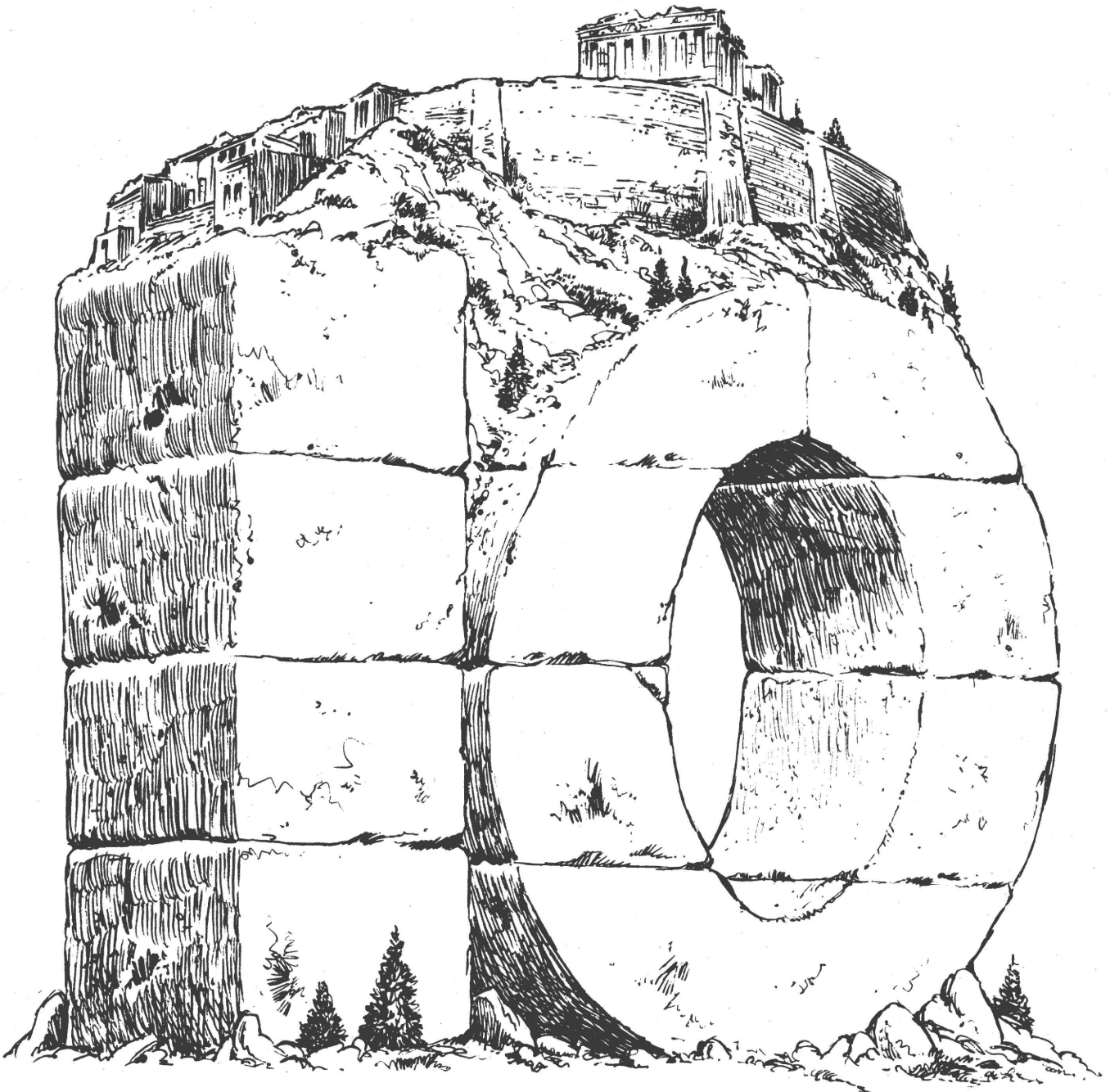


# Euroforum



Greece to become No. 10 in 1981. See page 3.

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# Euroforum

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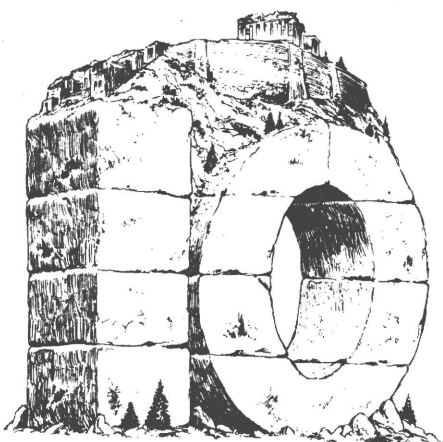
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## PROSPECT



## Greece to become No. 10 in 1981

Greece is to become the tenth member of the European Community on New Year's Day, 1981. The treaty of accession will be signed in Athens on May 28.

Final agreement on the terms of accession was reached at a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Greece and the Nine in Luxembourg on April 4, bringing to an end three years of negotiations.

Greece was anxious to become a member by July, 1980, but this date could not be met by the Community because the accession treaty must be ratified by the parliaments of the existing nine Member States.

Under the terms of the final agreement, Greece will have a transitional period of five years running from January 1, 1981, to align itself fully with most Community rules.

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During the final phase of the negotiations, two important concessions were made to the Greeks to make it easier for them to adjust to membership of a group of countries where the gross domestic product is two and a half times its own.

Firstly, arrangements have been made so that Greece will be a net beneficiary to the tune of around £53 million from the Community budget in its first year of membership. Projections based on this year's budget indicate that after the five-year transition period Greece will show a net gain from Community funds of around £335 million a year.

Secondly, it was agreed that, after three years of membership instead of five, the families of Greek migrants working in any of the existing nine Member States will be able to receive in Greece social welfare benefits at the level at which they are paid in the country where the family bread-winner is working.

Mr Lorenzo Natali, Vice-President of the European Commission who is in charge of the enlargement portfolio, said after the final round of negotiations that he thought the agreement reached was 'good and fair' and showed that the Community was capable of making considerable concessions to an applicant state in need.

He said that Greece's accession would mark the first stage in a shift by the Community towards the Mediterranean and he felt that such a shift would give it more geographical balance.

Both Spain and Portugal have applied for membership of the Community and negotiations with them are now in progress.

When it joins the Community the Greek government will have the right to nominate one member of the Commission, bringing its membership to fourteen. It will have 24 members in the European Parliament from the date of accession and Mr Natali said that it would be up to the Greek government to decide whether, for the life of the first Parliament which will run until June, 1984, they will be directly elected like the members from the other nine countries or whether they will be nominated from among members of the Greek parliament.

Greece will, of course, have equal representation with the other Member States on the Council of Ministers whose membership will be increased to 10. Where the Council acts by qualified majority Greece will have five votes out of a total of 63 and the majority will be increased from 41 to 45 votes.

Greece will also have the right to nominate one member of the Court of Justice as well as one member of the Court of Auditors which scrutinises expenditure under the Community's budget.

The accession of Greece is expected to create a number of administrative problems for the Community institutions, particularly for the translating and interpreting services. A committee of 'Three Wise Men' is currently studying this matter and is due to report before the end of this year.

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## TRADE

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### Some cause for congratulations

One of the most closely-watched statistics all over the world records international business transactions—otherwise known as the balance of trade.

Countries want to keep track of their shipments to and from other countries to make sure that they don't continually buy more than they sell. This would result in the undesirable loss of a country's currency to its suppliers.

Especially since the 1973-74 energy crisis, European Community countries have been anxious to maintain a surplus in the balance of trade because oil now costs so much more than it did five years ago.

That's why there was some satisfaction recently as a result of trade figures showing that the Community's sales abroad had generally improved in the first nine months of 1978 (full-year figures won't be calculated until later).

While the Nine Community countries were still running an undesirable deficit in their foreign trade during that period, this red ink had been reduced to £2.6 billion from the £5.5 billion in the first nine months of 1977.

This notable improvement was a result of the fact that exports from the Community to other countries increased at a much higher rate than imports into the Community during the period.

One interesting aspect of the shift was the marked improvement in sales to developing countries by the Nine while the trade picture with other industrialised countries shifted from a surplus for the Community to a deficit. With the developing countries this January-September period saw an increase in Community exports coupled with a reduction in imports.

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## HEALTH

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### Call for ban on killer nightwear

Hardly anything appears more secure and peaceful than a child sleeping snugly in bed. Yet, it was discovered recently that a fabric widely-used for children's nightclothes was potentially hazardous.

The problem surfaced when tests in the United States revealed that a certain chemical substance used to fire-proof pyjamas and nightgowns caused a number of harmful results on laboratory animals. It was found that they created genetic deformities—a shriveling up of some organs—as well as cancer.

As a result of these findings, the American authorities banned the sale of children's nightwear treated with this substance, called triphosphate, in 1977. About a year later, French and Belgian Governments also prohibited imports or the marketing of these products. The British Government indicated it was planning a similar action.

Because the danger still exists of these products being sold in yet other European Community countries, the European Commission has just proposed that a ban be placed throughout the Community.

It has asked the Council of Ministers to add this substance to the list of harmful products that are prohibited or controlled under a 1976 Community law.

### More ways than one to protect that garden freshness

These days a large share of the food you eat comes out of a tin or a packet, whether it is simply baked beans or a complete pre-cooked meal.

Packed into towns and cities, we no longer have much time to cook or to go and buy food from the farms. Instead much of the food we eat comes from huge canning factories, has travelled many miles and may be several months old.

Canned food is nothing new. The explorer Capt. Scott took large supplies of canned meat to the Antarctic. What remained of the supplies was in perfect condition when his base camp was found after his death.

In this case, both the cans and the cold probably preserved the contents. But not all methods of food preservation are equally effective.

The European Commission is concerned about this problem and

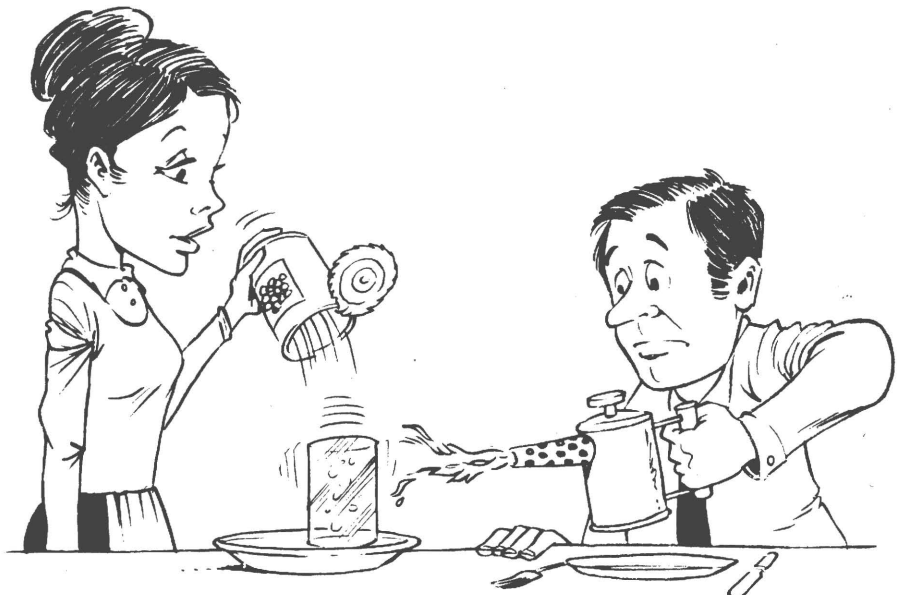
has just made proposals concerning the effects of heat processing and distribution on the quality and nutritive value of food.

It has proposed a three-year research programme costing £8 million to examine the quality of processed and mass-distributed food products and safeguards against toxic substances.

This proposal complements a Community law passed in February 1978 on the effects of processing and the physical properties of foodstuffs. Food processing by heat treatment and freezing will be compared with other forms of processing.

The Commission proposal will fill a research gap. The major food processing firms only carry out research into specific problems of direct commercial importance. University studies into the effect of processing on the nutritional value of food have been very limited.

The Community research programme would cover milk products, fruit and vegetables, cereals, fish and meat. Among other things it would examine the effect of chilling and freezing meat and then thawing it out again to see what effects this had on its nutritional value. The effects of heating milk on its protein content and quality will also be studied.



## It's not what you drink that counts, it's the container

When our earliest forefathers felt thirsty they simply went along to the nearest river, lake or well and took a long draught of water. Cool and clear, as the advertisements say, and, most important, clean.

Not so today's beverages. Which is not to suggest that they are not all that their advertisers claim them to be. The problem is the way they are packaged.

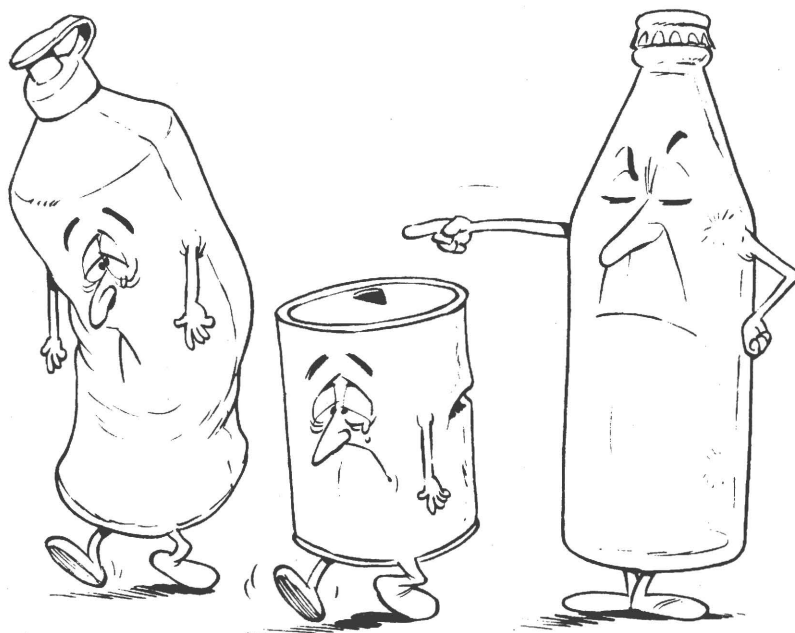
Whether we like wine or beer, spirits or soft drinks, we cannot simply tap them at source. They have to come to us through a manufacturer who tries to attract our custom with ever-brighter bottles, plastic containers, tin cans and what have you.

This trend in thirst-quenching poses a number of problems for society. It creates litter, it involves us in expensive waste disposal, and, at the manufacturing stage, it causes air and water pollution.

It is not easy to put a figure on the cost to society, but one rough estimate has put it at around £450 million a year.

Some types of packaging raise the cost more than others. Non-recyclable throwaway glass is worse than plastic, which in turn is worse than returnable glass. But, since manufacturers are not involved in the social cost created by their products there is little incentive for them to choose a material for packaging which would help keep this cost down.

The European Commission feels that the nine Member States ought to get down to discussing better management in this area and to exchange experiences. It envisages possible restrictions on the production, consumption and disposal of packaging, such as the use of lighter and recyclable materials, or changes in the way in which packaging is used e.g. deposit charges and re-use.



It urges a combination of research into the hazard, the possibility of eliminating asbestos dust in the workplace and into the impact on the general population. And it also proposes a ban on the most dangerous type of asbestos, as well as strict labelling requirements, control of emissions and more standards on use and health protection.

The Economic and Social Committee is not the first Community institution to express concern about the asbestos problem. The European Parliament also studied the situation last year and the European Commission is currently in the process of deciding just what Community-wide controls it should propose.

At a meeting in Luxembourg earlier this month, the Nine's Environment Ministers agreed this was a priority area for Community action.

Some Member States have already begun to tackle this problem. For example, in Germany there are voluntary agreements between brewers concerning the use of returnable glass bottles, although it is still permitted by law to sell beer in cans or non-returnable bottles. Industry has also been encouraged to step up the collection of bottles and the recycling of glass.

In the Netherlands, manufacturers have reached agreements relating to the deposit charge on containers for

beer and soft drinks. The public authorities support the recycling of materials and the creation of bottle banks.

## Asbestos: an old problem needing a new solution

Asbestos, because it is highly resistant to fire, has been used since pre-historic times. More than 4000 years ago it was used in Finland to strengthen clay pots. Marco Polo wrote about the Tartars using it to make cloth that would not burn. But even the ancient Greeks had discovered the difficulties and hazards of working with it.

With the proliferation of its use in industry and construction in the last 60 years and especially since the end of World War II, the dangers to workers handling the substance has become a serious occupational safety problem.

Sometimes fatal diseases such as fibrosis of the lungs or bronchial cancer have been linked to exposure to asbestos and some scientists even feel that it can be a harmful polluting agent for the public living near factories using asbestos. Products treated with asbestos may also be dangerous, according to researchers.

While several Member States of the European Community have restrictions on the exposure that workers can be subjected to or other health and safety

precautions in connection with asbestos, the Community's Economic and Social Committee (ESC) feels there should be Community-wide restrictions.

The Committee, which just recently studied the situation and issued its recommendations, says 'there is no doubt that exposure to asbestos fibres may cause serious, often fatal diseases for which no cure is yet known'.

The ESC is an advisory body made up of employer, trade union and special interest representatives which plays an important consultative role in Community decision-making.

While it acknowledges that with the state of present information it would be unrealistic to think of a widespread ban on asbestos, it says that continuing exposure of workers to the substance without some precautions is 'inadmissible'.

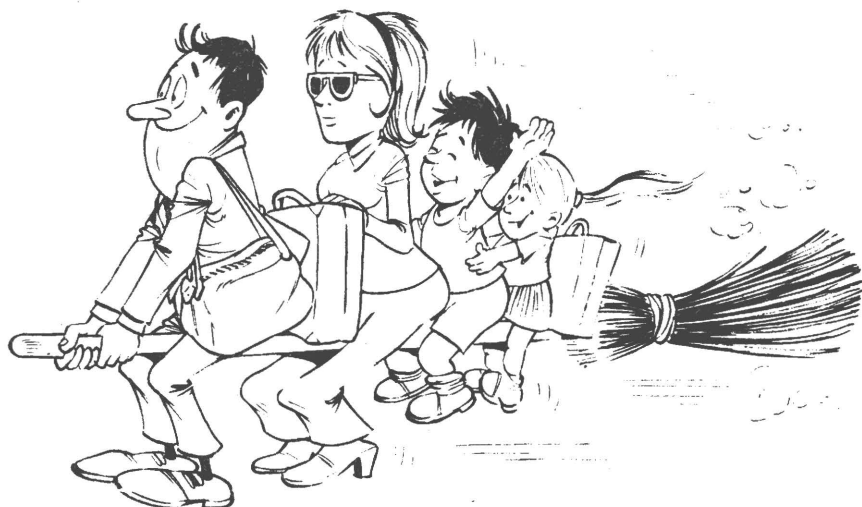
## New move to protect Europe's wildlife

Of all the important measures considered and adopted by the European Community in recent years, one of the most emotional has been that on the protection of migratory birds against hunting and capture. The proposal by the European Commission originated after floods of letters from the public asked for Community-wide protection.

Now that the Council of Ministers has finished debating and has adopted this measure, the Commission wants to continue the work of protecting wildlife. The latest step proposed is for the European Community to take part as a bloc in other work being done in this field.

Specifically, the Commission wants active Community participation in the negotiations now underway in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on a convention to supervise and regulate activities and the use of substances which might be harmful to the natural environment or to wildlife. There are also plans to create reserves to replace wildlife habitats that are endangered. Research into the identification and cataloguing of animal and plant life which is, or which could be, in danger is another aim. The Commission feels that these efforts should be coordinated at the Community level. There is also a need to coordinate rules on imports into the Community of endangered species.

## CONSUMERS



## Air fares: can they cost less?

High-flying voyagers in Europe have been wondering recently when air fares in their continent would become as attractive as those now being offered across the Atlantic.

On some flights it costs little more to fly from a spot in the United States to a destination in Europe than it does to fly to the same destination from another European airport. Puzzled travellers have been left to scratch their heads at the twisted logic that leads to such discrimination.

They also point to certain other anomalies that allow American commuters who fly, say, between New York and Washington to travel at a fraction of the price it takes passengers from London to fly roughly the same distance to Paris or Brussels and back.

They are not the only ones who would like to see some changes made. The European Commission in Brussels has also been studying airline operations and the fares structure within the European Community.

Part of the problem is that air operations have traditionally been the province of the national governments, each preoccupied with supporting their own national airlines. But that leads to inefficient and even unfair competition, which is one of the main reasons fares are not more economical.

The Commission, which has responsibility for ensuring fair competition between businesses, both in their own interests and those of the consumer, has begun to examine what changes are needed to reduce air fares while still preserving the national airline structure.

The Commission hopes that it will be able to present concrete proposals for the Council of Ministers to consider in the near future. The aim, the Commission says, will be to offer more benefits to the traveller.

## Protection from pests

Another step aimed at safeguarding public health and the environment in the Community has been taken with the adoption by the Council of Ministers of a new measure designed to control pesticides.

The measure means that certain active ingredients whose use is hazardous to man, animal life or the environment will no longer be sold. These include mercury.

This was the second such action within a year. The other, agreed early in 1978, laid down standards for the classification, packaging and labelling of pesticides.

## Migrant workers: time to tackle their problem

Draw up a list of the dozen most dangerous or dirtiest jobs and the chances are you will find most of them being filled by immigrant workers from outside the Community.

The immigrants, in addition, generally have to work unsocial hours; they are badly paid and they are the first to be made redundant in times of recession.

They live mainly in ghettos, they are exploited by employers and landlords and are sometimes harrassed by the police. Their problems multiply if they have entered the Community illegally.

These workmen, mainly from North Africa, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece have all come to Western Europe in recent years to toil at some of the most demanding jobs that frequently are the backbone of industrialized economies.

They come because job opportunities at home are limited, because there were vacancies in Europe and because they hope to make enough to feed their families at home or to enable their children to acquire a higher education in the West.

These third country migrant workers as they have been called, number about six million and represent some 5% of the labour force in the European Community countries. The families that also joined these workers in Europe bring the total of foreign residents to some 12,5 million.

The fact that their conditions of residence still vary from one Community country to another is a problem that the European Commission in Brussels would like to discuss and if possible to change so that national laws and situation are more identical.

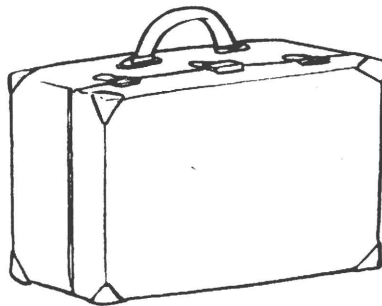
Recruiting of foreign workers has virtually ceased and the experts feel that now may be the best time to try achieve some general Community-wide policies in this field.

In a few years, the situation will be further complicated by the fact that Greece, Portugal and Spain—three traditional places of origin for foreign workers—will be entering the Community and will be on the way to acquiring unlimited access to all nine Member States.

This would cause additional pressures on the already tense industrial labour situation in the Community, where there are currently six million—ironically equal to the number of third country migrant workers—unemployed.

European Commission Vice-President Henk Vredeling, who is in charge of social and employment affairs, observed in a London speech recently that 'the distorted development brought about by the uncontrolled migration of the fifties and sixties faces society with serious consequences...'

But he adds that, currently, 'we have a breathing space which will enable us to consider the situation and lay down a new line of approach'.



What is being sought is a joint policy if possible on problems connected with foreign workers and their families. This approach would cover such matters as the training of migrant workers returning to their homeland, illegal entry and employment in the Community, the resumption of recruiting from outside the Community when the economies of some Member States make it necessary, the re-unification of families in the host country, and a number of other questions involving international treaties and accords.

In addition the Commission has proposed five principles that should be considered during these discussions. They are: the need to ensure equality of treatment for workers from third countries who live regularly in the

Community, the need to provide for the professional development of members of their families, the requirement that trade unions and employers be included in such policy negotiations, the prevention of illegal immigration and punishment of those who encourage it, and the need to consider the policies of the Member States if there is a resumption of recruitment of workers from outside the Community.

What these negotiations would focus on would be ways of unifying the policies of the Nine on a number of specific legal and social areas. These would range from the conditions for entry and stay in a Community country to the welfare of the migrants and their families, including social security, housing, health and training.

Another related issue which should also be examined at the same time would be possible problems incurred by citizens of Community countries and their families who live and work in non-Community countries.

In discussing the need to work out an organized system of dealing with the issues, Commissioner Vredeling has warned against the simple-minded reaction that would resolve the unemployment problem in the Community by simply throwing out the foreign workers.

He emphasized that the right of free movement granted by the Community at its creation was economically necessary and the 'fulfillment of a great ideal' of opening national frontiers.

It should also not be forgotten, he added, that foreign workers have and are continuing to contribute to 'keeping our production going and powering our standard of living'.

## Fund spends £380m. to aid 1m. workers

With the increase in employment problems throughout Europe, national Community governments have been stepping up efforts to assist their working population to find jobs.

The European Community's Social Fund can help. When national governments give financial assistance to training programmes or other remedial measures in their own countries, they can also turn to Brussels for aid.

This is what happened in 1978 with increasing regularity. The result was that the Community Social Fund had more requests for assistance than the funds the Member States had voted for such purposes.

The Community gave out the £ 380 million but had requests for about twice that amount. According to the rules decided upon by the Council of Ministers, the Social Fund can cover up to 50% of the expenses incurred by public authorities in the Member States.

In 1978 this type of Community intervention helped about one million persons throughout the nine countries. Nearly half of the total Community assistance given out was especially designed to benefit people in the hardesthit regions of the Community.

Some 31% went for programmes destined for young people and the rest for women, the handicapped, migrant workers and workers in agriculture and the textile industry.

These categories of persons are among the high priority targets of the Community Social Fund. For the first time the Fund was able to act to aid training programmes for women seeking work and it will be able to undertake additional measures to assist employment of young people in 1979.

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## INDUSTRY

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### £36 million loans to give workers better housing

Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds in Cardiff are to receive a 20 year European Community loan—at a reduced interest rate of 1%—of over £ 57 000 to help them build 31 houses for their employees. The money is part of a £ 36 million programme being carried out by the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to support the construction of houses for people working in the coal and steel industries.

The latest decision also covers a number of projects in other Community

countries. In Germany, the funds made available total DM 1 887 143, in Luxembourg FL 2 100 000, France FF 5 447 500, Belgium FB 7 740 000 and Denmark Dkr 790 000.

Founded in 1952, the European Coal and Steel Community is the oldest of the three European Communities. The other two, the European Economic Community and Euratom, first saw the light of day in 1958.

Over the last 25 years coal mining in the Nine has had many ups and downs. In the early 1950s, it was a key industry in Western Europe and a necessary element of economic growth. Five years later, however, the oil boom plunged it into crisis and as demand declined so production fell by almost a half and the workforce shrank considerably.

During this period, the ECSC gave aids to pits in difficulties and established a system of Community aid which enabled governments to cover losses and avoid social or regional problems from untimely pit closures.

This phase lasted until 1973 when the impact of the oil crisis and the need to lessen the Community's dependence on imported energy saw a certain turn for the better in the fortunes of the coal industry, although difficulties still persisted with the general economic stagnation and the crisis in the steel industry.

Between 1954 and 1977 the ECSC made loans totalling £ 3,2 billion. It finances its operations by means of a levy on coal and steel production and by borrowing funds on the capital market.

On the industrial front, the ECSC has given loans valued at over 20% of the total investment made by Europe's coal and steel companies. Between 1975 and 1977 the steel industry received over £ 1,2 billion and approximately £ 370 million was paid out to the coal industry during the same period.

In addition, the ECSC grants loans for purely social and regional purposes. It supports reconversion programmes that will provide alternative employment to people made redundant through structural changes. Over the last three years it is estimated to have created 11 500 jobs in this way. Meanwhile, the number of houses built and part-financed by the ECSC stands at over 150 000.

## Our factories are still producing more

The industrial production index for the European Community reached 112 last year—a 2.3% increase over the 1977 figure. This growth rate compares with yearly rises of 2.2% and 7.3% recorded in 1977 and 1976 respectively (1975 is considered as the base year of 100).

But this increase was not evenly spread throughout the year. In the first six months the rate of expansion of industrial production fell sharply, while in the second half of 1978 the rate of growth accelerated steadily. By the end of the year the improved trends in industrial production appeared to be well established and commentators expected further expansion in the early months of 1979.



This general Community pattern was mirrored at the Member State level by Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, has witnessed some slackening in industrial production growth during recent months, a trend, which conflicts with the noticeable upturn in production in Germany, France, Italy and Belgium over the last quarter.

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## IN BRIEF

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The European Community is expected to have a 3.4% growth rate this year, compared with 2.8% in 1978. Predictions are that Ireland will top the Nine's growth league with 5%, followed by Italy (4.6%), Germany (4%), France (3.4%), Belgium (2.8%), Denmark (2.6%), United Kingdom (2.3%), Luxembourg (2.2%) and Netherlands (2.1%). The figures do not take into account recent oil price rises.



## At long last, a new alternative source, cheap and clean

You have heard of solar power, wind power, wave power. But wait for it. There may be an alternative source of energy that no one has yet tried... mice power.

And why not? Solar energy is not available at night. Wind and wave power are highly unpredictable and are at their least efficient during anti-cyclonic periods which in winter coincide with peak electricity demand.

It is therefore clear that research needs to be undertaken to develop alternative sources of energy which can guarantee a constant power output when required. Studies have shown that animals may offer a solution.

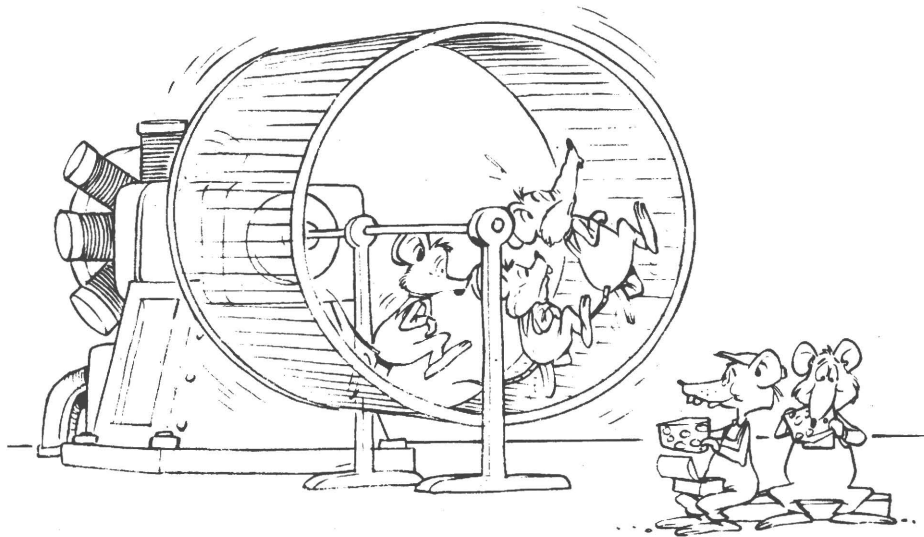
In the past, animals have been used by man for the production of energy. For example, oxen, horses and mules have been employed for drawing water, milling and so on. However, these heavy animals have a high unit cost, and are difficult to look after. What's more, they take several years to mature.

Not so mice! At least, not according to a couple of ingenious European inventors—or should the word be adventurers—who think there is a future in mice-power generators.

Put simply, a mice-power generator consists of a modification of a treadmill (found in the cages of pet mice) which can be linked to a dynamo. The treadmill itself is rotated by mice. Each mouse has a power output of 0,03 watts, which is equivalent to a single solar cell.

Mice-power generators, according to their inventors, exploit the natural instincts of mice who, having eaten, need exercise in order to keep fit. Their favourite form of exercise is, of course, to operate a treadmill.

There are a few snags, however. The mice must be organized so that at least one mouse is operating each treadmill, allowing the others to rest



and eat. Additionally, the number of mice per treadmill must be carefully calculated so that it does not become overloaded.

The inventors point out that it is very easy to increase the workforce of mice because a single pair can reproduce to the power of six within one year. Other advantages are that the mice could be fed on dairy produce which, as everyone knows, is currently in surplus in the Community, and their waste droppings could be collected for conversion into bio-gas.

The inventors, in a submission addressed to the European Commission looking for funds to back their idea, propose constructing a pilot plant but they foresee a full-scale plant powered by mice being able to generate enough electricity to supply a whole village or small factory.

Output might be improved by means of research in genetic engineering which could well produce mice with an especially strong desire to rotate the treadmill generators.

Is this what we have all been waiting for? An alternative source of energy at low cost, offering the advantages of simple maintenance, low running costs, guaranteed continuous power output and no pollution if you discount a

little waste matter which can be converted into bio-gas.

A well-argued proposal, you must agree. What a pity it was dated April 1.

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### IN BRIEF

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The European Commission is currently studying the problem of dangerous drugs which are circulating freely between the Member States. The result will be a proposal to the nine governments to set up a Community-wide system for the exchange of information to curb the traffic in these drugs.

Consumer prices in the Community are expected to rise by 7% this year, compared with 7.5% in the United States. This estimate was made before the recent rise in imported oil prices. The biggest rise is expected to be in Italy (12.5%) and the lowest in Germany (3%). In between come the United Kingdom (9.7%), Ireland (9.5%), France (9%), Denmark (6.9%), Netherlands (4.8%), Belgium (4.1%), and Luxembourg (3.5%).



## Curbing your dream kitchen's appetite for costly electricity

Chances are you have a 'power guzzler' in your home. No, ladies, we are not referring to your husbands but to domestic appliances such as electric ovens, refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, dishwashers and tumble dryers.

They have been dubbed 'power guzzlers' by the author of a report to the European Parliament because many of them are so badly designed that they waste a good deal of energy.

As part of its contribution to the Community-wide campaign to save energy—and, incidentally, reduce your electricity bill—the European Commission is trying to get the 'power guzzlers' off the market by asking manufacturers of domestic appliances to—  
— label their energy consumption  
— redesign them so as to reduce energy consumption.

So far it has put the emphasis on better labelling (which admittedly is the easier solution). Last July it made proposals to the Council of Ministers for Community laws detailing the information to be given on labels affixed to all domestic appliances,

beginning with electric ovens. The proposals have just been adopted.

The labels, which would be an easily-recognizable light orange colour measuring 90 × 100 millimetres, will indicate the amount of energy actually consumed by the appliance in question, thus making it possible for the housewife to compare different brands on the basis of something more than just eye appeal; in other words, their operating costs.

The Commission hopes she will invariably pick the ones which consume least energy. But as the parliamentary report points out, will she understand a reference to consumption in kWh? Would it not be better to give her the actual running cost, based on the average price of electricity in the country concerned?

However, at Community level the use of different national currencies and the complexity of the tariffs makes this a difficult task.

The labelling system will be implemented on a voluntary basis. However, it will be in the manufacturer's interest to apply it because a uniform labelling system will enable producers who wish to do so to sell their goods throughout the Community without having to meet varying national standards. The result could

eventually be a saving of some 20% in the energy used in running the Community's domestic electrical appliances, which account for just under 5% of the total energy consumption.

The really big savings in energy can only come about through design changes, however. All studies made about this problem in Europe and the US reach the same conclusion.

Many domestic appliances on the market are veritable 'power guzzlers'. Differences in energy consumption of up to 57% have been recorded for different makes of virtually all kinds of electrical appliances. A European dishwasher in fact consumes three times as much electricity as an American one.

Manufacturers would meet few technical obstacles in reducing the energy consumption of future models. In some cases the necessary design changes could be made at no additional cost.

Auxiliary materials would need re-designing also. There is no good reason why water in washing machines should be near boiling point; if it were at lower temperatures it could come straight from the hot water tap. But in that case it would be necessary to further develop low-temperature detergents.

One report favours the introduction of consumption ceilings for appliances. In the case of electrical ovens, for example, the new information label could also indicate 'Less than... minutes preheating time to 200°C' or (for refrigerators) 'Defrosting cycle consumption less than... watts'. This would help the housewife who finds it difficult to assess the significance of kWh.

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## IN BRIEF

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Around 5.4% of the Community's working population is expected to be jobless this year, compared with 6.5% in the United States. Belgium is estimated to face the worst rate (8.4%), followed by Ireland (7.9%), Denmark (6.9%), Italy (6.5%), United Kingdom (5.7%), France (5.4%), Netherlands (4.4%), Germany (3.6%) and Luxembourg (1%).

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### Community support for Egyptian-Israeli agreement

The European Community's nine Foreign Ministers have expressed strong support for the peace treaty signed recently by Egypt and Israel.

In a statement issued after a meeting in Paris they said they were 'fully appreciative of the will for peace which has led President Carter to engage himself personally in these negotiations, as well as the efforts made by President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin'.

However, they recalled their declaration in June, 1977, in which they came out in support of the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland.

Their statement added: 'In this context, they take due note of the will expressed by the signatories to the treaty to consider this not as separate peace but as a first step in the direction of a comprehensive settlement designed to bring to an end 30 years of hostility and mistrust.'

'They hope that this will, to which they attach particular importance, be given practical form soon in a comprehensive agreement in which all the parties concerned, including the representatives of the Palestinian people, would participate and to which the international community could give its endorsement.'

'The Nine express the hope that all the parties concerned will avoid any statement or action which will impede the search for peace, such as the Israeli policy of settlements in the occupied territories'.

## IN BRIEF

Further talks have been held in Tokyo between Wilhelm Haferkamp, Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for external relations, and Japanese government representatives amid rumours that the Community might impose import restrictions to correct the Community's massive trade deficit with Japan—more than £3 billion last year.

## THIRD WORLD

### Renegotiation of Lomé Convention nears completion

The Bahamas are normally associated with rich American tourists, gambling casinos luxury yachts and champagne seas. But beneath this glossy surface the Bahamas are just one more developing country in need of aid from the industrialized world.

The Bahamas are part of a group of 57 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states which have signed the Lomé Convention with the European Community.

The Convention, a five-year trade and aid pact signed in 1975, is currently being renegotiated and Freeport in the Bahamas was the venue for the latest round of talks.

The main purpose of the meeting was to try and speed things up. Since the last ministerial meeting was cut short by a power failure in Brussels in December a lot of talking has been done but little negotiating. At Freeport the ministers at last got round to taking some decisions.

They agreed to set up a centre for agricultural research and development. In the current Convention this has been the priority sector receiving 40% of aid available from the European Development Fund.

The Community also agreed to make Stabex, the system for guaranteeing commodity export earnings from ACP States more flexible. It will also consider adding more commodities to the Stabex list. Among the most likely candidates are rubber, tobacco and sisal.

In addition, the Community undertook to devise a system to aid ACP mineral exporters. The system will be inspired by Stabex but separate from it. It will be of great interest to Zaire and Zambia, who are among the world's leading copper exporters, and are suffering severe economic problems. Other minerals such as cobalt, tungsten, zinc and phosphates could also be included.

It was also agreed that Community aid for development projects in ACP States should be released more quickly. Funds are often held up either because the projects have not been adequately prepared or because of bureaucratic delays. The ACP States will be given a bigger say in the management of the European Development Fund which administers the aid.

The size of the new Fund will not be decided until the last minute and will be the object of much haggling. The ACP States are demanding £670 million, nearly triple the amount provided under the first Convention.

Both co-chairmen of the Freeport meeting, French Foreign Affairs Minister François-Poncet, and the Gabonese Finance Minister, Mr Anchouey, considered that enough progress had been made to enable the next meeting in Brussels on May 24-25 to be the last one.

Some major points of difference remain to be settled, especially in the industrial and trade sectors. However, both sides are optimistic that agreement can be reached in May.

This would be an important achievement for the Community. Coming towards the closing stages of the UNCTAD V Ministerial Conference in Manila it would provide a rare example of successful cooperation between industrialized and developing countries.

### Solar energy offers ray of hope to developing countries

Only the guest of honour failed to show up at a recent 4-days conference on solar energy organized by the European Commission in Varese, Italy, which we mentioned briefly in our last issue.

However, the absence of the sun did not prevent the 300 scientists and engineers from 80 countries and 10 international organizations from holding long, fruitful, if occasionally heated, debates on just how solar energy can help people in the Third World to a better life.

The conference concluded that solar energy is perhaps one of the most promising of the energy options open to developing countries, and not simply because most of them are 'sunshine' states which have been using solar energy for generations.

The fact is that solar energy can help developing countries overcome the shortages of food, water and energy itself with which so many of them must contend. Once adapted to local conditions, it can also create new jobs.



It can also vastly improve the quality of life, especially in the villages, reducing much of the drudgery associated with such basic tasks as getting in the day's supply of drinking water or fuel for the stove.

The sun's energy is already being used to pump water for irrigation, turn brackish water into drinking water, generate electricity, dry rice as well as cook it, produce ice so that food and medicines can be stored for longer periods, run radio and television sets and heat homes as well as cool them.

But several of these developments are still at the experimental stage; some which have the greatest potential are also the most expensive, so that short of a technological breakthrough they will remain much too expensive for Third World villages.

This is because solar energy technologies range from the very simple to the extremely complex such as the photovoltaic cell, which was developed by the Americans to power the instruments on their space satellites.

Photovoltaic cells, for example, represent the simplest and most effective means of harnessing the sun's energy. They are already being used for

lighting, to power school television sets in villages and as battery chargers.

But their cost is prohibitive at present. Most of the solar pumps powered by photovoltaic cells which are operating in the Sahel, for example, have been donated under foreign aid programmes.

The engineers at the conference who specialize in photovoltaic power generators were confident that the costs can be reduced substantially over the next 5 to 10 years. But it was clear from the discussions that their use raises some very basic issues.

It is obvious that developing the more technologically advanced forms of solar power generation to the point where they are ready for mass production is a long and costly process. Private firms are reluctant to undertake the effort unless they are assured of large and growing markets. For a number of reasons it is the developing countries which offer the most promising markets.

But this very fact led some Third World participants to express the fear that the widespread use of solar energy could mean a new form of dependence on the West. The developing countries, in other words, could end up simply as consumers of technologies developed by the West and made available to them—at a price.

The conference concluded on the need for co-operation between developed and developing countries on a basis of equality. Their co-operation would involve not only the joint design of projects but also the joint manufacture of the final product. Developing countries would thus be involved at all stages of the development of solar energy.

This, at any rate, was the hope. Whether it will materialize remains to be seen. The European Commission could do a great deal, however, to ensure effective international co-operation by organizing similar conferences (a second is already envisaged in two year's time); by promoting the exchange of scientists and engineers; and by helping bridge the information gap.

But above all it could help by associating developing countries with some of its other activities in the energy field (such as the continuing research on energy storage) and by holding out to Community firms and institutes the carrot of financial support if they work in partnership with firms and institutes in the Third World.

## Community to send £3.35m for refugees

Following a recent visit of Mr. Poul Hartling, the Danish Head of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to Brussels, the European Commission has decided to give £3.35 million to aid refugees in Southern Africa.

It is estimated that there are about 100 000 refugees in Botswana, Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Tanzania. There are many more in Angola and Mozambique. Most of them have come from Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

The Community contribution will finance nearly half the UNHCR £8 million aid programme. This involves the setting up of health and educational facilities and the construction of access roads to the refugee camps. Farming equipment will also be provided.

The large influx of refugees has aggravated food shortages in the host countries, especially Zambia. The European Commission has asked the Council of Ministers to agree to send £2.7 million of extra food aid to Zambia.

The aid would be in the form of 6 000 tons of white maize and would be in addition to the 10 000 tons in the 1979 programme and 6 000 tons of wheat.

## Aid for war, cyclone and disease victims

The European Community is providing exceptional aid totalling £800 000 under the terms of the Lomé Convention to Rwanda, Fiji and Mali.

The tiny, landlocked Central African State of Rwanda is an indirect victim of the fighting between Uganda and Tanzania. Its international road links have been cut off and essential fuel and food supplies have not been coming through.

The Community is providing £201 000 to help air freight the supplies. It is estimated that over the next three months 7 500 tons of fuel and 17 000 tons of other products will need to be flown in.

The Community is also providing £ 37 000 to combat a meningitis epidemic in the northern part of Rwanda which has already killed 190 people and affected 3 000 others. The aid will be used to buy and transport 240 000 doses of vaccine.

At the end of last December Fiji was hit by cyclone 'Fay' and suffered widespread damage. The Community is providing £ 201 000 to help rebuild 800 homes.

Mali, a landlocked country in the West African Sahel, has been affected by a recurrence of parasitical and infectious diseases. These have been provoked by malnutrition especially among the drought stricken people in the northern part of the country.

The Community is providing £ 147 000 which will be enough to buy three months supplies of medicine.

## IN BRIEF

Budget Commissioner Christopher Tugendhat has warned that even if farm prices in the Community are frozen for the whole of this year expenditure on agricultural support from the Community's Farm Fund will still increase by 10%.

The next world economic summit will be held in Tokyo at the end of June. The summits, which are held at regular intervals, are attended by the Heads of Government of four European Community countries—France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom—the leaders of the United States, Canada and Japan, and by the President of the European Commission.

A conference on 'The Financing of Regional Development in the European Community' is to be held in Dublin on June 26-27. Among the speakers will be the former Irish Foreign Minister Garret FitzGerald, and Pierre Mathijsen, the European Commission's Director-General for regional policy. Inquiries from the Regional Studies Association, 62 Chandos Place, London WC2N4HH.

## LIFESTYLE

### Some taxes quench your thirst more quickly than others



Beer, whisky and red wine are probably the three most widely drunk alcoholic drinks in the European Community. But as every traveller and holiday-maker knows, you get more for your money in some countries than in others.

This is partly due to different cost structures and traditions—generally Southern Europe goes for wine, while the North prefers beer. Another element, however, is the variety in the rates of excise duty and value added tax throughout the Nine.

Take whisky for instance. In the United Kingdom, which is far and away the largest producer among the Nine, excise duty and VAT combined account for over 82% of a normal 26 ounce bottle costing £ 4.50 (approximately 7 EUA)—the highest rate in the Community.

In Ireland, the only other major producer in Western Europe, you will have to pay on average over £ 4.90 (7.4 EUA), 75% of which is accounted for by excise duties and VAT. The only other country with taxes of a comparable level is Denmark (77%), where prices are the highest in the Community. A bottle sells at Dkr 137 (almost 20 EUA).

The lowest rate is in Luxembourg (38%), with a bottle costing a modest Flux 185 (4.7 EUA). Nor does the German government ask its whisky drinkers to pay a great deal in tax. VAT and excise duty total only 43% on a bottle retailing at DM 19 (7.6 EUA).

In Belgium, France and the Netherlands the combined taxes are a little under 60% on bottles ranging in price from 6 to 7.7 EUA. But to buy whisky at the cheapest prices, aficionados should go to Italy. At Lit 4509 (some 4 EUA), a bottle is one fifth the Danish cost.

Differences are less marked for beer. The highest VAT and excise rate is in Denmark—just over 50%—where a normal 0.33 litre bottle is the most expensive in Europe: Dkr 3.80 (0.6 EUA). Nor is it particularly cheap in Ireland, famous for its Guinness. On a bottle costing 0.27 pounds (0.4 EUA), 41% goes in tax.

In all other countries, tax accounts for between 15 and 30% on bottles ranging from 0.2 to 0.3 EUA each.

Wine drinkers would, not surprisingly, be well advised to go to Italy, where a one litre bottle of average-quality red table wine is the cheapest in Europe, Lit 530 (0.5 EUA) and VAT one of the lowest at 6%. No excise duties are charged on wine.

Nor is there any excise on domestically produced wine in Luxembourg, making a litre bottle well within the financial means of most people—Flux 33 (0.8 EUA).

As you go further North in Europe, so the price also rises. In Germany you will have to pay 1 EUA for a bottle, in Belgium 1.3 EUA, the Netherlands 1.5 and Ireland 2.3. No figures are available for Denmark and the United Kingdom.

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**EDUCATION**


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### From school to work: not an easy transition

The transition from school to working life is often an unsettling event. This year nearly four million young people will be leaving the cosy security of the classroom and seeking jobs in the harsh professional world.

Their prospects are far from bright. With six million unemployed in the Community the job market is extremely tight, especially for school leavers. Many of them will have no formal qualifications or else diplomas that are irrelevant for the jobs they are seeking.

In December 1977 the Community's nine Education Ministers launched a four year action programme to help prepare young people for working life.

The keystone of this programme was a series of 28 pilot projects involving several hundred schools. These projects started operating at the beginning of the 1978/79 school year.

Recently the project leaders met in Brussels to exchange views and discuss how the action programme was faring. Mr Guido Brunner, Commissioner responsible for education policy, opened the meeting which was also seen as an opportunity for 'grass roots'

workers to directly help in the shaping of Community policy.

The pilot projects are intended to give fresh impetus to action taken by the nine Member States. They are also designed to strengthen Community efforts, mainly through the European Social Fund, to develop employment and vocational training.

The projects will be jointly financed by the Community and the Member States. Their annual cost during the three years they run will be about £4 million.

The projects are inspired by six inter-linked themes:

- Helping school leavers find and keep jobs
- Improving job motivation
- Special help for specific groups such as girls, young migrants and young handicapped people
- Coordination of the activities of educational, guidance, training and employment agencies
- Greater cooperation between schools and employers
- Improving initial and in-service training of teachers concerning the transition period between school and work.

For example there are pilot courses in Bradford, England to help young West Indians and Asians who cannot find jobs after leaving school. In Strathclyde, Scotland there is a course to help early school leavers with little or no qualifications.

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**PUBLICATIONS**


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'Europe Information' is a series of information notes published by the European Commission's Information Department. The first issue of 1979 deals with the Community's relations with EFTA, the European Free Trade Association. It can be obtained from the Directorate-General for Information, Rue de la Loi 200, 1049 Brussels. Catalogue No. CC-AA-78-003-EN-C.

'The Consumer in the European Community' is the latest issue in the European Documentation series published by the European Commission. It can be obtained from any of the sales offices listed on our back cover. Catalogue No. CC-AA-78-003-EN-C.

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**IN BRIEF**


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Ireland has broken its currency's 150-year one-for-one parity with Sterling. The Irish Punt is a member of the European Monetary System but Sterling has remained outside. When Sterling appreciated it brought the Punt along with it, thus causing the Punt to diverge from the value of the Belgian franc, currently the weakest currency in the EMS, by more than the permitted EMS margin. The break means that Ireland will have an independent monetary policy for the first time since it gained its independence from Britain in 1922.

Farm prices in the European Community have been frozen for three months until the British general election and the first European elections have been held.

## FOCUS

## He who helps the Third World helps himself



Six pounds. An evening out on the town, with dinner and maybe a show would easily cost that much for many of us.

It's also just about all some people have to spend for a full year if they were unlucky enough to have been born in Egypt, Mali or Rwanda.

At this moment, 57 more or less similar countries are negotiating the renewal of a cooperation accord that is probably going to cost Europe something like £ 500 million beginning in 1980. But it's not really too much. It's just slightly more than 0,45% of the European Community's annual income. And it could mean

the difference between life and death for those who are hungry or sick, or it could advance their educational or job prospects.

These 57 countries with which the Community is linked by a treaty now being renegotiated are scattered throughout Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. That's why they are known as the ACP countries.

Europe is helping them not just for humanitarian reasons — they also furnish 95% of Europe's uranium, 85% of the cocoa, 55% of the bauxite and 50% of the copper we need and use. There are also a number of other products we depend on such as wood, nuts and sisal. What would we do without these imports? Probably close some factories and lay off more workers.

These Third World countries are also increasingly important buyers of our products. Some 7,6% of our exports are destined for these countries, one and a half times more than three years ago. To buy these European products, and to keep our plants running, they have to have funds. But right now the debt of the Third World has increased at an alarming rate, partly because of the rise in oil prices, from around £ 35 billion in 1970 to £ 87 billion of debt today.

Some European countries, such as the Netherlands and Germany, have simply cancelled these debts and other countries, like France, have also dropped certain ones. This is not just a kind gesture, it is also aimed at maintaining the purchasing power of clients which our exporters need. If they are ruined they won't be customers any more.

There are many discussions, debates and disputes about the ways of continuing this cooperation in the negotiations currently underway, but no-one on the European side doubts the need.

The 57 countries involved also feel satisfied about certain aspects of the Community aid.

It is political neutral, for one thing. It does not require anything in return which would undermine their independence, even if there is on-the-spot control by Community representatives to assure that it is effectively used.

There are various types of Community aid. First of all, many of the exports of the ACP countries' goods enter the Community without having to pay the usual tariffs. In addition, the European Development Fund gives aid grants to better equip these countries in roads, ports, schools, irrigation systems, plants and other such projects. For a number of primary products such as bananas, tea, wood and coffee, the Community guarantees a basic revenue to the producers of these commodities. It assures the reimbursement of losses suffered due to a drop in commodity prices or a slump in production or exports.

Claude Cheysson, the European Commissioner for development programmes, has referred to this plan as 'a minimum wage for less-favoured nations'.

One condition, the Community does try to impose, is that the recipients of this aid promise to respect basic human rights as Europe does.

The discussions have been continuing since the end of September, but they are mainly about 'how' to do it rather than 'why'.

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