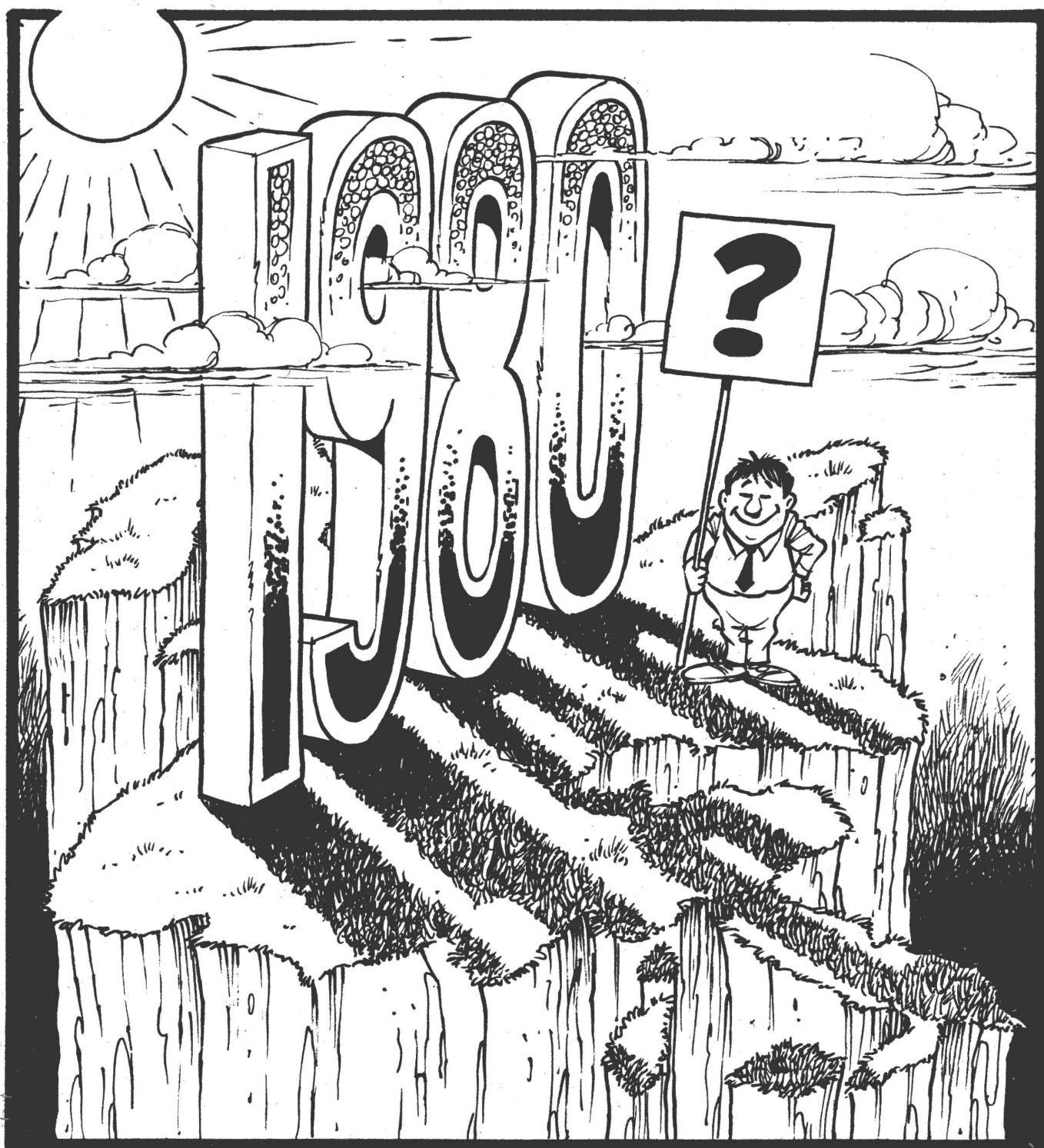


Euroforum



The year ahead: what lies in store for the Community? See page 3.

Euroforum

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The year ahead: what lies in store for the Community?

The gloomy mantle of Cassandra slips all too easily over the shoulders of those trying to make predictions about what 1980 holds in store for the peoples of the European Community as for the world at large. But try as one might it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that 1980 is going to be a very difficult year—perhaps the most difficult faced by the international community for many decades.

It will be a year of world-wide recession, continuing inflation; in all probability a year of turmoil in the Middle East and the Far East; and a year of treatment and renewed tensions between the rapidly rearming super-

The editor wishes all *Euroforum* readers a very happy New Year. As in 1979, *Euroforum* will be published fortnightly throughout 1980, apart from holiday breaks. If you are not receiving a copy regularly please let us know. Equally, if you receive more copies than you need because of the amalgamation of mailing lists we would like to hear from you (please enclose the wrapper from unwanted copies). And don't forget we are now publishing an occasional column of readers' letters. If you want to have your say, the space is yours. But please try to keep your letters as short as possible.

powers. Above all, it will be a year when the oil-consuming nations will have to learn to live with dearer and scarcer energy.

The European Community, it is said, is much more than the sum total of its constituent national parts. If this be so, it is just as well. For the New Year threatens political uncertainty and even instability in most, if not all the nine Member States of the Community. In only two of those countries—the United Kingdom and Ireland—can the present governments be reasonably sure that they will still be holding office at the end of 1980, and even that assumes no dramatic economic or political upheavals.

The controversy in France at the end of the old year over the parliamentary ratification of the 1980 budget was a reminder of the potential vulnerability of that government. Even if the French government staves off any challenge to its authority, French political life is certain to be dominated by the preparation for the next Presidential elections due in March 1981.

The general election to be held this summer in Germany is certain to overshadow the domestic political life of the Federal Republic. Together with the French Presidential election, the German election places important question marks over the political leadership of the two strongest economic and political entities in the European Community itself.

There must also be fears for the governmental stability of a number of the smaller Community countries. The last months of 1979 saw serious challenges to the governments of Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands. The tensions within all those countries seem certain to be fed by the general deterioration in the economic situation which is nearly universally expected for Europe as a whole. Apart from well-ordered Luxembourg, that leaves Italy, where the minority Christian Democratic government of Mr Francesco Cossiga remains dependent on the support of a variety of parties outside the administration.

It is just as well that, whatever the vulnerability of the minority Italian Government, it seems likely to be one of the more stable governments in 1980, for Italy took over the Presidency of the Community at the beginning of the New Year. During the first six months of the year it will

fall to the Italian Government to steer the Community ship of state through some of the most threatening economic and political shoals it has ever confronted.

The domestic political difficulties confronting so many of the Member States cannot make any easier the resolution of the daunting list of Community problems which have to be solved. And with the world economy about to slide into an inflationary recession (if not a depression) in 1980, these problems seem likely to multiply rather than to diminish.

The economic recession, as it spreads across the Atlantic, will not only bring more unemployment and industrial decline in its wake; it will also increase the reluctance of national governments to boost Community expenditure—even though 1980 will be a year when a much greater European investment effort in a whole number of areas will be urgently needed.

True, the economic/energy crisis could draw the Nine closer together in a common understanding of what has gone wrong and what needs to be done to put it right. But it is just as likely to exacerbate disagreements which were all too evident in 1979 among national governments over just what the Community's policy and spending priorities should be.

That, in a nutshell, represents the most immediate and in many ways the gravest problem facing the Community in 1980—the adoption of the new Community budget. The budget proposed by the Council of Ministers was thrown out by the European Parliament at the end of the old year precisely because the newly-elected European MPs did not approve of the priorities enshrined in that budget. Until a new budget is drawn up by the Commission (whose task it is to make the initial proposals), and subsequently agreed by the Council and the European Parliament—there will simply be no legal budget for the New Year.

In practice—and for as long as the crisis continues—the Commission and the Council of Ministers will be restricted to spending no more than one-twelfth of the 1979 budget. Bluntly, that means there will be no money for any additional measures to tackle the economic recession, the energy crisis—or regional and social development. Until a new budget is

agreed—a process which could take months—the Community will be in danger of drifting into politically explosive stagnation—just when the pressures on it to intervene in many different areas will be on the increase.

The most potent source of all of these pressures is likely to be the British Government, which spent much of 1979 campaigning for a massive reduction in its annual net contribution to the Community budget—arguing that it was out of proportion to the United Kingdom's ability to pay or to that country's benefits from Community expenditure. Following the stormy Dublin meeting in December the European Council agreed to meet again in another attempt to find a solution to the British budgetary problem—perhaps as early as February—if there was evidence that such a meeting would be more fruitful than the one held in Dublin.

If and when the summit leaders do meet, the UK Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher can expect to be offered a reduction in British budget payments of about £350 millions but to bridge the difference between that figure and the £1 billion annual net British contribution there will have to be a vast increase in Community spending of a kind (energy, industry and transport, for example) which could be expected to bring particular benefit to the UK. But without a 1980 budget such a plan—even assuming it would be agreed at a new summit—risks being stillborn.

1980 will see two other Community problems, related to each other and to the budget crisis which demand urgent solutions. The first is the curb on farm spending and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy which are now desperately needed. The Commission is preparing proposals on how to tackle this massive problem—or rather begin tackling it—but much will depend on what line is taken by the Farm Ministers of the Nine when they come to fix annual agricultural prices in the spring.

The second issue concerns 'own resources', the system of revenue to the Community from customs duties, agricultural levies and a share of VAT income which is transferred by Member States to Brussels to finance Community spending. We are within a year or two—and probably less—of the legal limit on those revenues being reached. If at that point the Nine do not agree—for instance to raise the VAT revenue they remit to Brussels—the money will simply dry up to finance any form of Community expenditure—even the sacred cow of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The New Year is also certain to see the shadow of the next enlargement fall heavily over the Community's policy makers. At the end of 1980 Greece will become the tenth full member of the Community. By the end of the year the back of the negotiations to make Spain the eleventh member (and possibly Portugal the twelfth) will have been broken. That, at least, is the jointly agreed target of both the Commission and the Madrid Government.

The closer we come to Spanish entry, the greater may become the misgiving of the other poorer Member States as well as those countries like France whose Mediterranean farmers stand to suffer from Spanish competition. It would not be surprising to see the Italian Presidency try to give Community policies a greater bias in favour of the poorer—particularly the southern European regions—of the present Community in the first half of the New Year.

The problems needing the most urgent attention of all will probably remain energy and unemployment. There are signs that the Nine might make greater progress towards agreeing common measures to save energy and develop alternative energy sources, but it is very much an open question whether these measures—even combined with the effect of economic recession—will be enough to stave off the effects of higher real oil prices, particularly if some OPEC producers continue to cut back output.

Even that cannot, with confidence, be said for unemployment. There may, in 1980, be faster progress in the Community towards a shorter working week. But the fate of Europe's unemployed—and there may be more than 10 million of them—will depend more on what happens in the world economy than on any specific decision of either national governments or the Council of Ministers.

All in all, then, there is a good case for staying warm in bed until New Year 1981. On the other hand, the testing times ahead—not just in 1980 but well into the new decade—will, above all, be a testing time for the dynamism, even the very viability, of the Community. It could prove sorely testing for the Commission, which enters the final leg of its four-year term of office. It will be challenging for the newly-awakened European Parliament. However gloomy 1980 may prove to be, it is most unlikely to go down in history as a dull year.

John Palmer
European Editor
of the Guardian

CONSUMERS

The comparative cost of topping up your thirsty tank

The Danes have the dubious honour of having to pay more for their petrol than any other drivers in the European Community. Compared to them, the Luxembourg driver can count his blessings.

As *Euroforum* went to press, the French were almost as badly off as the stoical Danes and several sous ahead of the Belgians, the Italians, the Dutch, the Germans, the Irish and the British.



However, when it comes to finding out who is responsible for the discrepancies, the picture changes hue. The taxman, while active everywhere, plays his role with differing zeal from country to country.

He is most active of all in Italy, where his take represents 66% of the price of premium petrol at the pump. The most lenient is the Irish government, which snaps up only 43%. The Danish VAT is 62%, the French 62%, the Belgian 57%, the Dutch 54%, the German 52%, the Luxemburger 43% and the British 44%.

IN BRIEF

Upward curve

Consumer prices in the Community rose by almost 12 points last year, according to figures released recently by the European Commission. Taking 1975 as a base of 100, the year began at 137.8 and finished at 149.2.

ENVIRONMENT

Cleaning up the Rhine's pollution: is there a European solution?

'If you want photos developed, throw them in the Rhine'. This is a common joke in the Netherlands, according to a Dutch member of the European Parliament, Johanne Maij-Weggen.

Mrs Maij-Weggen of the European People's Party was just one of the parliamentarians who has some wry but bitter comments to make recently on the state of pollution of Europe's premier waterway which has been a subject of concern for a number of years.

Another member, European Democrat (British Conservative) Stanley Johnson, who before his election last June used to work in the European Commission's Environmental Protection Service, offered the chamber his 'Ode to Cologne', one line of which runs: 'What power divine would cleanse the Rhine?'.

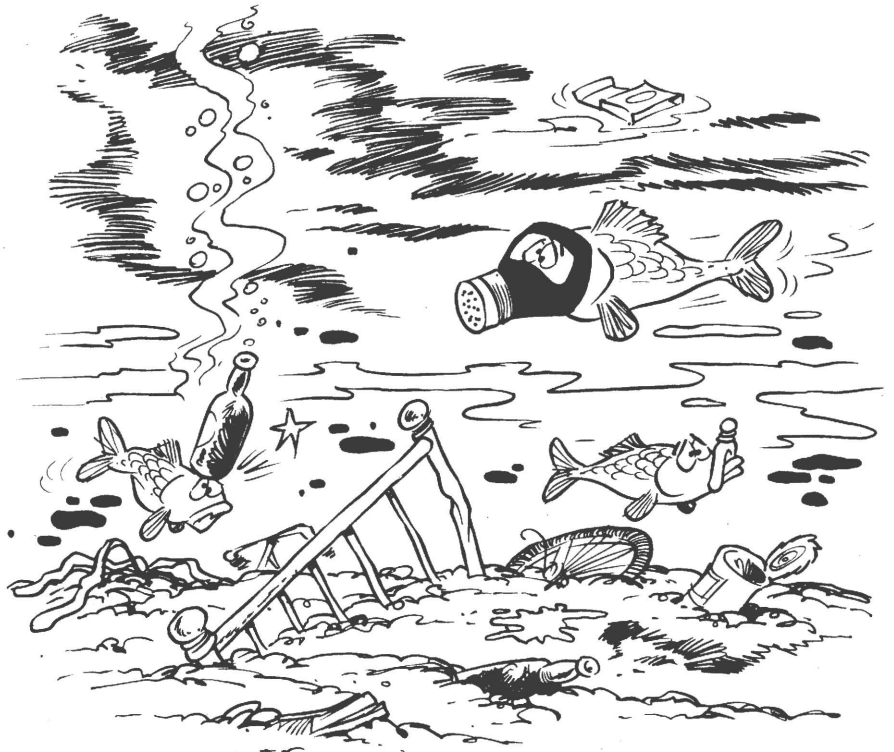
The reason for their wrath was the failure of the French National Assembly to ratify a five-nation treaty to control pollution of the river which was signed three years ago by its riparian states—France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, along with Luxembourg.

The Parliaments of the other four countries gave their backing to the treaty a year ago, but the French parliament has not so far been asked to ratify it.

One of the major sources of the pollution is the dumping of salt waste into the river from a number of potash mines in Alsace. This is then carried down-river through the two countries which own the longest stretches of the river, Germany and then the Netherlands where the people depend on the Rhine for almost three-quarters of their drinking water.

The river is also an important source of supply for both countries' horticulture industries, especially in the Netherlands whose tulips and other blooms are justifiably world famous.

Mrs Maij-Weggen claimed that the river, which is due to be linked by a canal to the Rhone, thus opening up a European artery stretching from the



North Sea to the Mediterranean, was slowly dying of poisoning from mercury, cadmium, lead and chlorides.

She asserted that, of the 12 million tonnes of chloride dumped in the Rhine, 40% came from France and it was the other riparian states which suffered the consequences. She added that these states would gladly pay to help the French resolve their disposal problems.

The Dutch Parliament has adopted a motion calling on France to take immediate steps to cut down on salt discharges into the Rhine. The motion emphasized the importance of the Rhine in supplying drinking water for 20 million people, as well as for the Dutch horticulture and agriculture industries.

Dutch Liberal Cornelis Berkhouwer, a former President of the Parliament, demanded to know why the convention had not been submitted for ratification to the French National Assembly. And he urged that the time had come for legislation to protect all of Europe's waterways.

The French case was argued, among others, by a Communist member, Francis Wurtz, who asserted firstly that it was matter for the French government and, secondly, that the main pollution of the river was being caused by chemical firms in Germany and Switzerland.

He also claimed that suggestions that the French government should make arrangements to make salt from the potash waste were unrealistic because the salt industry was controlled by a European cartel of salt manufacturers! The motion, before the Parliament which provoked the debate was proposed by a Dutch Socialist, Hemmo Mintingh. It urged that the French Parliament ratify the convention and was endorsed by 22 members of the house.

Learning about food

The European Commission is to organise a symposium in London in March on nutrition, food technology and nutritional information. To date, Commission action in this area has concentrated mainly on the toxicological problems arising during food production and industrial processing. Now the time has come to concentrate on the nutritional quality of products and to give consumers more information.



Lethal aerosols must find a new form of spray power

The European Community's Environment Ministers have agreed to oblige the manufacturers of aerosols to cut by one-third the amount of a suspect substance they use as a propellant.

The reason is that chlorofluorocarbons, which are used by a large number of manufacturers to make sure your hair spray or shaving cream leave the can with sufficient velocity, may be causing irreparable damage to the earth's atmosphere.

Many scientists believe that these gases—CFCs for those who have to talk about them every day—are stripping away the ozone layer which surrounds the earth to protect us from the effects of ultraviolet radiation.

Following increasing concern about the future of the human race being put in jeopardy by one of its own seemingly simple inventions, the nine Ministers have agreed to instruct their aerosol manufacturers to reduce by at least 30% by the end of next year the amount of CFCs they use as a propellant.

In the meantime, further scientific examinations will be carried out in an effort to discover just how dangerous these gases are and the position will be reviewed in June, 1981.

It should be noted that the scientific evidence regarding their threat to human health has not so far been conclusive.

As a precaution, however, the nine governments will instruct their industries not to produce any more of the gases than they are manufacturing at present.

In a second measure designed to make our environment healthier, the Ministers set standards for the amount of sulphur dioxide and suspended particles in the atmosphere in cities.

However, they put off a decision on a proposal from the European Commission to set a limit on the amount of lead per cubic metre of air that should be permitted.

IN BRIEF

Hi-fi fine

One of Europe's biggest distributors of hi-fi equipment, Pioneer Electronic Europe, and three associated companies have been fined a massive £4.5 million by the European Commission for operating an agreement that effectively reduced consumer choice and resulted in price distortions. It is the biggest single fine imposed to date by the Commission, which is responsible for ensuring fair trade throughout the Community.

ENERGY

Eurocrats show they can practise what they preach

The European Commission has been playing a prominent role in persuading Community citizens to conserve energy. But are these Brussels boffins as enthusiastic when it comes to applying their advice to themselves?

If the first five months of last year were to be the criterion, the answer would probably be 'no'. In all but April the 5 000 inhabitants of the Berlaymont, the Commission's main office block in the Belgian capital, consistently used up more energy per month than they did in 1978, with the single exception of April.

However, in June a new energy manager was appointed to find ways of cutting down on the amount of energy used to supply heating, air-conditioning and light to the 13-storey glass and steel building.

Result? The increase in the use of energy in the first five months of the year of a mean 5% was turned around to a saving of 24% in June. After a slight faltering in steamy July, when the demands of the air-conditioning units kept the saving down to 16%, the cuts in consumption grew more dramatic month-by-month—31% in August, 34% in September and 35% in October!

In a separate conservation exercise, the Eurocrats are mounting 'Operation Eurolift' which is a system of car-sharing. Within a few days of its announcement, several hundred members of the Commission staff had joined up.

Space problems

The European Space Agency will hold a seminar entitled 'The economic effects of space and other advanced technologies' in Strasbourg on April 28-30. It will bring together for the first time in Europe economists, forecasters and technologists in government research establishments, universities, the sciences and industry from Europe, the US and elsewhere. Details from the Agency, 8-10 rue Mario Nikis, F-75738 Paris, Cedex 15.



5 peas in the pod are worth...?

How many peas should there be in a pod before it can be classified as a luxury product deserving of a place on the best European tables?

Indeed, is it even necessary that there should be a minimum number of the said succulent items in a pod to ensure that the housewife is buying quality?

And an even more difficult poser: how does the farmer know how many peas are in each of his pods without opening them to find out?

Before hordes of readers who fancy themselves as inventors start beating a path to the Community's Patent Office, let us hasten to say that the matter has been disposed of without any peas being split.

The question of quality related to quantity, as well as the doubtful dilemma of the pea farmer, was brought to the notice of the European Commission, which has its own problems in the agricultural field, by a preoccupied British Conservative member of the European Parliament, Lord O'Hagan.

Euroforum readers will recall that it was the same noble lord who had more than a few well-chosen words

to say recently about what he called 'Eurobabble' or Community jargon.

The Commission explained to him that what he had heard was true: quality standards for peas, not only in the Community but in international trade in general, do indeed specify that Grade I should have at least five peas per pod.

It pointed out that it was generally found that consumers expected, not surprisingly, to find a reasonable number of peas in pods marketed as a better class product.

And what of the farmer alone in his field at harvest-time worrying whether that crucial fifth pea is in there or not?

Quite simple, it seems, for our green-fingered friends. 'Growers are aware from experience with the varieties cultivated when the necessary size and maturity is reached to ensure this minimum,' say the Commission experts.

Now you know!

Life down on the farm is losing its attraction

Wages of farm workers are increasing steadily throughout the European Community. Yet, the number of people willing to work on farms is steadily declining.

This trend continued in 1978, for which *Eurostat*, the Community's Statistical Office publication, has just drawn up figures on the employment situation in agriculture.

The biggest gains in 1978 were made by Irish farmhands, whose real wages increased by 7.6%, a reflection of the benefits which Irish agriculture has derived from the increased prices it enjoys under the Common Agricultural Policy.

The least progress was made by the Belgians, whose pay packets bulged by only an additional 1.1%. The rest of the table reads: Germany (5.7%), Italy (5.6%), Luxembourg (5.1%), France and the United Kingdom (4.5%), the Netherlands (3.8%) and Denmark (2.1%).

In every single Member State, workers were better off on larger farms. The worst-paid were on farms with only one or two hands, and the best on farms employing more than 10.

A matter of taste

Not everyone could look a horse steak in the mouth but, for many Europeans, there is no other meat like it. In some countries, specialist butchers abound.

Although less than 1% of all the meat produced in the Community comes from the horse, quite a substantial amount is eaten. In fact, production is not able to keep pace with demand and three-quarters of the horsemeat sold is imported.

Consumption is also rising. In 1975, 228 000 tonnes were consumed. In 1978 the figure rose to 247 000 tonnes. Of this, 184 000 tonnes had to be imported.

So who accounts for this taste? Far and away the biggest eaters of horsemeat are the Belgians and Luxembourgers who, although they make up only one-twenty-sixth part of the total Community population managed to consume one-sixth of all the horsemeat.

At the other end of the scale is Ireland, where no horsemeat is eaten. In between, in order of appetite, come the Dutch, the French, the Italians, the Germans, the Danes and the British.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

No longer any need to stand up and be counted

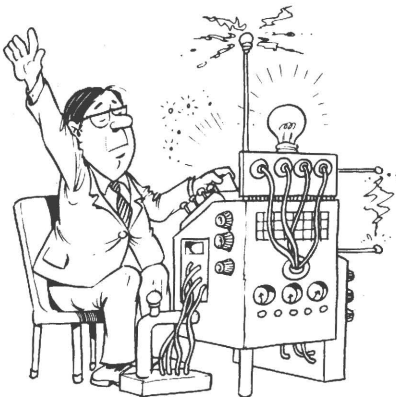
The European Parliament has installed an electronic voting system which can reveal within minutes the outcome of every vote and will, it is estimated, save as much as 80% of the time the Parliament devotes to voting in the traditional manner.

The system, supplied by Olivetti, offers members a choice of three buttons on a console on their desks: one for yes, one for no and a third to record an abstention.

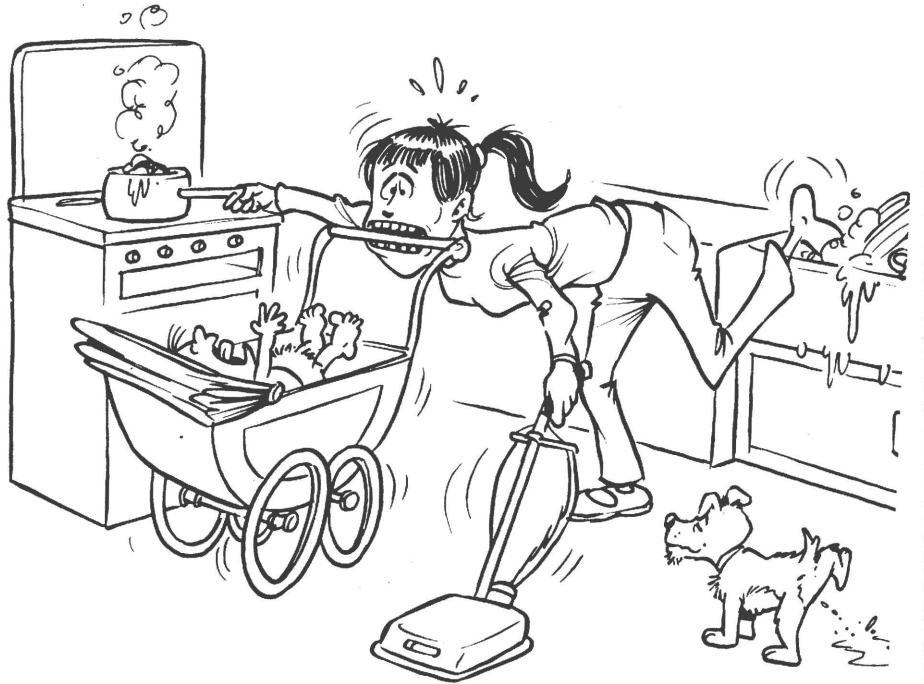
A computer then performs an immediate count, checking for any irregularities (e.g. each member has to insert his or her own personal plastic identity card into the console, so that a member who votes from another's seat will not have the vote registered) and will transmit the results on a video on the President's table and on illuminated panels visible all over the hemicycle chamber. It will also print a report of the voting.

The system can handle 17 different types of voting operation (according, for example, to the voting procedure used or the type of majority required for a particular vote by the rules of procedure). It can also trace out a plan of the chamber on the President's video showing the distribution of the vote.

A similar system is to be installed in the Parliament's chamber in Luxembourg, where it normally holds about half of its sessions.



SOCIAL AFFAIRS



Ensuring greater protection for the au pair

To many young girls the concept of the au pair has been a godsend. It has enabled them to go abroad and study a foreign language and the culture of another country and at the same time earn some pocket-money in return for relatively little work.

That, at any rate, is the theory. In practice, many return home disillusioned, having been exploited by their hosts who have used them as cut-price maids and nannies.

As much as a decade ago the Council of Europe recognized these double standards and sponsored a European agreement on the employment of au pairs which was open for signature and ratification at the end of 1969.

Dutch Socialist Piet Dankert has been elected a Vice-President of the European Parliament in succession to another Dutch Socialist, Mr Anne Vondeling, who was killed in a car crash in November.

European Community Member States, all of whom also belong to the Council of Europe, are, sad to say, dragging their heels on putting the theory into practice.

In the European Parliament recently, the European Commission revealed that, to date, only three of the Nine—Denmark, France and Italy—have ratified the agreement. Three more—Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg—have signed it but have not yet ratified it, which means that they are not implementing it. The other three Member States—Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom—have done neither.

This state of affairs came to light when a French Liberal member of the Parliament, Madame Marie-Jane Pruvot, asked the Commission if it intended to introduce Community legislation to prevent abuses because of the failure of some Community Member States to sign or ratify the agreement.

The Commission undertook to ask the Member States which had not already done so to ratify the agreement. It said that once this had been done it was satisfied that the Council of Europe would be in a position to ensure its proper implementation.

Forum draws up balance sheet after first year

The first anniversary is always a suitable moment for making a progress report.

The European Community's Youth Forum, which was officially launched in June 1978, recently held its first General Assembly at the Manhattan Centre in Brussels. It was attended by 150 delegates from the national committees of the nine Member States and more than 20 international youth organizations. The atmosphere was both serious and relaxed.

It all started over 10 years ago. Do you remember May 1968 when the students took to the streets in order to express their views? Society was shaken to the core. Order was eventually restored. But the ideas were not forgotten and were taken up quietly but none the less effectively.

As a result the Heads of State and Governments of the Community decided at The Hague in 1969 to involve young people more closely in building a united Europe. The idea of a European Youth Forum was born.

However the Council of Ministers had many doubts. It took a great deal of persuasion from the European Commission, supported by the Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, before funds of £30 000 were approved in 1976 for creating a temporary secretariat.

By 1979 the Commission was providing over £220 000. This was mostly used to install and maintain a permanent secretariat of four people. The Forum also consists of a General Assembly, an Executive Committee and three Permanent Committees.

The Forum acts as a political platform for youth organizations to express their views to the institutions of the European Community. Its breadth of membership gives it much weight. Its members include the Young Christian Workers, Euroscouts, International Nature Lovers and the European Trades Union Confederation.

While this wide range of views may sometimes lead to heated debates on subjects such as South Africa, action is only taken when there is a large majority in favour.

On one point everyone is agreed: the Forum should not limit itself only to youth questions. As the Secretary General Gilbert Veron told Euroforum: 'Young people are interested in all subjects and the Forum should be similarly wide ranging.'

The Forum's three permanent committees cover political, social and cultural questions. The General Assembly discussed reports from the three committees.



The political committee said that the present Lomé Convention was too discriminatory and should be enlarged. It also urged the Community to break trade, military and diplomatic links with South Africa.

The social committee suggested changes to the Community's second programme of exchanges for young workers. It also said that aid given by the Social Fund in creating jobs for young people was inadequate and of the wrong kind.

The cultural committee adopted motions on the International Year of the Child, the Education Ministers Council meeting and illiteracy. The European Commission will have studies carried out on some of these problems.

The Forum is preparing a charter on the rights of young people between 15 and 21 years. It will cover civil, penal

and social rights and will attempt to remove the inequalities existing within the Community.

The Forum can thus be moderately satisfied with its first year's activities. However, the General Assembly asked whether the views of the Forum had any practical impact. It demanded that the European Commission recognize three basic rights for the Forum and the young people it represents—those of initiative, information and consultation.

The latter two demands present problems. If the Forum is not informed early enough about the Commission's plans then it does not have time to prepare and present its opinion before decisions are taken.

As for systematic consultations, this privilege is only granted under the treaties to the Economic and Social Committee and the Parliament.

At the moment relations between the Commission and the Forum are managed by the Social Partners Office, which is part of the Commission's General Secretariat. Contacts have also been held with various services of the European Commission. The Forum also has special links with the Parliament's committee on 'Youth, education, culture, sport and information' chaired by Mr Pedini and had a formal meeting with it just before Christmas.

In his report to the General Assembly Mr Christian Koutzine, President of the Forum, said, 'In 1980 the Forum should consolidate its relations with the European Community's institution.'

Mr Koutzine spoke just after the President of the European Commission(Roy Jenkins had congratulated the Forum on its good start. Mr Jenkins urged the Forum to fix longer-term objectives. He also spoke about the three main challenges facing Europe: energy, demographical problems and the rapid development of advanced technology.

However Gilbert Veron, when asked which is the main challenge to youth in the 1980s, replied without hesitation, 'The main problems, which are inseparable, are the training and employment of young people. Everything must be done to guarantee young people the right to work.'

THE BUDGET

Community spending frozen: so what happens next?

The European Community has, as things stand at the moment, little cause to ring in the New Year with much enthusiasm. Like Old Mother Hubbard, the cupboard is bare. At least the budget shelf.

In its final session just before Christmas, the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly to block the 1980 Community budget following a protracted battle with the Council of Ministers over both its size and Parliament's right of control.

The result of the rejection, by 288 votes to 64 with one abstention, is that the European Commission, which is charged with implementing Community policy and is therefore in charge of spending, must get by on a month-to-month basis with the same amount of money it had available to it last year.

Since the original preliminary draft budget for 1980 proposed by the Commission was, at around £11 700 million, 22% higher than the 1979 figure, and was still a considerable increase on last year even after being pared back by the Council of Ministers, the development of agreed Community policies is bound to suffer.

What happens next? At a press conference given immediately after the

vote in the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg, Mr Erwin Lange, the chairman of the Parliament's budget committee, which had recommended rejection to the 410 members, made it clear that the initiative in finding a solution lay with the Council of Ministers.

The budgetary procedure, which we described in Euroforum 19/79, has now started all over again with the Council asking the Commission to propose a new preliminary draft budget.

However, as the budgetary procedure is very long drawn-out—it normally lasts about six months—Community spending will in the meantime be pegged at last year's level.

The unknown factor at this stage is the degree to which the Council is prepared to meet the conditions imposed by the Parliament for its acceptance of the budget as it finally emerges from the Council.

One point at issue is, of course, the Council's refusal to accept the Parliament's suggestions for the restoration, in whole or in part, of sums proposed by the Commission which the Council cut. An example was the Parliament's demand that the Council would commit an additional £605 million to regional development spending. The Council was prepared to offer only £128 million.

The second major bone of contention is the question of parliamentary control of Community spending. The major points at issue here are two important sources of Community revenue and expenditure, the European Development Fund and the so-called 'Ortoli facility'.

The first is a Fund of just under £3 000 million for helping the 58 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific who are signatories with the Community of the Lomé Convention. The Fund is financed by direct contributions from the nine Member States and, since it is not included in the Community budget is not subject to the Parliament's formal control.

The Ortoli facility is a mechanism whereby the Community uses its creditworthiness to raise loans on the open market for on-lending to help Community industries in difficulty. Again, this money is not included in the budget.

The willingness, or lack of it, on the part of the Council on these key issues will decide whether, and how soon, the Community will have a new budget.

TRANSPORT

Community's skies will be quieter in the future

A major step towards reducing the noise created by aircraft has been taken by the European Community's transport Ministers.

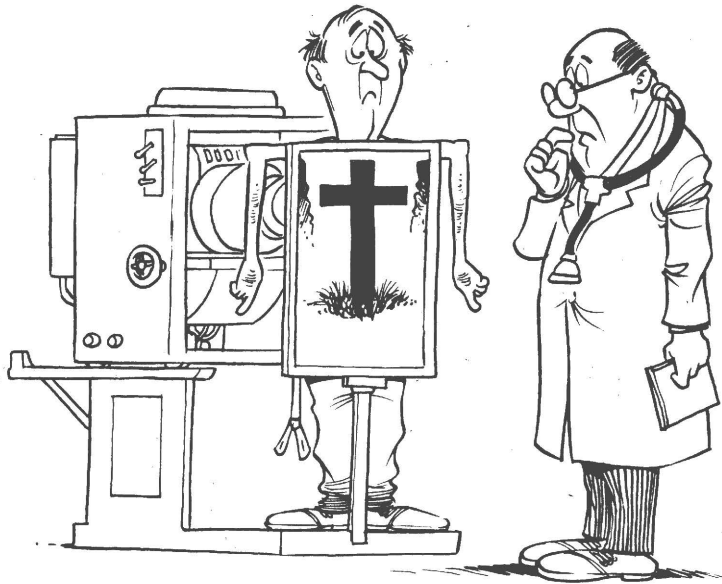
They agreed at a meeting in Brussels on arrangements fixing the permitted noise level of subsonic aircraft. Newly-registered aircraft will have to conform immediately while aircraft already on the registers can continue to fly until a deadline of December 1986.

A two-year period of grace will be allowed to airlines which can show that they have suitable plans to replace their noisy aircraft with planes conforming to the most stringent noise standards.

Once these deadlines have been passed, the registration of a subsonic civil aircraft will be subject to possession of a 'noise' certificate. These certificates will only be granted to aircraft complying with specifications at least equivalent to the standards fixed by the Chicago Convention of International Civil Aviation.

Profile of the Budget vote

	For	Against	Abstention	Absent	Total
Socialists	92	4	1	16	113
Christian Democrats	86	6	—	15	107
European Democrats	60	2	—	2	64
Communists	21	13	—	10	44
Liberals	15	15	—	10	40
European Progressive Democrats	—	19	—	3	22
Technical Coordination Group	6	5	—	—	11
Independents	8	—	—	1	9
TOTAL	288	64	1	57	410



Radiation protection: a suitable case for treatment

One of the greatest preoccupations of modern man is the danger of nuclear leakages or fall-out. Potential disasters like Three Mile Island serve to remind us constantly of our vulnerability to radiation exposure.

It has long been established, of course, that all of us are exposed to a certain amount of what is known as natural background radiation, that is radiation which exists in the atmosphere and which would be of killer quality were it not for the ozone layer which clothes our globe in a protective sheath.

However, we must also contend with non-natural radiation, and this can come in many forms, the most obvious of which are waste from the nuclear industry or fall-out from nuclear explosions. Less obvious examples are consumer goods which contain radioactive substances in small degrees, and doses received by workers who are occupationally exposed to ionizing radiation.

But, ironically, the bulk of non-natural exposure comes from a quarter where we would be entitled to expect the opposite, the medical profession or, more specifically, radiologists who X-ray us.

This is a riddle researchers have been trying to solve without success for a number of years and, until now, the

only solution legislators have been able to come up with has been to try to limit as far as possible our exposure to this type of radiation.

In 1976 the European Community Member States, following work carried out by the International Commission on Radiological Protection which outlined the principles, involved, agreed on what constituted basic safety standards.

Now, the European Commission has drawn up a proposal for implementing these standards throughout the Community which it hopes the Council of Ministers will adopt quickly.

In its proposal, the Commission acknowledges that ionizing radiation has enabled very great progress to be made in the diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive aspects of medicine, and that new techniques of potential value are being developed, notably in nuclear medicine, high energy therapy and the use of computerized diagnosis.

Nevertheless, it believes that, while ionizing radiation has its uses under proper supervision, there is a need to reduce the amount of unnecessary exposure of patients to it, and that all examinations involving it should be avoided where the need for it is not established.

The Commission also points out that the elimination of excessive exposure to radiation could result in considerable savings on social security payments as well as protecting the health of the general public, in addition to

doctors, nurses and other personnel who are constantly exposed to it during their working day.

A short sound tape on the Commission's radiation protection programme is available to broadcasters. Euroforum will be happy to pass on requests to our audio-visual division.

Community helps finance fight against cancer

The increasingly active support being given by the European Community to the fight against cancer was stressed by Research Commissioner Guido Brunner in Brussels recently.

Mr Brunner was speaking at a gala to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Institut Bordet which has played an important role in Europe's anti-cancer research since its foundation in 1925.

Mr Brunner outlined the Community's current research programme in the field of radiation protection which costs £25 million and to a new programme now before the Council of Ministers which proposes expenditure of over £44 million. This research concerns such matters as the effects of radiation, as well as work on bone marrow transplantation.

In addition, the Commission has signed an agreement with the European Organization for Research on the Treatment of Cancer, supporting a data bank which will give Europe computer access to one of the most advanced systems of information collection and evaluation in the world.

The Commission has given £130 000 over the next two years to the data centre which will gather information from 150 hospitals and will include half a million separate items of biological and clinical information.

Mobile delivery

Midwives will be able to help deliver babies anywhere in the Community within three years following a decision by the Council of Ministers just before Christmas. The agreement enables midwives who are Community citizens and who hold recognized national qualifications to practise in any other Member State of their choice. It follows similar arrangements for other professions, such as doctors and lawyers.



Community support for charter of patient's rights

An idea for a European Charter of Rights of Hospital Patients, proposed by the Community's Hospitals Committee, has won support from the European Commission.

The Charter, which seeks to ensure for the patient such care and consideration as are consistent with human dignity (which could be interpreted as a rather barbed reference to the standard of hospital cooking) and the right to refuse to go under the surgeon's eager blade, was first suggested at 'Interhospital 1979', the largest international hospital 'trade fair'.

Other rights covered by the proposed charter are:

- the right to appropriate hospital treatment;
- the right to accept or to refuse any method of diagnosis or treatment;
- the right of the patient to be informed of any important matter concerning his or her state of health;
- the right to be fully informed of the risks involved in acting as a guinea pig for untried methods of diagnosis or treatment;
- the right to as much privacy as accommodation and other facilities allow;
- the right of the patient to respect and consideration of his or her religious and philosophical convictions.

The Commission has endorsed the general objectives of the charter, and

is currently considering whether it would be appropriate to carry out a study into relations between patients and doctors, hospitals and social security systems, bearing in mind cross-frontier mobility.

THIRD WORLD

Departure of Amin opens way for new aid to Uganda

Since the fall of President Idi Amin's regime early last year the flow of European Community aid into Uganda has been resumed.

During the eight-year Amin regime Community and other international aid was frozen because of the violation of human rights in Uganda.

During the same period, the economy deteriorated to a critical state due to the domestic political upheavals, lack of investment and departure of nearly all skilled manpower.

A fresh start in tackling Uganda's economic and financial problems was made when the World Bank consultative committee on Uganda met recently in Paris for the first time in 10 years.

The meeting was attended by representatives of western governments and banks, including representatives of the

European Community. The participants agreed to assist Uganda's programme for economic reconstruction and modernization. They also agreed to help Uganda overcome problems caused by inflation, the black market and lack of internal security.

The Community, which is Uganda's largest aid donor, outlined the aid it plans to give over the next 12 months as well as what it has already given.

The Community is considering a £33 million aid package to help restore the main sectors of the Ugandan economy. This would follow the £12 million short-term programme agreed last July. The aid was intended to cover urgent needs such as water supplies, electricity, road repairs and farm equipment.

Both the short and medium term programmes are being financed under the Lomé Convention.

The Community has made two grants of emergency aid totalling £335 000. In April, it provided aid to purchase basic foodstuffs and medical supplies. In July it provided further medical assistance via the African Medical and Research Foundation to purchase drugs, vaccines and other medical equipment.

Since April the Community has delivered a substantial amount of food aid. This has included 400 tonnes of cereals, 950 tonnes of milk powder and 300 tonnes of butter-oil.

IN BRIEF

Safer investment

If you like to dabble in stocks and shares you will soon be able to do so with more confidence. By around the middle of 1982 firms which wish to be admitted to a stock exchange listing will be required to meet Community standards on the information they give to the public.

Another 'out' call

Despite opposition from pro-market-teers, including former Prime Minister James Callaghan, the British Labour Party's National Executive has called on Mrs Thatcher's government to stop contributing Community taxes, to stop sending Ministers to Council of Ministers meetings and to study the options to continued British membership of the Community.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Sparring partners in pursuit of a common interest

One of the more interesting developments in the European Community's external relations in recent years has been its round of talks with the Soviet bloc Comecon. In this article, American journalist Max van Dyke explains what is at stake and the present state of play.

Despite the current tension between the nations of East and West Europe over NATO's plans to deploy new nuclear missiles aimed at Soviet territory, both sides are trying to open wider the door to detente.

The vehicle being used to do this is not the usual imbroglio of conferences on disarmament and arms limitations. It is negotiation on normalising economic relations between two of the world's important trading groups—the European Community and the Council for Mutual Economic Cooperation, otherwise known as Comecon. The most recent round of talks was held in November in Moscow.

This current dialogue has come a long way since the first hesitant contact was made in July 1973. It was then that Comecon approached the Community and said it wanted to establish contact with it. It expressed the desire to strengthen detente and cooperation through contacts with the Community and suggested the two sides meet to discuss the scope and content of future talks.

Following this, there has been a series of exchanges during which the two sides have attempted to understand the other's competences and functions, many times with frustrating results. Eventually formal negotiations got under way at a meeting in Moscow in May 1978, despite the fact that Comecon did not—and still does not—formally recognize the Community.

This opening round on normalising relations was held between Commis-

Comecon consists of the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Mongolia and Cuba. Albania is no longer an active member. Yugoslavia has observer status.

sion Vice-President for External Relations Wilhelm Haferkamp and Comecon Secretary Nikolai Fadeyev. They have met twice since then, once in Brussels in November 1978, and again in Moscow this past November. Progress has been made, albeit slow and disjointed.

The negotiations are based on two draft agreements, one set forth by the Community, the other by Comecon. The two texts differ considerably. The Comecon draft is unacceptable to the Community basically because it fails to recognize the division of powers between the Community institutions and the nine Member States.

Although there has been a vague acknowledgement in the talks that each side would respect each other's aims, functions, structural composition, and institutional rules, these fundamental differences must in future be clearly spelled out and fully accepted by each party before negotiations can be fruitful.

The Comecon draft also contains suggestions emphasizing trade between the two groups and proposals touching on other aspects of economic cooperation. Mr Haferkamp told Mr Fadeyev at one of their early meetings that the Comecon draft departs from basic criteria for negotiations on a number of essential points. He noted that many of the articles in the Comecon draft would not be compatible with the Community's institutional rules.

However, the major obstacle to real progress is the difference in the fundamental positions of the two organizations concerning negotiations on trade. Comecon persists in demanding that any overall framework cooperation agreement of the type under consideration to normalise economic relations must include arrangements for trade between the two groups. It insists that it and the Community negotiate trade questions together with other areas of economic working relations.

The Community is willing to negotiate such working vehicles for economic cooperation as exchanging economic data and forecasts, studies on transport problems, environmental questions, and various improvements in the conditions of economic and commercial cooperation. Comecon has even proposed similar areas for discussion.

But the Community firmly refuses to negotiate trade questions with Comecon as a trading unit. It main-

tains that Comecon agencies as they are now constituted have insufficient powers to conclude agreements on behalf of Comecon members collectively. It says Comecon is not an economic organization with a common trade policy such as the Community has. It sees Comecon as merely a coordinating economic group with trade policies vested in its member governments.

Because of this, the Community insists that any agreement on trade cannot be incorporated in an overall cooperation agreement, but must be concluded between it and the individual Comecon member states separately.

Despite the conflicting positions of the two groups, there is a desire on both sides to seek a way out of the labyrinth. This was demonstrated at the last Haferkamp-Fadeyev meeting in November. The Community, anxious for progress, went to that round with new concessions to Comecon's demands.

Among them was an attempt to meet Comecon's insistence on the trade aspect of an overall agreement. The Community agreed to mention in a new revised preamble to its draft the importance of trade between the two sides. It also revised an article which now states that the two parties would pledge to work for and develop trade between them, and emphasizes that no Comecon member is obliged to carry out trade negotiations with the Community if it does not want to.

Another concession was the Community's agreement to a Comecon demand for acknowledgement of the economic principles of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act (on European security cooperation) in any overall agreement.

It also said it was willing to define the principles on which economic working relations between the Community and Comecon would be based, rather than merely stating in the agreement that the two sides agree to set up working relations.

Comecon did not give a formal response to the new Community proposals, and is not expected to until after its Executive Committee examines them this month. Mr Fadeyev and his delegation, however, gave the impression that they were rather surprised by the new concessions and recognized that the Community was seriously attempting to improve its negotiating offers.



THE NEWS AT A GLANCE

Foreign fields

An agreement has been signed by the European Commission with a number of youth organizations to provide Community finance for a programme of exchange of young workers. This is the second such programme devised to enable young workers to study and work in another Member State. Courses can last anywhere between three weeks and eight months.

New link

The Nine have approved an economic and commercial cooperation agreement which the European Commission has negotiated over the past 12 months with Asean, the Association of South-East Asian Nations. Asean groups Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines.

Going live

Euronet, the new European computerized information network, is now open for free customer access. This free service will be available during an introductory period. Potential users can contact Euronet, Jean Monnet Building, B4009, Commission of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

Musical date

During the Christmas holidays a British member of the European Parliament, Richard Balfe, was busily collecting signatures for a resolution suggesting that 1985 be declared European Music Year, primarily to celebrate the tercentenary of the births of Handel, Johann Sebastian Bach and Scarlatti.

By the lagoon

The next world economic summit—the sixth since 1975—is to be held in Venice in June. It will be chaired by the Italian Prime Minister who is currently President of the European Council. It will also be attended by the government leaders of the United Kingdom, Germany and France, the United States, Canada and Japan. Commission President Roy Jenkins will represent the Community interest.

Green light

The Council of Ministers has given the Commission the go-ahead for a climatological study costing just over £5 million during the next five years (details in *Euroforum* 20/79).

Learning anew

Worker retraining grants worth just over £400 million were approved last month from the Community's Social Fund.

Into the Eighties

The Community and its Member States have signed the agreements resulting from the Multilateral Trade Negotiations which have been conducted under the auspices of GATT. They are designed to regulate world trade during this decade.

Using energy wisely

The European Commission is to launch a major campaign designed to save energy. This is a follow-up to a report by a group of experts which concluded that the transition to energy efficiency will provide a large part of the dynamic for renewed economic growth. Among the follow-up projects are public information campaigns, the possible organisation of a trade fair based on the theme of 'the post-oil world', as well as proposals for the regular monitoring of energy pricing and taxation policies and the development of a technology data bank and information system linking the Nine.

Full-speed ahead

The Canadian Energy Bus we talked about last month (*Euroforum* 19/79) is on the road in several Community Member States this month. It is accompanied by Canadian experts who are demonstrating its energy-saving potential to government representatives, industrialists and technicians. An agreement was signed last month by the Canadian government and the European Commission to develop the Energy Bus idea.

By-line boost

An Italian, Ezio Bazino, and a German, Klaus Schöndube, have been jointly awarded the 1979 European Journalism Prize. It was presented to them by European Commission member, Raymond Vouel during the Association of European Journalists' annual congress in Luxembourg last month.

Protecting workers

The European Commission has sent the Council of Ministers a proposal designed to limit the exposure of workers to lead and its ionizing compounds at work. About 1 million workers would benefit.

Health protection

The Council of Ministers has approved a Commission proposal for a five-year Community research programme on protection against radiation. The budget fixed was almost £37 million though this has to receive the approval of the European Parliament.

Unemployment static

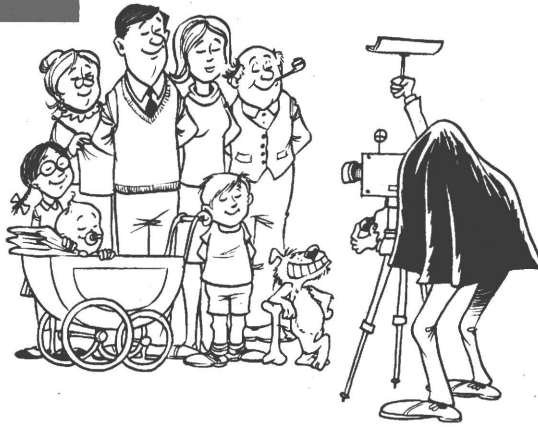
Just over six million people were without jobs in the Community in November. This represented 5.6% of the total civilian working population, the same as for the previous month and little or no change from November, 1978.

Keeping track

The Community's Fishery Ministers have agreed to a system of reporting fish catches which will be brought into operation early this year. However, agreement on an overall Community policy to manage and regulate fishing catches and conditions in its territorial waters, which has been under discussion for two years, still eludes them.

Food cost factor

One reason that food prices continue to rise is the cost to the farmer of the fertiliser he needs to keep up his production. Recent figures show that his bill rose by an average of more than 12% a year over the past five years.



Plea for a Community policy to favour the family

"Children are the future", Joseph Gilles, President of COFACE, the Committee of Family Organisations in the European Community, pointed out recently.

"A Europe which is 'children not admitted' (to borrow a phrase from the cinemas) is a Europe without a future", he believes. And, as last year was celebrated as the International Year of the Child, COFACE hopes the European Community will take the message to heart.

Some time ago the Commission published a booklet called "The Little Citizens of Europe" (*Euroforum* 5/79) showing what progress has been made so far in helping the Community's children: by supporting family and child-oriented projects in its Anti-Poverty Programme, for example, or in the field of education, especially at a nursery level; help for handicapped children and the children of migrant workers; and, in particular, concern for the young unemployed. (The booklet, by the way, is available free of charge. *Euroforum* will be happy to pass on your request for a copy).

Though it welcomes all these moves, COFACE feels that children and the family still

remain on the fringes of Community policy.

"The 60 million families remain a blank on the map of the Common Market", claims Mr. Gilles, since people still tend to be regarded primarily as producers—born potential producers, living the lives of producers, dying former producers.

Much more could be achieved, feel the members of COFACE, if there were a real political will at a European level to give positive help to children and to the family. They believe the directly-elected European Parliament could play a major part in causing this to happen.

In its action programme called "The Europe of People and Families", COFACE refers to Article 235 of the founding Treaty of Rome,—which empowers the Community to pursue policies not specifically provided for in the Treaty—and calls for the Commission to be asked to put forward a proposal for a Community policy for children and the family. Ministers responsible for family affairs from all Member States should meet periodically to harmonize national policies to further any Commission proposals.

Believing that a stable population is necessary to support all economic and social policies, COFACE also calls for the development of a Community population policy which would respect family values and respond

to the challenge of Europe's declining birthrate.

COFACE points out that there are family aspects to the great problems of the day—the economic crisis, unemployment, and so on—and calls for the Community to widen its horizons to reach the daily lives of men, women and children.

It recommends certain popular social measures like making life easier for handicapped people, or increasing social and cultural activities for migrant families to combat undercurrents of racism.

In addition, it believes that efforts need to be increased to overcome youth unemployment, particularly bearing in mind that this early discouragement will affect a person's whole career.

COFACE also makes a plea for the speedy adoption by the Council of Ministers of Commission proposals on consumer protection at present languishing in the drawer, and calls for the development of consumer courses in schools.

Summing up, COFACE hopes that the Community will take account of the changes in family and working life in our modern world of production-line labour and growing feminism.

It would also like the Community to ensure through practical law-making that "the peaceful revolution we are living through can be a source of progress and happiness for children, women and men".

The doyenne of the European Parliament, Louise Weiss, in her speech opening the first session of the directly-elected assembly last year, said: "The Community Institutions have created European sugar beet, butter and cheese, European wines, veal and even pigs. What they have not created is a European man". COFACE hopes the Europe of trade will pave the way for a Europe of Europeans and their families.

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