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ANNIVERSARY: The Treaty of Rome was signed thirty years ago

A continuously evolving Community of like-minded nations?

This week the 12-nation European Community will celebrate the 30th anniversary of its "constitution", the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, signed in Rome on 25 March 1957. Some feel the anniversary to be largely meaningless because the Community has failed to live up to the hopes placed in it. Others believe Europe has made greater progress over the last 30 years than in 30 centuries.

In the following pages Carlo Ripa di Meana, the European Commissioner for information, culture and the People's Europe, sets out both the dangers which threaten this 30-year old and the possibilities open to it.

On 25 March 1957 the ministers of six West European nations (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) signed two documents which have changed their relations with each other. The better-known of the two set up the European Economic Community, the European Common Market. The expression "Treaty of Rome" refers to the EEC. The other Treaty of Rome set up the European Atomic Energy Community, better known as EURATOM.

The origins of the European Community can be traced to a proposal made in 1950 by Robert Schuman, France's minister of foreign affairs, to the governments of several neighbouring countries. It was that they should jointly manage their coal and steel industries, a proposal which resulted, a year later, in the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community by France and five of her immediate neighbours.

It was in 1957 that the Six agreed to enter into a sort of economic union covering agriculture as well as trade and industry. A start was to be made by setting up a common market, in which goods and capital as well as workers could circulate freely. The Six's objectives included economic and social progress, improved living conditions and "an ever closer union" between their people.

Since then the Community has grown from six to twelve members, but has yet to complete the common market decided on 30 years ago. However, in order to recover the momentum of 1957 to meet the challenge of the year 2000, the Twelve decided to update the EEC Treaty by adopting the Single European Act, which comes into force this year.

This revised "constitution" provides for a genuine common market for 1992 and for Community action in such fields as the new technologies, the environment and currencies. It also reinforces the powers of the European Parliament.

TWO OPPORTUNITIES

Carlo Ripa di Meana

Those who love Europe, like those who have loved it, have reason to suffer from its impotence and from the very slowness of its advance towards unification. This is especially true at the present time, when at the very heart of the continent, the pressure of the Soviet totalitarian system is becoming more subtle and federal Germany, withdrawing into a sort of medieval regionalism of the Länder, is asking itself uneasily whether its membership of the European Community is not one more obstacle on the road to German unity.

The present is also marked by an upsurge in American aggressiveness in trade vis-à-vis the Community. This is accompanied by the first signs of a possible weakening of the United States' strategic commitment to Europe, which could lead to it becoming an object of negotiation.

Moreover, the distribution of roles among the Western powers automatically leaves the European Community with responsibility for Africa on a priority basis, with the very heavy burden this represents. The United States, on the other hand, is associated with Japan in the Pacific basin but has chosen to deal with the current problems of Latin America alone. In such troubled regions as the Middle East and the Gulf, the Community finds itself unable to act because of divergent national interests, and therefore contents itself with following, if with alarm, the recent disturbing initiatives taken by the Americans.

The Community's internal development is more or less at a standstill. Having eliminated in 1968 tariffs on goods traded between the member states, it continues to cherish the illusion that one can create a large internal market and an economic and monetary union without first modifying its political and institutional nature. The Community fails to understand that it is gradually being reduced to a free trade area, the promises of solidarity made some thirty years ago forgotten.

Enlarged first of all by the entry of the U.K., Ireland and Denmark, then Greece and later Spain and Portugal, and tomorrow Norway and perhaps Switzerland, the European Community nevertheless has failed to strengthen itself, whether through a contribution from Britain's long-established Parliamentary democracy or through the new Hellenic and Iberian democratic impulses. On the contrary, the process of integration seems to have come to a halt and now risks going backwards.

Turned over to national bureaucrats by those who should have taken the political decisions, Europe is now living the dramatic contradiction between the feeling, widely held in all the member countries, that there is no serious alternative to the continent's unity, and the incapacity of national governments to capitalize on this feeling. The growing gulf between the political society - the national institutions, the political parties - and the real one - the people, shifts in opinion - signify at present, and at the level of Europe, that the national governments have become truly illegitimate as regards the management of Community affairs.

The unity of Europe thus appears inaccessible. But the only alternative to it is for Europe to become an overseas American territory.

If one rejects this alternative, one cannot simply content oneself by defending what the Community has accomplished during thirty years marked by ups and downs, even if it constitutes the starting point for fresh progress.

To break out of the impasse and benefit from the results already achieved, which can also be viewed in terms of the spirit, form and contents of a multilateral negotiation, two opportunities present themselves just now: the strategic-military situation and the crisis in the relations between the State and its citizens.

The first leads to an awareness of Europe's own strategic interests: the nuclear forces of France and Britain are now viewed from a European standpoint or in the context of a European project. Joint defense - this is a card no one has yet played. However, Reykjavik has allowed Europe to reflect and cooperate in new and original ways. This is a considerable external force, which for the present is being exercised negatively but which can be exploited. Which brings us back to 1954*, the year in which Europe decided against playing a key role that would ensure its own security.

As for the second, it opens the door to Community action in new fields, in which the effect of the unification of the Continent is direct and immediate: the environment, culture, European television, the school and university.

Of course neither path is easy. But if it wishes to move ahead, Europe must renounce its humdrum existence, made up of "subdued accents and silent words, of strangled sobs and plaintive sighs".

* Failure of the proposal for a European Defense Community.

DRINK: Cheers?

German and Greek "purity" laws for beers are incompatible with the Rome Treaty.

Since the 16th century only four raw materials can be used by law to make beer in Germany: hops, barley, yeast and water. This "purity" law makes it equally illegal to market, and therefore import, beers containing additives, whether natural or chemical. Not surprisingly, when Otho I of Bavaria became the first king of independent Greece in 1833 he saw to it that Greek brewers followed the German tradition.

Others were free to do as they liked, of course, provided they did not try to contaminate German taste buds with their concoctions. The fact is French, Dutch and Danish brewers add up to 30% of corn or rice, so as to have beers which keep longer and foam better. But there are numerous other additives, more suitable, in German eyes, to a witches' cauldron than an honest brewery.

This situation clearly delighted the 1,600 German and Greek brewers whom it shielded from foreign competition. But the "purity" laws have no place in the Treaties setting up the European Community, so that when the European Commission challenged their legality before the Court of Justice in Luxembourg, the Court ruled in its favour.

It is unlikely the ruling will prove harmful to the health of the Germans; some of the additives authorized in other Community countries are permitted under German law for the manufacture of a wide range of beverages, except beer, of course.

The Commission is naturally pleased at the Court's decision, as it had also maintained that an additive used in another member state must be authorized once international scientific research has shown that it is not harmful but meets a technological need.

European beers can flow freely in Germany, unless the German authorities can prove that any of the additives contained in any one of them is harmful. In any case, German and Greek brewers are free to advertise the fact that their beers conform to the country's "purity" laws.

The Germans are not expected to switch en masse to beers from other Community countries, however. Tastes differ and one man's meat

HEALTH: Long live women!

French women do exactly this, with a life expectancy of 79 years.

A Portuguese male child, born this year, can expect to live to the age of 69, but his twin sister will survive him by almost eight years, while a French girl born this year can expect to outlive them both, having a life expectancy of 79 years.

If, however, we look at today's 40-year olds, those with the highest life expectancy are Dutch women (81 years), followed closely by Spanish women (80.5 years). Among males, Luxembourgers are the worst off, with a life expectancy of just over 72 years. But even the Greeks, who are the luckiest in this respect, have a life expectancy of under 75 years.

As these are averages, everyone can hope to do better. And men can take comfort from these figures, for it is women who are in surplus - a surplus more welcome than milk and butter, of course.

In France this surplus is just over 8% for those born now and just over 7% for the 40-year olds. The Greeks are not so well off; the corresponding figures for them are 4% and 3.4%.

SPORT: The problem of the free movement of footballers still awaits a solution

The European Community's national football associations against the application of Community law.

The European Commissioner, Manuel Marin, has once again reminded the European Community's football associations that the law is the same for everyone. Professional footballers must, therefore, be free to play for any club in the Community, regardless of their nationality, by 1992.

The Commission is not insisting on a rigid timetable; it is prepared to take football's specific problems into account. But Mr Marin has made it clear that there can be no question of allowing the various national football associations to disregard Community laws on freedom of movement.

He has asked them to submit to him before June 30 plans which provide for full freedom of movement in 1992, with the first step in this direction timed for the next football season. Should they fail to do so, Mr Marin has warned he will take the matter to the Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

But his words seem to have fallen on deaf ears. The heads of the associations have made no effort to hide their opposition. They have already set up a legal commission to challenge the validity of the Community law and hope it will provide them the necessary ammunition for their meeting with Commissioner Marin, set for end April.

It should be pointed out that some of the Community's sports leaders are rather confused in their views on Community law, if one goes by what is reported in some papers. One of the managers of the well-known club, Juventus, which favours freedom of movement, spoke of taking the matter to the Court of Justice at The Hague, to be told by another that it was the "court in Brussels" which was competent.

Others have argued that "politics should be kept out of sports". While the legal commission can be counted on to straighten out matters, it is unlikely it will be able to come up with arguments likely to sway Mr Marin, let alone the Court of Justice. The fact is that the Court made its views known clearly some 10 years ago, in a ruling the football associations have ignored.

It is precisely for this reason that the European Commission is now firmly decided to apply the law and oblige the clubs to accept the principle that a player born in Liverpool can play for Munich or Brussels, just as he can play for Birmingham or Coventry.

POLLUTION: " .. The water looked so inviting I went for a swim ... "

Pollution-free beaches ... and others.

Not everyone is happy with the European Community's Directive on the quality of water found in areas designated for bathing.

The European Commission has received a number of complaints from both private associations and private citizens in the U.K. because it had failed to include one or other bathing area in the list of those which meet Community standards. Some people clearly believe that the stakes are sufficiently high to turn mudflats into sandstrewn beaches and toxic bacteria into harmless denizens of the sea.

Similar complaints have been made to the U.K. authorities, who are planning to monitor water quality in a number of areas over a two-year period. The list of waters to be surveyed, and improved, if necessary, to bring them into line with the Community Directive, should be based on the survey of over 350 waters announced by the authorities last December.

Stanley Clinton Davis, the European Environment Commissioner, is convinced that the Community-wide application of this Directive, in force since the beginning of this year, will be beneficial for living conditions, tourism and public health.

Replying to a question from the British Euro-MP, Michael McGowan, Mr Davis reaffirmed this conviction and reminded member states of their obligations under the Directive. Hence the need for governments to take all necessary precautions in the event of a privatization of the water authorities.

All of which is clear as running water

EMPLOYMENT: Training pays off

An agreement between employers and trade unions on the introduction of new technologies.

Companies planning to install new machinery or new office equipment must provide training for their workers and inform them of the changes. The European representatives of both employers and workers were able to agree on this at a meeting convened by the European Commission in Brussels on March 6.

In a joint text the Union of Industries of the European Community (UNICE), the European Centre of Public Enterprises (CEEP) and the European Trade Union Confederation (CES) agreed that trained, informed workers can only mean an improvement in both working conditions and competitiveness.

The meeting was not the first of its kind: it was part of what the European Commission has called a "social dialogue". In November 1985, Jacques Delors, the Commission President, took the initiative in bringing together in Brussels for the first time representatives of employers' organizations and trade unions at the level of the European Community. Two working parties were set up at that time.

The first of them, entrusted with the task of examining the Community's economical policies, adopted last November the cooperative growth and employment strategy favoured by the European Commission. Community employers and employees called on the Twelve to complete the single, internal market. They thought it necessary to relaunch investments and held that wages should rise more slowly than productivity.

The second working party, which dealt with the problems raised by the new technologies, has now completed its work. It insists on the need for training which is adapted to a company's needs. It calls on the educational authorities in the twelve member states to consult more often with employers and trade unions. It also wants more accurate forecasts as regards changes in employment at the local and regional levels.

Employers and trade unions believe workers will be more strongly motivated and capable of adjusting to technical changes if they are informed in time. Even though it is the employer who takes decisions, the European organizations favour genuine consultations, which could amount to negotiations.