required all foreigners on French soil to be registered. Mrs. Vermeil's lawyer pointed out the contradictions between French law and the Human Rights Convention on this issue and Willy Dondelinger of the European Parliament has asked the Commission if the case does not in fact infringe European legislation on free movement within the European Community.

The Commission's reply is negative. Community legislation does not prevent Member States from applying their own national regulations and fines to control foreigners. However in a similar case the European Court of Justice specified that the time period for adhering to these registration obligations should be reasonable and fines or sanctions should not be disproportionate to the infringement. In any case a country would not have the right of expulsion.

++ AUTOMOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Technological innovation is an essential factor in keeping the European car industry ahead on the world market, and the Commission has been trying to stimulate innovation by:

- examining together with experts from industry, techniques for reducing energy consumption and pollution from engines
- examining together with the electronics and car manufacturing industry ways of progressively integrating electronics into the car.

In April 1978 a European Association for Electric Vehicles was set up under the auspices of the European Commission. Its aim is to promote the use of electric vehicles or hybrids in road transport.

Finally, by dint of the Community's efforts, the technical specifications of vehicles will soon be identical in all nine countries. In this respect the Commission places great importance on vehicle safety standards (out of 43 special directives standardising technical specifications of vehicles, 33 cover safety) and it is trying to advance knowledge in this field.

++ MILK AND CHEESE CHAMPS

In Europe it is the Irish who are the biggest milk drinkers (in 1976 213.5 kilos per inhabitant of fresh milk products with the exception of cream) and the biggest butter eaters (close to 13 kilos per head). The French are the greatest cheese consumers (almost 16 kilos per inhabitant in '76) and top of the cream eaters comes Denmark with 6.5 kilos per head. The Netherlands takes the lead when it comes to concentrated and powdered milk (10 kilos and 4.4 kilos respectively). Despite these ferocious appetites, average consumption of milk products in 1976 only saw an increase in the fresh milk sector. Butter and cheese experienced a slight reduction.

++ ID CARD FOR LAWYERS

Community citizens are destined to wait some time yet for a Community document to prove their right to move freely within the Nine. The European passport is still a long way off.

European lawyers however have been making progress and are the first to adopt an identity card valid throughout the European Community. The Consultative Committee of Bar Associations in the European Community has produced this document to help lawyers freely exercise their profession in any of the nine Community countries. This right to free establishment was laid down in a directive in March 1977 but Member States have yet to introduce the appropriate changes into national law.

++ PRODUCTIVITY AND THE WORKING WEEK

The European Commission has undertaken an in-depth study on work sharing methods (and in particular on measures to reduce working hours) likely to aid current unemployment problems. On the basis of the study and experience gained, the Commission concludes that a reduction in the working week could in fact increase productivity. It is not possible however to quantify these effects with precision

since they vary according to the way working hours are reduced, their initial level, economic conditions, capacity utilisation in industry, the mechanisation of production methods, the system of remuneration and the reactions of workers, to name but a few factors.

++ FREE MOVEMENT OF MEDICAL BAGS

Travelling from Switzerland, a German doctor arrived at the Italian customs and in his luggage he was carrying a first aid kit. Nothing more natural, you may say, for a doctor who may be called upon at any moment to tend an accident victim. But the Italian customs officials did not see things this way. To cross the border the German doctor was obliged to leave his first aid equipment in the care of Swiss customs.

This strange incident has been cited by Horst Seefeld of the European Parliament in a question to the European Commission. The Commission has explained that at the time, Italy had not yet adjusted its own national legislation to the Community directive on the free movement of doctors within the Community. In the future neither doctors nor their equipment will be refused entry at Community frontiers.

++ COMPULSORY CRASH HELMETS

In Ireland and Italy motor cyclists are not obliged to wear crash helmets. In the seven other Community countries, crash helmets are compulsory.

++ JOBLESS HANDICAPPED

The number of handicapped persons registered at labour exchanges in 1977 amounted to 74 000 in the United Kingdom, 46 000 in Germany, 38 000 in the Netherlands and 37 000 in Belgium. These figures cannot be compared directly however since the definition of "handicapped" and "unemployed" differs from country to country.

In the UK, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, employers are obliged to reserve a certain number of jobs (2-6%) for handicapped people. The public authorities however do not always enforce this minimum requirement.

The European Commission itself employs a number of handicapped persons. They total more than 5% of its staff and the Commission's first objective has been to employ people who are blind (it has recently recruited 4 blind people, 2 telephonists and 2 typists) and regularly employs five blind freelance interpreters.

++ DATA PROCESSING AND FARMING

The European Commission has just published the summarised proceedings from a seminar it organised in Luxembourg, July 1977, in a booklet entitled "Factual data banks in agriculture". Papers presented in the seminar covered the various automated information systems which can be applied to farming. The booklet is available in English only from the "Centre for Agricultural Publishing and Documentation", Wageningen, Netherlands.

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A TRADE UNDER THE BELT

For young people to be able to go after jobs in Europe with the greatest chance of success they need to have a trade or profession well under their belt. The European Community places great importance on improving contacts between young people and the world of work but at the same time the Community is very concerned about the number of young people without jobs or on the point of losing their jobs - today they number more than two million in the Nine as a whole.

The crisis will be long

For those under 25 years, the crisis will be long. For them it started around 1969 when one in four unemployed were young. Since then the situation has deteriorated and combined with the economic crisis the total number of unemployed has increased dramatically - young people are always affected first. Today more than one in three persons out of work is under 25 years.

It is no good trying to conceal reality from young people. Immediate improvements are not on the horizon even though all governments in the Nine have taken stern measures to combat unemployment and inflation and regenerate the economic machine. But no-one today dares hope that an economic upturn can provide jobs for everybody. Young people will always get the worst deal. In all Community countries the law is geared to protecting those people with jobs. This is understandable since most wage earners have to feed a whole family. It is not only the worker the law is trying to protect but the family and our society. It would be unthinkable to put the head of a family out of his factory job in preference to a youngster straight out of school.

Finally, employers are hesitant about creating new jobs in today's economic conditions. When they have a little extra work to cope with they cannot be certain how long it will last. Where possible, employers will try and increase their production and productivity without increasing their labour force. If this is not possible, they will opt for workers with experience.

And this leads us to the third reason why young people come off badly : there is an increasingly large gulf between what the youngsters are taught to do, and what is required of them in the factory or office.

Another factor works against young people and that is the population growth. In 1979, for example, there will be 2.8 million people in the Nine reaching the age of 65. At the same time there will be more youngsters reaching the age of 16 or the beginning of their working life - 4.3 million in the whole Community.

The situation will not improve in the near future. In 1984 there will be 4.1 million teenagers celebrating their 16th birthday, but only 2.3 million adults reaching the age of retirement.

Can teenagers help themselves?

Young people cannot simply give up at the beginning of their working life, but what can they do? They cannot fight against population changes. Proposals for early retirement are hardly likely to benefit young people and it is impossible to fight against the law which protects existing jobs - young people will not take the bread from the mouths of those with families.

There is only one other solution : improved training of teenagers for jobs offered by industry; and make sure they have a solid trade under their belt to get full-time jobs. The European Community wants to help young people at this difficult point in their lives.

European Social Fund

Each country needs to organise vocational training programmes for the young unemployed. To expand the number of courses, the Community will give financial support. Since 1975 the total amount of subsidies distributed through the European Social Fund has risen to around 500 million units of account (1 EUA = + 1.3 dollars). Priority has been given to young people looking for a first job and, particularly, those without any qualifications, and those looking for a specific occupation for which a certain demand exists. More than 100 000 youngsters have been given such assistance each year.

Improving education is always possible and is vital since it can give teenagers better preparation for working life. Over the coming three years, new experiments will be undertaken with Community assistance to increase the effectiveness of education in training youngsters for jobs. In a selected number of schools courses will be organised during the last two years of compulsory schooling, to give practical training oriented towards working life. Vocational guidance in schools will be improved and closer links established with

industry. Throughout Europe information and experiences will be exchanged, not only between teachers but also between all those involved in education, particularly those in administration.

Vocational preparation

Trade unionists, employers and government officials who are in contact with young people echo the misgivings of the European Commission: the young people most threatened with unemployment are those leaving school at the minimum legal age without any suitable preparation for working life.

Either at 14 years in some countries or 16 years in others teenagers are leaving the classrooms ill-equipped to deal with the world of work, and what happens to them? Some of those looking for jobs have nothing better to offer than their good intentions, whilst industry is looking for qualified workers.

There are those teenagers on the point of losing their jobs. They are in a better situation than the first. They have found a job but an unqualified job which makes them vulnerable to difficult times in the company.

Both of these categories need to be given help and another chance and the European Commission has approached national governments to stimulate a special effort to promote the vocational preparation of young people.

"Vocational preparation" is a relatively new idea and entails a training which ensures a satisfactory transition from school to work, whilst providing young people with a minimum basic knowledge and competence to enter full-time working life.

The Commission's response

The teenagers who experience the most difficulties in finding jobs are those who have drawn least benefit from the school system. Often they leave school with a feeling of rejection and lack confidence in themselves. In addition they have little idea of careers open to them.

The European Commission feels that young people should be able to benefit from vocational guidance which can evaluate their aptitudes and capacities and not solely their scholastic results. Vocational guidance can advise teenagers on possible job opportunities and training required.

Those youngsters who perform poorly at school, frequently lack certain basic knowledge which is indispensable for working life such as being able to read a workshop regulation, filling in a form or writing a letter, presenting themselves to the personnel director, or dealing with government officials. These young people need to be given help, in the view of the European Commission, in improving their basic knowledge which they can use in practical circumstances.

Many young people jump feet first (with eyes closed) into working life because school atmosphere does not suit them and does not stimulate their adolescent interests. This is why the European Commission considers that the proposed vocational preparation should be implemented in a way most suited to young adults and adapted to their real needs.

The first objective of vocational preparation is to catch up on lost time at school. The second is to help them face up to working life.

Educational gaps

Despite the good intentions of teachers, there are many things which school does not teach and this is a basic justification for vocational preparation : to teach young people to communicate with others, to work with others in teams, to understand the function of, for example, work committees, job placement services, trade union representation and factory inspectors.

Young people need to know about economic and social organisation and the essential workings of our society. Such information should cover both social legislation, hygiene and safety in industry, and practical information on how to approach guidance services, training or job placement organisations etc.

Finally, young people have to be introduced to a trade or profession or a selection of them.

Faced with teenagers who have bad memories of their days at school, vocational preparation should call on many of the techniques used over the years in adult vocational training, in particular active participation supported by the audio-visual techniques most suited to catch the attention.

Vocational preparation should first of all deal with reality and the contents of courses should be concrete and not too theoretical.

In Denmark, for example, young people are let loose in specialised centres to work with raw materials and a few tools. The results of their efforts are discussed amongst themselves. They later learn to produce useful objects which they are proud to take home with them.

Community needs

A very interesting experiment has been carried out in the UK by "Community industry", an organisation linked to the National Youth Club Association and assisted by the Ministry for Employment. "Community industry" acts as a sort of social educator and initiates under privileged youngsters into working life (2 000 per year approx.). This form of paid apprenticeship is of interest since it employs techniques which give youngsters more confidence in themselves and enables them to fit into their own community better. Young people are for example, required to:

- teach road safety to school children, and build adventure playgrounds;
- undertake archeological digs and transform old cattle sheds into regional museums;
- form mobile painting and decorating teams to improve the homes of aged or infirm people;
- to trace old footpaths in forests and build bridges over rivers, etc.

In Belgium, Guy Spitaels, Minister for Employment, has launched a job creation programme which pays unemployed people to work on community projects. The twofold objective is to train those looking for jobs - almost two thirds of those involved have no qualifications whatsoever - and to stimulate the imagination of public authorities (town halls, etc.) and charitable associations, through these modest but original projects.

By September 30th of this year, the number of such projects which had been approved in Belgium represented 28 000 jobs. Some 19 000 people have been taken from the dole queue and given jobs. Some examples of community jobs are:

- physical education courses and social-cultural interest courses for retired persons;
- gardening and crafts to decorate public parks;
- setting up supervised workshops for handicapped persons;
- social services for immigrants, scholastic aid for immigrant children;
- babysitting for sick children, medical care for aged people;
- classification of Community relics extracted from historic sites;
- economic surveys, for example, of public transport requirements.

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It is not only young people that the European Commission is trying to help. For vocational preparation to be a success, trade unions and employers have to be involved in the drafting, organisation and execution of programmes. In addition, the European Commission expressly requests that public authorities check the quality of the practical courses offered to young people.

AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Equality, unemployment and illegal immigration were just some of the highlights of the latest session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg:

Equality for men and women

More than thirty months have passed by since the directive on equality was adopted, long enough for the directive to come into force in Community countries. A number of Parliamentarians have been asking just how far the directive has got and one of them, Mr. Gérard Bordu (French, Communist) has shown that there is still an average difference of 33% between men's and women's wages.

In reply, Mr. Henk Vredeling, Vice President of the European Commission stated that reports returned by six Member States on the legal basis of equality in their countries are currently being examined. Germany, the Netherlands and Luxembourg have yet to submit reports. A reminder has been sent. During the debate, Ms. Vera Squarcialupi (Italian Communist) insisted on the vital role of information (played by women's associations, female wings of political parties) to bring about the required 'natural change in society'.

Tripartite Conference and employment

During the debate on the forthcoming Tripartite Conference (c.f. Euroforum N° 36/78) the rapporteur, Dutch Socialist Mr. Willem Albers, expressed fears that the fourth Tripartite Conference would be limited to the expression of common principles and would be important in resolving the human and political problems facing the Community. According to the rapporteur "given the absence of proposals from the Commission on investment and plans for creating jobs it is essential to reach final conclusions on questions such as the reduction of the working week, restrictions on over-time and shift work, maternity leave and leave for training courses, the promotion of the service sector, etc." Mr. Vredeling refuted the criticisms levied at the Commission and mentioned the satisfaction demonstrated by trade unions in the preparation of the Tripartite Conference by the European Commission.

Illegal migration

After a stormy debate the European Parliament finally adopted a draft directive on illegal migration and illegal em-

ployment (see Euroforum N° 13/78). All the British members voted against the motion and Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody went so far as to call the proposal "racist". The UK is in a special position and does not have a problem of illegal workers. According to several speakers, the application of this directive risks harming inter-racial relations in the United Kingdom. Other speakers, by contrast, welcomed the Commission's adoption of the principle - put forward by the European Parliament - to recognise the rights of "clandestine" workers when related to work undertaken in agreement with employers.

Arms supplies

The European Parliament expressed the desire for more cooperation and coordination between the Nine over arms supplies. "Should Europe as a peaceful power be exporting weapons to areas of conflict?" asked German Socialist Mr. Helmut Sieglerschmidt. The speaker also asked the Nine to ban arms shipments to countries flagrantly violating human rights.

In its reply, the acting President of the Council of Ministers Mr. von Dohnanyi, affirmed that the Nine is trying to harmonise their policies towards areas of tension. He also stressed, however, the need to open our eyes to the actions of other powers.

Energy

The European Parliament has requested the Council of Ministers to take an urgent decision on the Commission's energy proposals, to finally arrive at a common energy policy. One of the speakers, Mr. Pierre Krieg (France, European Progressive Democrat) stated that "The European policies which some people desire depend on energy independence", and he added: "Nothing has been accomplished so far in this sector and we are amazed at the lack of decision concerning hydrocarbons, refineries etc."

In the energy field, not all is black, nor rosy, replied European Commissioner Dr. Guido Brunner. The Community has suffered a number of setbacks in the energy field but it has also seen some progress. For example, Community dependence on oil imports has dropped to 50% and some success has been seen in energy savings measures.

The Parliamentarians adopted two resolutions, one inviting the European Commission to draw up a model for medium term energy policy, taking account of the current social

and economic situation, the other inviting the Council of Ministers to accelerate the introduction of an overall energy policy.

Summer time

The Nine's Transport Ministers have not always seen eye to eye over summer time, and it is European citizens who have to suffer. When they move from country to country within the Nine they have to deal with three different systems, it was mentioned by several Parliamentarians. Dr. Brunner of the European Commission went one better : we need agreement without fail next year, the year of European elections. The affair is in the hands of the Nine.

Steel

Reorganisation of the steel industry could be adversely affected if the Community does not deal with national interventions and assistance, observed Mr. Vincent Anquer (France, European Progressive Democrat). The Parliamentarians also approved the cooperation programme proposed by the European Commission whilst demanding that its application does not lead to discrimination between companies.

Several Parliamentarians deplored the absence of consultation with workers. European Commissioner Etienne Davignon replied that the participation of workers affected by the reorganisation will take place at three levels : in the ECSC consultative committee, at the national level (for example in national parliaments) and finally in industry.

Harmonisation of national legislations

"The virtue of the Community resides as much in its differences as in its common points" stated British Conservative Sir Derek Walker-Smith, who declared himself against harmonisation of the Nine's legislation "at all costs". Roy Jenkins, President of the European Commission stressed that the way directives are applied should be left entirely to the discretion of Member States. He added that the harmonisation of legislation is justified when the Community can better legislate than the Nine.

Seal massacre

The British Government had authorised the selective slaughter of 5 000 grey seals in the Orkneys by Norwegian hunters. (On going to press, the seal cull had been called off). Alerted by British MP Tam Dalyell, the European Parliament immediately invited the European Commission to intervene and approach the British Government to provide scientific documentation to back up its decision, as well as sufficient breathing space for nature conservation organisations to study the document before, and not after, authorising the massacre of the seals and their cubs.

The European Commission is not permitted to intervene directly in such a case, says Commissioner Finn-Olav Gundlach, but it can undertake a "neutral study" on the problem of the disappearance of grey seals.

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