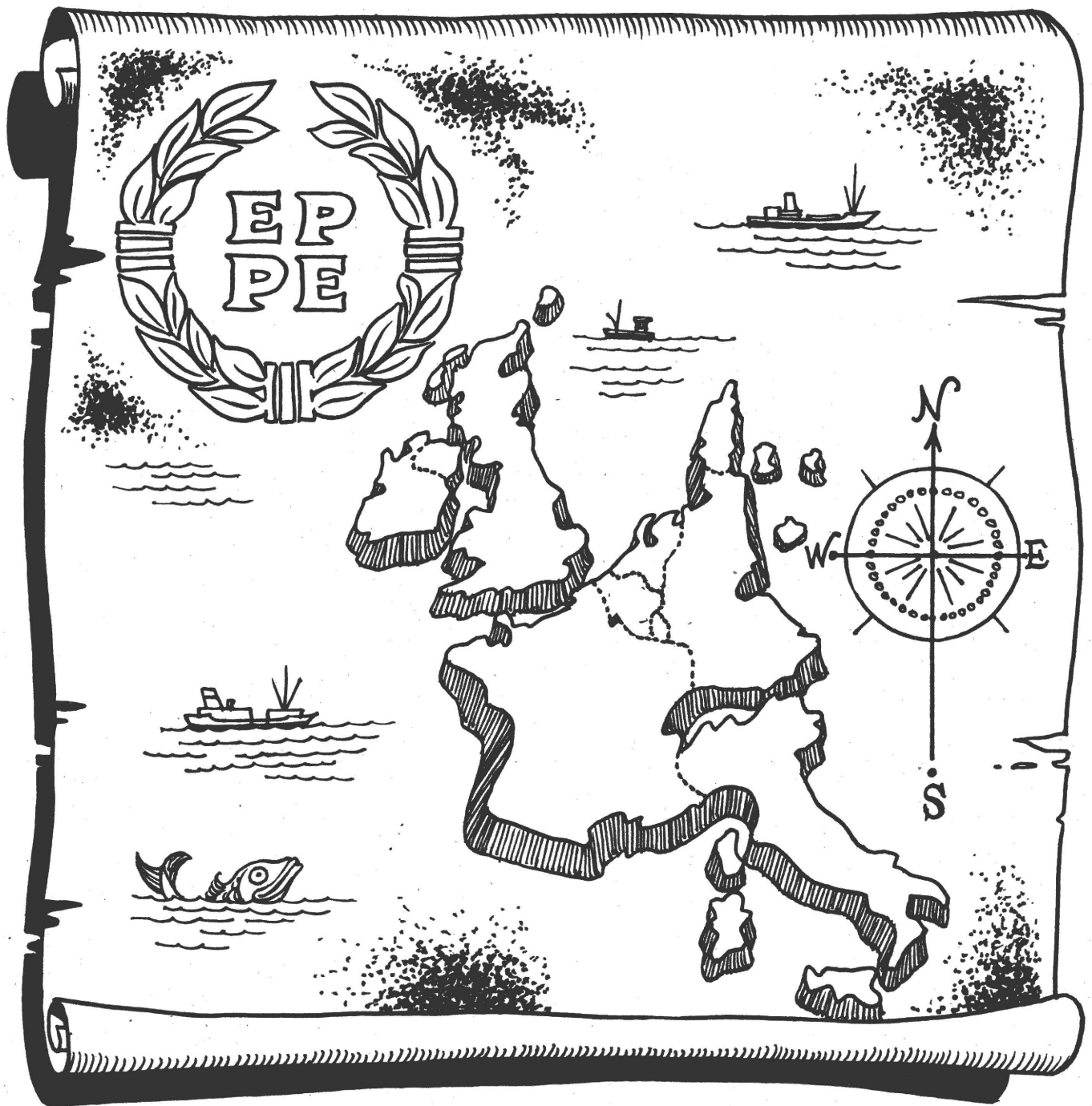


Euroforum



Political discussions are curtain-raiser to the first session. See page 3.

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Political discussions are curtain-raiser to the first session

The new European Parliament, which was elected by 110 million voters last month in the West's largest election, will meet for the first time in Strasbourg this week.

The 410 parliamentarians will come together in the Palais de l'Europe for an opening plenary session that is expected to be devoted largely to ceremony but also to the more important task of electing the key figures who will be responsible for its smooth functioning over the next five years.

The first star attraction, if appearing only for a brief spell in the limelight, will be 82-year-old Mrs Louise Weiss, a Gaullist deputy who, as the oldest member, has the honour of taking the chair at the opening session until a President is elected.

The election of the President, together with the election of the 12 Vice-Presidents, the chairmen of the powerful 12 parliamentary committees and the address to the new members of Commission President Roy Jenkins, will be the highlights of the June 17-20 session.

Corrigendum

In our last issue we stated incorrectly that Mr Gaston Thorn had lost his seat in Luxembourg's national parliamentary elections which were held on June 10. In fact, Mr Thorn was re-elected at the head of the Democratic Party list in his constituency. We apologise to Mr Thorn and to our readers.

As Euroforum went to press, the names most frequently mentioned as possible presidents were those of the former German Chancellor Willy Brandt, the front-running left-wing candidate; Emilio Colombo, outgoing President and a former Christian-Democratic Prime Minister of Italy; and two Liberals, former Luxembourg Prime Minister Gaston Thorn, whose government fell in national elections which coincided with the European elections on June 10, and Simone Veil, who headed President Giscard d'Estaing's list in the elections and who has just resigned her job as Minister for Health to devote herself full-time to the new Parliament.

The outcome of the election for President is clouded by the uncertainty surrounding the political line-up of the 410 members which was the subject of intense discussion between the different national and political factions during the past week.

On the result of these discussions depends the formation of the all-powerful groups which dominate debating time during the sessions, which have priority in nominating members for committees and which are entitled to financial aid for secretarial and other assistance.

In the old Parliament, whose 198 members were nominated by their national parliaments rather than elected directly, the Socialists formed the largest group, followed by the Christian Democrats, the Liberals, the Conservatives, the European Progressive Democrats and the Communists. There was also a handful of independents.

Although the Socialists and Communists between them will be able to muster 155 of the 410 seats, they will be outnumbered by right-of-centre deputies. Between them, the Christian Democrats, Liberals and the Conservatives will have 210 seats.

Among the uncertain political alignments are those of the old European Progressive Democrats, which until now have brought together the Gaullists, the Irish Fianna Fail party and one Dane. There have been rumours that the Gaullists, who are not large enough with 15 seats to form their own group, might join forces with the British Conservatives who returned 60 members. There has also been speculation about the eventual shape of the Christian Democrat and Liberal groups.

Clearly, whoever eventually emerges as President of the Parliament will need the support of more than one group, none of which commands anything like a decisive majority.

And what of the other political luminaries who are likely to add lustre to the well-publicized plenary sessions and the (incamera) meetings of the committees where much of the unspectacular but important work is carried on?

The debates, often dull and frequently boring in the past, are bound to be enlivened by the performances of such unorthodox new arrivals as the fire-brand clergyman the Rev. Ian Paisley from Northern Ireland; the hardline Republican former government minister Neil Blaney from the other side of the Irish border; Jiri Pelikan, a leading Czech dissident who will be sitting with the Italian Socialists, and 'Red Heidi' Wiczorek-Zeul, former leader of the German Young Socialists.

There will also be five anti-Community members returned in the Danish elections, including one from Greenland!

EMPLOYMENT

Community's dole queue shortens once again

Unemployment in the European Community is continuing to fall. The trend which began in February has continued, according to the figures for May which have just been released.

At the end of the month, there were 5.6 million out of work, or 5.3% of the civilian working population. This was a fall of 250 000, or 4.2% on the April figure.

Some countries did better, and some worse, than the Community average. Denmark fared best (a drop of 15.7%), followed by Germany (11.5%) and Luxembourg (6%). The other Member States were below the Community average—United Kingdom (3.1%), The Netherlands (2.7%), France (2.5%), Italy (2.3%), and Belgium (1.7%). No figure was available for Ireland.

In the Community as a whole, the percentage of men out of work fell from 4.9% to 4.7% and of women from 6.5% to 6.3%.



The perils of home, sweet home

Home accidents are fast becoming as dangerous a menace to the public as road casualties or cancer. The statistics are alarming. A visit to the emergency service of most hospitals will also bring confirmation that the home may be as unsafe as the high-speed motorway.

The latest estimates are that four to five million persons are injured each year in domestic mishaps. Some 25 000 to 30 000 die as a result. This grizzly record contrasts to the 1.6 million killed or injured in road accidents. The carnage in flats, gardens and garages has reached an alarming level in all the countries of the European Community.

Our private torture chambers are laden with potential hazards for the average person—cleaning products that are also poisonous, highly-flammable synthetic fibres, aerosol spray cans that explode, glass that shatters, and toys, do-it-yourself or sports equipment that can maim or cut the unsuspecting.

At this moment, the only extensive statistical survey that exists is for the United States. It found that, in 1976, there were some 9 million accidents that took place while handling consumer products, of which some 2.5 million occurred in connection with sports or recreational equipment, 2 million from implements used by the handyman or woman during the construction or maintenance of a house, one million from furniture or other household furnishings, 500 000 from electrical appliances and 300 000 from toys. The European consumer has reacted to this increasing danger and consumer associations have sounded the alarm before the European Commission in Brussels. They want products which are potentially dangerous to health and security to be subjected to a specific control, or withdrawn from the marketplace in keeping with regulations that are quick and simple to apply. In addition, there should be better information on the nature of home accidents and on the products that present the most danger.

In response, the European Commission has proposed that the nine European Community member countries begin by establishing an information network comparable to the one existing in the

United States so that the situation throughout the Community can be instantly analysed.

The aim would be to collect data on accidents in the home from the hospitals, clinics or other institutions where such information is compiled. A second stage would cover accidents on the playing fields, campsites and other similar locations. This data collection process must be coordinated so that the information can be compared by computer in a central agency.

This data bank would also be accessible to all interested parties and institutions such as public services, consumers, manufacturers, and research laboratories through their national ministries. In keeping with the growing preoccupation with the need for privacy for the public in connection with computerized data, all steps would be taken to assure anonymity for the victims, who would be identified only by a number code.

The decision to create such an information centre is in the hands of the Community's Council of Ministers. In the meantime, consumers are anxiously watching over the Minister's shoulders.

Are prices spiralling as dramatically as they seem to be?

We are all accustomed to rising prices and we can all quote favourite examples showing how little we used to pay for the essentials of life, with change left over for a few luxuries.

But have prices really risen as much as we think? Has galloping inflation really been as runaway as we would like to imagine?

Prices everywhere have certainly risen, and continue to rise. But figures released recently by the European Commission which look back on price increases since 1975 indicate that changes have not been anything like as dramatic as our faulty or selective memories might lead us to believe.

Taking 1975 as a base of 100, the Consumer Price Index for the Community as a whole rose by just under a third to 132.1 by the end of last year. At around 8% a year, hardly what our grandparents were used to; but still short of the double-digit inflation we seem to read about almost daily.

ENVIRONMENT

New identity card will help combat killer chemicals

In the 15 years or so since a book called 'The Silent Spring' dramatically focused attention on the danger of chemicals to the environment, the situation may have become even worse.

Hundreds of thousands of new chemicals are 'synthesized' each year, of which around a thousand are put on the market, adding to the more than 30 000 compounds already in daily use.

Luckily, most are necessary and beneficial, but some have properties that could be harmful in certain circumstances and others have a relatively untested impact on man and the environment. In any case, most officials, environmentalists and industry experts agree that the contents of such products should be known so that they can be put to best use or that side-effects can be identified and combated.

That's why the European Community and a number of individual countries have begun paying attention to this problem. New laws are coming into force in France and the United States, and the Community Environment Ministers have just agreed that a coordinated defence system should be established throughout the nine member countries.

What the new Community measure involves is basically the creation of an 'identity card' for new chemicals coming on the market or imported into the member countries. To qualify for this identity card allowing it to be sold anywhere in the Community, a new chemical product will have to pass a battery of tests proving its safety. The manufacturer or importer will have to communicate the results and other relevant information to national authorities assigned to protect the public and the environment from dangerous substances.

This way, each product will have its identity card giving the information which has so often been lacking in the past when accidents took place without anyone having the technical knowledge to know how best to react.

The European Commission in Brussels will also be collecting the information gathered by all the member countries and will pass it on so that each can find out about chemicals introduced elsewhere.

By way of comparison, in the same period, the index rose in the United States by just over one-fifth, from a base of 100 to 121.2.

The Community increase was not spread out evenly between the nine Member States. Germany fared best of all, with a rise of only 11.5%. Luxembourg managed to come second, but at almost double the German rate (20.8%), followed by its Benelux partners the Netherlands (21.2%) and Belgium (22.2%). France (31.1%) and Denmark (33.3%) were fairly level-pegging, Ireland and the United Kingdom were towards the lower end of the scale with increases of 44.3% and 46.1%, but Italy was out on its own with a rise over the four years of 55%.

What of the more recent performance. The index for last May, for which figures have just been released, show an increase over the previous month for the Community as a whole of 0.8%. However, on a month-to-month basis, this was a slightly lower increase than earlier in the year.

The rise in the various Member States remains very different. In the Netherlands it was zero while the Danes managed 1.6%. In between came Italy (1.3%), France (1%), UK (0.8%), Luxembourg (0.6%), Germany (0.4%) and Belgium (0.3%). No figure was available for Ireland. The increase in the United States was exactly 1%.

Taken on their own, inflation statistics make depressing reading, particularly for the least well-off sections of society. But they cannot be judged in isolation from the parallel increase in wages.

Although it could not come up with strictly comparable figures, Euroforum has been able to lay its hands on statistics showing the increase in hourly earnings in industry for another four-year period, 1972-1976.

Taking October, 1972, as our base of 100, the overall increase for the Community (excluding Ireland for which figures were once again not available) was almost three-quarters (74.7%).

Again, the increases from one Member State to another were uneven. Italian workers were compensated for having to put up with their high inflation by clocking up a wage rise of 106.8%. The next best performance was in the United Kingdom (85.7%) and Denmark (82.2%). These were the countries with the three highest inflation rates in our other calculations.

Belgian workers did well with a 77% rise, followed by Luxembourgers with

74.3%, the French (72.5%), the Dutch (63%) and finally the Germans (36.7% to match their record low inflation rate).

At a rough estimate, and allowing for the fact that the figures are not strictly comparable, the Germans at one end of the scale had wage rises which were more than treble the rise in their prices, while the Italians at the other managed to increase their wages by more than double their rate of inflation.

Were our grandparents, who would have been made dizzy by such price and wage spirals, too cautious with their old saying 'what you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts'?

To smoke or not to smoke: that is the question

Our article on smoking (Euroforum 6/79) was, it seems, aptly titled 'Where there's smoke there's fire'. At any rate, it has drawn the fire of the European Trade Union Committee of Food and Allied Workers in the Community.

The Committee points out that, while it welcomes any efforts directed towards tackling the tobacco problem and its adverse effects on health in an objective manner, it does not agree with the statistics quoted in Euroforum.

'According to information at our disposal', says a statement issued by the Committee, 'there is no statistical evidence, whether at national or international level, which proves in a clear and unequivocal way that smoking causes such or such illness.'

'Scientific studies carried out recently have demonstrated that the negative judgment on the use of tobacco as expressed in the 1960s cannot be sustained today. This is particularly true of the comparison made between death caused by road accidents and death caused by smoking.'

The statement goes on to say that the Committee and its member unions cannot give their support to proposals for a generalized prohibition of smoking.

It says: 'Individual liberties must not be unnecessarily restricted through State legislation. The freedom to smoke is one of the liberties. A balance between the interests of smokers and non-smokers is a question of sound judgment and individual tolerance which have nothing to do with legislation.'

We leave the final verdict to the sound judgment of Euroforum readers.

The proposal has been under discussion at the Community level for around three years, giving some idea of how complicated it is to deal with this major environmental and economic subject. It's no wonder that larger international efforts to deal with the matter have also taken a lot of time and patience.

Virtually all national governmental authorities would like to have some sort of international identity card so that the costly and lengthy tests which have to be performed on new chemicals don't have to be repeated for each country where the product is sold.

The new Community law will accomplish this in Europe and discussions are also underway at the world level to achieve the same results. But this next step has, of course, been difficult and time-consuming because of all the differences in existing laws and in the interests of governments and industries involved.

That's why this most recent action by the Community countries to lessen the chances of a toxic environmental accident is important, not only inside its borders but also in the world-wide effort to come to grips with this hazard.

Helping the small man take on the big-time polluter

The Davids of Europe are beginning to fight back against some of the Goliaths, but it's not always easy or even possible in some situations.

A lot of attention has been given recently to the legal cases in Germany and the United Kingdom by citizen and environmental groups attempting to block, delay or review nuclear construction projects.

In addition, Dutch flower-growers and other interests have recently engaged in a long court battle against French mines along the Rhine that may be polluting the river waters long before they reach Holland.

What they have in common is that, in both cases, individuals have banded together to accomplish jointly what they could not do by themselves. In some instances, it can't be done because no individual citizen could afford to hire a lawyer to challenge the entire corporate legal section of an industrial giant causing the pollution, or of a government agency charged with protecting the environment.

Also, in a number of European countries, the citizen who is just fed up with the increasing pollution of his air or water can't do anything about it in court unless he can prove that his economic interest has been damaged. The legal systems in some countries just don't recognize the legal right of an ordinary resident to fight back against these modern social ills.

But, firstly in the United States and now in Europe there is a growing trend towards allowing groups representing a collection of ordinary, but concerned, citizens to legally combat polluters.

For instance, in the United States, environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth which are worried about noise or other forms of pollution have been at the forefront of sometimes successful legal cases over such issues as the right of the supersonic Concorde airliner to land at New York airport or to protect some aspect of the environment or a special site.

The beginning of a similar movement is also evident in Europe in the German, Dutch and some other environmental legal cases. But there are still a lot of legal obstacles, such as the one in some systems where specific economic damage has to be proven before a party can file a case.

The European Community's Economic and Social Committee recently studied the legal standing of ordinary citizens in such cases and concluded that some attempts should be made to enlarge the concept of 'class action suits' by groups representing citizens or consumers, as well as small claims suits so that the man in the street can recover small amounts for damages without spending more in attorneys' fees.

The European Commission also indicated recently that it would try to promote a thorough discussion and review of the rights of individuals and groups to participate in such class action suits.

Change of diet may make shellfish a more hygienic dish

If Europe's oysters, winkles, cockles and mussels knew what was in store for them they might not be lying so peacefully in their beds. In the interests of human health, they will find that their daily diet will be changing over the next few years.

The problem is that our most tasty molluscs are extremely partial to rather exotic products, not the least of which are foetal coliforms—better known as excrement. This is why some of the best beds tend to be near sewer outlets.

The European Community's Environment Ministers have now decided that the time has come to strike a balance

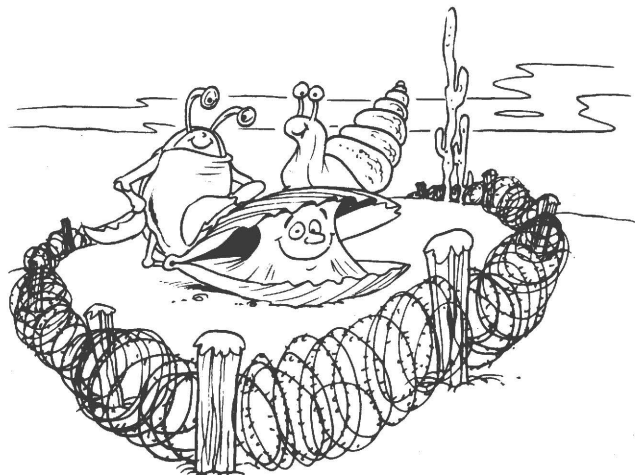
between healthy humans and happy shellfish.

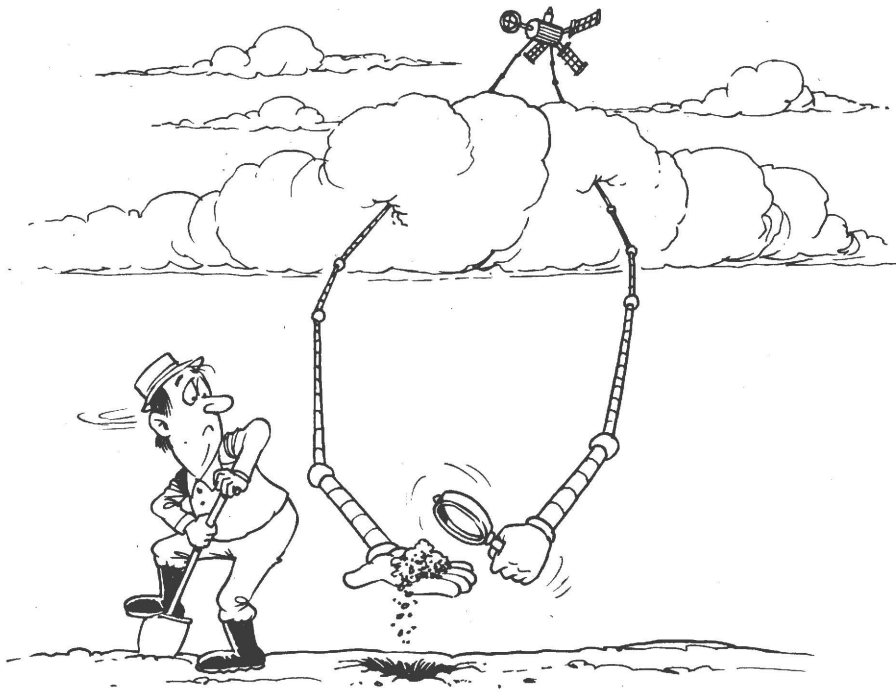
They have agreed on legislation which will set limits to the density of items such as metal, salinity, dissolved oxygen and the notorious foetal coliforms that may exist in areas designated for shellfish.

To ensure that these limits are being respected there will be regular sampling of the water's purity in these areas.

The Ministers have also adopted another piece of legislation to make our drinking water safer. In future, it will be illegal to dump substances that contain mercury, arsenic, cadmium and other dangerous substances near underground wells.

In order to offload products containing uranium, nickel and zinc special authorization will now be needed.





Remote sensing: a futuristic key to the earth's resources

Many people criticized the moon race as being a prestige exercise and a waste of money. However a great deal of new and advanced space technology was developed in the course of putting a man on the moon and this is now being applied for economic purposes.

The remote sensing of the earth's resources is one such example. Satellites orbiting many miles above the earth are able for instance to detect hidden mineral reserves using electronic multispectral cameras, lasers and other sophisticated equipment.

From their vantage point in space satellites are able to pick up information not only in the same detail but far more quickly than land-based surveyors.

Remote sensing can be used for a variety of purposes. It can help boost a country's agriculture by evaluating harvests, providing early detection of plant diseases, and carrying out forest surveys.

In oceanography, it can save time and money by assessing fish stocks, monitoring shipping movements, studying currents and charting iceberg patterns.

It can help protect the environment by detecting freshwater and seawater pollution and studying changes in vegetation growth. Physical planners can use it to survey and classify rural and urban areas. In geology it can be employed in evaluating mineral and hydrocarbon resources and in hydrology for finding water catchment areas and assessing snow as a source of water.

The Americans were first off the mark in launching a purpose built earth sensing satellite in July 1972. Many others have followed.

One of them is the METEOSAT which belongs to the European Space Agency (ESA), of which the European Community is a member. It is orbiting at 36 000 km above the equator and collecting advanced information about weather patterns. The satellite is controlled from Darmstadt in Germany.

METEOSAT is Europe's first remote sensing satellite. However, the French have decided to build one while

several others are planned by the ESA and Germany.

The ESA is also preparing two earth sensing experiments for the first flight of the American Spacelab next year.

Although Europe is still behind the Americans in the matter of satellites it has aircraft equipped with apparatus similar to that used by the Americans and has already carried out similar tests.

The Community's Joint Research Centre (JRC) at Ispra in Italy is carrying out research into remote sensing in collaboration with the American National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The JRC coordinates research carried out by 50 laboratories in the Community thus avoiding costly and time-wasting duplication of effort. The main priorities of this research are agriculture and sea pollution.

Another project is the AGRESTE, which was started in 1973 with the cooperation of French and Italian laboratories. It involves the survey of rice fields in order to gain early warning of plant diseases as well as forecasts about the size of harvests.

Poplar and beechwood stocks have also been surveyed, and the project is gradually being extended to other crops and trees.

Yet another, the YELLUS project, involves measuring ground humidity in areas with a semi-arid to humid climate. Ground humidity is essential for plant growth and its measurement helps in forecasting harvest yields.

Finally, the EURASEP project is aimed at assessing the health of the sea. Community waters are being surveyed to see how much chlorophyll they contain. This is the basic element in phyto-plankton the organic matter which keeps the sea clean and healthy. Without it pollution would steadily increase and fish stocks would disappear.

IN BRIEF

There are twice as many European as American multinational firms operating in the Community, a recent survey has shown. However, the Americans' aggregate sales were 40% higher. The favoured industries for multinational involvement are mechanical engineering (12.9%), financial and business services (8.3%), chemicals (7.5%), electrical and electronic engineering (7%), and food, beverages and tobacco (5.7%).

ENERGY

Community shows determination on common measures

The nine government leaders of the European Community have finally agreed to join forces in tackling the problem of oil shortages and escalating prices, giving a lead to other major oil consumer countries, such as the USA and Japan.

When the Nine met for their thrice-yearly European Council session in Strasbourg, only a week before the Tokyo economic summit of the major industrial nations, energy was on everyone's lips and concentrated everyone's minds.

At the Tokyo economic summit meeting agreement was reached on specific targets for oil imports and other measures in the energy field for 1979, 1980 and 1985.

The Iranian revolution at the end of last year set the ball rolling. Since then, oil has become a scarce and increasingly expensive commodity.

Community leaders have now recognized that joint action is necessary to prevent the situation developing into a major crisis. At Strasbourg they took two major decisions.

Firstly they agreed to introduce a worldwide system for registering the prices and quantities of oil deals, but only if the other major industrial nations went along with the plan.

The idea of the scheme is to provide more public information about oil movements and prices. It is thought that this would discourage speculation and dampen prices on the spot markets of Rotterdam, Genoa, Singapore and the Caribbean.

Spot markets are those where oil is bought and sold freely on a daily basis as opposed to long term fixed price contracts. Although Rotterdam, the most famous of the spot markets, only handles a few per cent of world oil trade its prices serve as a guide to OPEC, which groups the major oil producers.

Oil deals have always been surrounded by great secrecy. This has encouraged speculation and latterly spot prices were double the official rate at which OPEC members were prepared to sell.

An official oil register would have to be worldwide in order to be effective. Otherwise scarce oil supplies would merely be diverted from Rotterdam and Genoa to other markets in Asia and the Caribbean.

Secondly the European Council in Strasbourg decided to freeze oil imports at the Community's 1978 level of 470 million tonnes until 1985. At the same time they called on other oil consumer countries to agree to take similar action.

Community leaders stressed that the restriction of oil imports should not halt economic growth because of a lack of energy.

They recommended a number of measures in the energy field to ensure continued economic growth:

- Greater investment in energy saving production methods
- Vigorous promotion of nuclear energy programmes
- Substitution of coal for oil in power stations and industry
- Increased research and development both at a national and Community level, especially on new sources such as solar and geothermal energy.

Community leaders also said they were ready to start a dialogue between oil consumer and producer countries.

Nine's consumption drifts back to pre-1973 levels

The nine government leaders action at Strasbourg in backing the freeze on oil imports at the 1978 level came not a moment too soon.

After four years of dieting the Community has apparently recovered its appetite for energy. However, although energy consumption rose by 2.9% in 1978, at the same rate as GDP, total energy consumption at 942 million tonnes of oil equivalent (mtoe) was less than 1% above the 1973 level, while economic activity last year was

running about 10% higher than in 1973.

The biggest increases were in oil and gas. Oil, most of it imported, rose 3.7% to 512 mtoe and gas 3.9% to 163 mtoe. Oil currently accounts for 54% of the Community's total energy consumption and the aim is to reduce it to below 50%.

The OPEC ministers, meeting in Geneva, decided to raise oil prices to a level estimated to be 15% up on last year.

Better news. The Community is using more coal, especially in power stations. Last year it burned 3.6 mtoe more than in 1977.

The European Commission has suggested that the Community, which has substantial coal reserves, could become less dependent on OPEC if it used more of its own coal and nuclear energy. It would like to see the share of coal raised from 19 to 25% of total energy consumed.

Nuclear power still represents only 3% of total energy consumed even though it registered the sharpest increase among the various energy sources last year (+ 8%).

The Member States show markedly different appetites for energy. The biggest rises were in Ireland, Germany, Belgium, France and Denmark. Their increase in energy consumption was much higher than the Community average.

The Netherlands and Italy were more restrained while the UK and Luxembourg managed to consume less energy.

Gross inland consumption of primary energy

	(mtoe)	
	1978	1978/77
Nine	942.3	+ 2.9%
Ireland	7.8	+ 9.8%
Germany	271.0	+ 5.0%
Belgium	46.0	+ 4.8%
France	183.6	+ 4.7%
Denmark	20.5	+ 4.1%
Netherlands	64.8	+ 1.6%
Italy	135.5	+ 0.8%
UK	208.8	- 0.2%
Luxembourg	4.5	- 2.2%

Source: Eurostat

CULTURE

Overcoming language barriers: how the next generation is coping

For centuries, Europeans have been cut off from one another by a variety of barriers, both visible and hidden. The most obvious boundaries have been political ones. But surely the most frustrating have been those delineated by the languages we speak.

Even within individual countries, dialects, patois and even obscure provincial accents and usages can act as a barrier to communication or contribute to misunderstanding and stubborn parochialism.

While the extension of education to the whole population and the development of means of mass communication have helped to break down barriers, language differences have often paralyzed more spontaneous contact between Europeans.

Nowhere is this more keenly felt than within the European Community with its six working languages—English, French, German, Italian, Dutch and Danish.

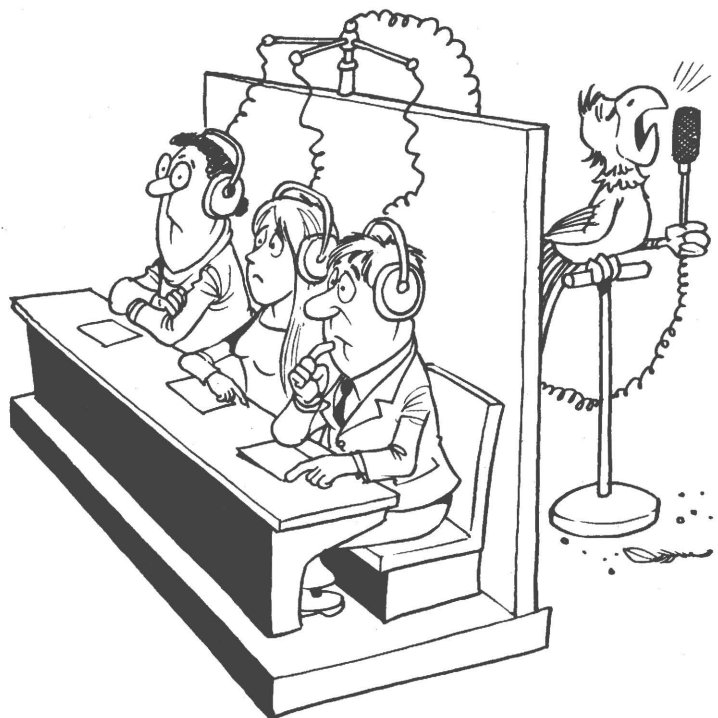
This figure will increase to seven when Greece joins in 1981 and there is the

IN BRIEF

The sun provides us with 60 times more energy than we actually consume, according to one expert who helped to organize a Day of Sun throughout the Community and elsewhere in Europe on June 23. Happily, the sun did its bit to brighten the day for its supporters.

Community citizens seem to be saving more. Total deposits in savings banks in March, the most recent month for which figures are available, stood at around £ 880 million. This compares with around £ 600 million in March, 1978.

The Commission has just announced a first series of grants from the European Social Fund for this year. They amount to just over £ 100 million out of a total for the year of £ 513 million. The Fund is used to help retrain workers.



prospect of a jump to nine when Spain and Portugal become members. A host of minority languages and dialects are also in use in the present as well in the prospective Member States.

It would be folly to suggest, of course, that anyone should abandon their native tongue in the cause of European unity. On the contrary, one of the Community's strengths lies in its cultural diversity, a point made recently in a report approved by the European Parliament.

This stressed the importance of preserving all Community languages and cultures—including those of minority ethnic groups. It also rejected the selection of one common language, such as Esperanto, as a means of universal communication.

In Mr Wackford Squeers' famous academy described by Charles Dickens in 'Nicholas Nickleby', the pupils were taught 'every language living and dead'. While this would be the ultimate solution to the eternal rivalry between various languages, it is hardly a practicable proposition for non-fictional schoolchildren to learn six, never mind nine languages.

In 1976, the Community's Ministers of Education adopted a more realistic approach when they urged that all schoolchildren should have the opportunity of learning at least one Community language other than their native tongue.

So much for the theory. What about the practice? Recent figures published by the European Commission give some idea of the progress that is being made.

Actual opportunities vary widely from one Member State to another. For example, all children in Luxembourg learn at least two languages, French and German, as well as their native Luxembourgish. However, in Denmark only English is compulsory for all.

English is the most popular foreign language in Community schools, and is learnt by almost eight out of every ten pupils. (In Germany, 99% of all children learn English.)

In the United Kingdom and Ireland, the most popular foreign language is French. Overall, French is the second most common language to be taught and is learnt by just over half of all Community children. German is learnt by one in three.

Trailing at the bottom of the list are Italian, Dutch and Danish. The most popular non-Community languages are Spanish and Russian.

The total number of pupils learning one or more Community languages apart from their own is increasing. In France, one in every three children opts to learn a second foreign language.

The Commission itself has drawn up plans to help prepare children for life in a multilingual Community. It has suggested the setting up of a scheme throughout the Nine for the exchange of native-speaking teaching assistants. The Commission also proposes that practising teachers should be able to spend periods of up to a year working in the country where their chosen language is spoken.

Its proposals which have yet to be agreed to by the Nine's Education Ministers, include the encouragement of foreign language teaching to non-language students in universities and other third level institutions.

As a first step to improving the language abilities of adults whose work brings them into contact with other

Community nations, the Commission suggests a special study of the language needs of certain professional groups, such as doctors and nurses, who now have the right to work in any Member State of their choice.

An ambitious proposal is to set up a network of experimental schools, with particular emphasis on foreign languages. Bilingualism would be encouraged.

The cost of the entire scheme is estimated at around £4.3 million for the first year, rising to around £5.5 million in the third.

Nor have the cultural and linguistic roots of the children of migrant workers from outside the Nine been forgotten within the Community. The

Commission has been urging the Member States, as far as national circumstances permit, to promote the teaching of these languages alongside the normal school curriculum. A number of pilot projects, supported by Community funds, are currently being carried out.

And while efforts continue to help the children of the new Europe break through the linguistic barriers, our ancient languages have not entirely been forgotten. The number of pupils learning Latin within the Community has actually increased in recent years.

While we may never again be able to match the blanket coverage offered by Mr Squeers' academy, we may look forward to the day when every Community citizen is at least bilingual.

EDUCATION

Big differences in Nine's investments in the future

Are the Danes the most educated people in the European Community? If investment in schooling is anything to go by, they ought to be.

The Danes spend most per head on education in the Community, over three times as much as the Italians who are bottom of the list of the nine Member States.

In 1975, the latest year for which official figures are available, the Danes spent £276 per head, while the Italians managed only £82 per head.

Despite its large population Germany spent £197 per head on education compared with only £89 by Ireland. Luxembourg, another country with a small population, also spent comparatively little per head.

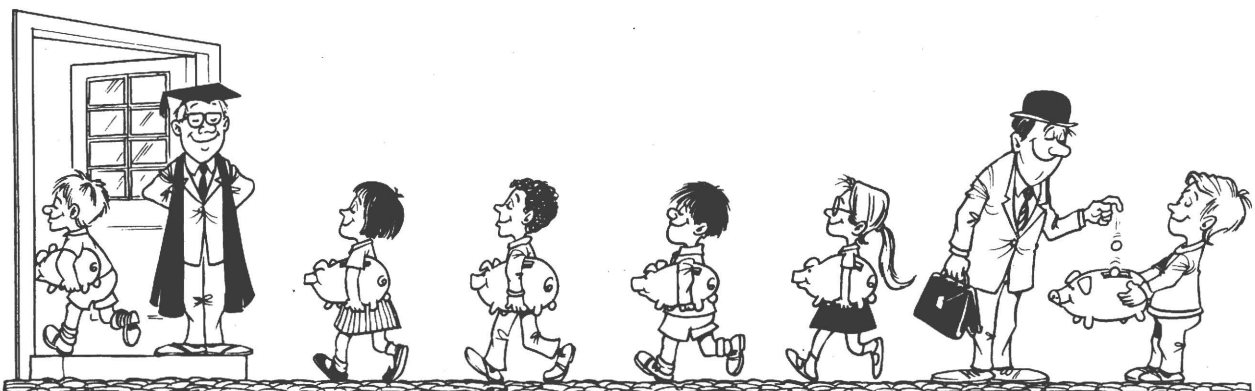
Overall the nine Member States spent £40 600 million on education in 1975. Germany was easily the biggest spender accounting for nearly one third of the total.

Luxembourg is the only Member State in which educational expenditure

accounts for less than 10% of total government expenditure. In Denmark it is as high as 15%.

Government spending on education 1975

	Total million £	Per head £
EEC	40 600	157
Germany	12 200	197
France	8 700	166
UK	8 107	144
Italy	4 556	82
Netherlands	3 283	239
Belgium	2 010	209
Denmark	1 407	277
Ireland	0 268	89
Luxembourg	0 067	165



Marathon session gives green light to Lomé II signing

Each of the 300 million people in the 57 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries belonging to the Lomé Convention will receive \$25 of European Community aid during the life of the new five-year convention which is due to be born on March 1, 1980.

During the final 48-hour marathon ministerial meeting between the Community and the ACP countries in Brussels recently, the Community raised its aid offer by 10% to \$7 400 million. This is 72% more than the \$4 300 million provided under Lomé.

The aid will be used to finance development projects in the ACP states —arming, industry, roads, railways, schools, hospitals. It will also help stabilize ACP export earnings from cocoa, coffee and other farm commodities. The Community will help the ACP states to maintain production of copper, tin and other minerals.

The Nine and the ACP states still have to ratify the agreement. Until then, no date or venue is likely to be chosen for signing the new convention though Lomé, the capital of Togo, and Khartoum, the Sudanese capital are the favourite candidates.

Claude Cheysson, European Commissioner responsible for Development, said that the final text was an 'impressive achievement'. He described it as a 'coherent and complete package'. He claimed it was just as big a step forward in relations with developing countries as the Lomé Convention.

Mr Cheysson admitted that the negotiations were tough but pointed out that the same was the case in the GATT Tokyo Round talks. He said he admired ACP solidarity in negotiating as a single unit which greatly increased their negotiating strength.

Mr Cheysson pointed out by way of comparison that the oil-producing states, which are almost embarrassed

by their current trading surpluses, had just increased their aid to poor countries by \$800 million to \$1 800 million. This compares with a \$3 100 million increase by the Community which will give four times as much.

Other European negotiators pointed out that this represented a commendable effort by the nine Member States in view of the prolonged economic recession, high unemployment and precarious energy situation in Europe.

Mr Cheysson added that other forms of Community aid such as food aid and the preferential terms on which ACP sugar and beef are imported would bring the total value of Community aid to nearer \$10 000 million.

The major elements in the new agreement are measures to help ACP mineral producers and to protect European investments in these countries, according to Mr Cheysson.

The Community will provide \$375 million to help ACP producers maintain production of copper, cobalt, phosphates, bauxite and alumina, manganese, tin and iron ore. Countries which will benefit include Zambia and Zaire (copper), Rwanda (tin) and Gabon (manganese).

The Community will provide soft loans to help restore production capacity when export earnings from these minerals fall by over 10%. Only the major exporting countries will benefit as these minerals must account for over 15% of total export earnings.

Although the amount of aid is modest —copper alone could absorb the whole amount in a single year—it represents the first step in a new direction.

The scheme is of mutual benefit. It helps guarantee supplies of vital raw materials for European industry while providing ACP states with a greater degree of income stability. Zambia for instance depends on copper for 90% of its export earnings.

In the new Convention the European Investment Bank will provide \$268 million for the exploration and development of new mineral and energy resources in ACP states.

European investors will also be encouraged by new measures to protect investments. Political uncertainty, especially in African states, has meant that European investment in the mining sector has almost dried up.

Dutch, Belgian, Irish and Danish investors will benefit from a clause stating that the advantages of bilateral investment agreements between a Community country and an ACP state will automatically be extended to other members. This means that the better terms that the larger Member States such as France, Germany and the UK are able to obtain will now be available to each of the Nine.

The Community has increased the funds available for the system for stabilizing the export earnings of farm commodities (STABEX) by nearly 50% to \$735 million. The number of products covered has been increased from 34 to 44 the most important new addition being rubber (mainly of interest to Liberia). Other new products include shrimps, pepper and cotton seed.

The Community also agreed to import more beef and veal from Botswana and three other African countries, and to improve the regime for Caribbean rum exporters.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Community aid for South-East Asian refugees

The European Community has lent its voice to the growing international preoccupation with the plight of the thousands of refugees in South-East Asia.

The Community action came in two separate meetings in Paris and Brussels and involved both immediate emergency aid and planning for more permanent solutions to the human problems involved.

The subject was one of the main topics of discussion at a meeting in Paris of the nine Foreign Ministers who called for a United Nations conference.

A declaration issued at the meeting also supported the freedom of Vietnamese to leave their country but also said that they should not be forced to leave under intolerable conditions. The statement added that the Community would also approach the Vietnamese Government on all aspects of

the subject and also make contact with the Association of South-East Asian Nation (ASEAN) with which it has established special links.

In the meantime, as individual Community member countries made known their intentions and plans to relieve the refugee problem, the European Commission in Brussels decided on a grant to the UN High Commissioner on Refugees of £ 2.7 million. In addition, the Community has agreed to grants worth £ 13 million in food aid for refugees in South-East Asia.

Chinese probing the mysteries of the West

The Chinese are coming... only 10 postgraduate students but there could be more to follow.

The Chinese students will study in Europe in the 1979-80 academic year on scholarships provided by the European Community.

The scholarships were offered to the Chinese government when Wilhelm Haferkamp, European Commissioner responsible for External Relations, visited Peking last year.

The students will be able to choose courses for which they are qualified in any university in the Community.

Ever since Richard Nixon went to China, when he was president of the United States, there has been a growing stream of visiting Western politicians, businessmen and tourists.

However, few Chinese have returned the compliment, but the arrival of the students could start a flow in the opposite direction. After all there are 950 million potential visitors...

IN BRIEF

The European Commission has given aid worth £ 183 000 to help about 20 000 Ugandan refugees in the Sudan.

The European Commission has proposed that the Community raise its contribution to the International Food Aid Convention by 28% from this year onwards. This would bring the figure from 1.2 million to 1.6 million tonnes.

LIFESTYLE

The bright lights have begun to dim all over Europe

Since the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a feature of most European societies has been the flight of people from the land, lured by the prospect of work or excitement in the new industrial centres.



In recent years, however, the general trend for people to migrate from rural and agricultural societies to swell the city populations has come to a halt. Only in Italy does this still continue as the inhabitants from the Mezzogiorno in the South move northwards in search of work.

The trend now is, in fact, in the opposite direction. As the industrial regions have been hit by the world economic recession people have tended to move out.

This is particularly true for most regions in Germany, especially Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg; the Nord-Pas-de-Calais area, Lorraine, Bassin Parisien and Ile-de-France in France; the South-East of Britain, Copenhagen in Denmark, and Hainaut, Liège and Brussels in Belgium.

Factors apart from the dimming attractions of the bright city lights now appear to draw people to other parts of the country.

A pleasant climate and nice countryside appear to be two of the main ones as people move to the Mediterranean and South West France; East Anglia

and the South West in Britain; the Western regions in Denmark; North, East and South of the Netherlands; Bavaria, Schleswig-Holstein and Lüneburg in Germany.

But the level of births and deaths in a region, in addition to migration patterns, also has an important impact on population density. In general, regional differences within a country are small, although there are certain notable exceptions.

In France and Italy, the natural movement, in other words the net result of births and deaths, reflects the sharp contrast between northern and southern regions.

In France, the Mediterranean and South West areas, as well as the Auvergne, have a net loss while other regions have a net gain. In Italy, however, the southern regions often have a large net gain but in the North West, as well as Friuli-Venezia, there is an overall loss.

Birth rates are the most alike between regions in the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK, except for Northern Ireland where it is 37% above the Community average, and Denmark. Differences are most marked in France and Italy.

Death rates vary considerably, especially in Germany and Italy, but less so in Britain and Denmark.

Against this background, it is not surprising that there is an unequal distribution of production in most countries. In UK, 36% of production is centred in the South East; in France, 28% in the Paris region; in Belgium, 27% in the province of Brabant around Brussels; in the Netherlands, 26% in the province of Zuid-Holland; in Italy, 21% in Lombardia. Only in Germany does no such concentration exist and the most important economic region—Düsseldorf—accounts for only 11% of global value added.

It is also generally true that the highest levels of productivity are reached in the more urbanized regions, where the service sector represents a large part of economic activity.

On the other hand, the lowest levels of productivity are to be found in the mainly agricultural regions on the periphery of the Community, especially in France, Italy and Ireland.

Are too many saying Cheers, Santé, Skol, Prosit, Salute, Proost?

Whatever the virtues of the average European abstemiousness is not among them. When it comes to hitting the bottle you will always find a Community Member State topping one of the world's major league tables.

According to figures published recently in the Netherlands by the *Produktschap voor Gedistilleerde Dranken*, Germany is number one among beer drinkers. France is leading the game among the world's wine-drinking nations and Luxembourg is defending an honourable second position among consumers of spirits.

La douce France holds the world record for consumption of alcoholic beverages in various forms. The French guzzle a yearly 16.4 litres (4 gallons) of pure alcohol equivalent per head of population. Which makes one wonder what the French mean by the expression 'as drunk as a Pole'. As a wine drinker, the Frenchman is second to none. Be it 'du gros rouge' or a 'premier grand cru', he puts away a yearly 101 litres (22 gallons), and even a great deal more if we assume that grannies, small infants and sick people are not normally to be reckoned among the wine drinkers.

The French are, however, closely followed by the Italians, who have a yearly intake of wine of 97 litres (22 gallons) per head.

Luxembourg, which holds third place among the Community's wine-drinking nations, is clearly situated right on the invisible border which cuts across the Community, dividing Luxembourg into a wine-drinking southern and a beer-drinking northern half. Luxembourg's wine consumption, at

49 litres (11 gallons), is only half that of Italy, but the Luxembourgers drink nine times as much beer (127 against 14 litres (28 against 3 gallons), as the Italians who are among Europe's and the world's most modest beer consumers.

Germany holds the record for beer consumption throughout the world, with nearly 149 litres (33 gallons) per head. Although itself a wine producer, it consumes only 23.4 litres (5.2 gallons) per head, or less than 25% of the Italian and French consumption.

The Irish, British and Danes are also doing fine in the beer league, with a

yearly intake of 126, 119 and 116 litres (28, 26.4 and 25.8 gallons) respectively. But wine still remains for the most part the beverage for special occasions and celebrations. Consumption in the United Kingdom is no more than 5.4 litres (1.2 gallons) and in Ireland 4.3 litres (just less than a gallon) per head per year.

For spirits, Luxembourg is tops among Community countries and, after Poland, the second on the world list, with 4.7 litres (one gallon) per head. It is followed by the Netherlands and Germany, with 2.9 litres (0.6 gallons) each, France, with 2.5 litres (half a gallon) and Ireland, with a yearly 2 litres (0.4 gallons) per head.

In spite of the uncontested origins of whiskey, the United Kingdom remains the Community's smallest consumer of spirits, with a yearly 1.4 litre (just over a quart) per head.

As regards the consumption of alcoholic beverages in general, five Community countries are among the top eleven on the world list, which is led by France, followed by Luxembourg, Germany (in position No 5), Italy (in position No 6) and Belgium (in position No 11).

Contrary to its rather widespread reputation, Ireland is the Member State with the lowest total consumption

in terms of alcohol equivalent. It ranks number 23 on the world list and its yearly consumption (of 7.7 litres (1.7 gallons)) is less than half of France's 16.4 litres (3.6 gallons) per head.

Perhaps not quite as spectacular, but still noteworthy are the Community's achievements as a producer. While the United States is the world's biggest brewer, with over 200 million hectolitres (4.4 billion gallons) of beer, Germany comes second, with 94 million hectolitres (2.1 billion gallons), followed by the United Kingdom, with 65 million hectolitres (over 1.4 billion gallons).

Italy tops the list as a wine producer, with a yearly 64 million hectolitres (1.4 billion gallons). It is followed by France with 52 million hectolitres (1.2 billion gallons), Germany holds seventh position on the world list, with a yearly output of 10 million hectolitres (230 million gallons).

As a producer of spirits the United Kingdom is to be counted among the front-runners. It takes second position after the Soviet Union (8.4 million hectolitres—190 millions gallons) a year, with an output of 4.2 million hectolitres (over 9 million gallons).

among the world's ten biggest producers of spirits.



AGRICULTURE

Commission fails in bid to freeze this year's farm prices

It took the Nine's Agriculture Ministers several months of negotiations—the last session ran on for four solid days—but in the end they have managed to agree on this year's farm prices.

The outcome does not satisfy the European Commission, which was strongly critical of the final package. In a bid to reduce structural surpluses in the sugar and dairy sectors, and to cut the preponderant amount of the Community budget that goes on agriculture, the Commission had proposed that this year's prices remain frozen at last year's levels.

In the end, however, the Ministers agreed to an across the board price rise of 1½%. The only exception they made was for the dairy sector, which currently soaks up 45% of the £6 500 million spent annually on agriculture. Here they agreed on a price freeze.

But in order to tackle the notorious butter mountain, the Commission wanted to go further. It was proposing that the tax on milk production, known as the co-responsibility levy, should be raised to as high as 5% for the larger producers, with a lower rate for smaller farmers.

The plan was shot down by the Farm Ministers, who agreed to keep the tax at its present level of 0.5%. They did, however, concede that if milk production in the Community rises by more than 2%, then the tax should be increased next year.

Other measures decided on to reduce the surpluses in dairy products included increasing the butter subsidy Member States receive from the Community; 100% Community financing for school milk; and a ban on aids to dairies which are processing butter and milk powder. This last measure is intended to encourage them to branch out into other products.

The Commission has estimated that, as a result of the agreement reached by the Farm Ministers, the Community

budget next year will be approximately £860 million more than its original forecasts.

This is accounted for by a loss in the revenue which the proposed increase in the milk tax would have brought and a rise in expenditure on the milk and butter subsidies.

MONEY

EMS functioning well, according to first progress report

After three months of operation, the European Monetary System (EMS) is regarded as being in good health despite the difficulties which have afflicted the Belgian and Danish currencies in recent weeks.

This was the judgment of Community Finance and Economic Ministers who met in Luxembourg recently to review the EMS and to consider other issues.

The Ministers also discussed but did not reach agreement on the establishment of a system of interest rate subsidies for less affluent Member States of the Community and on the need for closer cooperation by the national central banks on the fixing of interest rates.

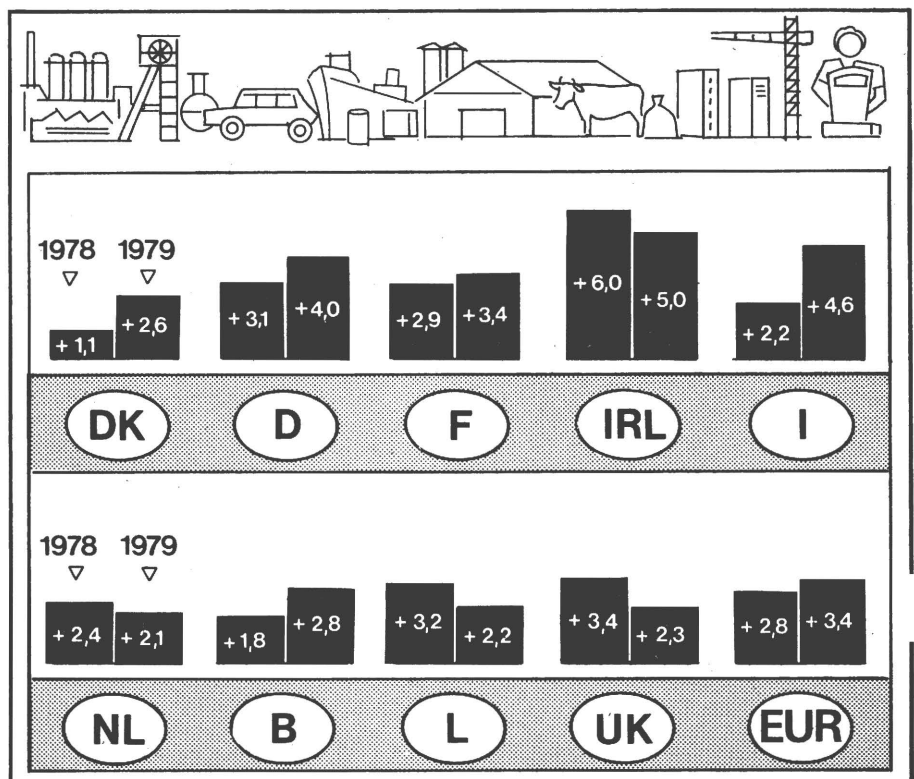
The optimistic diagnosis of the EMS, which was created to help set up a zone of monetary stability in the Community, came even after a review of the 'turbulence' which has struck the money markets in recent weeks.

The basis for this favourable judgment, which was shared by Belgian and Danish Ministers present, rested on the evaluation of the general functioning and cooperation of the system, which they felt was working reasonably well.

The failure to reach agreement on the interest rate rebates worth around £670 million which would be passed on to Ireland and Italy to help bring their economies into line with those of their more prosperous Community partners, came as a result of the UK's request for assurances that it too would benefit from the scheme if it joined the EMS. The UK was not satisfied on this point.

THE ECONOMY

Projected growth for 1979 of the gross domestic product of the Nine at market prices.



An international wardrobe



Clothing stores of Saville Row and Bond Street have acquired a world-wide reputation and in recent years shoppers have been paying greater attention to their attire than their forefathers.

Customers throughout the British Isles and Ireland, and especially the young, try to keep up with the latest styles. The same is true of most residents of Western Europe from Copenhagen to Milan and Berlin to Paris.

But despite their probable preference for classical European styles, most of these shoppers might be surprised to learn that their trousers may come from Hong Kong, their favourite scarves or ties are from Eastern Europe, the shirts or blouses they wear are Korean and the stockings Indian.

That's because some 50% of the textile products sporting Western labels and colours come from developing countries. By and large, the customer benefits.

Thanks to these lower-priced fabrics, the average household's clothing budget has remained relatively stable or even declined. Tailors or merchants also stand to gain because profit margins can be higher with such goods.

The European textile industry, however, has to bear the brunt of this development because it can no longer compete with imports from lower-wage countries. The salaries of European textile workers are just about the highest in the world, being, for example, 25 times higher than those of Pakistani or Egyptian workers.

Hand-woven, natural fabrics are as old as the human race. Byzantines and Saracens were already conducting a flourishing trade in textiles during the time of our ancestors the Crusaders.

The industrialization of the industry took place in the 18th century. At that time, the industry seemed in full bloom and had a rich future with inexhaustible supplies. But, after being one of the first beneficiaries of industrialization, it is now one of the first victims of the current economic crisis and the new international division of labour.

Following the Second World War, less-developed countries burst into the textile and clothing trade. Profiting from this, European manufacturers of textile machinery immediately sold their equipment to these new markets. Our producers conceived and delivered ready-made 'turnkey' factories. The buyers had to pay for these plants by exporting and earning hard foreign currency.

Somewhere in this process the buyers of clothing plants quickly realized that it was more economical to order shirts from Korea than from traditional European suppliers. This ultimately resulted in a flood of imports on the European markets.

Between 1970 and 1976, imports originating in less-developed

countries climbed by 311%. The rate of exports from South Korea shot up by 436%; Hong Kong alone exports more textile products than all the members of the European Community together. Developing countries are not the only ones in this field. The Communist countries of Eastern Europe have thrown themselves with abandon into this struggle and Poland has seen its exports towards the West mount by 245%.

The European Commission in Brussels has sought to intervene. Even though it champions free trade, consumer protection and the improvement of the standard of living in developing countries, it has also had to protect declining European industries. It had to act not only to preserve employment but also because it is a dangerous policy to be dependent on imported sources of supply. The oil crisis is a vivid illustration of what can happen in such a situation.

For this reason, the Commission, on behalf of the nine Member States, recently negotiated a series of accords setting limits to shipments of textile products from low-wage countries to the Community.

The renewal of the Lomé Convention, a cooperation treaty between the Community and 57 less-developed countries, will also regulate textile imports into the Community.

That leaves China. The Community has concluded a treaty with the People's Republic of China which should open up this huge and potentially lucrative market for European products. But China has traditionally been one of the world's largest textile producers. Will China pay for the machinery it buys in Europe with exports of textiles? Will customers in Liverpool, Tipperary or Marseilles complete their wardrobes with Chinese shirts? And will workers in textile mills keep their jobs?

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