

REPRODUCTION AUTHORIZED

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\*\* Over 1 600 000 people in Europe owe their VOCATIONAL TRAINING to the European Community. Since its establishment the Community has granted 910 million u.a. (1 u.a. = approximately US \$1) to finance retraining schemes in Member States.

ANNEX 1 gives a rundown of grants made by the Community towards financing retraining schemes.

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#### PRESS AND INFORMATION OFFICES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

##### BELGIUM

1049 BRUSSELS  
Rue de la Loi 200  
Tel. 735 00 40

##### DENMARK

1457 COPENHAGEN  
4 Gammeltorv  
Tel. 14 41 40

##### FRANCE

75782 PARIS CEDEX 16  
61, rue des Belles-Feuilles  
Tel. 553 53 26

##### GERMANY

53 BONN  
Zitelmannstraße 22  
Tel. 2380 41

1 BERLIN 31  
Kurfürstendamm 102  
Tel. 886 40 28

##### GREAT BRITAIN

LONDON W8 4QQ  
20, Kensington Palace Gardens  
Tel. 727 8090

##### IRELAND

DUBLIN 2  
41 Fitzwilliam Square  
Tel. 66 223

##### ITALY

00187 ROME  
Via Poli, 29  
Tel. 68 97 22 à 26

##### LUXEMBOURG

LUXEMBOURG  
Centre européen du Kirchberg  
Tel. 479 41

##### NETHERLANDS

THE HAGUE  
29, Lange Voorhout  
Tel. 070-46 93 26

##### SWITZERLAND

1202 GENEVA  
37-39, rue de Vermont  
Tel. 34 97 50

##### UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037  
2100 M Street, N.W.  
Suite 707  
Tel. (202) 872-8350

NEW YORK 10017  
277 Park Avenue  
Tel. 371-3804

\*\* European FARM PRODUCTION will continue to expand in the next few years. For most products an annual growth rate of about 1 to 3% is likely. FOODSTUFFS CONSUMPTION will develop differently, depending on the products. These are the main findings of a survey conducted at the request of the European Commission by various research institutes in Member States. The survey covered production and consumption prospects for farm products between now and 1977.

ANNEX 2 gives a brief summary of the findings.

\*\* The amount of SOLAR ENERGY available to the Community represents about 150 times its total consumption of primary energy. In its "Energy for Europe" research and development programme (see I&S - No 31/74), the Commission considers the use of solar energy to be one of the priority projects in the field of new energy sources. We have already published one article on heat conversion and solar energy, and now, in ANNEX 3, we turn to the process which consists of transforming sunlight into electricity by means of solar cells.

\*\* Mr Lardinois, the Member of the European Commission with special responsibility for agricultural matters, recently received representatives of European CONSUMERS. At the meeting, which had been arranged at the previous session of the Consumers' Consultative Committee (see I&S - No 38/74), Mr Lardinois stated that he favoured taking greater account of consumer views regarding trends in the COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY. He promised to supply consumers with fuller information on all aspects of agricultural policy, and announced that discussions would soon be taking place with a view to establishing a procedure for permanent consultation. He also suggested that meetings between consumers and representatives of food product manufacturers should be arranged from time to time, to keep the latter better informed on consumer opinion.

\*\* One of the main aims of the Community's ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION programme is to establish criteria for the most harmful pollutants, or in other words, to determine the relationship between the concentration of a pollutant in a given area, and the effects of that pollutant on human health, or on the environment. The Commission is working on a proposal, to be submitted before the end of the year, concerning such criteria for sulphur dioxide and dusts, carbon monoxide, lead, and noise pollution.

\*\* Following intervention by the European Commission the Frankfurt company, AEG - Telefunken, has raised the ban imposed on German distributors regarding export to the Netherlands of electrical HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES, since they did not conform to Netherlands safety regulations. From now on German traders may export appliances of this make to the Netherlands

because they have been adapted to the safety regulations in force there. Raising the ban is to the advantage of Netherlands consumers, a wider, and greater selection of appliances of this type now being available on the national market.

- \*\* In 1975 the Statistical Office will carry out a comparative study of the PURCHASING POWER parities of the gross domestic product in the different Member States, and make known the results, in its publications. It intends to update these surveys each year.
- \*\* The Commission recently laid before the Council a series of proposals on future SUGAR PRODUCTION. These would guarantee supplies in the Community by allowing production to expand in the areas most suitable for sugar-beet cultivation, and would adjust Community production under normal circumstances to the level of internal consumption. Total SUGAR production in the Community in 1973/74 was 9.5 million metric tons while total consumption was 10.3 million metric tons. According to the latest estimates, the 1974/75 crop will be down on the previous year, owing primarily to climatic and plant health factors, which have reacted on the average beet yield. The price of sugar on the Community market however, is considerably lower than on the world market. Sugar prices on the world market have trebled over the last twelve months (from 19.92 to 60.64 u.a. per 100 kg) and are now well above the prices set under the Common Agricultural Policy (which, during the same period, have risen from 23.57 to 25.22 u.a. per 100 kg).
- \*\* In the UNITED KINGDOM, several events have occurred in recent months on the CONSUMER PROTECTION front. The following article has been sent to us by the British Consumers' Association.
- The Government Price Commission has looked at the profit structure of eggs and has also started to look at meat. The Commission could find no evidence that excessive profits were being made on eggs, or that prices were unjustifiably high. The meat inquiry comes at a time when producers claim substantial losses, and accusations of profiteering have been made.
  - On television there will be tighter control over drink and cigarette advertising since existing legislation has been widely ignored.
  - Unit Price Orders have come into effect: the price per pound must now be stated on pre-packed meats, some fish and some vegetables.
  - The Prices and Consumer Protection department of the Government has announced plans to prohibit restrictive trading practices, such as price-fixing, for certain services (travel, cleaning, hairdressers and so on). The professional services are excluded.

- The Government proposes to set up a National Consumer Agency, an advisory, non-executive body, coordinating the activities of consumer groups, overseeing the consultative councils of the nationalized industries, and representing consumer interests in the EEC. Some people were disappointed that it was to be advisory only, and that it was not to take over the control of advertising from the Advertising Standards Authority, which is usually very sympathetic to the advertising industry.

- Electrical appliance manufacturers have brought out a code stating how long repairs and services for various electrical appliances should take. The code is in response to many requests.

\*\* IN GERMANY 80% of the public believes that ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION is as urgent as ever, even though it might put the brakes on the economy, while 56% state that they would even accept the risk of unemployment. These are the main findings of a survey made for German television by the Institut für Demoskopie, on the attitude of the general public in Germany to environmental questions.

\*\* A report on the diffusion of RADIOACTIVE GASES over medium distances has just been published in German, ("Die Ausbreitung radioaktiver Gase in Meso-Scale") and in English, ("The diffusion of radioactive gases in the meso-scale"). Both titles are available from the Health Protection Directorate of the European Commission, Centre Louvigny, 23 avenue Monterey - Luxembourg.

## VOCATIONAL RETRAINING

Over 1 600 000 people in Europe owe their vocational training to the European Community. Since its establishment the Community has granted 910 million u.a. (1 u.a. = approximately US \$1) to finance retraining schemes in Member States.

Many workers throughout the Common Market would not have been able to retrain without aid from the Community - steelworkers in Sunderland, for instance; or fishermen turned builders, in Greenland; miners retrained as manual workers in the Netherlands; Olivetti employees in Italy; one hundred aircraft maintenance men in Dublin who were once farm-workers; handicapped workers making TV tubes in a protected workshop in Belgium; teachers of the handicapped in France; workers in backward regions in Germany, and so on.

Community aid for workers' retraining schemes can come from one of two sources - grants from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and grants from the European Social Fund. Grants from the ECSC to date total 357 million u.a., and have affected 480 000 workers. Each grant is matched by an equal grant from the government concerned. In 1973, 40 million u.a. was made available for retraining 41 600 workers. Most of these (26 600) were German coal miners affected by closures or modernization of coal mines. In July 1974 British industry was granted one million u.a. to retrain 1 500 men, whose jobs had disappeared in rationalization schemes, to do jobs elsewhere in the plant.

One of the most striking interventions by the ECSC was in the Netherlands. The closure of 11 coal mines in the Limburg region of the Netherlands in the late 60's and early 70's led to the ECSC putting up 79 million florins for training 41 435 workers and providing around 38.5 million u.a. of low-interest loans to help create 9 400 new jobs. In 1966 the ECSC and the Netherlands concluded an agreement under which they would share the cost not only of retraining miners fired or made redundant, but a number of auxiliary expenses as well, to soften the blow of redundancy. This involved paying a bridging allowance of at least 12 months (and at most 30) which made up the difference between current income and 80% of their previous income for the first six months and 75% thereafter, plus an additional payment equal to 60% of the difference between old and new salaries. A special indemnity was granted to workers prepared to move or those still unemployed after two and a half years. There was also a domestic fuel allowance; moving expenses were met and a separation allowance was paid if the worker had to be separated from his family.

These miners are now working in the chemicals plant owned by the former state coal mining company, DSM, on production lines at the DAF car factory, or making stockings. The engraving workshop on the Kerkrade industrial estate built to reemploy miners, employs 70-odd former coal miners doing highly specialized work which they learnt in 14 months instead of the usual five years. (The consultant who worked on compressing the course was paid with ECSC money.)

One of the unusual features of the ECSC-backed schemes is that they accept responsibility for failures. If a new plant goes bankrupt or if the worker does not like his new job, as happened in some cases at DAF, he can be retrained a second time at no cost to himself. Now a new problem is arising at the DAF plant: some of the reemployed miners are reaching retiring age and a new generation of car plant workers has to be found. This time it is the European Social Fund which has been able to help, with money for a scheme which trains school dropouts who, elsewhere in the Netherlands, could not get an apprenticeship without a school-leaving certificate.

Grants from the European Social Fund meet half the cost of government retraining schemes, of of government support to company retraining schemes. Private firms have been eligible to apply for grants since 1972. In 1973, 186 million u.a. were paid out to meet training costs for 436 000 workers. The largest grant made in 1973 amounted to 39 794 million u.a. for a retraining scheme involving over 50 000 workers in some backward regions. The request had been made by the relevant Ministry of Labour.

Those eligible for aid from the Fund fall into two major categories: first of all, workers in backward regions with chronic unemployment - to whom go 60% of the grants - or in industries left behind by technical advances; then those, such as migrant workers, who are either part of a common Community problem or are directly affected by Community decisions. This is particularly the case with agricultural workers penalized by the Common Agricultural Policy, which promotes bigger farms, and with workers in the textile industry whose firms may not be able to compete with cheap imports allowed in by the progressive liberalization of the EEC textiles policy. A proposal that workers in the shipbuilding industry also be included is under discussion.

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF FARM PRODUCTS - THE OUTLOOK

European farm production will continue to expand in the next few years. For most products an annual growth rate of about 1 to 3% is likely. Shortages are likely to occur only in barley, potatoes and horsemeat. In some sectors, particularly durum wheat and maize, there will be a particularly large increase - over 7%. Here it must be added that technical advance will be the greatest contributing factor. Such are the main findings of a survey made at the request of the European Commission by various research institutes in Member States, which covered prospects for the production and consumption of farm products between now and 1977.

I. Foodstuffs consumption

Future demand trends for farm products will depend on the product. Foodstuffs consumption depends partly on increased population, no more than 0.7% per annum, and partly on per capita consumption. Per capita consumption is decreasing as regards cereals (-1%), rice (-0.9%), potatoes (-0.9%), fresh milk (-0.3%), butter (-0.9%), horsemeat (-2.8%) and sheepmeat (-1.6%), while it is on the increase as regards several types of fruit and vegetables, the more usual varieties of meat (+1 to +4%), eggs (+1.7%), and various milk products (cheese +1.6%, cream +3.1%).

II. Community self-sufficiency

A comparison of likely production trends with internal demand, gives indications of the degree of self-sufficiency. Forecasts for some products reveal a possible balance between consumption and production. Thus in the case of wheat, self-sufficiency could increase from 85% (1970/71) to 104%. For potatoes production and demand could balance out. Self-sufficiency in cereals as a whole will probably increase from 81% (1970/71) to 91% in 1977, for the nine Member States.

In the animal product sector, a considerable increase in milk production (some 6.1%) and beef and veal (5.3%) in Ireland will probably be the outstanding feature. Similarly, some increase in production in these sectors is likely for the United Kingdom and Denmark (1 to 3%) mainly through more intensive use of land under forage in the United Kingdom. As regards milk products it would appear that, unless there is more intervention, no improvement of the present Community imbalance is to be expected. Unless special measures are introduced existing surplus production is likely to continue.

As for the supply of beef and veal, there are signs of increasing deficit in the Community of the Six, from 14% in 1970/71 to 20% in 1977. Taking into account an appreciable increase in the new Member States (Ireland 5.3%, United Kingdom 2.6%) Community self-sufficiency may be expected to rise to about 92% in 1977, as against 90% in 1970/71. In the matter of pigmeat,



estimates reveal that for the nine members of the Community as a whole, production is likely to outstrip demand. Finally, there is some sign of improvement in the supply of sheepmeat - self-sufficiency should go up from 55% (1970/71) to 68%.

CONVERSION OF SOLAR ENERGY TO ELECTRICITY

The amount of solar energy available to the Community represents about 150 times its total consumption of primary energy. In its "Energy for Europe" research and development programme (see I&S - No 31/74), the Commission considers the use of solar energy to be one of the priority projects in the field of new energy sources. We have already published one article on heat conversion and solar energy and now, in Annex 3, we turn to the process which consists of transforming sunlight into electricity, by means of solar cells.

No basic technological obstacle stands in the way of developing solar energy to supply standard power plants. Various studies and laboratory experiments have proved that electricity production by means of solar cells, i.e., through photovoltaic conversion, is quite feasible on a large scale. The Community is extremely interested in this type of application because of the efficiency of the conversion procedure, which gives good results even in cloudy weather.

Only since 1972 have photovoltaic panels been used on the ground, to produce electricity in inaccessible areas for instance, or for portable power units. Before 1972 solar cells had been used chiefly to produce power on board artificial satellites. The United States was among the first to realize that by the year 2000 solar energy could supply a large part of its total demand for electricity. What is more, this interest can be expressed in figures. In 1975 the US Government has decided to devote US \$8 million to the development of solar cells, whereas in 1973 only US \$2.25 million was made available to institutes commissioned to study the development of electricity from the sun. At present there is still one drawback to the conversion of solar light into electricity by means of solar cells - the high cost of photovoltaic devices. However, these costs could be cut, if it was decided to make a large-scale industrial effort to develop solar cell panels of the ground type.

Research required

The European Community should undertake research based principally on the development of silicon and cadmium sulphate solar cells, in order to bring about a substantial reduction in production costs. These cells constitute the most advanced type of light-weight converters. The European Commission is in course of drafting proposals on this subject.