

Euroforum



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Editor-in-chief: Peter Doyle



Community signs new trade pact with Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia is an unusual country. A Communist Federation made up of 22 million diversified and sometimes quarrelling peoples, it is nevertheless a fiercely united and independent country.

Ever since 1948, this once-explosive Balkan nation has been a leader of the non-aligned movement and a centre of keen political and economic interest for its Eastern and Western neighbours.

Since the dramatic illness of its post-World War II leader, President Tito, shortly after the beginning of the year, this outside interest in the future of Yugoslavia has been intensified. As news bulletins from the bed of the man who has dominated his country for 3 years recorded President's Tito's deteriorating health, more and more attention was cast on means of assuring its continuing independence during the post-Tito era.

For the European Community, this concern dates back a number of years and was solidly underlined again on February 25 when Community and Yugoslav leaders announced in Brussels that they had concluded an historic new economic cooperation accord that they hoped would help solidify the existing links between them and reinforce the country's economic and political stability in the coming years.

This Community interest in Yugoslavia's future was also highlighted later the same week by the visit of European Commission President Roy Jenkins to Belgrade. Mr Jenkins was the latest in a series of high-ranking Community officials to have demonstrated the Community's commitment

to Yugoslavia through a voyage to that land of Alexander the Great.

This journey between Yugoslavia and Western Europe is one which has been made with increasing frequency by both peoples and goods during the post-war period. The trail has been well-worn by Western European tourists streaming towards Yugoslavia's sunny Adriatic shores for their summer holidays and by some one million Yugoslav workers who have migrated in search of work in Western Europe.

This cross-current of peoples has helped increase the contacts between the two, but just as importantly has helped improve the Yugoslav economy through the millions generated for the Yugoslav treasury.

These earnings of Western European currencies are a welcome compensation for the heavy trade deficit the country has been experiencing with the European Community for a number of years. This deficit, as well as the need to strengthen the political links between Yugoslavia and the West in preparation for the post-Tito transition, was one of the driving factors behind the conclusion of the February accord. This fact was stressed by the leaders of the two delegations which negotiated the new treaty—European Commissioner for External Relations Wilhelm Haferkamp and Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Trade Stojan Andov—during a press conference at the Commission's headquarters in Brussels on 25 February.

Commissioner Haferkamp called the document 'an important sign of our will for cooperation and détente'.

Mr Andov added that his country has an agreement with the Comecon economic grouping of Communist countries, but 'we were looking for an agreement of this type with a partner like the Community, which is one of the major partners in economic relations for our country'.

He added that his country has never sought to narrow its relations with other countries and that the pact with the Community would help it maintain a greater independence and avoid its recent economic stagnation.

The pact negotiated in Brussels is an outgrowth of the formal relations between the Community and Yugoslavia which date back to 1973 when a non-preferential trade accord was concluded between the two.

At that time Yugoslavia was the first Communist country to have concluded such ties to the European Community. While other Communist states have had limited contacts and accords with the Community and Romania is also conducting intense and broad talks aimed at such an accord, the connections with Yugoslavia have always been more intense. The Community's official relations with the Comecon itself are still under discussion after years of slow negotiation.

As a result, Yugoslavia has since 1973 benefited from the Community generalized preferences for imports of manufactured goods from developing countries and from financial aid from the European Investment Bank for such projects as a major trans-European motorway through the country. The road and the February accord will help promote contacts between Yugoslavia and its Western and Community neighbours such as Italy and Greece on its borders and others farther away.

The accord also displays a clear desire by both sides to help correct the recent sizable trade deficit Yugoslavia has been running with the Community. This trade has been characterized in the past by heavy purchases of sophisticated Western equipment to power the active and unusual 'self-managed' Yugoslav economy.

Agricultural products, such as beef, textiles and other goods which have been restricted for entry by the European Community because of economic difficulties have made up about 35% of Yugoslavia's shipments to the Community.

The new accord will improve the Yugoslav access to the Community market and create a joint commission that will have the mandate to resolve problems and expand the contacts between the two. Cooperation in a number of fields ranging from research and development to the environment will also be promoted under the new accord.

Under the old system, Yugoslavia was the 12th leading market for Community trade and the 25th-ranking supplier of goods. In turn, the Community took 23% of Yugoslavia's exports and supplied 38% of its imports. This has resulted in a trade surplus of between £ 600 million and £ 1200 million for the Community. This is the imbalance that the new pact hopes to erase in the future in order to

promote economic and political stability in the troubled Balkan nation born following World War I from a disparate grouping of five principal ethnic nationalities.

Historically, while these Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and Bosnian Moslems had frequently clashed, they also had a strong sense of unity among South Slav peoples. This has provided the cement for the original political and economic experiment launched by President Tito and the guerilla fighters who wrested control of the country during the last war.

This policy has seen the Communist country steer a noteworthy course of independence from both the Soviet and Western bloc and develop a dynamic 'self-management' economy that is a blend between the planned socialist and the Western market systems.

President Tito personally became a world political figure of symbolic importance in the non-aligned group of nations.

But the Yugoslavs—and Western political leaders and analysts—are concerned that this fragile personal system erected in the past 35 years might be subjected to outside pressure by the Soviet Union following Tito's death to rejoin the Communist bloc of nations. The Yugoslav Government has therefore evolved a complex collective political leadership system that it feels will provide stability between the different nationalities and religions in the country. And a web of relationships has been fashioned with the outside world that is also designed to assure Yugoslavia's continued independence during the difficult post-Tito period.

These connections between the West and Yugoslavia have been the subject of even more attention since the beginning of the year which saw the Soviet military intervention in non-aligned Afghanistan and President Tito's failing health. The new economic cooperation accord between the Community and Yugoslavia is one example of this interest and concern for the future.

Community takes the initiative on Afghanistan

In a major foreign policy initiative, European Community Foreign Ministers meeting in Rome last month proposed a neutralization of the

troubled Asian state of Afghanistan, a plan that quickly became the centre of world-wide diplomatic efforts aimed at relieving East-West tension.

The plan, originally formulated by British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, was accepted by a regular meeting of Community Ministers dealing with political coordination.

The proposal was the latest in a series of Community stands and declarations in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan in late 1979. These moves, taken in consultation with other Western countries, have also included restrictions on trade with the Soviet Union, reservations about participation in the coming Moscow Olympics, aid to Afghan refugees and neighbouring Pakistan and a number of important declarations by the European Parliament.

The proposal issued by the Foreign Ministers on 19 February was refined by Community experts and presented to the Soviet Ambassador in London on 29 February. The possibility that Italian Prime Minister Francesco Cossiga, current president of Community Council activities, would visit Moscow in the near future to discuss the proposal with Soviet leaders was also being considered.

The policy was designed to take into consideration the Soviet claims that it sent nearly 100 000 troops into Afghanistan to prevent outside interference into the affairs of Afghanistan. A few days after the Rome meeting, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev indicated that the Soviet Union would 'immediately withdraw its troops' if it could obtain international guarantees of non-intervention by other countries into the affairs of a neutral Afghanistan. Some subsequent statements by Soviet leaders to other sources also indicated a degree of support for this general concept and have been accompanied by some unofficial reports that diplomatic contacts in this field could take place.

However, there have also been a number of contradictory reactions in the Soviet press which displayed either a rejection of the idea or definite reservations about it in the Soviet Union. Some Soviet commentators have called it a Western 'smokescreen' for plans to reopen the cold war.

These Community diplomatic measures have also come at the same time as a thorough review of agricultural and other trade with the Soviet Union.

Discussions have taken place in recent weeks within the Community institutions about the volume of exports to the Soviet Union of such goods as butter, cereals, meat and other dairy products.

In general, the Community has agreed that it would not step in to fill the gap left in shipments to the Soviet Union caused by the restrictions applied by the United States in reaction to the Soviet military action.

But discussions about the exact level and conditions of sales in such products as butter have continued with closer surveillance being applied on the actual volume of such exports.

New Zealand farm exports discussed during visit

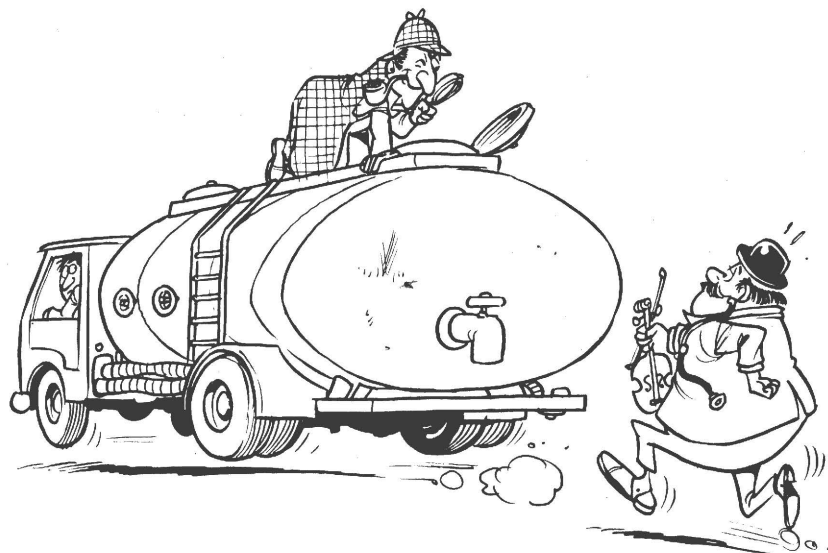
The Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand, Brian Talboys, visited the European Commission in Brussels on 20 February to discuss the continuing controversy over his country's agricultural exports to the Community.

These shipments include butter and cheese and lamb which have continued to be imported into the Community through the traditional trade with the United Kingdom. Despite some reduction negotiated since the British entry into the Community, these deliveries have continued at a volume that has been criticised by the Community's own producers.

The situation in both the dairy and lamb sector in the Community is extremely delicate, characterized by either surpluses or a slump in prices. The dairy surplus is the biggest source of agricultural spending in the Community and the lamb trade situation is at the root of a serious controversy between France and the United Kingdom since France's imposition of imports restrictions on British lamb. In both cases, some have declared that imports from New Zealand have contributed substantially to the problems.

The country is highly dependent on its agricultural exports, especially to the Community. Agriculture employs 12% of the labour force and provides almost three-quarters of the country's export earnings.

In 1978 the Community had a trade deficit with New Zealand of £180 million having taken 31% of New Zealand's exports in that year as the country's leading export market.



Keeping a closer eye on the oil markets

The European Commission has proposed further measures to the Nine's member Governments to allow a closer watch to be kept on the world oil market.

The idea is to set up a quick response system for crude oil imports into the Community and a system of certification of free on board (f.o.b.) prices for crude oil, in collaboration with the producing countries.

Between them, the two measures should permit the Community to react more swiftly than present capabilities allow to potentially damaging developments in world oil trade and to have a better view of market events, particularly in times of supply shortage.

The Commission hopes that its new initiative will be discussed at the April meeting of Community Energy Ministers, and at the May meeting of the International Energy Agency to which all Community Member States except France belong.

The Community already has a register of crude oil imports into the Community, as well as a weekly oil bulletin giving consumer price movements over the period since the end of 1978 (the latest bulletin shows that f.o.b. crude

oil prices have risen by 122% since 31 December 1978, as a result of decisions taken by the oil exporting countries, and that pre-tax consumer prices for the principal oil products—petrol, heating oil etc.—rose by 88% over the same period).

As an additional aid to market transparency, the Commission has also drawn up an interim report on the first six months of the current check-run on the Rotterdam and Mediterranean crude oil spot markets, code-named COMMA (Commission Market Analysis).

COMMA shows that over the six months spot market trade in refined oil products has contracted considerably, dropping to less than half of last year's level. In the past, less than 5% of North Western Europe's total oil product consumption was traded through the Rotterdam spot markets.

The Commission has also promised the Council to come forward with an analysis of the costs of imported crude oil and consumer prices in due course, and to produce the experts' report requested by the Council assessing the possibility of setting up an oil 'exchange' similar to those for stocks and shares and various metals.

Nuclear waste: the precautions that must be taken

One of the major problems worrying both supporters and opponents of nuclear energy development in the European Community is how to dispose of the radioactive waste arising from nuclear power generation.

As we reported briefly in the last issue of *Euroforum*, the Council of Ministers recently adopted the so-called nuclear 'trilogy', two of whose elements are the re-processing of nuclear material and the disposal of nuclear waste. The aim of the 'trilogy' is to produce a common Community strategy for coping with future developments in these fields.

The current position on the disposal of radioactive waste from nuclear power stations in the Nine has been outlined by the European Commission in reply to a written question tabled by four Italian Members of the European Parliament, Mario Capanna, Marco Pannella, Emma Bonino and Luciana Castellina.

Briefly, the MEPs wanted to know the names of the specific sites in each of the Community Member States that are to be used to store radioactive waste. They also wanted to find out what specific techniques are to be used for such storage, the safety level for the present and future generations and how much what they labelled these 'atomic cemeteries' would cost each Member State over the next 20 years.

The Commission first pointed out that the radioactive waste produced during the operation of nuclear power stations is generally of low-level activity and requires storage for a limited period only.

The waste is stored either close to the nuclear power stations themselves or on suitable sites all of which have to be approved by the competent national authorities, near other nuclear installations (e.g. Windscale in the United Kingdom or La Hague in France).

Radioactive waste can also be discharged at sea, under an OECD Nuclear Energy Agency multilateral consultation system, provided that the relevant anti-pollution conventions are complied with. A combination of the two systems can be used, depending on the type of waste involved.

Waste contaminated by plutonium (whose radioactive lifetime is estimated at 250 000 years and which is therefore of particular concern from the safety angle) arises, according to the Commission, from the re-processing of spent fuel discharged from nuclear power stations and the recycling of the plutonium recovered from re-processing.

The volume of highly-radioactive waste of non-military origin is relatively small and is at present stored on an interim basis near the reprocessing plants. Waste that has been only slightly contaminated by plutonium is frequently disposed of at sea.

Research and development programmes are being carried out at national level in the Nine to find the safest methods of storing radioactive waste over a long period. 'Barriers' have to be placed between the stored radioactive material and man and the environment.

The most promising form of 'barrier' currently envisaged is the encapsulation of the waste in materials such as glass and its subsequent burial in geological formations (salt, clay or crystalline formations, for example) that have been stable for millions of years and specially chosen to fit the bill. Such a burial site exists at Asse, in Germany.

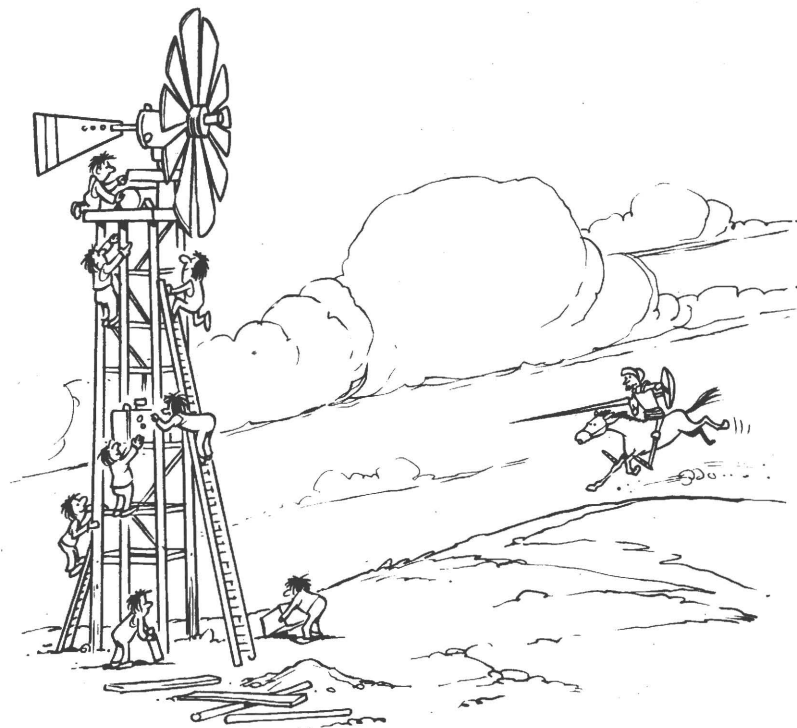
Studies carried out to date show that the radiation dose to man resulting from radioactive waste disposal should be lower than that caused by natural background radiation (e.g. cosmic rays).

The uncertainty surrounding the pace of nuclear development in the Nine in the future makes it impossible to evaluate with precision the costs of storing radioactive waste, but the Commission experts believe that this cost will only represent a small fraction of the total cost of nuclear electricity generation.

The adoption of the nuclear 'trilogy' will help to ensure that a constructive strategy is developed to cope with this aspect of a growing source of much-needed home-produced energy that can be a viable alternative to increasingly dear imported oil.

Restoring the glow

Almost £11 million is to be spent from Community funds to boost research into new techniques in the coal industry. More than half the money will assist projects to improve mining techniques.



Conservation: a new dimension in job creation

The European Community Member States are planning significant levels of investment between now and 1990 in a concerted effort to save energy, and in the process create new jobs.

In reply to a question from a German Member of the European Parliament, Rolf Linkhor, who had asked about the effect of the Commission's energy programme on the job situation in the Community, the Commission confirmed that, while it was difficult to assess the overall impact of its policy on job creation, 300 000 potential new jobs could be found in thermal insulation alone.

Between them, the Nine have planned investments totalling about £32 000 million in general energy conservation measures, around £20 000 million in the search for alternative sources of energy (solar, wind, geothermal and so on), £23 000 million in non-nuclear electricity generating technology and a hefty £68 000 million on improving the production and market infrastructures of hydrocarbons (coal, oil and natural gas).

A good deal of money is also being spent, both by the Member States and individual manufacturers, on finding a car which has a lower fuel consumption and causes less pollution, although

no figure can be put on this, since not only are car manufacturers' investment plans largely unknown, but future decisions both by the public authorities and by manufacturers on environmental matters and energy consumption are bound to have a significant effect on the volume and pattern of investment.

PUBLICATION

Investment in the Community coal-mining and iron and steel industries, 119 pages, Commission of the European Communities. Catalogue number: CB-28-79-520-EN-C. Price £6.60.

The report has been prepared on the results of the 1979 survey of investments in the Community coal and steel industries. The survey, which is conducted annually, collects information on actual and forecast capital expenditure and production potential of coal and steel enterprises.

The introductory chapter summarizes the results of the survey and the conclusions on them.

Subsequent chapters of the report examine in detail the results of the survey for each producing sector, namely:

- the coalmining industry;
- coking plants;
- briquetting plants;
- iron-ore mines;
- iron and steel industry.

BUDGET

Tugendhat warning to Farm Ministers on CAP spending

The Community's coffers will be empty sometime next year unless a major effort is made to control spending on the common agricultural policy. The message is being hammered home at every possible occasion by Budget Commissioner Christopher Tugendhat.

Speaking recently at Exeter University in England, he told his audience that last year the Community used up 90% of its potential revenue in financing the various Community activities.

The Community's income comes from customs duties, agricultural levies and up to 1% of value added tax in member countries. The 10% margin left last year represented only £1200 million—less than one-fifth of the amount currently spent on the CAP.

He warned the Nine's Agricultural Ministers against adopting 'a cavalier attitude' in their negotiations on this year's farm price proposals as this could quickly lead to a financial crisis.

He said that the Community's taxpayers want value for money and as a result they expect that before the Community tries to increase its income it should show that it is capable of spending wisely the money it already has by controlling agricultural expenditure.

Upward motion

Despite increasing competition from Japan, the Community's motor industry seems to be thriving. Latest figures indicate that employment in the sector increased by 13% between 1975 and 1978.

Slight improvement

Real gross domestic consumption in the Community grew by 3.3% last year, compared with a rise of 3.1% in 1978.

Alternative source

The Community's natural gas production increased last year by 3%. Natural gas accounted for 17.7% of total energy consumption in 1979.

TECHNOLOGY



Computer link-up could help to save lives

The marriage between the most modern techniques in medicine and computers is already of long standing. But studies are being conducted that could lead to even more intense collaboration that will benefit the suffering patient and save lives throughout Europe.

While computer diagnoses and analyses have been incorporated into modern medicine's capabilities, what is now being examined is a broader geographic connection that would permit the patient and doctor in one country to tap resources in another.

A study was recently conducted under the sponsorship of the European Commission in Brussels into the possibility of interconnecting organ and blood banks in the European Community through computers.

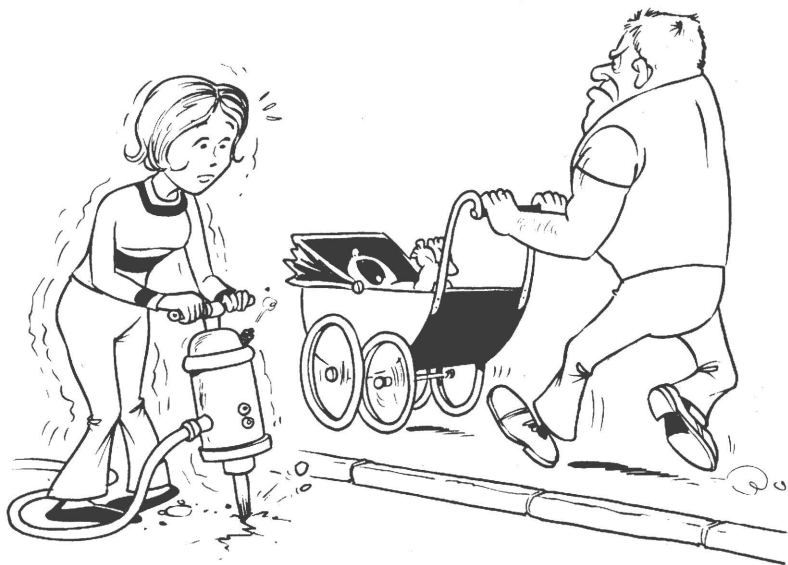
The study concluded that such an interconnection is possible. While in the early stages it is recommended that it should only deal with the matching

of potential kidney donors and recipients, it could eventually be extended to blood and bone marrow and other types of transplantation.

This could be accomplished by the installation of computer terminals in organ banks that could be linked via telephone lines. The costs have been estimated and contacts are currently being made to study the operational aspects.

In addition, the Commission is building up its information about highly specialized installations and equipment capable of performing transplants with a view to coordinating their activities through computer connections.

Another aspect of this preliminary research in a related field involves a questionnaire sent by the Commission to the governments of the nine Member States on the installations and equipment that could be made available to the public throughout the Community in case of major accidents. The replies to this survey should lead to the compilation of an inventory on the technologies available throughout the Member States that could be used in case of emergencies.



Mismatch: a phenomenon of modern times

'Mismatch', a word which you would expect to roll off the tongue of a sportsman more easily than that of an economist, is a growing phenomenon in the European Community.

It is used to describe the paradox, where, despite rising unemployment—almost certainly near six and a half million now—a large number of jobs remain unfilled.

The reasons for this are fairly evident. Often those out of work are poorly qualified to fill the vacancies, or else the new jobs are not in their country or region and they are reluctant to travel or leave their home town.

In all Community countries except France this phenomenon is on the increase. In 1978 unemployment was running at just under six million, yet public employment offices among the Nine reported some 612 000 unfilled vacancies.

Of these, 245 000 were in Germany, where there were 992 000 people out of work. The United Kingdom reported a further 210 000 jobs

available for some of the 1.5 million unemployed.

The highest ratio of 'mismatch' was in the Netherlands where the 205 000 unemployed could choose from 63 000 jobs.

Only in France (and to some extent in Luxembourg) did the number of notified vacancies decrease between 1976 and 1978, in the French case by 40 000 down to 87 000.

In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, vacancies almost doubled during the same period from 120 000 to 210 000. An increase which was virtually identical to the rise in the numbers of unemployed.

A Community system known as SEDOC—the International Clearing of Vacancies and Applications for Employment—exists to promote closer contact between the nine national employment agencies. Officials from these agencies are brought together several times a year by the European Commission, which coordinates the system.

SEDOC is still in an experimental stage but it is nevertheless beginning to play an increasingly important role in making workers in search of jobs aware of vacancies which exist in other Member States.

Winter brings cold comfort to the jobless

Bad winter weather appears to have been the chief cause of the 5.7% increase in the number of unemployed in the European Community between December 1979 and January of this year. There were about 6.5 million people out of work at the end of January (almost as many as the same time last year), that is 6% of the total civilian working population.

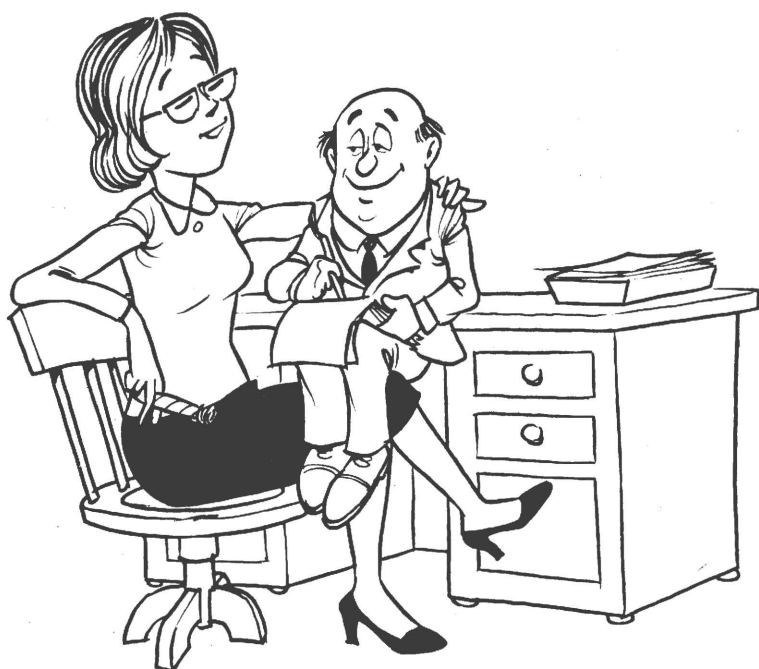
The influence of the bad weather which hits industries such as building, was felt particularly seriously in Germany, where unemployment rose by 19.6%. Increases in other Member States, although less marked (the United Kingdom + 8.5%, Denmark + 8.2% and the Netherlands + 7.2%) were still well above the Community average.

In France and Italy (+ 1.1%), Luxembourg (+ 3.5%) and Ireland (+ 4%), the increase in unemployment was below average, while in Belgium the number of unemployed actually fell by 1.4% compared with December 1979.

Compared with the situation in January 1979, unemployment overall in the Community has fallen by 0.8%, although in some countries the drop has been considerably larger, with Germany (- 11.5%) Denmark (- 12.5%) and Ireland (- 8.1%) showing the most significant improvements.

Despite the slight fall in the number out of work in Belgium in January 1980, compared with the year before, the situation has in fact deteriorated with 4.9% more people on the dole. In France the position appears even worse (9.5% more out of work) while in the United Kingdom there was a 1.1% increase in unemployment overall during the year.

Ow the same period, the percentage of the male population out of work in the Community fell by 5% (although seasonal increases were recorded) but the picture for women was a good deal bleaker: there were 5.2% more women without jobs in January 1980 than a year earlier. Women now make up 44.4% of the total unemployed in the Community compared with 41.9% in January 1979. This confirms a trend first detected in 1974.



Equal treatment: Commission takes defaulters to task

The principle of equal pay for equal work, while widely accepted as right and just, is still not being properly implemented in a number of Community Member States.

The European Commission has now decided to send reasoned opinions to four Member States for their continuing failure to implement aspects of a 1975 Community law which provides for equal pay for men and women doing the same work or work of equal value.

The countries in question are the United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The Commission action, which is the second stage of its infraction procedure, could eventually lead to these countries appearing before the European Court of Justice if they don't comply with the terms of the Community law.

Of the four Member States, two have taken steps to eliminate the remaining

discrimination following complaints from the Commission, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of Community legislation.

Belgium has drafted a royal decree which would change the present system under which only a married male employee in the Belgian public services automatically benefits from a family allowance. Until now, only a married woman looking after her children alone has been able to benefit from this addition to her salary.

In Luxembourg, the Government Council has adopted a draft bill which will go before Parliament and which is designed to make it possible for married women to benefit from 'head of family' allowances currently paid only to married male civil servants, as well as from a housing subsidy which is now received by their male counterparts in the public service as well as men working in banks, insurance offices and the steel industry.

In the Netherlands, equal pay for women doesn't extend to female employees in the public services. A proposed change has not yet been submitted to the Parliament but only to the Council of State for an opinion.

The United Kingdom's Equal Pay Act doesn't permit a female employee to claim equal pay for work of equal value unless a job evaluation scheme is practised in the firm where she works.

Last March, three other Member States, France, Germany and Denmark, received written warnings from the Commission about discrimination against women with regard to equal pay.

In response to the warning, France has now repealed the law which discriminated against women in the semi-state sector in the matter of housing allocations. The Commission has now dropped the case.

In Germany, where the legal basis for equal pay was very ill-defined, the Government has submitted a draft bill for examination by the Parliament. The Commission has agreed to an extension until next June for the necessary legislation.

As far as Denmark is concerned, the law on equal pay for equal work applies only when men and women are employed in identical jobs, not for work of equal value. Denmark has so far done nothing to change this, and the Commission services are still examining the case before taking a further decision.

The Commission has also sent letters warning Germany, the Netherlands and Luxembourg that they are infringing a second Community law which says that Member States must treat men and women equally in the areas of employment, training, promotion and working conditions.

Germany has since set up a legal framework to guarantee equal treatment in the same draft bill already mentioned that covers equal pay and the Commission's deadline has been extended to the same date.

In the Netherlands a similar draft bill is in its final stages before the Parliament, while Luxembourg has not yet taken any action and its case is still being examined by the Commission.

If the Commission is not satisfied with the efforts made by a Member State to implement Community legislation to which it has already agreed in the Council of Ministers it can refer the matter to the Court of Justice for a ruling.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Community fund furthers schooling

The Paul Finet Foundation has awarded financial aid of £57 000 to 348 orphans of workers who were killed in accidents or who died of work-related diseases in coal and iron ore mining and in the steel industries of the European Coal and Steel Community.

These awards, which are allocated once a year, go to students aged 14 and over who show exceptional academic ability. As well as secondary school pupils, the grants are also available to students at university or any other establishment of further education or vocational training.

Priority goes to those students suffering real financial hardship who show flair and endeavour in their studies. Any student whose father died as a result of an industrial accident or an illness related to his occupation after 30 June 1965 (1 January 1973 in the case of the UK, Ireland and Denmark) is eligible for financial aid.

The grants are renewable throughout the course, and are fixed on a means test basis, taking into account the academic standard and the cost of the chosen studies.

INDUSTRY

Commission role in steel deadlock

European Commissioners Henk Vredeling and Viscount Davignon have met British Steel Corporation executives and trade union leaders in an attempt to try and resolve the deadlock between the two sides over BSC's rationalization plans.

BSC's plans could lead to 50 000 British steel workers having to look for new jobs. In order to make this transition as easy as possible, the Social Affairs Commissioner, Mr Vredeling has proposed that Community money be made available for three years to help the Nine's steel workers find new jobs. This scheme has not yet been adopted by governments.

REDUCING BARRIERS



Here's to variety, and cheers to the European Court

As elbows are bent and glasses raised throughout Europe, the toast will be 'To the Court'.

Very rarely do people feel affected by legal decisions, but a series of recent judgments by the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg—the Community's highest legal body—is expected to mean a reduction in the price of spirits in general in France, Italy and Denmark.

Over a year ago the European Commission started legal proceedings against these three countries because, in its view, they discriminated against imported beverages and protected their own domestic tipples.

Both the French and Italians had different systems of taxation, which meant that spirits produced from grapes or fruit—brandy, armagnac, poire williams or grappa, for example, paid less tax than grain based beverages, like whisky.

Denmark had similar arrangements whereby the duty on a bottle of the country's world famous aquavit was considerably less than on imported drinks like brandy and whisky.

In the Commission's view—and it was supported by the Court of Justice—whisky and brandy compete for people's palates with aquavit and grappa and so the various practices were illegal under the Community's rules, which prevent discrimination between similar products and aim to give consumers a wider choice.

But the Court has still to give its final verdict on a case against the UK, which is being eagerly awaited by the country's wine drinkers.

The Commission reasons that on average, wine is three times more potent than beer and so it should not have to pay tax higher than three times that on beer. In the UK this ratio is greater. The conclusion drawn by the Commission, and by certain wine-producing countries, is that the British government is protecting beer and penalizing wine.

But to prove their case to get a reduction in the price of wine, it must first prove that beer and wine are competing drinks and that you are just as likely to go into a pub and ask for a glass of wine as for a pint of beer. The British ridicule this approach, but others take this argument seriously.

The Court is still mulling over the evidence—some would say it is savouring it like a good malt whisky—and its final word on the matter is not expected for another 12 months.

Joint ventures can make Community aid more effective

Small is beautiful, they say. This can be particularly true in developing countries where local knowledge and organization can play an important role in ensuring that aid is distributed to maximum effect.

With this in mind, the European Community decided some years ago to give a helping hand to Third World groups that operate self-help programmes for the poorest, least-favoured sections of the population in developing countries.

Timidly at first, but with increasing conviction the Community has been cofinancing development projects with such non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as Oxfam, SOS Faim, Misereor and Dan Church Aid.

By the end of last year it had committed almost £20 million. While this is a small amount in relation to total Community spending on development aid, it represents almost one third of NGO investment in such projects.

It should also be remembered that the entire programme is based on the idea that, for successful development at the grass roots level, much more than money is needed.

The Community has, in fact, deliberately limited its contribution to 50% of the total cost of a project, with an upper limit of around £65 000 a year per project for a maximum of three years.

The balance is contributed by the NGO—and the people who are to benefit from the project. The contribution of the ultimate recipients can take the form of free labour, for example.

The success of the project is further ensured by involving the local population at every stage of it, from conception to implementation. The emphasis, therefore, is as much on social progress as on economic growth.

Since 1976 the European Community has joined forces with more than 100 NGOs to cofinance 508 self-help projects in no fewer than 84 developing countries around the world.

It is not necessary for the country in which a project is to be established to have a preferential relationship with the Community. In fact, almost half the £20 million committed so far has gone to projects in the countries in Asia and Latin America which do not have association agreements with the Community. The rest of the aid went to African and Middle East projects.

The projects themselves vary greatly and range from the supply of small-scale equipment to integrated rural development.

If the emphasis is on projects involving rural communities, it is simply because this is where the poorest sections of the population in Third World countries are to be found. Even so, the Community has cofinanced a number of health and educational projects. It has also helped to provide training facilities and helped to develop social infrastructure.

A new and significant development has been the cofinancing of alternative energy projects, especially in the field of solar energy.

The NGOs clearly can respond flexibly and effectively to local needs and initiatives. It is not surprising, therefore, that collaboration with the NGOs is now an integral part of the Community's development policies.

The amount set aside in the 1979 budget was around £8 million (as against £1.6 million in 1976, when the programme was launched).

All non-profit making NGOs based in a Member State and active at the grass roots level in the Third World can seek the Community's financial help. The Community reserves the right to monitor the use of its funds, but it also respects the autonomy and freedom of action of the NGOs, in recognition of their unique role in promoting development.

Parliament begins hearings to help fight world hunger

Imagine that the entire population of the United Kingdom had died off in the last 12 months. Hard to imagine, isn't it?

And yet last year some 50 million people, including 17 million children

under the age of 5, starved to death. Another 800 million were living in conditions of utter poverty, most of them unable therefore to afford an adequate diet.

It is clear that in 1980 several millions more will either die of hunger or have their physical and mental growth permanently stunted.

In an effort to come to grips with this problem, the European Parliament's Committee on Development and Co-operation is organizing a series of public hearings on hunger in the world. The first of these was held in Brussels on 18 and 19 February.

The first guest speaker was the President of the U.N. World Food Council, Arturo Tanco, who is also Agricultural Minister of the Philippines.

Mr Tanco told the Committee: 'You have become a forum of hope for the starving hundreds of millions. By adopting the cause of the hungry people of the world as your legitimate concern you are converting this Parliament of Europe into a Parliament of Mankind'.

U.S. Congressman Benjamin Gilman, who heads the Commission on World Hunger established by President Carter, pointed to one of the major difficulties facing the world community in its attempts to mobilize public opinion. 'The major world hunger problem', he said, 'is not periodic famine but the less visible and dramatic one of chronic undernutrition'.

Willy Brandt, the former Chancellor of the German Federal Republic, referred to the findings of the Commission on International Development issues over which he has presided and which has just published a disturbing but constructive report on the results of its investigations during the past year.

Its main recommendation was that putting an end to hunger requires measures at both the national and international level. Developing countries, for example, must raise domestic food production. The fact is that from being net exporters they have become large-scale importers. Last year their imports amounted to 80 million tonnes and could escalate to 145 million tonnes in ten year's time.

To raise food production, these countries must not only step up investments, especially in irrigation, but also carry out agrarian reforms, so that farmers are more motivated.

But the poorer countries will need much more outside help to raise food production. The World Food Council has put this help at \$8300 million a year at 1975 prices. But in 1978 such aid came to only \$6500 million.

Countries giving technical aid will have to look more closely at the type of aid they provide. The Western agricultural model, with its high degree of mechanization and use of chemicals, cannot be simply transferred to developing countries, according to the Brandt Commission.

Chile's Jacques Chonchol, who was Minister of Agriculture in the Allende Government, argued that increased food production in the Third World was not enough. In his view it was equally, if not more, important to ensure higher incomes and a more equitable distribution of incomes. In other words, to abolish hunger it is necessary to abolish poverty.

In many cases, poverty cannot be abolished overnight, however. Mr Tanco drew attention to the World Food Council's two-pronged approach, which seeks both to eliminate the root causes of hunger 'through fundamental development efforts' and to raise food consumption immediately through such direct action as food subsidies and improved distribution programmes for vulnerable groups.

The hearings underlined the importance of food aid, once criticized for its negative impact on agricultural incentives in developing countries.

Mr Tanco noted that the Council of Ministers had authorized the European Commission to take part in negotiations for a new World Food Aid Convention, increasing the Community's contribution for 1980/81 from 1.3 to 1.7 million tonnes. He saw the decision as 'fundamental in leading to a new Convention' and as 'an important step towards the food security of the poorest countries'.

IN BRIEF

Still exploding

The world's population is expected to reach six billion by the end of this century, instead of four billion today. This forecast was made by the Population Reference Bureau in Washington. The Bureau says its forecast takes account of the drop in the world's annual birth rate.

Food aid

The Community is to send 500 tonnes of skimmed milk powder to Ghana.

TRADE

No magic carpet to fly away from this dispute

Previous transatlantic trade controversies have frequently had labels connected to them because of their barnyard origins, such as the 'chicken war'. But the most recent trade problem involving Europe and the United States has moved into the parlour and is about such home comforts as tufted and other types of carpets.

Just as in the earlier disputes, it hardly seems to the layman worth making an international fuss over such mundane issues. But to important segments of industry and the labour force, it has become crucial to determine just how much tufted carpeting or synthetic fibre yarn is coming into the United Kingdom or Italy, for instance, from the United States, because it could spell trouble for European manufacturers and the jobs of their workers.

This has become a major problem requiring high-level consultation between officials from both sides of the Atlantic. Because of the current difficult economic conditions in Europe and the United States, the issue could have serious consequences for the traditionally close and constructive economic partnership between the Community and the U.S.

The problem caused by shipments of carpets and other American products made from artificial fibres stems partly from the world-wide oil crisis. Petroleum serves as the base for such synthetic yarns and the world has become only too conscious of the rapidly escalating price of oil and related products in recent years.

In Europe, where there is a higher dependence on imported oil than in the U.S., prices of oil-based products have increased dramatically. However, in the U.S., which still has large deposits of oil and a tradition of maintaining low prices, the costs of such petroleum products have been below European and world levels.

This means that American synthetic fibres, yarns and tufted carpets and other goods of petrochemical origin have a cost advantage over competitors from Europe and other regions, one which has helped them take a larger share of the markets in countries like the UK and Italy.

Faced with a loss of business and jobs, these European industries have been asking for assistance from national and Community authorities. Although no one in this interdependent world likes protectionist policies except as a last resort, international trade treaties and rules do provide for such help in special cases where an industry has been injured by imports.

The European Commission in Brussels, which has responsibility for Community trade negotiations, recently reviewed the case for protection of the British industry and authorized the Government to apply quotas in two instances but judged that there was insufficient evidence that American exports had harmed Britain in another case. In the meantime, a similar Italian complaint was also being considered.

While US-Community contacts over this matter have been amicable, there is concern about what action the Americans might take in response. US trade negotiator Reuben Askew told Community officials in Brussels that the US would seek compensation for the loss in trade resulting from the British action. There is provision for this under international trade rules, with which both sides want to be consistent.

In addition, there is continuing concern about pending claims by the American steel industry that Community steel manufacturers are unfairly dumping their products on the American market and thereby harming their U.S. competitors. If the Americans win their case with the Washington Administration, the steelmakers will want to have restrictions imposed on steel imports from the Community in the same way as imports of American synthetic fibres were curtailed in Europe.

These trade problems between two such major and close partners show how difficult and tense the international economic situation is at the moment, with all parties carefully seeking to protect their industries and jobs from foreign competition while at the same time wanting to ensure that their own industries are actively competing in the world market-place.

But it also shows the desire of both sides to stay within the rules of the international trade game which they have painstakingly negotiated over the years and which both see as their best guarantee of protection against unfair competition.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The family's role

Sir,

Euroforum (3/80) published letters from two Italian readers who took exception to the fact that you published an article entitled 'Plea for a Community policy to favour the family'. This article summed up the conclusions of a seminar held by COFACE (Confederation of European Community Family Organizations). The astonishment of these readers astonishes me!

Europe of the Nine has 60 million families: that is a reality which cannot be dismissed with the stroke of a pen. Thousands of these families have come together at national or Community level. Why, then, should they be prevented from expressing their point of view in a democratic manner in the same way as the trade unions, professional organizations and political parties? Would these readers like to see the columns of *Euroforum* reserved exclusively for those who oppose the concept of the family?

These two readers appear to have a 19th century view of the family and to believe that this 19th century model is what COFACE wants to preserve. They employ facile slogans to condemn the traditional family. However, they are waging war against a phantom; such a family is well on the way to extinction.

COFACE is concerned with the problems faced by the modern family. It regards feminism not as its enemy but as its ally. The well-known German slogan of the Three Ks (or J Cs in English—cooking, children and church) is anathema to COFACE.

Nor do we advocate pushing blindly ahead with a policy of increasing Europe's birth rate. That would be absurd. However, it is equally

absurd to evaluate Europe's population disequilibrium by reference to world overpopulation.

For good measure, these readers, who have not bothered to find out what we stand for, set themselves up as judges and declare that we are opposed to contraception. The reality is more subtle. What COFACE has said is that a population policy should respect family values, that is to say, the autonomy of the family and the right of parents to decide whether or not to have children, or to have as many as they consider themselves capable of raising.

Joseph Gilles,
President,
COFACE,
rue du Trone 125,
1050 Brussels.

Community languages

Sir,

I would like to comment on three articles which appeared in *Euroforum* 3/80 concerning different aspects of language and culture.

Firstly, the proposal for a charter to protect minority cultures. I consider this to be a very worthwhile initiative because what is at stake here is a patrimony which is in peril because of the growing hegemony of the two 'big' languages.

With regard to the call by the European Parliament's Education Committee for more language teaching in schools, may I point out that this call comes from a committee which consistently refuses to recognize the claims of Esperanto.

Thirdly, your article entitled 'English is to the fore in the Tower of Babel'. This phenomenon of the primacy of English was also noted during a conference held last year in Geneva on Third World problems where 96% of the contributions were delivered in English. Many of the French delegates, on the other hand, complained that they could not follow the debates because of the poor quality of the interpretation in French.

Germain Pirlot,
Kemmelberstraat 5,
Ostend.

Eurobabble

Sir,

Since the publication of the Commission's answer to my question about Eurobabble (*Euroforum* 18/79) I have received many expressions of support for my campaign to reduce the EEC's jargon mountain.

I am not anxious to persecute unfortunate translators. I wish to lambast the soggy brains of all those active in the politics of the Community—including parliamentarians—who conceal the shallowness of their thoughts with amorphous verbiage. I am grateful for the interest shown by *Euroforum*.

Following the precedent of the Charlemagne Prize, I am instituting The Gargantua Award for the worst example of Eurobabble which your readers can uncover.

All entries should be sent to me—by 1 April, if possible.

Lord O'Hagan
Member of the European Parliament

Afghanistan

Sir,

The edition of *Euroforum* dated 1st February, on page 12, carried an article entitled 'Soviet Action in Afghanistan' which noted that the European Parliament held a vigorous debate on it and condemned Russia's intervention; and then said that 'other related measures ... were... ultimately discarded'.

In fact, as I am sure you know, the resolution adopted by the Parliament called strongly for the identification of a list of economic sanctions that might be used against Russia, and also for re-consideration of the site of the Olympic Games. Both these highly significant motions made possible the far stronger resolutions which the Parliament voted for by a substantial majority at its February session.

The Parliament has thus taken two successive stances in foreign affairs which the Foreign Ministers of the Nine were unable to take themselves in concert. It would be a pity if *Euroforum* were to overlook the significance of this kind of event for the development of a European foreign policy.

Adam Fergusson
Member of the European Parliament



THE NEWS AT A GLANCE

Aid for Azores

The Community is making a grant worth £200 000 to help victims of an earthquake in the Azores in January.

Talks down under

Commission Vice-President Wilhelm Haferkamp, who has responsibility for External Relations, is due to travel to Australia in April for upgraded ministerial-level talks on international and bilateral issues.

Dire warning

The Community's precarious energy situation is underlined in a new Commission publication, 'Crucial choices for the energy transition'. It predicts that scarcity of energy will lead to a slowdown in economic growth and urges that the Community move away from imported oil and press on with energy conservation and research into alternative domestic sources.

Before the mast

A British Conservative member of the European Parliament, Lord O'Hagan, is calling on the Council of Ministers to end the use of flags of convenience in the Community. He believes they can be a danger to shipping and a cause of pollution.

Less confidence

Industrial business confidence in the Community, a leading indicator of industrial production, weakened noticeably between December and January, according to figures just released. The industrial climate indicator for the Community as a whole fell by 3.5 percentage points. This was due mainly to an expected fall in industrial production in the first quarter of this year.

Vintage year?

The 1979 wine harvest in the Community was 167 million hectolitres, just short of the record of 170 million in 1973. An average crop which the market could absorb would be around 142 million.

Double-digit inflation

Consumer prices rose by 12% in the OECD countries—which include the Nine—last year, compared with a rise of 8.4% in 1978. The main reason was the rising cost of energy. The record rise was in Turkey (81.8%), while the smallest was Austria (4.7%). Of the Nine, Italy fared worst, with a rise of 18.8%, followed by the United Kingdom on 17.2%.

Widows' Charter

Britain's National Association of Widows has published a Widows' Charter. It calls for reforms in taxation, social security and pensions. There are 3 million widows in the UK.

More information

The European Parliament has called on the Commission to provide it with an annual report on the operating performance of nuclear reactors in the Community and elsewhere. It has also urged the Commission to make proposals for improvements to the safety of Community reactors.

Less thrifty

Community citizens are saving less. According to the Community-level Savings Bank Group, deposits at its 1460 savings banks fell during November last by £77 million.

Safety call

A French Liberal member of the European Parliament, Christiane Scrivener, has demanded to know why the Council of Ministers has not yet acted on a proposal made by the Commission in 1978 to reduce the number of accidents in the home. The Parliament approved the proposal last May.

Lower production

Community steel production in January fell to 10.5 million tonnes, a drop of 12.8% on the previous month. This was largely due to the British steel strike.

Hitting back

The European Commission has been carrying out a study into the channels and procedures for consumers to obtain legal remedy for complaints in the nine Member States. A comparative report is to be drawn up which could eventually lead to Community action in this field.

Speeding things up

The European Commission is supporting the idea of Community financial help for a new motorway in Austria. This will be an important road link between the Nine and Greece.

Talking Turkey

Talks have begun in Brussels on ways of improving the association agreement between the Community and Turkey (see *Euroforum* 4/80). The European Investment Bank has just made a low-interest loan of £46 million to Turkey under a financial protocol which runs until October, 1981. The total amount involved is around £200 million.

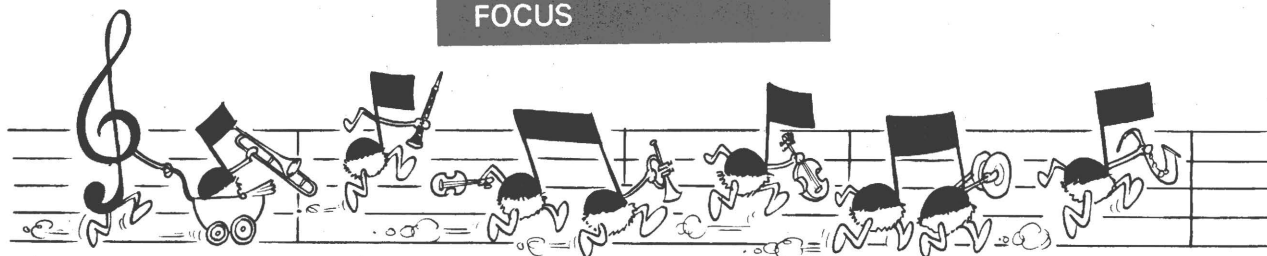
New forum

The new European Parliament hemicycle chamber in Luxembourg has been completed. It can house 560 parliamentarians. In Strasbourg, the Mayor, former French Prime Minister Pierre Pflimlin, commenting on the competing claims of his city and Luxembourg to play host to the Parliament, has said that he had no intention of insisting that the Parliament hold sessions in Strasbourg against its will.

Environmental factor

In response to the worries of a British Conservative MEP John Marshall, about juggernauts, the Commission has pointed out that its recent proposal on the size of lorries, which is currently being discussed by the Parliament's Transport Committee, would allow Member States to exclude large lorries from certain roads for environmental or safety reasons.

FOCUS



Youth orchestra gets in tune for new Community tour

The European Commission doesn't often hold musical receptions on a weekday morning, but that's what happened recently when 17 members of the European Youth Orchestra and their President, the former British Prime Minister Edward Heath gathered in Brussels to mark the start of the orchestra's 1980 tour.

The 17 young musicians were part of the string section of the 125-strong orchestra. Before an audience made up of press, diplomatic staff and officials of the Commission, they played Mozart Divertimenti to remind the assembled company of a European dimension greater than committees and directives.

Mr Heath, who in addition to being the orchestra's President is its Guest Conductor, was in a relaxed mood as he introduced the orchestra, outlined its forthcoming tour and dwelt on its successes in 1979, when it played in Avignon, Copenhagen, Ghent and London to enthusiastic audiences. It was, he said, the first youth orchestra ever to be invited to the Salzburg Festival where it had received rapturous acclaim. The audience were still on their feet applauding an hour after the concert ended.

This year the orchestra will be once again conducted by its Musical Director, Claudio Abbado, to whose devotion the orchestra owes much of its

success. Mr Abbado will be joined by both Mr Heath, and, at his own request, Maestro Herbert Von Karajan, the renowned conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic. Mr Von Karajan will be conducting the orchestra at the Salzburg Festival on August 12 in the Grosses Festspielhaus.

The orchestra's rehearsal time is extremely limited but the young musicians achieve a great deal in a very short time. This summer, after a fortnight's intensive rehearsing in Courchevel in the French Alps, they will be heading for the concert platforms of Stuttgart, Sienna, Lucerne, Amsterdam, Luxembourg and the Edinburgh Festival. This year, too, as well as performing outside the Community—in Switzerland and Austria—the Orchestra will be playing, for the first time, behind the Iron Curtain, in Budapest.

The orchestra performs with world famous soloists. Last year John Shirley-Quick, Maximilian Schell, Margaret Price, Maurizio Pollini and Murray Perahia appeared with them. This time they look forward to working with the accomplished tenor Placido Domingo who will be singing a selection of arias with the orchestra, and they will also be performing with the talented young violinist Anne Sophie Mutter.

The orchestra is sponsored by the European Commission which has given it a grant of more than £30,000 for this season, as well as by the governments of the different Member States, and, for the second year running, by IBM Europe.

Commissioner Guido Brunner acted as host at the Brussels reception. Since the early days of the orchestra when it was no more than an idea on paper, Dr. Brunner has given the orchestra his help and support.

The orchestra is made up of young men and women between the ages of 14 and 21 who come from the nine Member States. It was the brainchild of the International Festival of Youth Orchestras of Great Britain and made its debut at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam two years ago this March.

It aims not only to make music of the highest possible standard, but also to promote friendship and understanding between young Europeans engaged together in creative work.

Auditions are held in January for that year's orchestra by different organizations within the Member States. This year, more than 4000 young people took part in auditions and, according to a spokesman for the orchestra, the standard of applicants is steadily rising.

All the finalists throughout the Community are auditioned again by a selected panel which includes the Associate Director of the European Youth Orchestra, Mr. James Judd.

Any young musician interested in becoming a member of the orchestra should get in touch with Mrs. Joy Bryer at 24, Cadogan Square London SW1X 0JP England. She will be able to put them in touch with the relevant auditioning body.

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