

# Eurofocus

A NEWSHEET FOR JOURNALISTS • REPRODUCTION AUTHORIZED

Nº. 28/80

BRUSSELS July 28, 1980

For the week of July 21 to 26

**NOTICE!** This number is the last before the summer holidays. EUROFOCUS is going on leave for a while and will reappear beginning on September 15. News about Europe will probably be slowing down in the coming month of August. And, unfortunately, it is also expected that the European Community's problems, such as unemployment, economic recession and others, will still be with us when we return and that the summer sun will not have chased all the clouds away. Nevertheless, we hope you spend an excellent summer break and WE'LL MEET AGAIN IN SEPTEMBER.

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There are between 13 and 23 million handicapped persons in the European Community, which is actively trying to integrate them in social and economic life...

This newsheet is published in six languages (English, French, German, Dutch, Italian and Danish) by the Directorate-General for Information of the

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Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Community institutions.

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TRANSPORT: Who controls the skies?

Air transport is believed to be eight times as safe as it was in 1960. But progress is mainly due to improvements in technology, rather than improvements in the air control system.

However, in 1960 the Benelux countries, Federal Republic of Germany, France and the United Kingdom (joined by Ireland in 1965) signed an international convention on European air navigation security. In 1972, the first "Euro-control" centre was set up in Maastricht (the Netherlands), but apart from Belgium, Luxemburg and Germany, the other EEC countries refused to transfer their competences in this matter to the Eurocontrol headquarters. Today, air transport continues to be a "national" rather than a "European" phenomenon, a fact which has an impact on the efficiency of the system.

One example: a flight from Copenhagen to Paris is successively monitored by the Scandinavian centre when the plane flies over Denmark, by Eurocontrol when the flight is over Germany, by Schiphol centre when it is over the Netherlands, once again by Eurocontrol once it is flying over Belgium, and finally, by the French authorities for the stretch over France!

The fact that cooperation between EEC countries is not more developed in this sector has been deplored by the European Parliament in a recently adopted resolution, which focuses on the shaky future of Eurocontrol given the lack of political will to make it work. The European Parliament also points out certain problems facing air traffic in the Community:

- the under-utilisation of the management system for air traffic;
- the overly high number of personnel and services responsible for the management of air traffic and navigation;
- the over-frequent bottlenecks which lead to interruptions, deroutings and delays in traffic and problems for passengers;
- the inadequacy of coordination between civil and military air traffic;
- the frequent incompatibility between the air traffic equipment and management;
- the unjustified increase in costs and wastage of money and fuel.

The Parliament concludes that Eurocontrol should be made responsible for the tactical and strategic planning of air traffic in Europe and that it should have an active say in its daily running.

The Eurocontrol convention expires in 1983, but the Nine's Ministers have promised to look into the question after 1980.

Employment: Is three months too little for the unemployed?

Among the various articles and paragraphs of regulations necessary for the daily running of the Community is one very important article - no 69, paragraph 1 of regulation no 1408/71 - which concerns all the unemployed persons in the Community. It allows the unemployed of one EEC country to look for work in another member state.

The European Court of Justice recently looked at the application of this article in a case setting a number of German unemployed persons against the Federal Employment Office in Nuremberg. These unemployed persons went to Italy to look for jobs. Not only did they not find the jobs, but when they came back to Germany, the Federal Office refused to give them unemployment benefits. The reason was simple: they had been absent for more than three months.

After a delay of three months, the unemployed person is considered to have found a job in another country. If not, the person is expected to return to his region before the three-month period is over.

The Federal Office therefore refused to pay the unemployment benefits, and also did not apply those aspects of the article (paragraph 2 of article 69) which allows competent institutions, in exceptional cases, to extend the three-month period, thereby preserving the unemployment benefits.

The unemployed persons in question therefore brought the case before the German courts, in order to see their right to the maintenance of unemployment benefits confirmed. What followed was a legal battle. An earlier decision of the Court of Justice indicated that the fact that an unemployed person could absent himself for a three-month period in order to look for a job in another member state gave the person a real advantage, and ensured the free circulation of workers. It was therefore clear that article 69, paragraph 2 was not incompatible with the Treaty of Rome's rules on the free movement of workers.

In fact, the arrangements laid down by article 69 only apply to those persons who request their application, and therefore renounce any advantages to be granted by the general arrangements which are applied to other workers in the country.

The European Court of Justice therefore decided that the worker or unemployed person who returns to his country after the three-month period has expired (under article 69) cannot use his right to unemployment benefits from that country, unless, for an important reason, the delay has been extended under the terms of article 69.

Unemployed persons will therefore have to be very careful when they leave their home countries to look for work elsewhere.

EDUCATION: Illiteracy, an unknown reality

There is a general tendency to believe that compulsory education has done away with illiteracy in Europe. This, however, is far from the truth. A recent study undertaken in the United Kingdom shows that there are at least 2 million adults in England and Wales who are unable to read as well as an average nine-year old child.

Another poll undertaken in all Community countries (excluding Italy and Luxemburg) indicates that between 4 to 6 % of the total European population is illiterate. There are about 10 to 15 million illiterate people in the Community.

The point has been taken up by the European Community Youth Forum (the political platform for youth organisations vis-à-vis the Community institutions). In a paper sent to the European Commission, the Forum calls for:

- a global study on illiteracy in Europe;
  - an evaluation of the various programmes to combat illiteracy which exists in the member states;
  - the need for a policy which would ensure that, within a ten-year period, all Community citizens, young and old, would be able to read and write.
- Such a policy could be undertaken within the context of the Social Fund, which grants aids to other less fortunate categories of the population including the young unemployed, migrant workers, etc.

ENVIRONMENT: The quality of bathing water

At a time when Europe's beaches are over-run by tourists, it's probably not a bad idea to recall the efforts undertaken recently by European authorities to guarantee that bathing water attains a certain degree of purity.

Since December 1975, there is in fact a directive by the European Community that sets standards for the specific quality of fresh and sea water in areas where bathing is either authorised or tolerated.

The objective is primarily to prevent infectuous diseases which are transmitted through sewer water discharges into water that is also used for bathing.

That's why the directive requires an inspection of the bacteria contained in this water. It also indicates the admissible levels for certain toxic products, such as pesticides, and for metals, such as lead, arsenic, mercury and cadmium. It also regulates the methods and testing required.

Since the beginning of the year, the European Commission has officially informed the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, and Belgium that they have not complied with these Community regulations on bathing water purity inspection. In addition, the member states of the Community are also required to report regularly to the European Commission on the quality of their water. The Commission is in turn planning to publish the information contained in these reports on the cleanliness of the beaches in Europe.

INDUSTRY: The crisis in the textile sector

The European textile and clothing industries in recent years have experienced some profound upheavals. For several years, efforts to adjust and adapt to these changes have been underway in order to assure that this sector maintains its important position in the employment picture, especially in certain regions. Nevertheless, despite the aid measures adopted at the national level, the adjustment of the Community industry to new international market conditions and to technological change has translated into a loss of some 700,000 jobs between 1973 and 1978 (422,000 jobs lost in the textile sector and 278,000 in the clothing industry) and by the disappearance of 4200 firms. At the same time, productivity, that is the output per person employed, has increased markedly by some 25 percent between 1973 and 1979.

The Community's textile and clothing industry nevertheless still remains the world's leading exporting industry. It also represents some 9.5 percent of the manufacturing employment in the European Community and 30 percent of the feminine employment.

HELPING THE HANDICAPPED TO LEAD A BETTER LIFE
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The courage of handicapped people in facing up to their difficulties is an inspiration to the rest of us. But the frightening fact is that some 5 - 9 % of the total EEC population (i.e. between 13 and 23 million people in the nine Community countries) is in some way handicapped. This figure is only an estimate because complete statistics are hard to come by and also because defining the term "handicapped" differs between the countries of the Common Market. But the fact that does not differ is that in all countries handicapped people have a difficult life, for the media too often give an image of being handicapped which is not only unrealistic but also tends to penalize those who are forced to live in a different way. Too often living and working conditions make no concession to those who have to face up to added difficulties. What is the Community doing to try to help the handicapped?

The aim of programmes to help the handicapped is to try and eliminate segregation affecting these people and to help them communicate fully with others, as well as to help them participate in social and economic life without restriction. The ultimate aim of all programmes is that a handicapped person should be capable of supporting himself or herself to develop his or her potential to the full. The EEC is trying to promote rehabilitation and it is developing other ideas which have an impact on the specific aspects of social integration of the handicapped. In 1974, the Nine's Council of Ministers adopted a European Action Programme on the development of vocational rehabilitation. This means the EEC's efforts in this field are mainly devoted to help the handicapped person return to some sort of job or occupation. The European programme tackles the problem of vocational rehabilitation in three ways: the elaboration and teaching of new rehabilitation methods; improving the techniques used in practice and finally organising studies and research on the subject.

As far as rehabilitation methods are concerned the European Commission has set up a network comprising some thirty rehabilitation and training centres. The close collaboration organised by the EEC has meant that experiences and results throughout the Community could be compared. This work has dealt with the training of staff in the centres and on the important work of evaluating the individual capabilities of the handicapped persons in question and on the training programmes offered to the handicapped. Joint action covering the teaching of rehabilitation techniques is also covered but has not yet been implemented.

The second element in the European programme is improving field techniques. Through the European Social Fund the Community offers to all the nine member states the chance of receiving money for vocational rehabilitation work. The

funds available have gone up from nearly £30 million in 1978 to £37 million in 1979. £43 million have been requested for 1980. In 1978, 72,000 handicapped people benefited from aid to help them to return to active working life. Up until now 100 % of the financial help offered by the EEC has been used up. This has enabled activities to be developed in general and also has been used to support the implementation of national programmes for developing medical and social facilities for use by handicapped people. Thirdly, certain research studies have been undertaken on the state of rehabilitation in the EEC countries, on education and on the employment possibilities for handicapped people. Taken together these Common Market measures have made definite progress. In Ireland, for example, the impact of programmes for the handicapped has increased almost three-fold since 1973. Recently the European Commission sent to the Council of Ministers a report on the initial results of the Community action programme which stated that there should in future be greater participation by companies and the social partners (i.e. employees and trade unions) in finding solutions and also that those job-finding facilities for the general public in the member states should be more available to the handicapped. Also the report suggested linking job-finding activities to those covering different aspects of social integration and extending them at the local level.

But vocational rehabilitation is only one problem that has to be solved in providing the handicapped with a better future, for there are other areas where promising work has been carried out. In education, for example, the EEC has recently been very concerned about young people passing from school to work without having obtained adequate vocational guidance. In 1976, it was decided to do something about this and a detailed analysis of the problem was prepared. Within this framework, the Commission is also preparing a set of proposals which will stress the special educational requirements of handicapped children. The problems encountered by those handicapped people who are forced to use a wheelchair are many. Entering or leaving a building can be difficult if no ramps have been provided for wheelchairs. That is why the EEC has been actively involved in helping the Council of Europe in laying down minimum standards of access for home and building construction and has made finance available to several projects which try to improve housing conditions for handicapped people. Some of these projects relate to town planning schemes such as at Evry in France and Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Others are concerned with housing renovation schemes and with the construction of specially built homes for handicapped people.

Finally, efforts are being made to supply the special materials that handicapped people need from abroad as cheaply as possible, for example, duty-free imports of items for the handicapped which are manufactured outside the Community (eg. in Japan or the USA). Two EEC Regulations have facilitated the imports of such materials into the Common Market countries in some circumstances. In the field of medical research the first Community action was launched in 1978 to record congenital anomalies. The Commission has introduced other proposals concerning the deterioration of hearing, detecting the signs of thrombosis, as well as monitoring the first few weeks of children's lives. However, in the last analysis all organised efforts will not be enough to change the lot of the handicapped without a change in attitudes from all Europe's citizens to realize that such people have an active role to play in society.

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Thank you.