

### S U M M A R Y

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CONSUMERS: Children will be a little safer in the Community

European safety standards for toys and a ban on products which imitate food.

The risk of accidents to children should diminish throughout the 12-nation European Community now that the ministers responsible for consumer protection have agreed to ban the manufacture, import and sales of erasers shaped like fruit and other articles which imitate food items. The fact is that such imitations result in numerous accidents each year, especially to children.

After the new regulation has been in force for two years, the EC Council of Ministers will decide whether to extend the ban to imitations of non-food products likely to provoke accidents.

The ministers also agreed to harmonize national regulations on toy safety. The new regulation sets the basic safety requirements which all toys must meet before they can be put on sale throughout the Community, even while referring manufacturers to the technical standards when drawn up by the Community's experts. The European Parliament must give its opinion, however, before the text of the new regulation can be finalized.

UNEMPLOYMENT: The long-term unemployed and regions in difficulty to have priority

The European Commission's guidelines for Social Fund policy in 1988.

Under-22s who have been jobless for over 12 months will be entitled to financial help with training from the European Social Fund next year. So far the Fund can only help adults in this way. The European Commission has decided, however, to change this rule in order to fight long-term unemployment more effectively.

Young people who have been unemployed for some time have a very good chance of finding a job, in the Commission's view, as against only 30 to 40% of adults in the same situation.

The Commission also intends to limit help from the Social Fund to the regions in greatest difficulty. These will account for 50% of the Community's active population next year, as against 56.5% this year and 63% in 1986.

INTERNAL MARKET: A fully mobile telephone for 1991

... and a few more steps towards the single European market.

Imagine being able to telephone London or Dublin, or to receive calls from Milan or Barcelona, while bowling along the motorway between Amsterdam and Cologne. Thanks to the measures approved by the European Community's Council of Ministers on June 11 the truly mobile telephone will become a reality in 1991. This "second generation" instrument will use the latest digital technology and replace the present five incompatible national systems.

The EC's internal market ministers have also agreed to free certain frequencies in all the member states and to allocate them to the new Community-wide system in 1991. The time-table they have adopted provides for the progressive, coordinated introduction of the new mobile communication services in all 12 Community countries. One of the texts approved by the ministers sets out the technical standards already approved by some of the national telecommunications authorities and by European manufacturers.

The new mobile telephone will have a further advantage for users: it will be cheaper. The European Commission has estimated that the most expensive equipment in 1995 will be cheaper than the cheapest mobile telephone on the market today. Manufacturers obviously will be able to take advantage of economies of scale once a Community-wide market replaces the present national markets.

The ministers also took a few more steps down the road to the single market, envisaged for the end of 1992. They agreed to the harmonization of rules governing noise levels of tower cranes and vehicles intended for purposes other than to be driven on roads.

Ministers also approved the basic standards for car fuel tanks as well as several regulations dealing with the transport of goods between member states.

Some of these regulations will be finalized only after the European Parliament has given its opinion. Ministers were unable, however, to agree on the question of the right of residence in another member state of students and retired persons.

While the June 11 meeting was the most productive to date this year, the Twelve will have to do better if they are to meet the deadline they have set themselves for completing the single market.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: For a technology without frontiers, a market without frontiers

The European Commission favours a common market in Information Technology by 1992.

The European Community countries must provide themselves with a large internal market and common standards if they want to take full advantage of Information Technology (IT), the offspring of the marriage between computers and telecommunications. This is the European Commission's message to ministers and trade unions as well as manufacturers and national telecommunications administrations.

It is contained in a Green Paper presented in Brussels by the European industries commissioner, Karl-Heinz Narjes. By the year 2000 some 60% of all jobs in the Community will be affected by IT and up to 7% of the Community's Gross Domestic Product will depend on it, compared with just over 2% at present. In 1986 the Community market for telecommunication equipment amounted to ECU 17.5 billion\*, out of a total world market of ECU 90 billion.

In the IT race, whose chief protagonists are Europe, the United States and Japan, the Europeans are not doing so badly. Four West European companies were among the world's 10 largest suppliers of telecommunications equipment in 1985 and European companies as a group accounted for nearly 80% of their home market.

However, between 1983 and 1985 imports into the 10-nation Community+ from the U.S. rose by 70%, while imports from Japan more than doubled. At the same time European sales to these two countries were negligible in comparison. European markets, moreover, remain fragmented. No single Community country accounts for more than 6% of the world market, while Japan accounts for 11% and the U.S. 35%.

In its Green Paper the European Commission proposes the progressive opening up of the Community's 12 national markets to competition. This would encourage the creation of a single market for telecommunications services, lead to more jobs and the development of the Community's outlying regions, in the context of the single market forecast for the end of 1992.

The Commission wants to prevent the agencies currently operating the telecommunications networks - national monopolies, in most cases - from setting the rules of the game. It also proposes the creation of a European Standards Institute, as this would make it easier to draft common standards. The Commission plans to send draft Community regulations to the Council of Ministers before the year is out.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.70 or IR£ 0.77.

+ The Community before the entry of Spain and Portugal.

ENERGY: 1986 was less favourable

Consumption in the 12-nation Community fell but dependence on outside suppliers increased, if slightly.

The 12-nation European Community is using energy more efficiently than before. Last year consumption increased more slowly than the output of goods. But this good news, announced recently by Eurostat, the Community's statistical office, was accompanied by some less welcome news: the Community's dependence on its outside suppliers increased by just that much last year.

In 1986 the Community's energy consumption increased by 1.1% while its Gross Domestic Product rose by 2.5% and industrial output by 1.9%. As in 1985, per capita energy consumption rose slightly.

Electricity consumption rose fastest, even if the 7.5% increase recorded last year is well below the nearly 20% in 1985. After the downward trend of previous years, oil consumption rose 2.1% last year. While consumption of natural gas rose slightly, that of coal fell.

Energy production rose 1.8%, with nuclear energy showing a rise of 7.5%. Output of coal and oil increased also but by smaller amounts. Output of other forms of energy declined.

The main setback last year relates to imports, which rose 44.9% in 1986 as compared to 43.2% the year before. The Community's dependence on oil imports rose from 31.6% in 1985 to 33.1% last year. Total nett imports\* rose by 5.5%, with oil imports rising by 8.7% and natural gas 8.8%.

The European Commission fears higher oil prices as a result of increased American oil imports in particular. Last year the U.S. imported 20% more, although domestic consumption rose by only 2.6%.

All the Community's member states consumed more energy last year, with the exception of the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Denmark.

\* imports less exports.

REGIONS: Some surprising figures ...

... while the European Commission re-examines its policy towards state aid to regions in difficulties.

Which are the regions in difficulties in the 12-nation European Community? Subsidies and loans on favourable terms as well as facilities for companies and jobs can depend on the answer. But a member of the European Commission will not have the same viewpoint as a minister in one of the Community capitals.

The Commission recently announced a more critical approach to state aids to regions which did not fall within either of the two "priority" categories: they are either underdeveloped or have declining industries.

Reducing regional disparities is on the Community's agenda more firmly than ever before. It is among the objectives written into the Single European Act, which should come into force in the coming month.

Under the Treaty of Rome, the Community's "constitution", the European Commission can limit, or even ban, in certain cases regional aid provided by a member state. At a time when it favours concentrating Community aid on the regions in greatest need, the Commission wants to be sure that its efforts will not be off-set by programmes of state aid.

In relatively poor member states, such as Portugal and Ireland, state regional aid can extend to the entire country, while in the more prosperous ones, such as Denmark, it is limited to some 20% of the population. But the statistics can hold some surprises.

The following Table was prepared by the European Commission in reply to a question from eight German Euro-MPs:

Regional aid in the EC member states, 1986

<u>Country</u>	<u>As a percentage of</u>	
	<u>total population</u>	<u>total surface area</u>
Belgium	33.1	53.2
Denmark	20.7	45.1
France (excluding overseas departments)	38.1	58.6
Germany (excluding Berlin)	44.5	62.5
Greece	65.6	95.9
Ireland	100	100
Italy	48.9	67.9
Luxembourg	79.7	57.5
Netherlands	27.1	31.0
Portugal	100	100
Spain	62.7	80.4
United Kingdom	46.6	46.2

MOTORING: Unleaded petrol takes off in Germany and the Netherlands

More readily available in some EC countries than others.

Lead-free petrol was available at some 12,500 pumps in Germany and 8,000 in the Netherlands in mid-May. On the basis of these figures, published by the European Commission in response to a question from a German Euro-MP, Rolf Linkohr, these two countries lead the way when it comes to unleaded petrol.

The fact is that lead-free petrol is available at only 900 pumps in Denmark, at a mere 100 in Belgium and at fewer than 100 pumps in all other Community countries for which statistics are available. The number of such pumps in the U.K. came to 174 last November, and another 170 should be in place shortly, according to the European Commission. It has no figures for either Ireland or Portugal.

The Community's member states have until 1 October 1989 to ensure the availability of lead-free petrol for their motorists. Some of them have taken steps to encourage motorists to use unleaded petrol, or at least to buy cars fitted with catalytic converters. In countries which have not done so consumption of lead-free petrol is very small - not enough, in any case, to cover the oil companies' operating and capital costs.

MOTORING: Diesel-powered cars gaining ground

The number of cars in the 12-nation EC in 1985.

Of 105.2m. cars on the road in the 12-nation European Community in 1985, just under 8% were powered with Diesel engines. But 17% of the 9.6m. cars sold in the Community that same year were fitted with Diesel engines. This information, given by the European Commission in reply to a question from the French Euro-MP, Pierre Bernard-Reymond, points to a sharp rise in the popularity of Diesel cars.

Some 25% of the new cars sold in Italy in 1985 had Diesel engines. The proportion was as high as 24% in Spain and 22% in Germany, although it fell to 15% in France and was a mere 4% in the U.K.\*

The proportion of Diesel-engined cars on the road, as a percentage of all cars, ranged from 1% in the U.K. to 10% in Germany and Italy. The corresponding figures for Spain and France were 6% and 9% respectively.

\* The Commission does not have figures for the other member states.

FOOD: How can the quality of wines be verified?

Coming shortly: a new method of detecting adulteration and better labelling.

Since the scandals involving wines to which methanol or anti-freeze had been added, both wine bibbers and honest vintners have been concerned about the quality of wines. In response to the preoccupation of two Euro-MPs, the European Commission has indicated that a new method of determining the origin of alcohols contained in wines should make such scandals a thing of the past. It has also pointed out that wine labels will be more informative from next year.

The Commission agrees with the Italian Euro-MP, Ferruccio Pisoni, that the Martin method of analysis should be officially adopted throughout the 12-nation European Community. It is based on the comparison of products for analysis with reliable reference samples. The Commission is trying to ensure that the technique, developed partly with Community funds, moves from the experimental to the operational stage.

It has pointed out that from next May the level of alcohol will have to be clearly shown for all wines sold in the Community. Unlike the French Euro-MP, Emmanuel Maffre-Baugé, the Commission does not feel it necessary to ban the blending of wines. However, it has proposed that the labels should clearly show the origin of the wines which have been used.

CONSUMERS: A guarantee certificate valid throughout the Community

A Japanese firm is giving Europeans the chance to take advantage of ... Europe.

Thanks to the European Commission's go-ahead, buyers of products made by the Japanese firm Sony will receive, from the beginning of July, a guarantee certificate valid throughout the 12-nation European Community.

This is the outcome of an initiative taken by Sony's European distributors, who have entered into an agreement among themselves for this purpose. Such agreements are banned in principle under the Rome Treaty, the Community's "constitution". But the European Commission can grant a waiver, especially if it believes the agreement in question will benefit consumers.

The Commission last year established the principle that a consumer who has bought goods in one Community country must be able to avail himself of the manufacturer's guarantee in all the others. With the European guarantee certificate the buyer knows that this principle will be respected, without his having to take the manufacturer to court. It only remains for European firms to follow Sony's example.



CULTURE: Calling all budding scenarists

Scenarios on Europe are needed for the 1988 Cannes Film Festival.

"Europe, our future". Here is a theme which should inspire 18 to 25-year old Europeans. All who are interested in the cinema - and have ideas - can try their hand at writing a scenario for a 26-minute film. It is expected the winners will be announced at next year's Cannes Film Festival.

This attractive offer is being made by the European Commission, which has decided to organize a competition for young scenarists on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome, the Community's "constitution". The Commission is hoping to encourage them to deal with themes of interest to youth, such as the environment, jobs, education and research.

All those who are interested can write to the Directorate-General for Information, Culture and Communication, BERL 2/29, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

EDUCATION: Bringing Europe into the classroom

But ministers have yet to follow up words with deeds.

"Education must give greater importance to the European dimension". The European Community's education ministers were unanimous on this point when they met here last month. They said much the same thing in 1984 but no concrete actions followed their earlier declaration, at least as regards primary and secondary schools.

In this connection the Belgian government, which has the presidency of the EC Council of Ministers until the end of this month, has sent its partners two reports. The first notes that the young must be given the means to discover the European aspects of economic and social life, the second that as many young people as possible should have the opportunity to learn at least two foreign languages while at school. This is an objective which the Community's heads of state and government have already approved in principle.

The European Commission would like to further the training of language teachers and get the Twelve to share their experiences with each other in the context of a European action programme. It also hopes to present proposals regarding exchanges between schools to the education ministers.