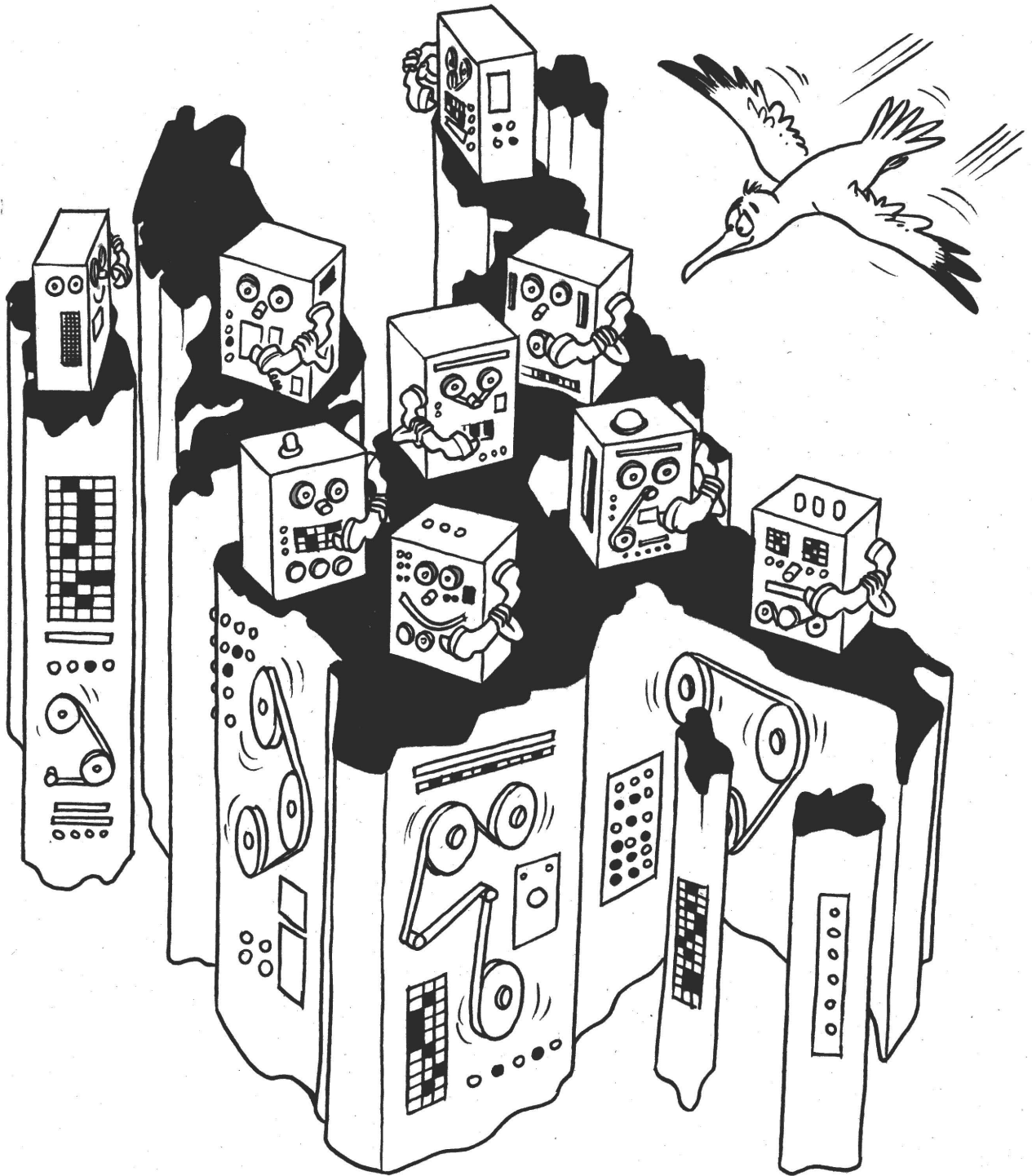


Euroforum



Euronet-Diane: a new dimension in fact-finding. See page 3.

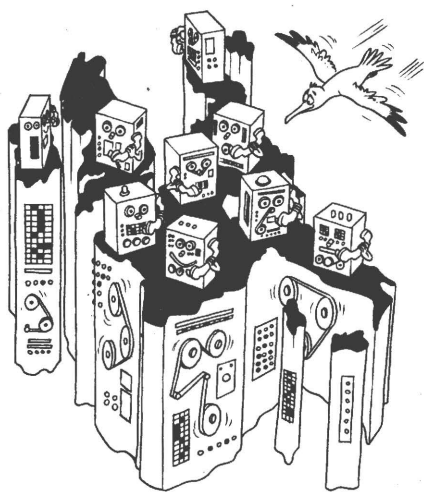
Euroforum

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Euronet-Diane: a new dimension in fact-finding

What has been hailed as one of the greatest advances in the dissemination of information since the invention of printing came into being officially last week when the Euronet-Diane system was inaugurated by Madame Simone Veil, President of the European Parliament, in Strasbourg.

Euronet-Diane is a Community-wide network of computerised information which enables subscribers to extract information from data bases and data banks in different Member States simply by picking up the telephone.

The new network opens up vast possibilities in the increasingly-important field of information. The world's store of computerized information is equivalent to 50 000 volumes the size of the Bible.

While not all this information will be immediately available to Euronet-Diane subscribers, the system already covers the broad spectrum of human knowledge—scientific, technical, economic, legal and social.

Subscribers can switch into this vast store of valuable information whether they are 20 or 2000 miles from the computer. What's more, subscribers can have this access for the cost of a local telephone call.

The idea of creating the Euronet-Diane network was born about 10 years ago as the faster rate of industrial, economic and social evolution brought in its train greater demands for easily-obtainable, accurate information on a wide range of subjects. Access also had to be cheap.

The Seventies saw the creation of numerous information services making use of advanced technology, notably computers. However, these services were independent of one another and were frequently incompatible. In addition, they were usually set up to answer the needs of a specific group e.g. research chemists or constitutional lawyers, and were therefore developed in isolation.

As long ago as 1971, the European Commission proposed to the Council of Ministers the development of a Community-wide network for scientific and technical information and documentation that would be quick and cheap.

The Council gave the go-ahead for the plan, fully appreciating the need for a cooperative effort between the Member States to rationalise the development of this new industry by sharing research, technical management and staff costs.

At the Commission's request, the national post and telecommunications authorities set about laying down the basis of the network. This has now been installed and has been in use since the beginning of this year.

The network spans the whole Community. There is a monitoring centre in London and four packet switching exchanges in Frankfurt, London, Paris and Rome. These exchanges are equipped with computers which are connected through high-speed links which have been doubled in case of breakdown. 'Host' computers throughout the Community, as well as 'user' terminals in Amsterdam, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin and Luxembourg, can be connected to the nearest switching exchange.

How does the system operate in practice? If a subscriber (known in the trade as a user) in London wants to find out what research has been done recently in France in a certain subject and where this information is available he can simply pick up the telephone.

The user terminal transmits the request to the switching exchange which relays it to the host computers linked to the network. The hosts are the information centres—data bases and data banks.

Although Euronet-Diane is still in its infancy, it already offers a wide choice of data bases filled with references and

abstracts of articles, books, conference proceedings and other sources, all containing specific data, facts, figures and formulae.

According to the team which manages the system, it is particularly useful to organizations working in the fields of aerospace; agriculture and veterinary science; all branches of engineering; computing and electronics; human sciences; medicine, metallurgy, patents, petroleum and pharmaceuticals.

For researchers and development scientists its attractions lie in the fields of biology and biomedicine; chemistry, environmental sciences; mathematics; nuclear sciences; physics and social sciences.

Each subscriber is given a password which gives him access to the whole network. He or she is also given a short training course to learn how to use the system and to get the best out of it.

As a result of Community-financed efforts, host computers of different makes have been connected to the network. A common command language has also been created so that it is not necessary for the subscriber to learn the language of different host computers to make his requests understood.

It is thus possible for a subscriber to use only one terminal for access to any of the 23 host computers connected to the network and to speak one 'computer language' only with the approximately 130 data banks and data bases stored in the memories of these computers.

Having created, so to speak, a true esperanto of computer jargon, the Commission, mostly thanks to the help of the European Parliament, has launched a programme for computer-assisted translation of the data itself. It covers all the official Community languages but, for cost reasons, it has been limited to certain fields.

However, the Commission is about to propose to the Member States a full-scale research programme into fully automatic translation. If this goes ahead, it is not too much to expect that in a few years time a Sicilian doctor, say, will be able to put a question in Italian to a German data base specialised in the medical field, that his question will be automatically

translated into German and that the answer provided by the German data base will be automatically translated into Italian before appearing on the screen in front of the doctor.

So far, around £ 13 million, four-fifths of it paid for out of Community funds and the rest by the national PTT administrations, has been spent setting up the present network. But a great deal more money will have to be invested to perfect the system.

For example, the Commission is investigating the possibilities of a link-up between Euronet and the new videotex technology which enables a subscriber to telephone for information which is then displayed on his television screen.

Another problem to be tackled is copyright. At the moment there are nine different national legislations regarding copyright. Eventually, a single copyright law for the whole Community could be envisaged but for the moment it will be necessary to work out a system to ensure payment and the recovery of royalties for authors and publishers whose publications are traded as computerised information from one Member State to another.

The demand for this on-line information is increasing at a dramatic rate. In 1976, the number of queries to computerised information services was about 60 000. By 1985, this is expected to overshoot the 2 million mark. Euronet-Diane is the Community's response to this challenge.

ENERGY

High priority is placed on ensuring nuclear safety

Potential disasters like the Three Mile Island accident and other incidents nearer home are a continuous reminder to us of the hazards associated with the development of nuclear energy.

Yet, in a Community uncomfortably short of domestic energy supplies, the nuclear option cannot be discarded. However, hand-in-hand with its development must go the improvement of its safety aspects.

The extent to which this need is appreciated was highlighted in the European Parliament recently when

the European Commission outlined the work it is doing in the field of nuclear safety for Anne Marie Lizin, a Socialist MP from Belgium where a quarter of all electricity is supplied by nuclear power a higher percentage than any other country.

The Commission promotes nuclear safety in a number of ways, notably by means of research in its own laboratories and by acting as a coordinator for research and the exchange of ideas between the nine Member States and on a world-wide scale.

The Council of Ministers agreed in principle on February 5 to Commission proposals on the reprocessing of nuclear material and the disposal of nuclear waste.

In 1979, it devoted about £ 16 million to work on reactor safety in its own research establishments and in national laboratories. This figure is likely to reach around £ 26 million this year.

The budget for its research into fuel-cycle safety was £ 13 million last year and is expected to increase by around 50% this year.

In addition, the Commission spent about £ 260 000 in the work of harmonising the safety practices and rules applied in the Member States.

At the international level, the Commission participates in the preparation of nuclear safety codes and guides produced under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. It also maintains close contacts with the US government, in particular through an agreement for research cooperation.

Last May, the Commission set up a group of independent high-level experts in the field of nuclear safety to carry out a general review of the present situation in the Community. The group's report is due to be ready at the end of May.

Brunner calls for world strategy

European Energy Commissioner Guido Brunner has proposed an international pact starting with Community Member States but open to

others to cooperate on the conservation of energy and raw materials supplies.

Another step proposed would be the introduction of a Community tax on oil imports to encourage domestic energy production and help finance such projects.

In addition, he suggested the setting up of a world Security Council for economic affairs, similar to the United Nations Security Council on political matters. He also proposed that an energy conference be organized among European nations as part of the Helsinki accord on European Security and Cooperation.

Savings forecasts offer some encouragement

Revised forecasts on how much energy we will be using by the end of this decade indicate that savings may be marginally greater than expected.

Last year, the European Commission set out energy objectives for the Community in 1990 based on programmes which the Member State governments submitted to it at the beginning of the year.

Now, new forecasts have been drawn up which indicate that consumption is expected to be 40 million tonnes of oil equivalent or 2.9% lower than at first expected, which is the equivalent of almost 10% of the oil we import.

Unfortunately, this cut-back is likely to be due more to slower economic growth and thus reduced manufacturing activity rather than to greater energy saving.

A further disturbing forecast is that energy produced in the Community is expected to fall, particularly in the nuclear sector—which could be down by as much as 16%—and even this estimate may prove to be over-optimistic.

In an effort to reduce the Community's dependence on imported oil, the nine Member States have agreed not to import more oil annually between now and 1985 than they imported in 1978—472 million tonnes.

The Commission now believes that this policy should be continued after 1985 as all reliable forecasts indicate that a crisis will continue to be just below the surface for several more years.

Strategy is needed to cope with fall-out of new technology

European Community leaders are generally agreed that if our industry is to survive into the 21st century and if jobs are to be secured the Community must be in the vanguard of the development of new technology.

In the face of increasing competition from developing countries which enjoy relatively plentiful raw materials and low labour costs, the Community will gradually have to abandon or reduce its involvement in a wide range of traditional industries and fall back on its 'grey gold', the technological capacity it has nurtured since the industrial revolution.

One of the most promising avenues for progress is the micro-electronic sector where the Community is already ahead of the field along with the United States and Japan.

However, while it is recognized that radical changes will take place in the pattern of our industrial production, it is being increasingly accepted that this will entail an equally dramatic transformation not only in the work place but in society in general.

When the nine Heads of Government held a meeting of the European Council in Dublin last December they gave the Commission the go-ahead to map out a detailed strategy which would prepare Community industry for the challenges of the next century in the field of micro-electronics.

Parallel to this work, the Commission has been devoting a considerable amount of time to weighing up the effects which this new industrial revolution could have on the structure of society.

Social Affairs Commissioner Henk Vredeling has now drawn up some preliminary projections which he is planning to discuss with representatives of employers and trade unions when they meet in the Community Standing Committee on Employment on February 26.

The Commission begins with a rather stark word of caution: the new technology can be a vehicle for economic growth but also a cause of social crisis. It is up to Community and Government authorities, as well as the employers and the trade unions, to ensure together that only the first part of this scenario remains valid.

This means that there will have to be continuous discussions between the employers and the unions to keep workers informed of developments which could have far-reaching consequences on their working lives.

The Commission believes that there will also have to be a widespread information campaign to let the public at large know what is involved in the new technology and to create a favourable environment for its development.

Among the dangers that the introduction of the new systems could entail is the possible alienation of the work-force because of the increasingly impersonal production process. Major efforts will be required to adapt workers not only by means of training in the new technology but psychologically as well.

This will mean re-designing educational systems and professional and technical training programmes as well as working out an acceptable man/machine relationship.

At the professional level, qualified men and women capable of masterminding this dramatic industrial metamorphosis are thin on the ground and the Commission is currently working out exactly what the needs will be so that the educational systems can adapt.

At the same time, it suggests that the European Social Fund could be used to help finance the retraining of workers whose traditional jobs become scarcer and who need to equip themselves for a place in the industries of the future.

According to the Commission experts, the emergence of the new technology will not necessarily result in a loss of jobs; neither, however, is there any guarantee that it will create more jobs than are lost as the result of phasing out of old-fashioned industries.

A broad strategy will have to be prepared to help industries and sectors which are hit by the loss of competitiveness with the aid of Community finance, and to identify the sectors which will continue to be viable and to channel investment towards them. This strategy also implies the need for early identification of sectors and regions where problems are likely to occur so that alternatives can be made available.

Clearly, a hard-headed approach is needed if the Community is to derive full benefit from its relatively strong position in a field which represents one of its best chances for industrial survival in an increasingly competitive world. But while the transformation of industry is dictated by economics, the Commission believes that there could be numerous accompanying social benefits.

For example, the gradual introduction of new technology in the work place will lead to a shortening of the working week. It could also channel the energies of the labour force which are currently used up in jobs that are often sheer drudgery into activities that could benefit society at large, such as caring for the sick and the elderly.

Lastly, and by no means least, the new technology is bound to spawn a whole range of new-fangled labour-saving gadgets for the home which will ease the burden of the housewife.



WOMEN



Parliamentarians will promote equal rights cause

There are more women voters in the European Community than men; yet women are sparsely represented in the national Parliaments.

One exception to this rule, however, is the new directly elected European Parliament, which numbers more women among its ranks than any other Parliament in the Nine.

A number of these MPs, prompted by the snail's pace progress towards equality for women, have formed an *ad hoc* committee on women's rights.

Headed by French Socialist Yvette Roudy, the Committee is made up of 35 MPs from the main political groupings. It had its first working meeting in Brussels last month.

European Commissioner, Henk Vredeling, whose portfolio includes responsibility for women's affairs, attended the meeting. He wasn't the only man present. The committee includes 10 male MPs, a man/woman ratio the committee hopes to see copied wherever possible on parliamentary committees. The new committee will be mainly concerned with what Ms. Roudy calls the discrepancy between legislation and life. She believes that Community legislation which makes it illegal for employers to discriminate between men and women with regard to pay and working conditions has had only limited success.

With approximately 38 million women in paid employment throughout the Community, the committee wants to ensure that women's rights get further than mere words on paper.

Unemployment is the main preoccupation for the committee's members. In any economic crisis they say, women's jobs are always the first to be affected. On the whole, women are less well qualified, lower paid, have worse promotion prospects and are offered less vocational guidance than their male counterparts.

The committee's vice president, Italian Communist Vera Squarcialupi pointed out how women's unemployment has increased by five per cent in recent years. Many women, she said, work 'in the black' without benefit of social security and are not included in statistics on employment.

At Community level, the parliamentarians want to see a women's consultative committee set up. They also call for legal help for women appealing against discrimination in the job field, and more attention paid to the problems of women migrant workers and women in the Third World. In addition, Ms. Roudy would also like to see at least three women among the 13 European Commissioners.

The committee sees its role primarily in terms of informing as many women as possible, both of their legal rights and of the organizations which can help them in the struggle to secure these rights.

They stress the importance of their work reaching grass roots level and envisage close contact with other

parliamentary working groups and with non-governmental organizations within the Member States.

The committee is preparing for a debate to take place in the European Parliament before the summer recess, which will be centred around a report it is compiling, as well as proposals from the European Commission.

YOUTH

10 000 will benefit from school-to-work projects

Nearly four million young people in the Community will be leaving school this year. Many will have no formal qualifications, while employers may consider others ill-prepared for a particular job.

It can be a very trying and worrying time for many youngsters as they try to find their first job.

In order to help them make this transition from school to working life, the Community, as we reported briefly in the last issue of *Euroforum*, is supporting 29 pilot projects throughout the nine Member States.

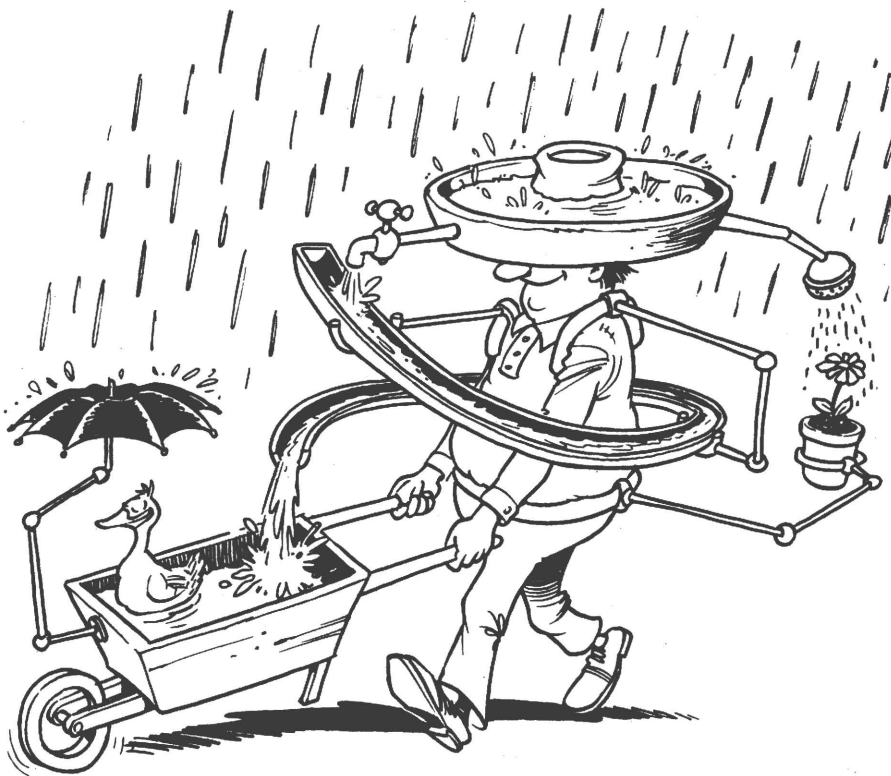
In fact, these projects cover several hundred different educational establishments and are likely to involve around 10 000 young people throughout the Community during their three years of operation.

Although the decision to grant annual Community aid of some £1.6 million was taken in 1976, only five projects were under way at the start of the 1978/79 school year.

Under the original agreement, Community support would have ended in December 1980. Now, however, the Council of Ministers has agreed to extend the aid for another 12 months to enable a full three-year programme to be assessed.

The projects concentrate on six main themes including the special problems of young migrants and handicapped, improvements to vocational preparation, the problem of poor motivation and improved in-service training for teachers.

European patent makes invention more profitable



The first European patents have just been announced by the European Patents Office (EPO) in Munich, which has been accepting requests since 1978.

The patents are not cheap—at just over £ 1000 a go they are more expensive than if an inventor were to register his product in just one country.

But it saves inventors or manufacturers having to apply for separate patents in different countries. And if the European patent is filed in at least three other countries it becomes profitable, according to Mr Van Benthem, the Dutch President of the EPO. It also saves a vast amount of paperwork and legal fees.

The idea of a European patent which is recognized throughout the Community is to enable inventors and manufacturers to take full advantage of the existence of the common market.

Larger firms are the Office's best customers, with 55% of the applications. This is understandable, since operating on an international scale, these companies want their products to be known in as many countries as possible.

At the same time the number of applications filed with the Munich organizations was increased in leaps and bounds. From 450 per month, a year and a half ago, it has now climbed to 1400 per month.

The many requests received by the EPO shows that throughout Europe the inventive spirit is still as alive as ever. One ambitious gentleman in Switzerland has filed a patent for that elusive product: an instrument to help roll spaghetti around a fork!

Too many regulations? Not so, says Commissioner Burke

Is there such a thing as too much protection from the hazards of everyday life? Or on the other hand, is it possible to protect against all risks?

These are some of the questions being discussed with increasing vigour in a

heated three-cornered dialogue between representatives of business, public authorities and consumer and environmental interests'.

In addition to this public dialogue, the subject is being given serious attention by scientists and other experts in a new field of increasing importance known as 'risk evaluation'.

While this evaluation tries to estimate whether, for example, it is safer for you to travel in an airplane than to consume a meal of prepared tinned meat through statistics on the probability and frequency of accidents, the public policy debate revolves around the costs of such protection.

A major discussion has erupted in the United Kingdom especially, but also in other countries, about the possibility that the cost of complying with consumer, environmental and public health legislation might be stifling business and industrial competitiveness.

In the United Kingdom, a study commissioned by business interests charged that these costs were a major burden, a contention instantly rejected by consumer advocates.

The debate also spilled over into a recent session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg when a number of members of the Parliament asked the European Commission about the cost of excessive regulations in the areas of consumer, environmental and public health protection.

The Commission, which over the years has proposed a number of Community regulations in these fields which have been adopted by the nine Member States and now have to be applied by industry, was urged to include an evaluation of the costs involved in future proposals.

The contention that national or Community laws in this field invariably or necessarily cause price rises for consumers was categorically rejected by Commissioner Richard Burke who is in charge of consumer affairs. 'This is simply not true', he told the Parliament.

He also went on to say that, in some cases, certain legislation leads to a reduction in prices. In this category, he noted rules on competition and price transparency. And laws on pollution prevention and on occupational health and safety help companies economise resources, eliminate accidents or increase productivity, which actually reduces the cost of production.

One recent study ordered by the Commission even concluded that environmental protection controls actually create new jobs and industries.

But Mr Burke also went on to say that, in the cases where there is an increase in production costs because manufacturers have to meet certain regulatory requirements, the producer has simply been required to assume the responsibility of paying costs that were previously borne by the public.

'For example', Mr Burke noted, 'the injury to health caused by the pollution of the atmosphere by a factory is not reckoned in the price of the final product. The polluter exploits resources as if they were free goods for as long as injuries or other costs arising from this exploitation are borne by the public at large'.

Turning the question around, he also inquired about the costs to society and industry of a deterioration in the environment and of work accidents due to the absence of regulations. These can lead to damage claims or hours lost at work which business and industry must pay. More importantly, however, they can result in a financial imposition on society at large which must bear the costs of hospitalisation and treatment of those suffering from pollution-related ailments.

Mr Burke also pointed out that, in many instances, European Community laws are recommended by industries themselves. They actually ask the Community authorities to standardise the many different national laws in the Member States concerning consumer health or environmental protection so that competition will be equal throughout the Community and so that their goods can be sold more easily in compliance with a unified law rather than having to adapt to a different requirement in each country.

Mr Burke assured the Parliament, however, that the Commission, in drawing up such legislation, actually did try to evaluate not only the costs but also the benefits for industry, and for other interested parties—such as citizens, consumers and workers.

But he remarked that sometimes it is difficult to obtain sound objective predictions of the costs from industry, which either does not know exactly or sometimes overstates the true costs. That's one of the reasons why the Commission a few years ago introduced a proposal to establish an accurate, reliable and standard method of evaluating the costs of environmental protection programmes.

EMPLOYMENT



Irish workers top Community strike league

It is impossible to open a newspaper or turn on the television these days without being bombarded with news about a strike—or to use modern terminology 'an industrial dispute'—taking place somewhere or other.

This leaves the impression that the number of strikes is constantly increasing, but the truth is quite different. Between 1972 and 1978 the number of days lost through strikes in the European Community per 1000 employees almost halved from 549 to 291.

Pride of place must go to the Netherlands, where only one day per 1000 employees was lost during the year. Denmark with 63, Germany with 119 and France 127 also had relatively good records.

Top of the strike league came Ireland with 838 days lost per 1000 workers, followed by Italy on 630. The middle positions were dominated by the United Kingdom (414) and Belgium (324).

The Italians were in the unusual situation of losing a large number of days (306) through agricultural strikes—the only Community country to do so.

The most strike prone areas in Europe during 1978 were the steel and motor industries with 1080 and 823 working days respectively being lost per 1000 employees.

While each industrial worker tended to go on strike for half a day in 1978, employees in the services sector appeared to be the most reluctant to use this form of action. Only 117 days were lost per 1000 workers—just about a third of the whole Community average.

MONEY

Playing the stock market on a Community basis

The size of stock markets must be adapted to take account of firms' capital requirements in the European Community, European Fiscal Affairs Commissioner, Christopher Tugendhat told a business audience in Milan recently.

In particular, he outlined several possible ways of converting European stock exchanges so that they can cope with the new demands and possibilities that Community-wide transactions provide.

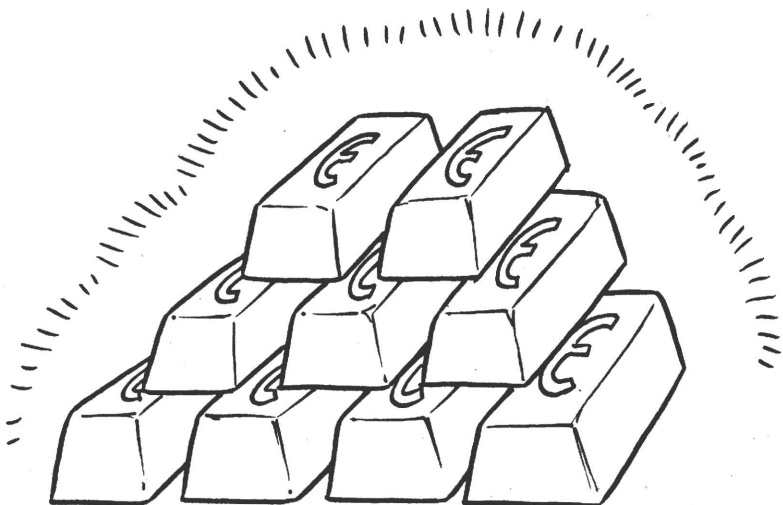
The first is to promote more contact between and interpenetration of national securities markets. This involves abolishing obstacles which prevent issuers of securities in one Member State from gaining access to stock markets in other Community countries.

As well as moving towards the liberalisation of transactions in securities, Mr Tugendhat said that measures should be taken to give Community broking firms access to stock exchanges in other Member States.

In order to strengthen the public's confidence in stock markets, the Commission is working on a draft directive which will lay down more precisely various restrictions on insider dealing.

Confidence in securities can also be assured, Mr Tugendhat said, by an effective information policy, whereby investors, who take the risks, are offered all the necessary facts to assess these risks at their true value.

Two pieces of Community legislation already exist on the information to be published on securities admitted to official stock exchange listings. A third Community proposal on the coordination of information to be published on a regular basis by listed companies is now being examined by the Council of Ministers.



Community's bank continues to boost lending

The European Investment Bank (EIB)—the Community's major lending institution—had a bumper year in 1979. It supported projects in the Nine and a number of developing countries with loans worth £2000 million—a 40% increase on its 1978 operations.

As a result, around 52 000 permanent jobs were created and another 25 000, which were in danger of being axed, were saved.

But the projects also supplied a number of temporary jobs, either during the construction period or in firms supplying the necessary services and materials. The EIB calculated these at 145 000 for 1979 and 1980, although this figure will gradually tail off.

Over two-thirds of the lending within the Community went to help less well-off regions. Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Italian Mezzogiorno and Greenland were the main beneficiaries.

The EIB's support was directed at a vast range of projects, including water supply, sewerage and irrigation schemes, improvements to telecommunications, transport, electricity and gas supplies.

Last year also saw, for the first time, loans made under the 'Ortoli facility' by means of which the Community uses its international credit-worthiness to borrow money at favourable rates

on the open market for on-lending. These reached £180 million.

Almost 45% of all lending in the Community in 1979 went to the energy sector in a bid to cut Europe's dependence on imported oil.

But, despite a difficult investment climate and a lack of demand for finance from several major public enterprises, which had borrowed from the EIB in previous years, the Bank increased loans to the manufacturing industry in particular.

Of this almost £90 million went to regional or national financial institutions and was used to help small and medium-sized industries.

Commission proposes extension of loan facility

The European Commission is planning to raise around £330 millions to boost energy and infrastructure projects in the Community.

The nine Member State governments still have to give the official go-ahead, but this is expected to be forthcoming shortly. Approval was given last year to raise a similar amount.

The Commission uses its excellent credit rating on international money markets to borrow the funds which it then lends on a long-term basis to help finance specific schemes in the Community.

Introduced only last year, the New Community Instrument—known more

familiarly as the 'Ortoli Facility' after Economics Commissioner François-Xavier Ortoli—has been a resounding success.

By the end of 1979 it had lent £200 million to projects which either helped to cut down Europe's dependence on oil imports or improved roads and communication systems. The remaining money is expected to be allocated shortly.

Among last year's beneficiaries were a hydro-electric power station in North Wales and water works near Dublin, and the Pertusillo aqueduct in Southern Italy.

While the new round of loans will continue to finance the same kind of projects, the Commission is keen to expand the scope of its activities. It is proposing that urban modernisation schemes, in particular housing and advance factories, should also be supported.

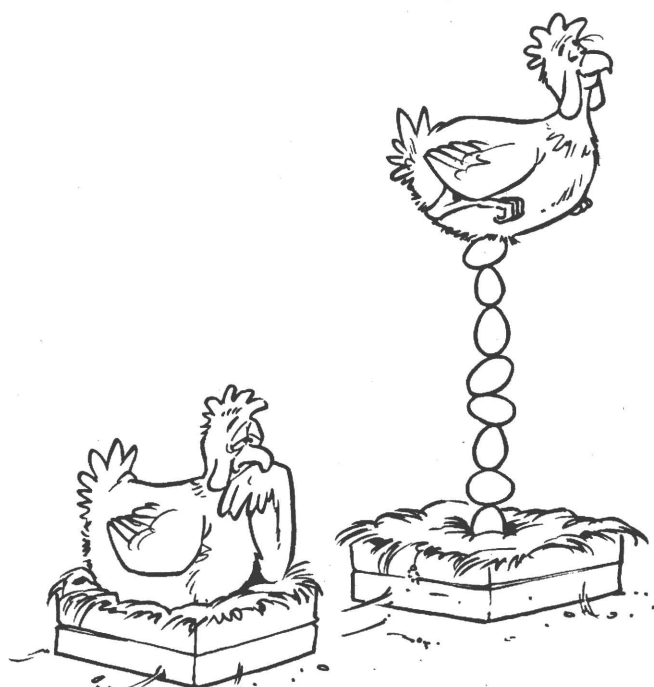
But it stipulates that it will consider financing only projects which have been submitted by national authorities and which form part of a coordinated programme to improve the general economic productivity of the area.

PUBLICATIONS

European Yearbook. (Vol. XXV). General Editor A.H. Robertson. Published under the auspices of the Council of Europe in English and French. To be published in October 1980. \$100. Order from Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, Distribution Centre, P.O. Box 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

With the publication of its twenty-fifth volume the European Yearbook has now been in existence for a quarter of a century. The aim of the European Yearbook is to promote the scientific study of European Organisations and their work. It is published under the responsibility of an Editorial Committee, which is an unofficial and nonpolitical body precluded from expressing an opinion on any aspect of international affairs. The articles published in French have an English summary, and vice versa, while the Documentary Section appears in both languages in its entirety.

The European Social Budget—1980-1975-1970, price £8.40. Catalogue number CB-25-78-704-EN-C.



Start the day with an egg: some do, some don't

From the traditional British eggs and bacon to the Italian pasta all'uovo or the French soufflé, each nationality has its different ways of appreciating the humble egg. What may come as a surprise, though, is that our hens seem to display different national characteristics too.

This unexpected information comes in a written reply to a question put by the German Christian Democrat member of the European Parliament, Isidor Früh on trends in egg production in the European Community.

The Italian hen, it seems, is the most lackadaisical layer, producing only 82 kilos of eggs a year as compared with her super-active Dutch and Danish cousins who manage to pile up almost twice as many—153 and 152 kilos a year respectively. And this is in spite of the fact that the Italians seem to be the Community's greatest chicken-fanciers, keeping some 82 million of them, and increasing the numbers each year.

The Danish attitude seems to be quite different—they keep the second

smallest number of hens in the Community, 4.5 million, and in spite of the hens' remarkable increase in productivity—18% in the years 1972-78—the numbers are declining faster than anywhere else.

The Dutch, on the other hand, egged on by their hens' keenness to lay, have increased their hen population by 60%—by far the largest increase in the Community—and, unlike most other countries, they've increased their egg exports too.

The Irish seem to be the Community's least enthusiastic chicken-keepers, with a population of only 3.5 million. Perhaps disheartened by their hens' poor laying record (105 kilos per layer in 1978), they come a close second to Denmark in reducing the numbers they keep.

The French are more optimistic—with the second largest population of hens (69 million) but the third lowest rate of egg production, they also have the second highest rate of increase in the numbers kept—though at 12%, it's far behind that of the Dutch.

The other areas covered by the statistics—the United Kingdom, Germany and the Belgium and Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU)—all come somewhere in the middle, with fairly large hen populations whose productivity is steadily increasing while their numbers decline.

One of the few overall trends that emerges is that egg production in the Community as a whole is up 5% since 1972.

So what causes this general disparity? The Commission suggests a variety of reasons. Different investment policies in member states may be one cause, as well as different marketing structures and differences in the availability of feed. As the Commission points out in its reply to Mr Früh, the production of eggs and the egg trade are affected by many different factors acting in a free market with no Community intervention.

Whether the chicken-buffs find this something to crow about or not, no doubt the hens will be saying 'Vive la différence!'

Farmers may have to take more responsibility for surpluses

The 1980s may be a more expensive decade for Europe's farmers than the 1970s. In its annual report on the performance of the Common Agricultural Policy last year and the outlook over the coming 10 years, the European Commission warns farmers they may have to pay more of the costs involved.

'It is not excluded that increasing costs of managing surplus markets will make it necessary for the producers to share the financial burden through some form of co-responsibility', notes the report.

A co-responsibility tax is already paid by farmers on milk production and under proposals tabled by Farm Commissioner Finn Olav Gundelach the levy would be increased this year.

The European Commission has proposed an overall price increase of between 2 and 3.5% for the coming marketing year for products covered by the CAP. It wants the Farm Ministers to keep the increase for milk and sugar, which are seriously in surplus, to 1.5%. The effect of the total price package would be to limit the increase in food prices in general to 0.8% and in overall consumer spending to 0.1%.

The report estimates that milk production and deliveries to dairies will continue to rise above the 100 million tonnes reached last year although the recent increase in the number of dairy cows may tail off in 1980 from the impact of non-marketing schemes.

Average yields, now at 4000 kg per cow, are expected to increase and will be the main reason for the rise in production.

Sugarbeet production—the other major surplus crop—outstripped demand in the Nine by over 25% last year.

But any extra taxes farmers would have to pay would be on top of the sharp increase they have experienced in input costs. In 1979 these are estimated to have risen on average 8%, although the United Kingdom (12%) and France and Ireland both on 10%, were significantly above this figure.

At the other end of the scale, price increases of inputs were remarkably low in Luxembourg (2%) and Germany (4%).

As might be expected, the brunt of the increases was accounted for by fuel costs, although the price of most machinery also rose appreciably—17% in Italy and 13% in Ireland.

The number of farms in the Community is also continuing to decline as the Community's structural policy begins to bite. In 1975 there were 5.8 million farms in the nine—some 12% less than in 1970.

Nevertheless, some 64% of farms are still under 10 hectares in area, covering no more than 14% of the total farmland used in the Community.

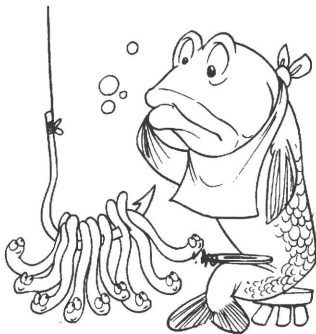
On the other hand, only 6% of farms are over 50 hectares, but cover 41% of all land being used for agriculture.

The two extreme farm sizes are to be found in Italy and Britain. In Italy 86% of all farmers have holdings under 10 hectares. In Britain, the figure is 27%.

Similar differences can be seen in the age of farmers. 44% of farmers in the Nine are over 55 years of age—a figure which varies from 26% in Germany to 52% in Ireland and 55% in Italy.

The number of young people in farming (represented by the under 35s) was particularly pronounced in Germany (13%), the Netherlands (14%) and Belgium (12%).

FISHERIES



New measures will help preserve dwindling stocks

The Nine's Fisheries Ministers have agreed on two measures designed to protect Europe's dwindling fish stock and to prevent overfishing.

The European Commission's proposed ceilings for the absolute amount of each type of fish that may be caught in various Community waters—known in Euro-jargon as total allowable catch (TAC)—were approved for the rest of this year.

These include a virtual ban on herring fishing, which has not pleased the Dutch. According to tradition, every year the first two boxes of herring caught are presented to the Queen and the Fisheries Minister.

But there is still some hope for this old custom. Ministers agreed that if a special report due to be submitted at the end of May by the International Council for the Exploitation of the Sea provided sufficient evidence, they would relax the herring ban in the North Sea somewhat.

In order to ensure that these new ceilings will be adhered to, a new catch reporting procedure is being introduced. By July 1, the same measures will apply throughout the Community.

The skipper of a fishing boat will have to keep a log in which he records the size of his catch, by species, the date and its location. Details will also have to be filled in when fish are landed or transferred from boat to boat.

This information will be handed over to national authorities once a month and then forward to the Commission for processing. This, it is hoped, will prove an effective deterrent to overfishing.

The next tough task facing Ministers will be to divide the TACs between the Member States, setting a limit to catches on a national basis. This is likely to prove far more difficult.

The aim of all these measures is, of course, to ensure that we will continue to have fish to eat (although overfishing in the past means a considerable reduction in the amount) and at the same time to provide fishermen with as reasonable a livelihood as possible.

IN BRIEF

Aid projects approved

Aid from the European Development Fund worth around £1.3 million has been approved for projects ranging from hydro-electric power stations to schools and coffee and cocoa plantations in a number of countries in Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean.

Emergency aid

The Community has granted initial aid of around £200 000 to the island of Mauritius which suffered more than £22 million worth of damage from two cyclones. More aid may follow.

Cyclone aftermath

The Community is making £200 000 available to help victims of the Cyclone Hyacinth in Reunion. Further aid is expected to follow when the situation has been fully assessed.

Happier holidays

Package holidays are to be investigated by the European Commission to determine the extent of consumer dissatisfaction. This follows a report by a group of European consumer organization lawyers (*Euroforum* 18/79).

TRADE

Fewer import controls

The European Commission has introduced new measures that will considerably simplify the formalities involved in intra-Community trade by doing away with unnecessary import controls.

The measures involve a new system for the application of Article 115 of the Treaty of Rome. Under this Article, the Commission may, in the event of economic difficulties caused by differences between the Nine's commercial policies, authorize a Member State to take protective measures against products coming from outside the Community and in free circulation within it, i.e. having been imported into another Member State.

In the past, the Member States checked for cases of difficulty by means of a system of intra-Community surveillance, under which importation of the products in question was subject to the issuing of an import licence, where the quantity of direct imports was already restricted, and to voluntary restraint by the non-Community country of origin, where deflections of trade were feared. Member States could also defer the issuing of a licence, provided that the Commission approved.

However, in a judgment delivered in 1976, the Court of Justice, while fully recognizing the need for such measures, questioned whether the across-the-board application of the authorization system in fact conformed with the basic Community principle of the free movement of goods.

The Commission investigated and found that Member States' surveillance systems were likely to cause barriers to free movement.

Hence the new system, under which intra-Community surveillance will no longer be applied across-the-board. Instead prior permission will have to be obtained from the Commission in each case, following an examination of the economic situation in the national sector in question.

Import licences will now be issued automatically (usually within five working days) but the importer can be called upon to supply the national authorities with exhaustive details when he applies for his licence.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



English is to the fore in the Tower of Babel

Anyone who has ever paid even a fleeting visit to Italy cannot have failed to notice that there is one thing Italians love to do and that is to talk.

This national characteristic seems, however, to have deserted those sons and daughters of Romulus elected to the European Parliament, and, given politicians well-established delight in the sound of their own voices, this relative silence among Italian politicians should come as a double surprise.

Equally surprising, perhaps, is the fact that the same degree of vocal shyness does not afflict the traditionally reticent Englishmen abroad in Strasbourg, who, according to a table showing the use of languages in the European Parliament between July and December last year—the first six months of the new directly-elected Parliament—flexed their vocal chords to greater effect than any of their fellow Europeans.

The table uses a column of text in the record of the Parliament's debates as its unit of measurement, and its results show up some interesting facts:

- the 81 talkative British MEPs (ably abetted by 15 Irishmen) inflicted a masterful 1132 columns of rhetoric on their unsuspecting colleagues;
- the French and francophone Belgian speakers were the next most vociferous with 1056 columns;

- the quietest of all (even 'out-silencing' the Italians, who only managed 481 columns) were the Germans with 475 columns: a mere murmur;

- the traditionally taciturn Danes (16 of them in the House) used up 139 columns between them (an average of 8.6 columns a head, which compares favourably with the Anglo-Irish average of 11.7 columns per head; or mouth, perhaps, to be more accurate);

- the Dutch (assisted by the Flemish Belgian members) actually averaged out better than the Anglophones at 11.8 columns per speaker.

Of course the problem with using the column of text as the unit of measurement is that the results it throws up are somewhat incomplete. For instance, a couple of verbose Anglophones could have droned on endlessly, to make their record look so impressive, whereas dozens of eager Italians or Germans could each have chipped in a 'Hear, hear' or 'Resign!' apiece, and we would be no wiser. Nor is there any indication of how many Members were actually listening to the pearls which were cast their way.

Still, the table does perhaps show that the English have adapted well and quickly to the novelty of European Parliamentary procedure.

One last thought, though. Anybody who knows Italians will also know that they employ a stunning variety of gestures and manual sign language (especially when they are aroused) to express what soon becomes their obvious opinion. And is there not, after all, a saying that actions speak louder than words....?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Eurojargon

In its reply to Lord O'Hagan (*Euroforum* 18/79), the European Commission most ungallantly laid responsibility for the horrors of what he called 'Eurobabble' on its own translators. It would have been better advised to draw attention to the fact that the Commission is not the only one to massacre the six languages spoken in its service: its only possible excuse can be that the same offence is committed in the nine countries where these languages are normally used.

For instance, distinguished economists (and it goes without saying that they are all distinguished, especially in the Community institutions) love to use pompous, meaningless phrases which nevertheless give a scientific gloss to the most obvious platitudes. I read somewhere recently that 'world sugar production is characterised by a structural surplus capacity', which in ordinary language means quite simply: 'the world produces too much sugar'. But only the first formula can justify the long years of study and the titles which no doubt adorn the author's visiting card.

Worst of all, this jargon is invading everyday language. In France, we are constantly assaulted by 'in the context of' (translate by 'as regards') or 'to the extent that...' used in the sense of 'because', or by ridiculous fashions like misusing the prefix 'non': the other day I heard a politician on the radio talk about the 'non-consent' of society today. Why not its 'rejection'?

I have reason to believe that we are not the only ones who have to put up with these absurdities. A British friend of mine who had spent a lifetime thinking he was eating

'pork' learnt to his surprise and distaste that he was in fact consuming 'pig meat'. Unless this is yet another case of mistranslation...

J.L. Fournier
Av. Léon Bollée
Le Mans (France)

Pollution of the Rhine

Sir,

I simply cannot understand why the French cling so obstinately to the idea that by burying waste from their potash mines in Alsace and Lorraine they will pollute the soil. They also claim that a process of recycling would not improve the situation. This I very much doubt, in view of the modern techniques available.

Why in heaven's name do they not construct some form of pipe through which the waste from these mines could be pumped to the nearest sea port, be it Antwerp, Le Havre or, indeed, Rotterdam, where it could be loaded on dredgers and taken far out into the Atlantic to be dumped? I do not believe that this would pollute the seas any more than they are at the moment because the micro-organisms in salt water would eventually break down the waste as it does with an oil spillage.

As it is, the waste from these mines reaches Rotterdam and the North Sea anyway, having first polluted the Rhine along the way!

J.A. Karreman,
Europalaan 88,
6991 DE Rheden,
The Netherlands.

The family's role

Sir,

I was surprised to read the article published in *Euroforum* 1/80 in Focus, 'Plea for a Community policy to favour the family'.

The reason for my surprise was that your magazine, which usually keeps up with the times, has given so much

space to a matter more suited a nineteenth-century publication: the 'Family' in capital letters. Though the family has withstood, more or less undamaged, violent waves of opposition and though it still remains the foundation of our society, I don't think it is in need of restoration, which seems to be the view of COFACE.

Its programme, in fact, purports to show the family as the main element in society, in spite of changes brought about by social progress. The main criticism seems to be reserved for feminism, which is blamed for having attacked the family, particularly the role of the woman in the family.

COFACE uses a tone which reminds me of the anti-feminist German formula of the three K's: Kindern, Küche, Kirche - children, kitchen, church.

In effect, COFACE's call to halt Europe's declining birthrate is not convincing. Encouraging the Community to follow a population policy which 'respects family values' sounds to me like an anti-contraceptive crusade. Worrying about a European population decrease is out of place if you think of world overpopulation and of the poverty related to it.

Finally, I don't believe it is possible to improve children's living conditions by adopting a policy aimed at increasing the population. The Year of the Child was not invented for that.

I hope *Euroforum* will take this into consideration.

Gemma Pignoloni
Via Parco Vecchio 7
27100 PAVIA (Italy)

Sir,

I read regularly in *Euroforum* news and warnings about the energy crisis, unemployment increase, pollution and so on. But I have yet to find anything about Europe's critical overpopulation and about the necessity for birth control. For example, there has been nothing publicizing initiatives such as the one we took in Italy for the liberalization of voluntary sterilization in Europe. Can it be that demographic factors are irrelevant to economics?

Calogero Falcone
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Association for Voluntary
Sterilization)
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THE NEWS AT A GLANCE

Common strategy

Closer cooperation between the Community and the 60 Third World countries which signed the Lomé Convention in meeting the challenge of rising oil prices was the main feature of discussions in Brussels recently between Bernard St. John, Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados and current President of the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Council of Ministers, and Development Commissioner Claude Cheysson.

New accord

With the signature of a new protocol governing their relations, the Community and Portugal have entered into a phase designed to pave the way for Portugal's eventual membership of the Community. The protocol, which supplements a 1972 agreement, will enable Portugal to protect certain sectors of its economy to allow for restructuring. Negotiations on Portuguese entry to the Community are expected to enter their decisive stage in the coming months.

Spelling it out

A British Conservative member of the European Parliament, Tom Spencer has complained about the cruelty to geese which are raised for paté de foie gras. He said during a debate on poultry trade that a goose was force-fed 400-500 grams of salted cooked maize three times a day for 3-4 weeks until its liver was so distended that it could hardly move or breathe. It was equivalent, he said, to cramming 28 lbs. of spaghetti into a man every day.

Support for Sakharov

Both the European Commission and the Political Committee of the European Parliament have condemned the Soviet Government's action against Nobel prize-winning scientist Andrei Sakharov. The exile of the well-known dissident from Moscow and other restrictions placed upon him are contrary to the Helsinki agreement on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to which both the Soviet Union and the Community are signatories.

New issues

Mr Calvo Sotelo, the Minister who is conducting the negotiations for Spain's accession to the Community, was in Brussels recently for talks with Lorenzo Natali, the Commissioner responsible for these negotiations. They have now extended their talks to the two issues not so far dealt with but which are of major importance — agriculture and social affairs.

Tapping the sun

European Commission tenders for Community-financed solar energy projects have been published in the *Official Journal* (No C23, dated 30 January).

Summit date

The next European Council meeting of Heads of Government is scheduled to take place in Brussels at the end of next month. The problem of British contributions to the Community budget is likely to be the main talking point.

More cooperation

Industry Commissioner Etienne Davignon urged a world strategy on raw materials and mining between the industrialized and developing countries at a recent UNIDO meeting in New Delhi.

Sport and State

'I do not believe that you can separate sport from politics', European Parliament's President Simone Veil told the US National Press Club during a recent visit to Washington. She said it was for western politicians to take responsibility for the decision about participation in the Olympic Games in Moscow.

Greater assets

The World Bank, which lends money for Third World development, is to double its authorised capital to \$80 billion.

Aid for refugees

The European Commission has proposed aid of almost £9 million for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Mixed response

The dangers of a multi-speed Europe have been stressed in an economic study carried out for the European Commission. The economists are worried about the different abilities of Member States to respond to economic change which could diminish their continuing interest in European integration.

Review meeting

The joint committee of the ACP/EEC Consultative Assembly will be held in Arusha, Tanzania, at the end of this month, to review the working of the first Lomé Convention. The second is due to come into force this year.

Minorities charter

A Northern Ireland member of the European Parliament, John Hume, and a fellow member of the Socialist Group, Italian Gaetano Arfe, are calling for a Community charter to protect minority languages and regional cultures. They point out that 30 million Europeans speak as their mother tongue languages which are not widely used and that the Community has a duty to defend them.

Call for progress

The European Parliamentary committee dealing with education, which is presided over by the Italian Christian Democrat Mario Pedini, is to press the nine Education Ministers to meet at Community level as soon as possible. Their meeting last November was cancelled. Among Commission proposals the Council should consider are one's for more language teaching in schools, equal opportunities for girls, and school curricula which are better adapted to the labour market.

Commission aims to combat dodges in payment of fines

Is your natural reaction upon receiving an electricity, gas or any other kind of bill to put it to one side and leave it until the last moment, or final demand, before paying? Apart from the (perhaps unconscious) desire to thumb your nose in the general direction of 'authority' or 'bureaucracy', the financial advantage of hanging on to the money for as long as possible is obvious: you benefit from the interest accruing, 'they' don't.

Among the 'theys' on the receiving end of this integral element of human nature is the European Commission in relation to the fines it imposes on firms which break the Community's clearly-defined competition or fair-trading rules.

These rules are aimed at ridding the market of cartels, reducing the risk of excessive concentrations of economic power which can adversely affect both consumers and smaller competing firms, and preventing government aids from distorting competition. The Commission can impose fines on firms for a number of unacceptable business practices.

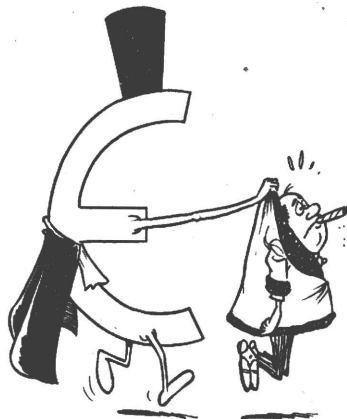
For example, market sharing agreements between manufacturers which set up protected areas, often national, are liable to be pounced on. In 1973, the Commission imposed a fine of £5.5 million (later reduced to £1 million on appeal to the European Court of Justice) on a sugar manufacturers' cartel.

Price-fixing agreements can be stopped, as can the granting of exclusive retailing rights to a restricted number of agents which allocate supply quotas and align selling prices, thus reducing

competition between the agents, freezing out other retailers and depriving consumers of free choice.

The most recent and the heaviest fine imposed to date by the Commission on an individual firm was some £4.4 million, meted out to Japanese hi-fi giant Pioneer and its distributors in France, Germany and the UK. Pioneer had banned parallel imports from Germany and the UK into France.

Once a firm has been fined, however, it can be some time before the Commission actually sees the money. In a reply to a recent Parliamentary question from French Socialist Edith Cresson, the Commission confirmed that, while the majority of firms pay their fines by the deadline set, some have in the past put off payment, sometimes for fairly lengthy periods.



In cases where the firm concerned is in financial difficulties, the Commission has made special facilities for payment. In other cases, however, fairly ingenious means have been employed by firms to delay payment.

In one instance a firm actually changed its name after the fine had been imposed, while in the case of the 1973 sugar cartel mentioned above, the firms made use of a loophole in Community competition law under which there was no obligation to pay the fine in any particular

national currency. By juggling with exchange rates for the Italian lira, the firms effectively managed to reduce the amount they paid by about 40%. The Commission eventually recouped the 'loss' through the Court and eliminated that particular loophole.

Under normal procedure, a firm has three months from the date of notification of the fine to pay up. However, if a firm decides to appeal to the Court (a practice becoming more prevalent as the amounts of money involved have increased—Pioneer, for example, has decided to appeal against the size of its fine) the Commission has agreed under present rules not to collect the money until the case is settled, and that usually takes about 18 months, often longer.

Potentially, therefore, the Commission, just like the electricity or gas authority, is losing money because it loses the interest that it is technically entitled to receive. Exactly how much money has been 'lost' in this way since fines were first imposed in the mid-sixties is difficult to assess but it is a significant sum.

The Commission is now looking into alternative ways of encouraging firms to pay up more promptly. Among the options being considered are collecting the money as soon as the fine is imposed and paying back anything subsequently knocked off by the Court on appeal; collecting the money straight away and in the event of the Commission losing its case in the Court, paying back what interest has accrued; putting the money directly into a blocked account until the appeal is settled; asking the Court to award interest.

Whatever measure or measures emerge will have to meet with the approval of the Court, which plays a central role in the whole process. The Commission hopes to have its 'persuasive' regulation ready by the end of this year.

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