

Euroforum



A developing role for the Community. See page 3.

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Euroforum

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CULTURE



A developing role for the Community

What do record pirates, restorers of ancient monuments, painters wanting to cross frontiers with their art, and a television series on the history of cinema have in common? The surprising answer is... the European Community.

One way or another, the Community has been involved in a remarkably wide range of cultural activities recently and, with the enthusiastic backing of the European Parliament, even more is planned for the coming year.

Record and music cassette pirates who reproduce popular music without authorisation may make themselves a lot of money, but the original artist doesn't benefit at all. Harmonization of laws on reproduction rights in all Community Member States makes it much more difficult for pirates to operate. The same applies to anyone else who tries to exploit any artist or his work without giving him his due.

Laws on authors', composers' and dramatists' copyright, public lending rights, and other ways of protecting artists, performers, photographers, authors and translators are all being brought into line within the Community.

For instance, the number of years an author should be paid copyright on his work will soon be the same all over the Community—making everything simpler for all concerned in this age of mass and increasingly international communication.

Tax liability on art works, historic houses, cultural foundations and people working in cultural fields are

likewise being harmonized. There are also measures to make it easier for painters, sculptors and other artists to transport their work from one country to another. Administrative formalities are to be simplified—though at the same time care has to be taken that life isn't also made easier for art thieves!

In the same field, an information exchange system should help actors, musicians and others to find jobs anywhere in the Community—and help prospective employers to find the people they want. Unemployment and illness are particularly grave problems for people in this field, and the Community has supported measures adapting social security systems to their particular needs.

What all these measures have in common is the aim of improving the social and economic situation of those who work in the cultural sphere—a traditionally capricious and insecure occupation where everyone agrees there's plenty of room for improvement. They are direct applications of the Community's founding Treaty of Rome to employment in this sector.

But Community interest in the arts spreads wider than that. As a result of four resolutions by the European Parliament (the latest in June 1979) Community activities have extended to other areas like the development of cultural exchanges, and the conservation of the European architectural heritage.

For instance, conservation work in all Member States is hampered by the lack of craftsmen trained in traditional techniques, so each year some 30 people from all over the Community receive bursary aid from the Community to enable them to get specialised training at centres in Bruges, Rome and Venice.

The Community also supports the work being done by the Grenoble Centre for Nuclear Studies in the new technique of nuclear conservation: a method of preserving stone, marble or wood by radiation. Community support has included information campaigns, professional training and financial aid to help the Centre to make its services more widely available at a price that is not too high.

Then again, in March 1980 the Community is sponsoring (together with the Council of Europe) a 3-day

congress in Brussels on the Architectural Heritage of Europe. Community finance will enable 30 young conservation specialists to attend. And next August, 50 young people from the eight other Community countries will be taking part in conservation work-camps in France—thanks to Community funding.

In a different field altogether, the Community is financing the publication of an 'Artist's Guide', to include practical information on the various measures each Member State has taken to help artists, like the availability of workshops, help in mounting exhibitions, and so on.

Ballet lends itself particularly well to cultural exchanges—it's a medium of expression unaffected by language barriers and particularly appealing to young people. Last summer, the Community offered bursaries enabling choreographers and composers to attend a specialist course in choreography and music. As from this year, the Community is to offer bursary aid to pupils at Maurice Bejart's famous 'Mudra' school in Brussels.

Thanks to financial help from the Community, the University of Urbino in Italy is embarking on an in-depth study on the European dimension of our culture from the Middle Ages to the present day. A wide-ranging and never-before-attempted study is to be published in due course.

Then there is the Community Choir and the Community Youth Orchestra, both of which have for some time involved people from many Community countries and received financial support from Community funds.

A new venture this year is a series of television programmes on the history of European cinema, which has the support of networks in all Community countries. Each country is to contribute a programme on its most representative films, and everyone will then show the whole series. This scheme should work to everyone's advantage: Europeans get a panorama of their cinematic heritage, and the TV companies get 9 programmes for the price of one!

In the field of opera, Community finance will give the Festival of Wiltz in Luxembourg an added boost. The Festival has a regular audience from four Community countries

—Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, and is normally bilingual—German and French. From now on it will be tri-lingual, with the performance every year of an opera in Italian.

Opera, cinema, television, ballet; concerts, museums and historic houses; choirs, orchestras and festivals; research, books, courses, work-camps and information programmes—this is an enormous range of activities. Clearly the interests of the European Community now go far beyond those of just a Common Market.

THE CONSUMER

Those spiralling food prices: are they really out of proportion?

The majority of households spend more on food than on any other single item. It is not surprising, therefore, that when food prices rise the increase can have a significant effect on the family budget.

But although food prices in the European Community are generally high, and although the Common Agricultural Policy is the butt of frequent criticism, it may come as a revelation that, in the Community as a whole, food prices have been rising far less than overall consumer prices.

In 1978, the increase in the cost of food was less than the rise in the consumer price index in six of the nine Member States. The exceptions were the United Kingdom, Ireland and Italy.

Last year, the index for eight of the nine (Italy excluded because the complete figures are so far not available) showed a mean average increase of 4.5%, whereas the same average for food was only 3.7%.

It is also worth pointing out that prices fixed under the CAP are prices paid to the producer and not the price quoted to the housewife in the shops. In the 1978/79 marketing year, the increase in CAP prices averaged only 2.4%.

The rest of the increase was accounted for by the middlemen.

Mr. Ten Per Cent

The consumer price index for the European Community as a whole rose by 0.9% from October to November 1979 (a slight fall on the previous two months), according to figures released recently by the Community's Statistical Office, EUROSTAT.

In some Member States, price increases were higher than the average: in Italy they went up by 1.3%, in Ireland by 3.7% between August and November, in Denmark by 1.2% and in the United Kingdom by 0.9%. In Luxembourg (0.7%), Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands (all 0.4%) prices rises were less marked.

EUROSTAT estimates that the price increase in 1979 as a whole for the Community will prove to have been about 10% compared with 1978, with a clear upward trend obvious throughout the year (8.3% in the first quarter, 8.9% in the second, 10.9% in the third and 12.2% in the fourth compared with the corresponding periods of 1978).

Differences in the rate of price rises between individual Community countries in 1979 remained significant with Germany and the Benelux states at the lower end of the scale (4%-5%), France and Denmark about average with 9.9%-15% and the three less prosperous Member States, Ireland, Italy and the UK suffering increases of between 13% and 15% during the year.

The fatter the cat...

One of the side effects of increased prosperity is that people tend to indulge themselves in more and richer foods. The citizens of Europe are no exception to this general rule.

The trouble is that they are eating too much fat. Their intake of calories from fat increased by 10% between 1955 and 1973, years which have been the subject of a recent survey.

Is there a link between this change of diet and the increase in cardio-vascular diseases? A group of scientists who have been brought together by the European Commission in Brussels would like to see more research carried out in to this worrying aspect of the European lifestyle.

They have also suggested that food labelling should be more informative and should tell the consumer how much fat is contained in packaged foods. In addition, they advocate closer control of advertising extolling supposed virtues of certain products.

BUDGET

New proposals for Community budget ready soon

The European Commission is currently working on new proposals for the Community's budget for 1980 and expects to present these to the Council of Ministers and to the European Parliament on February 13.

In the meantime, as we reported in the last issue of *Euroforum*, the Community is being run from month to month at the same budgetary level as last year.

This follows the rejection by the Parliament at its December session of the final budget as amended by the Council of Ministers which the Parliament judged to be insufficient, particularly as it did not contain many of the amendments called for by the Parliament.

The budgetary procedure normally takes almost six months and in the meantime the Commission, which is responsible for implementing Community policies, will be able to draw each month funds to one-twelfth of the value of last year's budget.

This means that spending for the moment is pegged at last year's level and no new Community policies can be implemented or existing ones expanded.

In addition, the Commission has pointed out that, if it is to avoid heavy interest payments, a special arrangement will have to be worked out to enable it to pay the rent on its buildings.

Brace yourself

The Community-financed programme of pilot projects in the different Member States on preparing school-leavers for the changeover to working life is to be extended until the end of next year.

Cloning: is it about to leave the realms of science-fiction?

Popular films, novels and increasing press coverage of exotic new technologies have in recent years familiarised the public with such terms as 'cloning' and 'genetic engineering.'

The creation and manipulation of essentially artificial life, as a result, has now surpassed the realm of strictly science-fiction and become a reality.

'Clones', or the artificially-produced duplicate off-springs of another organism, and the genetic engineering which gave birth to this new form of living matter have progressed beyond purely experimental laboratory work into industrial production and almost everyday use.

What is hard for many people to realise is that these revolutionary new techniques are not seemingly impractical or self-indulgent research but are also useful and even commercial assets in the same way that natural resources or other scientific know-how add to the national wealth.

What's more, these test-tube inventions also open up vast new possibilities for improving the standard of living, saving precious raw materials and protecting the environment.

Take just two examples: in the long term, the development of what is called biomolecular engineering could allow a reduction in energy consumption and increase food supplies by developing alternatives to the current nitrogen types of fertilizers which are so widely used to raise food production. In addition, marked improvements in the environment could also be the result of similar research aimed at finding biological substitutes for chemical pesticides.

These are but two of the everyday, practical uses of what sometimes may seem distant and irrelevant scientific experiments. The goal of such research is the controlled production of new forms of life that can perform roles currently being handled less efficiently by other means. This doesn't mean the creation of robots

or slave-like creature. But it does mean the creation of substances such as penicillin, vitamins, growth hormones and the like.

The potential of harnessing these new scientific discoveries to provide worthwhile products has already become evident to many governments and businesses. Japan, the United States, in particular, are already hard at work producing new formulae which have led to thousands of new patents in recent years.

But while some countries have gotten off to a quick start in the research field and in the practical use of this type of genetic and biomolecular engineering, European institutions and companies have somewhat lagged behind. This is the conclusion of a recently-published report by the European Commission in Brussels.



To try to narrow what it calls a 'patents gap' between the European Community and Japan and the United States, the Commission is advocating a new five-year programme aimed at financing additional research and cooperation between the nine Member States in the field of biomolecular engineering—that is, the controlled production of biological molecules, which may be of use to industry or agriculture.

The Commission has recommended that the member countries approve a budget of £ 16.8 million which in turn should be matched by similar grants by the national governments to result in some £ 32.1 million worth of backing for new research projects. This money, once approved by the Council of Ministers, would be given to European research centres to work on projects in six key areas carefully selected for the programme by the Commission in close consultation with experts in the field. These would include research into such sophisticated fields as cloning and the transfer of genes from one organism to another.

In addition, work would be carried out into improving the safety aspects of such experiments.

This is one of the most important aspects of this research. The studies would aim at creating an acceptable system of regulation and protection measures throughout the Community.

IN BRIEF

Farming finance

The European Commission has made grants totalling £ 28 million for the modernisation of the agriculture and fishery industries in the Community. A further £ 29 million has been granted to Mediterranean regions as special aid to help them prepare for the enlargement of the Community to include three countries with competing 'Mediterranean' agricultural economies.

Safety record

The European Commission is to hold an international conference in Luxembourg on May 20-23 to present the results of its last five year's research and development work in the management and storage of radioactive waste.

INDUSTRY

Community aid to iron and steel showing results

Some glimmers of hope for the European Community's beleaguered iron and steel industry. Although most companies still recorded heavy losses, the Community's efforts to reorganize and modernize have helped push up output and sales.

Iron and steel output rose 5% in 1978 to 133 million tonnes mainly due to a revival in exports. The net trade balance of the nine Member States with third countries improved from 11 to 17 million tonnes. But demand within the Community remained depressed.

According to the European Coal and Steel Community's 1978 report, which was recently published, the level of investment in the iron and steel industry remained disappointing. Investments in 1978 were expected to total only £1 400 million—£201 million less than in 1977.

In real terms investments in 1978 were only half the 1975 level. Many firms preferred to 'wait and see' rather than 'take the plunge' in the current uncertain economic situation.

In contrast to iron and steel, Community coal production fell slightly in 1978 to 238 million tonnes. A major effort is needed if the Community is to achieve its 1985 target of 270 million tonnes.

The Nine continued to consume just as much coal in 1978—about 287 million tonnes. Increased demand from power stations compensated for lower demand for coking coal.

Greater confidence in the coal industry was shown by the growth of investment. In 1978 this totalled £695 million, nearly triple the 1974 level. But this did not prevent a slight drop in production capacity. Greater efforts must be made to encourage power stations to use more coal.

In 1978 the European Coal and Steel Community provided just over £670 million to finance 51 projects in the coal and steel sectors.

The amount of aid for restructuring the industry jumped from £10.7 million in 1977 to £75.7 million in

1978. The aid has been used to help create several thousand alternative jobs.

A new system of interest subsidies for projects to restructure the industry and make it more competitive was also introduced.

Our table gives the breakdown of loans paid out in 1978.

	£ million
United Kingdom	183.1
Germany	93.1
France	85.2
Italy	84.7
Luxembourg	49.5
Netherlands	28.7
Denmark	8.8
Belgium	1.2
Ireland	0.01
Total	£534.31

The European Coal and Steel Community is six years older than the European Community. It was founded in 1951 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris by France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg. Its aim was to expand coal and steel trade within the six member countries and speed up economic recovery after the Second World War. During its first five years trade within the six rose 129%.

Better performance in 1979: but no room for complacency

Industrial production in the European Community is estimated to have increased by 4% in 1979 over the previous year's level. Figures published recently by EUROSTAT, the Community's Statistical Office, show that this forecast growth rate compares well with increases of 2.2% and 2.4% recorded in 1977 and 1978 respectively.

The major stimulus to industrial growth in the Community during last year appears to have come from the intermediate goods sector where production expanded by 6% (against 2.2% in 1977 and 3% in 1978). Growth in the consumer goods sector was put at over 3% after remaining steady at 2.8% for the previous two years. EUROSTAT forecasts pro-

duction growth in the investment goods industries of less than 2% after rises of 2.8% and 0.3% in 1977 and 1978.

EUROSTAT does however detect a cyclical downturn in industrial production towards the end of 1979. The seasonally adjusted index of production fell by 0.8% in October and short-term growth rates fell sharply in the investment and consumer goods industries. The intermediate goods sector retained some growth momentum at the end of the year, although rates were below those of the spring and summer months.

At Member State level, growth rates in Germany, Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands have been declining, whereas developments have looked more positive in Italy and France.

Looking ahead, EUROSTAT forecasts that industrial production in France will remain relatively strong in the first few months of 1980. For the UK, short-term trends have been difficult to interpret, thanks in part to the engineers' strike in August and September.

BUSINESS

More confidence in new decade

A slight improvement in confidence among European businessmen was reported in November 1979, following three successive months of increasing pessimism, although an overall downward drift in confidence appeared to mirror the declining industrial production during the closing months of the year.

In response to surveys carried out by the European Commission's Economic and Financial Affairs Directorate, UK businessmen appeared less pessimistic as regards both future production and the level of orders, while in Ireland, an apparent recovery of industrial production was not reflected in judgements made by Irish businessmen on the health of their order books.

In the rest of the Community, the Italians were looking ahead confidently to rising industrial production,

healthy order books and good price prospects. German businessmen were cautiously optimistic despite expectations of a price rise slowdown. In France opinion remained relatively confident, although export orders weakened in November and replies suggested that French industrial prices may also rise more slowly.

EMPLOYMENT

Jobless figures may not tell full story

Unemployment figures in the European Community remain depressingly high. There are more than 6 million people out of work, representing around 5.6% of the total working population. Young people continue to bear the brunt of the unemployment burden. Those under 25 constitute an estimated 44% of the total jobless figure.

It was against this depressing background that the European Parliament held a major seven hour debate during its January plenary session on ways of tackling the problem.

Indeed, many speakers considered that the official figures did not tell the full story. They estimated that there could in fact be as many as 10 million people out of work.

Among the many practical measures suggested by the MPs was the idea that the Community should encourage and assist the growth of new small firms, since these would provide much needed jobs.

Members also called on the Community to raise the limit of its investment loan facilities to industry from the European Investment Bank and the so-called Ortolli Facility. The real value of these loans has been heavily reduced by inflation, they argued.

The activities of the Social Fund should also be strengthened, they felt, especially in the field of training and labour mobility. This, said the MPs, would make a real impact on 'mismatch', an expression used to describe the situation where there are vast numbers of unfilled vacancies in the Community while at the same time there are so many unemployed.

The Parliament also wants to encourage further discussion of the consequences of a reduction in systematic overtime in appropriate sectors, and of earlier and flexible retirement.

TRANSPORT

Moves to improve safety standards for passengers

A recent United Kingdom government initiative to make the fitting of anchorages for safety belts compulsory in certain seats on buses, coaches and goods vehicles is to be taken up at Community level.

The European Commission is shortly to propose changes in its current law which makes the fitting of safety belts compulsory in all vehicles in the internationally recognised M1 category (that is, passenger cars with up to nine seats including the driver's).

The new proposals would extend provisions for compulsory safety belt anchorages to all seats in buses, coaches and goods vehicles, that have no other seat directly in front of them. In general, this means the driver's seat, the front seats and the central rear seat. The fitting of actual safety belts to these anchorages would remain voluntary.

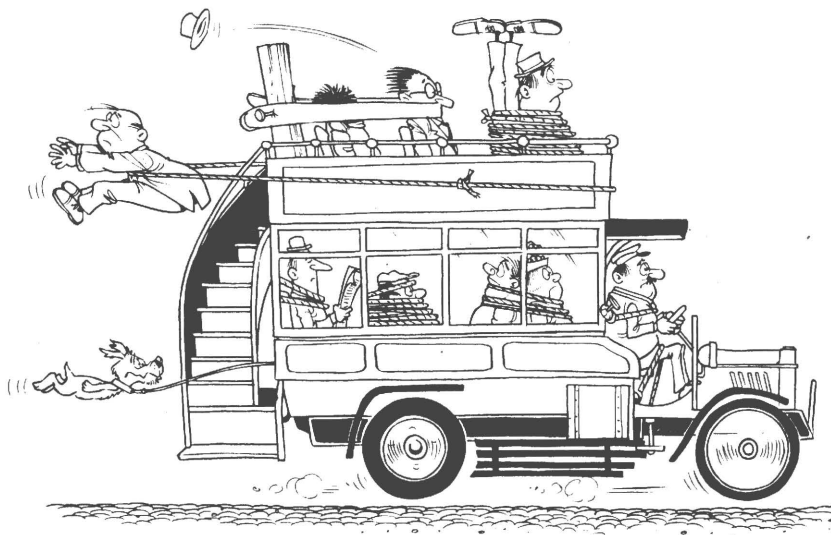
The UK proposal lays down standards for these anchorages with which

vehicles coming onto the British market would have to comply. These too could be taken up at Community level.

The Commission revealed its intention in a reply to a European Parliamentary question from a British Conservative member, John Mark Taylor, who wanted to know how many other Community Member States had compulsory fitting of safety belts and also mandatory wearing of crash helmets by motorcyclists.

All the Nine have had measures in force making the fitting of safety belts compulsory since the beginning of last year. In all Community countries except the UK and Italy, the actual wearing of safety belts is also required by law. (A private Member's bill in the House of Commons aimed at enforcing the wearing of safety belts in the UK was recently given a second reading, and was supported by most MPs, so a change may be on the way there).

On the question of crash helmets, the Commission reported that they are mandatory headgear for motorcyclists in all Community Member States except Italy.



AGRICULTURE

Budget Commissioner warns of escalating CAP price levels

As the European Commission was putting the final touches to its proposals for the coming agricultural marketing year, Budget Commissioner Christopher Tugendhat said that if the Council of Ministers had heeded warnings about voting for high prices which the Commission has been giving for the last three years preventive action could have been taken.

Had this action been taken, said Mr. Tugendhat in a speech to the British National Farmers' Union, the present crisis over the Common Agricultural Policy and over the Community budget could have been avoided.

Mr. Tugendhat said that the escalating costs of the CAP were now a matter of public concern not only in the United Kingdom, which has long been the main critic of the CAP, but throughout most of the Community.

He noted that the action of the European Parliament in rejecting the 1980 budget indicated a widespread belief among the Parliament's members that without drastic action to highlight the imbalance in Community expenditure the Council of Ministers would continue to postpone decisions—which only they can take—and to let things drift.

If the Council really faced up to the problems of agriculture expenditure, he said, the Community's current financial resources, which are beginning to look thin, would be sufficient to pay for Community policies in other areas.

Mr. Tugendhat said that he agreed with the Parliament in stressing that the principles of the CAP were not being called in question but measures were necessary to control the cost.

He added: 'Farmers should recognise that measures to tackle the abuses of the CAP will safeguard rather than undermine their interests. What we must seek to develop—and what I hope will emerge from the present controversy—is a well-balanced agricultural policy which takes into account the interests of Community producers, consumers and taxpayers, all of whom need and can benefit from a system providing secure and stable supplies of food.'

ENERGY

Making sure that car manufacturers are measuring up

An integral part of the European Community's continuing energy conservation campaign is economising on the use of fuels of all kinds.

Euroforum 20/79 reported on talks between the European Commission and car manufacturers in the Community over the voluntary undertakings of the manufacturers to cut car fuel consumption by 10% based on 1978 levels by 1985.

As a step towards monitoring this effort, and as an important information boon to consumers, the Commission has now proposed standard measuring methods for car fuel consumption and engine power which it hopes will be adopted throughout the Community.

The method chosen by the Commission is that used by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, called the Geneva A70 method. It is also the method on which the manufacturers in France, Germany and the United Kingdom have based their fuel-saving proposals.

Under this method, which will be applied only to passenger vehicles with up to nine seats, fuel consumption is determined by three tests: a simulated town drive, a run at a constant speed of 90 kilometres an hour (56 mph) and a run at a steady 120 km/h (75 mph) for cars with a maximum speed of over 130 km/h (80 mph).

The method for measuring engine power is highly technical and applies to both passenger and goods vehicles, diesel included.

The Commission proposes to make these two methods part of the overall European type-approval set of standards to which vehicles coming onto the Community market must conform.

In addition, of course, the introduction of uniform measuring methods will make objective and precise information about the relative fuel economy of different car models readily available to the consumer.

In this way, it is also hoped to increase consumer awareness of the

need to cut down on fuel consumption in private motoring and also to increase general awareness of the need for energy saving in other sectors.

Conservation: some have better record than others

Only four of the eight European Community countries which are members of the International Energy Agency (France is the exception) managed to cut down on their energy consumption between 1973, when the oil crisis broke, and 1977.

These figures have just been released by the Agency, which has also made projections on energy consumption up to 1990.

Luxembourg was most diligent in cutting down on the amount of energy it uses. It managed a cut of 5.2%, while the United Kingdom achieved just over 1% and Germany and Ireland just under 1%. The other four Member States slightly increased their consumption by amounts ranging from 0.3% in Denmark to 1.2% in Belgium.

What of the future? The Agency predicts a growth in energy consumption for the eight Community countries in the 1977-1985 period, Italy is expected to top the table with a projected 4.6% rise in consumption. Denmark is at the other end of the scale with a forecasted increase of only 0.2%.

For the period 1985-1990 increased consumption is also expected. While this is an encouraging sign for the economy, Community policy is geared towards ensuring that less and less of this consumption is derived from imported oil and more and more from domestic and alternative energy sources.

Development aid

Countries in Asia and Latin America have benefited from the latest Community grants to non-associated developing countries worth £26 million. This brings aid to date under the Community's 1979 programme to more than £56 million. A further £20 million is still available under this programme.

YOUTH

New programme to help workers study abroad

If you are, say, a young postman in Cardiff or Cork, the chances are you don't often spare a thought for your colleagues in Cologne or Calais, though the lives that they lead and the problems they face are likely to have quite a lot in common with your own. The same, no doubt, goes for young agricultural workers, fishermen, production-line workers, savings bank clerks and anyone else who may not get much chance to travel outside their native land.

With this in mind, the European Community supports an exchange scheme for young workers in the hope that spending some time living and working in another Community country may help them begin to relate to their colleagues as other human beings sharing a common Community identity.

At the same time, these exchanges have a strong vocational training aspect, so that those taking part can return home with better career prospects as well.

As we reported briefly in *Euroforum* 1/1980, the second Community exchange programme has just got underway with the signing in December of the first framework agreements between the European Commission and five organisations which work at a European level and specialise in organising exchanges.

Some, like the Italian organisation ENAIP (Ente nazionale ACLI istruzione professionale) may have a particular interest in agriculture; CPRM (the Conference of Outlying Coastal Regions) on the other hand operates on a fairly small scale in areas like Scotland, Brittany and Ireland where industries like fishing are important. Other organisations like Belgium's EFIL (European Federation for Intercultural Learning) or the Central Bureau for Educational and Vocational Exchange (CBEVE) in the United Kingdom or Interechanges in France, may be quite big and have a broader range, covering school visits or cultural exchanges as well. Most of them are State-aided.

The agreements last between one and three years, and to start with should benefit some 250 young people who started work before they were 20 years old (which excludes third-level students, for instance) who would particularly benefit from the chance to go abroad.

Individual projects will be organised with individual contracts, and exchange visits will last anything from three weeks to eight months.

The Commission will contribute 75% of their travelling expenses. Those on short-term exchanges (up to three months) also get help with 40% of their other costs (about £55 a week). For long-term exchanges the figure is just under £100 a month (or 20%), but where necessary, the Commission will also pay just over £80 a week towards the cost of preparatory language classes. These amounts will be reviewed regularly.

The Commission hopes to broaden the field in the coming year, involving more and different participating organisations, and extending the range of work covered by the scheme—into areas like manufacturing or service industries, for example, or perhaps to cultural workers.

Research should show what areas are most likely to benefit from the scheme, and the Commission also hopes to hear from people who are interested—the German young postmen's league has already made enquiries. Eventually some 1500 young people a year should be getting a chance to broaden their horizons in this way.

THE REGIONS

Changes in Fund proposed to help small businesses

In recent years, it has become glaringly evident that certain regions of Europe are lagging behind the average in economic development and general standard of living. It's also widely agreed that these underdeveloped areas need help to boost their economic potential.

Primarily rural or else decaying industrial regions throughout the European Community find themselves in this unfortunate situation. The income in these regions has either stagnated or actually gone down in comparison to that of their better-off compatriots and neighbours. Vast amounts of public funds have been poured into programmes to help these regions but the income gap between them and the rest of the Community is still widening.

Part of this money since 1975 has come from the Community's Regional Development Fund. Some £1608 million has been dispensed from this pool to help governments promote development of their depressed regions. The latest segment of this aid, announced recently, amounted to £349 million for nearly 2000 separate projects throughout the Community from Greenland to Sicily. Since the Fund was set up, Italy, the United Kingdom and Ireland have been the largest beneficiaries because



they have the most problem areas, but all countries have been recipients.

The European Commission, which is responsible for administering the Fund, would now like to see some changes to make it more flexible.

One change which was agreed upon last year that allowed Community officials to select a certain number of deserving projects to support regardless of the location, instead of being bound as in the past to a rigid system of national quotas.

Now the Commission is also recommending that funds should be available for non-traditional projects and approaches. While in the past joint financing by national governments and the Fund emphasised major transport and industrial undertakings, it is now felt that aid should be given to small and medium-sized operations, which actually provide more jobs than major plants and industries. Development of activities such as rural tourism or small handicraft manufacturing might also get more emphasis.

Another approach now being tried is careful integrated planning and assistance for entire urban regions. The first two selected to receive this type of concentrated planning and support are Belfast and Naples. This will mean that these areas will not just get large sums of money, but they will have studies and advice on how the funds can best be used to encourage the changes necessary to build a sounder economic climate.

This type of planning and counselling is something the Commission would like to see expanded. They would like to have the financing supported by sound professional marketing, production, distribution or other advice to the recipients. These additional services could come either from the national governments, the Community itself or outside private consultants.

In an effort to shift spending away from infrastructure programmes such as road-building to more direct job-creating investments, some thought is being given to the Community taking a direct financial stake in certain projects.

Although many changes are being advocated, it doesn't necessarily mean that the Fund has been unsatisfactory to date. A study made recently indicated that since 1975, when it first began its operation, some 53 000 jobs have been created by projects it helped finance.

Plea for Community financing of house building

An independent Irish member of the European Parliament, Neil Blaney, has called on the Commission to help finance housing programme under the Community's Regional Fund or with assisted loans as is done under the European Coal and Steel Community's housing programmes.



The steep rise in house prices has badly affected the agricultural community in particular, said Mr Blaney. If people are unable to find a house, then they will leave the land and possibly emigrate to the better off countries or regions, he argued.

In response to Mr Blaney's plea, Social Affairs Commissioner, Henk Vredeling said that a proposal was currently before the Council of Ministers whereby the special non-quota section of the Regional Fund could be used to finance housing schemes as an adjunct of new investment.

THE INSTITUTIONS

Council President looks forward to burying the hatchet

The Italian government, which took over the Presidency of the Community on January 1, intends to make every effort to end the conflict between the Council of Ministers and the

European Parliament according to the country's new Foreign Minister Attilio Ruffini.

Addressing Euro MPs in Strasbourg, Mr Ruffini said that his government 'intends to make the greatest possible effort to dispel the distrust and reserve, often psychological in origin at present clouding relations between the Institutions of the Community'.

This distrust came to a head before Christmas when the Parliament, for the first time in its history, rejected the Community's 1980 budget.

The Italian Foreign Minister also told members that governments would soon be examining the so-called 'Three Wise Men' report which suggests certain changes to the machinery and procedure of the Community's institutions.

The purpose of these discussions, he said would be to establish 'a more suitable institutional framework for further progress towards the ideal of an ever-closer union of the peoples of Europe'.

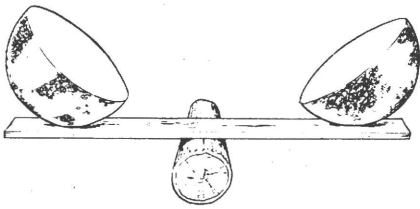
As far as the Community's internal development was concerned, Mr Ruffini said that an attempt would be made to abolish distortions in Community policies which cause the economic gap between Member States to grow. At the same time, there should be more consistent development of all backward regions.

This will mean that attention will also focus on possible changes in the Common Agricultural Policy, with greater emphasis being placed on measures to help modernise underdeveloped farms. But the Minister insisted that the basic principles of the CAP would not be questioned.

Energy is clearly one subject that will dominate the Community's agenda over the next six months. Mr Ruffini said it was imperative that the Nine make a greater effort to achieve a true Community policy. This should include financial measures to reduce the Community's dependence on imported oil.

The European Monetary System has on the whole worked well, Mr Ruffini noted. But he stressed that it was highly necessary for the Nine to work out a common policy towards the dollar.

This should provide not only for closer coordination of intervention on exchange markets but also a more pertinent monitoring of the compatibility of national monetary policies, he added.



Bright prospects for North-South dialogue relaunch

The start of a new decade, like the start of a new year, is an occasion for optimism. But the 1970s closed on such a sombre note that it was only too easy to imagine the darkness spreading and thickening during the 1980s.

Even so, there is a ray of hope as the decade begins. It is provided by a decision of the U.N. General Assembly to relaunch the dialogue between rich nations and poor—the North-South Dialogue as it came to be known—at a special session next September.

The preparations have been entrusted to a committee which is expected to meet four times this year. As the committee's decisions are on the basis of consensus rather than majority voting, they should reflect the views of all the participants.

European Commission experts believe the resumed North-South Dialogue will carry on the work of its original, which was the Conference on International Economic Co-operation, and met in Paris for 18 months in 1976-77.

Among other things the industrialised and OPEC countries participating in the conference agreed to set up a special fund worth \$1 billion to meet the immediate needs of low-income countries facing specific difficulties. The European Community was the main contributor, supplying \$385 million of the total.

But there will be important differences this time. The all important matter of energy, for example, will be treated as a 'structural' and not simply 'cyclical' problem. As a result, the non-oil producing developing

countries are expected to press for long-term solutions to their specific problems in this area.

The state trading countries, who were absent from the Paris Conference, will take part in the preparations for the resumed North-South Dialogue, as will the People's Republic of China.

The European Commission began its own preparations last December and it was finalizing its first communication to the Council of Ministers, setting out the issues, as *Euroforum* went to press.

But the Commission is not the only Community institution to preoccupy itself with the problems confronting developed and developing countries in an age of interdependence.

The European Parliament's Development Committee will hold a series of public hearings on world hunger shortly. This is a follow-up to a debate in the Parliament last autumn, when a resolution calling for increased efforts to combat world hunger was adopted.

The first hearings will be held in Brussels on February 18 and 19. The principal personality attending will be the former German Chancellor and Nobel prizewinner Willy Brandt.

The March hearings will focus on famine relief as well as more general problems of development aid. These hearings will be followed by a further Parliamentary debate this spring.

A related event, which should speed the resumption of the North-South Dialogue, will be the publication this month of the report on North-South relations drawn up by a high-level international commission set up in 1977.

Its chairman, Mr. Brandt, plans to organize an international summit conference, to which some 20 to 25 heads of government would be invited, to begin work on implementing the Commission's recommendations for increased cooperation between rich and poor nations.

If the North-South Dialogue can be relaunched effectively in the 1980s the decade may turn out to be one of hope for the world's poor.

Meanwhile, the European Community's own main contractual link

with the Third World will be carried a stage further when the second and expanded Lomé Convention with almost 60 independent states in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific comes into operation this year.

Variety of needs reflected by demands for aid

The European Community recently gave £ 31 million worth of aid to 18 developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to finance development projects, combat famine and meet emergencies.

The largest slices of aid—£ 27 million—went to 12 Asian and Latin American countries which do not have preferential trade agreements with the Community. The aid was provided under the Community's £ 74 million 1979 programme for non-associated countries.

The aid is mostly being used to finance rural development projects. These include improvement of cattle herds in Pakistan's hilly Baluchistan region, land drainage in Indonesia, farm seed centres in Laos and irrigation in Ecuador. Technical assistance is also being given to the Asian Development Bank and the Mekong Committee.

Apart from the non-associated aid programme, Latin America has also benefited from other kinds of Community aid recently.

Earthquake victim Nicaragua has received £ 1.3 million to purchase 10 000 tonnes of cereals and 500 tonnes of milk powder. Since July it has received £ 8.75 million of Community aid.

The Community has also given £ 670 000 worth of food aid to help 2 000 flood victims in Honduras. The aid will be used to purchase cereals, milk powder and butter oil.

Another £ 200 000 will be given to help the victims of Hurricane David in the Dominican Republic. About 200 000 people lost their homes and another 1 million are in need of food and medical aid. Total damage is estimated at £ 500 million, over double the size of the national budget.

Community aid will be channelled through the Catholic Relief Service

and be used to purchase seeds, fertilizers, farm equipment and construction materials.

The Community has so far provided £2.8 million worth of aid to Caribbean victims of Hurricane David in Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Montserrat and the Dutch island of Saba.

In Africa the Community has given £1.7 million to finance the air transport of 9 million litres of fuel into Malawi.

Cape Verde will receive £100 000 worth of Community aid to purchase insecticides to fight an invasion of locusts.

Finally the Community is providing £33 000 to help 300 000 refugees on the Indonesian island of Timor. As a result of fighting between government forces and guerillas, the refugees have had to flee to the mountains for safety. The aid will be channelled through Oxfam and be used to send out a medical team and purchase essential equipment.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Community condemns Soviet action in Afghanistan

European Community member governments and the Community institutions have become heavily involved in the world-wide diplomatic and economic follow-up to the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan.

Community aid to Afghanistan has been suspended, shipments of agricultural items to the Soviet Union have been limited and a strong policy declaration condemning the military action came from the Council of Ministers. In addition, a majority in the European Parliament voted for a resolution urging an immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

On top of these immediate reactions, the Community has been reviewing its relations with other potential trouble spots, including Pakistan, Yugoslavia and the states of the Persian Gulf.

The first to react was the European Commission which quickly recommended to the Council of Ministers a suspension of the aid destined for Afghanistan and a transfer of these shipments to benefit Afghan refugees in Pakistan fleeing from the fighting in their country.

Following the American decision not to deliver 17 million tonnes of cereals to the Soviet Union, the Commission also decided not to increase its small shipments of surplus grains and other agricultural products to the Soviet Union. After consultations with other grain exporting countries in Washington, it was generally agreed that the European Community and most of the other nations there would not substitute their shipments for the embargoed American supplies.

The scene then shifted to the United Nations in New York where the Community countries in the Security Council and General Assembly supported resolutions dealing with the Afghan crisis. The Security Council consideration of the situation was vetoed by the Soviet Union. But the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly accepted a resolution calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan. This move was supported by the representative of Italy, speaking on behalf of the Community.

The fullest expression of Community sentiment on the Afghanistan crisis came on January 15 at a meeting of the nine Foreign Ministers in Brussels. They issued a statement characterising the Soviet intervention as a 'serious violation of the principles of international relations.'

The declaration went on to brand the action as 'flagrant interference in the internal affairs of a non-aligned country belonging to the Islamic world.' The Ministers also said that it represented a threat to peace and called for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. They also recalled their past and continuing attachment to detente in international relations.

The Ministers indicated that the Community would consider restrictions on other exports and on export credit terms to the Soviet Union. They agreed to give urgent consideration to a request from the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees for some £25 million (\$55 million) to aid Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

For the future, the Ministers decided to speed up Community efforts to improve relations with the nearby Gulf States and with Pakistan and also to give high priority to the negotiations for a new economic cooperation accord with Yugoslavia. The latter is seen as being another potential problem area.

The European Parliament also held a vigorous debate on the Afghanistan crisis during its first plenary session of 1980 in Strasbourg. Following criticism of the Soviet action by most political groups, a majority voted for a resolution condemning the Soviet move. This resolution was supported by the Christian Democratic, British Conservative and Liberal members of the Assembly. Other related measures and amendment supported by Socialist and some Communist members were proposed earlier in the debate but ultimately discarded.

TRADE

World agreement will help to protect Community jobs

From the beginning of this year the jobs of workers in the European Community have been enjoying better protection because of a tightening up on unfair international competition in the market place.

This improved security for jobs is the result of years of painstaking negotiations conducted by most of the world's major trading nations aimed at creating a fairer international trading system.

One of the results of this important set of trade and tariff bargaining carried out under the auspices of GATT was that Europe, North America, Japan and other countries agreed on a number of codes of good behaviour concerning certain trade practices.

These international understandings replaced earlier rules which the participating countries had also hoped would reduce or eliminate a lot of unfair commercial operations, but which unfortunately proved to be inefficient or impractical over the years.

It turned out that, in some cases, these old-fashioned rules, created for different situations and conditions, were worse than no rules because they sometimes gave a false sense of security which did not live up to the expectations of some countries and industries, leading to frustration and misconduct.

One of the major achievements of the so-called Tokyo Round, just recently signed in Geneva, was that the GATT

countries worked out rules they felt they could live by for the next decade in order to safeguard their economies and their standard of living while still allowing open trade and fair competition. These new world standards for behaviour are now in operation in all the countries of the European Community and most of its major trading partners. Two of the most important involve codes on subsidies and what is known as dumping.

The first is aimed at at least establishing an internationally-accepted system for measuring the amount of subsidy given to a product or industry so that countries harmed by these imports can offset what might otherwise be an unfair advantage for the incoming goods and services.

Another agreement that gives countries a chance at correcting an unfair imbalance covers the practice of dumping products or services at prices that are below the actual value. Such artificially low prices are designed to underbid competitors in the importing country and keep workers in the producing country in jobs.

Maintaining employment is what everybody is worried about these days and the authorities that negotiated these new treaties felt that the best way do it was not to follow the law of the jungle and have every country use any means available to sell its output. Instead, they felt that the most effective way would be to counteract these disruptive subsidies and dumping operations through international cooperation.

Now that these anti-dumping and anti-subsidy codes are in effect, it means that when a country or business feels it has been significantly harmed by such unfair competition, it can, according to these new rules, move to offset the advantage through equivalent anti-dumping or anti-subsidy tariffs.

This means that Community industries and workers will be able to protect themselves against such unfair competition. And, of course, other countries will be able to take similar defensive steps should European goods benefit from such advantages.

The hope is that the new system will discourage businesses and workers, even in these difficult times, from asking their governments for subsidies and other help so that they can continue to sell on the world market. It is now generally accepted that such subsidies merely provide costly and temporary relief at the expense of the taxpayer and of long-term employment stability.

PUBLICATIONS

Consumer protection can no longer recognise frontiers

Nearly 260 million consumers live in the European Community and are able to benefit from the wide range of goods now on sale in the shops, largely due to the opening up of frontiers between the Nine.

But the famous consumer society has another side to it. Whereas in the past people tended to shop in their own locality and knew their suppliers, now they are faced with anonymous, powerful manufacturers, a vast, complex range of goods, and highly sophisticated, and effective, sales techniques.

So much so that going shopping these days can be quite a bewildering experience. Not only do we often lack the necessary objective information to make the best purchase, but it is sometimes difficult to exercise fully our legal rights, when, as so often happens, we find later that the product does not measure up to our expectations.

With the opening up of national markets, consumer problems have taken on a European dimension. For example, the consumer should not suffer any disadvantages on after-sales service, when he buys a product from another country where the requirements are less strict.

This new dimension was recognized by the nine Heads of Government at the Paris Summit in 1972 and they set out to give the Community a 'human face'.

The following year the European Commission set up the Environment and Consumer Protection Service. A consumer's Consultative Committee was established and work begun on a consumer protection programme.

The Community has been particularly active in a number of areas. Legislation has been passed covering the labelling of foodstuffs, the use of certain additives in food and the maximum limits of pesticides residues allowed in fruit and vegetables.

As well as health protection, the Community has acted on safety assurance (impact resistance of cars and lorries), protection of economic interests (there

are Commission proposals on door to door selling and misleading advertising) and consumer information and education.

But now, in its recently issued second action programme, the Commission is moving onto the offensive. It intends to encourage voluntary agreements between manufacturers and consumers and greater dialogue between the producers and purchasers of goods so that consumers may become more influential partners in the economic life of our countries.

You can learn more about this subject from 'The European Community and Consumers', No 13/79 in the European File series published by the Commission of the European Communities, D-G for Information, Rue de la Loi 200, B 1049 Brussels.



'The Community's Relations with Spain', study, Brussels 1979, Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities, rue Ravenstein 2. Catalogue Number: ESC-79-001-EN.

'The Agricultural Situation in the Community—1978 Report', Commission of the European Communities. Price: £ 13. Catalogue Number: CB-25-78-510-EN-C.

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'Community Law', Commission of the European Communities. Price: £ 1. Catalogue number: CB-25-78-671-EN-C.



THE NEWS AT A GLANCE

Presidential parley

Iran, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia and Turkey were among the subjects discussed when European Commission President Roy Jenkins met President Carter in Washington on January 22. They also talked about trade, energy and science and technology. Mr. Jenkins had further talks with the Secretary of State, Mr. Vance, and the National Security Adviser Mr. Brzezinski.

New link-up

European Parliament President Simone Veil is to inaugurate the Euronet information system in Strasbourg on February 13. Euronet is an arrangement whereby callers throughout the Community can dial databanks in any one of the Member States for the same price as a call to a local databank.

Flood relief

The European Commission is providing aid of around £260 000 for victims of floods in Wales and south-west England.

Showing support

Commission President Roy Jenkins is to visit Yugoslavia this month. As preparations were being made for his trip it was hoped that the Community's new trade agreement with Yugoslavia would be ready for signing during his stay in Belgrade.

The place of the sun

A booklet called 'Solar Energy: a new area of ACP/EEC cooperation' has been published by the European Commission. It outlines work being done in a number of countries which are members of the Lomé Convention with the help of Community financial and technical aid.

Growing consumption

Community aid to help consumer organisations is increasing. Last year the Commission made grants totalling about £32 500, compared with around £22 750 the previous year.

Determined to stay

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in a speech to British Conservative members of the European Parliament, has reiterated her Government's intention to keep the United Kingdom in the Community.

Resuming the dialogue

Community proposals for a resumption of technical-level discussions in the context of the stalled Euro-Arab dialogue have not yet received an official reply by the Arab League. The League has been keen to include discussion on political matters.

A new resource

A tax on oil imports into the Community is one of the possibilities being considered by the European Commission a part of its energy-saving proposals to the Council of Ministers. Such a tax could also be a massive boost to the Community's revenue.

Backing for U.S.

The Nine's Foreign Ministers have given their full political support to the United States in its dealings with Iran.

A matter of choice

The Socialist Group in the European Parliament is urging that a decision be taken before the end of this year on a single, permanent location for all the Community institutions. At present the Commission's main headquarters are in Brussels, the Council of Ministers meets in Brussels and Luxembourg, the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors are based in Luxembourg and the Parliament itself sits in both Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

Moving ahead

The Community is to accelerate its preparations for concluding an expanded new agreement with Yugoslavia. The Council of Ministers has asked the Commission to speed up its negotiations with the Yugoslav Government. It hopes to be in a position to take a decision on a final agreement at its next meeting on February 4/5.

For earthquake victims

The European Commission has made a grant of £65 000 to the United Nations Disaster Relief Office to help the victims of an earthquake in the Azores on New Year's Day.

End in sight

Representatives of the Community and of the Spanish government resolved at a recent meeting to complete the bulk of the negotiations for Spanish accession by the end of this year. This followed a visit by the Spanish Prime Minister, Mr. Adolfo Suarez, to Brussels where he met Commission President Roy Jenkins and other members of the Commission.

Still in crisis

A European Commission programme designed to guide the Community's steel industry through the current world crisis has been extended until the end of this year. It includes both internal price floors for certain steel products and import understandings with other major steel producers.

A helping hand

Pending independence, the Community will apply trade arrangements to Southern Rhodesia similar to those which the French overseas countries and territories enjoy. These offer preferential access on industrial and agricultural products to the Community. Independent Zimbabwe would, of course, be able to join the Lomé Convention.

Matter for the Court

French action against British lamb exports has been referred back to the Court of Justice in Luxembourg by the European Commission.

Grand Tour

Britain's Lord Privy Seal, Sir Ian Gilmour, has been touring Member State capitals putting the UK's case for a reduction of its contribution to the Community budget. Among those he met were Commission President Roy Jenkins.

FOCUS

The European Parliament: what the man-in-the-street thinks about it



As a reader who obviously takes a keen interest in European Community affairs, you no doubt have the impression that the media has given very comprehensive coverage to the activities of the European Parliament during the past year.

You would be right, of course. The coverage has at times reached saturation point, particularly during the run-up to the first direct elections to the Parliament last June, its first session the following month when the President and other officers were elected, and, more recently, when the Parliament clashed with the Council of Ministers and rejected the Community budget for 1980.

But *Euroforum* readers have an above average interest in Community affairs. How much penetration have all those news stories and feature articles, the radio and television programmes made into the minds of Community citizens in general?

Eurobarometer, the European Commission's own census unit which every six months takes a sounding of opinion in the nine Member States of attitudes to Community developments, has been finding out what people's

perceptions are of the Parliament and of their exposure to information about the Parliament.

Equally important, the survey, which was carried out last October and which questioned 9 000 people, tried to establish how much those questioned retained from what they had read, seen or heard.

This test was something of an eye-opener. On average, only two out of every three people interviewed claimed to have read or heard anything about the Parliament. What's more, less than half were able to recall spontaneously what it was.

The highest level of awareness was found in Luxembourg and Germany, and the lowest in the United Kingdom where just over half remembered having read or heard something but where only a quarter could remember what it was. In the other Member States there was approximately a two-thirds awareness.

People were also asked what importance they attached to the first direct elections to the Parliament. 10% thought they were 'very important' and 12% 'of no importance at all'. In between came 31% who thought

they were 'quite important' and 37% who felt they were 'of little importance.' A further 10% didn't know one way or the other.

So what impression has the Parliament made on the public consciousness since the elections? Interviewees were asked if they had read or heard anything about the work of the Parliament and, if so, could they recall what it was.

The first point to emerge was that only one person in two claimed to have read or heard something about the debates in the Parliament, while two-thirds claimed to have read or heard something about the Parliament in general. The greatest awareness was in Germany and the lowest in the United Kingdom and Belgium.

So much for the average citizen's awareness of the Parliament's existence. Equally revealing are people's perceptions of the role of the Parliament and of its future development now that it is directly elected.

In the Netherlands, France and Germany those who feel that the Parliament will play a more important role and those who expect its role to be about the same as before the elections were about evenly divided. The most frequent reply in the other Member States was that its role is unlikely to change. In every country, however, opinion leaders were much more inclined to expect the Parliament to play a more significant role in Community affairs.

Interviewees were also asked what they looked for from the new Parliament. Here the pattern was much the same in all Member States: the strongest hope is for initiatives to combat the economic crisis, and the principal fear is that there will be all talk and no action. These were the views of about six out of every ten.

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