

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
General Secretariat

Brussels, 16th July 1975  
S/1099/75 (RCI 13)

ORIGINAL

REPORT FROM THE INFORMATION OFFICERS  
OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
IN  
AUSTRALIA

(2nd report)

ANN.: 7 (The General Secretariat only received the annexes  
in English).

S/1099 e/75 (RCI 13) ag

Canberra, 30 June, 1975

AUSTRALIAN OPINION ABOUT THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Report No. 2

by the Press and Information officers of the countries of  
the European Communities in Australia (under the Chairmanship  
of Mr. John Lawton, Ireland) :

|                               |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Belgium-Luxembourg :          | Mr. Denis Banneel,<br>Second Secretary                                                |
| Denmark :                     | Mr. Niels Kristensen<br>Attache                                                       |
| Federal Republic of Germany : | Mr. Ludwig Steinkohl,<br>Second Secretary                                             |
| France :                      | Mrs. Janine Kraitsowits,<br>Press Attache<br>Mr. Claude Fannetier,<br>Third Secretary |
| Ireland :                     | Mr. John Lawton,<br>First Secretary                                                   |
| Italy :                       | Miss Mergherita Bortoletto,<br>Third Secretary                                        |
| Netherlands :                 | Mr. Jan Hennemann,<br>Third Secretary                                                 |
| United Kingdom :              | Mr. H.H. Tucker,<br>Counsellor                                                        |

(A) Australian Opinion About the European Communities

(i) General

It must be said that, in so far as it can be estimated by the diplomatic missions, the level of interest and knowledge of the European Communities in Australia is still well below what is desirable. This is especially true of the general public, whose concept of the Communities is based on rare statements by political leaders and the sketchy and incomplete coverage given by press, radio and television. The few public statements by the present Australian government about the Communities are not as negative as those of the previous government (pre-December, 1972). The Prime Minister, who is very interested in and knowledgeable about foreign affairs, and who has travelled widely - including his European trip in December, 1974 - and the Minister for Foreign Affairs certainly understand the Communities. Although they are concerned over the restricted measures taken at times by the Communities, especially the ban on beef imports in 1974, they both appear to consider favourably the very fact of European economic unification. Mr. Whitlam has repeatedly taken such a stand in public, during his trip to Europe at the end of 1974 and early 1975, and when he had to give his views on the matter of British membership to the Communities.

Other members of the government are not as interested since Australia is affected so little by the day-to-day activities of the Communities. However the Ministers for Overseas Trade and Agriculture are exceptions. As far as they are concerned, the E.E.C. means the C.A.P. which, to Australia, is entirely negative since the beef import ban was imposed. Members of Parliament from rural areas also are of this opinion, as is shown by the questions asked in the Parliament regarding the beef ban. Most members of the National Country Party are in this category. The new leader of the Liberal Party has also shown ignorance of the E.E.C. in a speech on 12 April, 1975 when he said: "It is worth noting that the A.S.E.A.N. countries have established an A.S.E.A.N. Brussels Committee to argue their common points of view with the European Economic Community. That is one of the largest and most selfish trading groups ever to be established..." While this view is probably not as strongly felt by others in his Party, the fact that it was expressed - albeit in Queensland, which is politically conservative, and where most of Australia's export beef is produced - demonstrates the problem that exists.

Officials in the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Overseas Trade are well-informed. At the time of the Prime Minister's visit to Europe there was some evidence that he was not well-briefed on the extent of the interest in Australian uranium in E.E.C. member-States. The subject of resources has created disagreements between officials in Departments in Canberra which may account for this.

As can easily be imagined, farmers in Australia have a very unfavourable attitude towards the E.E.C. This feeling is certainly not so widespread among other economic groups, where the attitude is one of ignorance or indifference. This is true also in the universities and the press.

(ii) Since 1 January, 1975

The pessimistic impression conveyed by the press during 1974 - exemplified by an article in the "Australian" of 28 December, 1974, of which copies are attached (Annex 1) - has not persisted. The Dublin "summit" meeting and the U.K. referendum were seen as positive developments. The referendum received more attention from the press, radio and television than any other topic related to the E.E.C. Important factors, of course, are Australia's interest in all news from Britain and the fact that so many news agency stories are despatched from London. There has been no suggestion in the Australian press that the result of the referendum was other than good. The attention given to other "E.E.C." matters in recent months has been very slight - about 20 articles dealing with economic items, almost entirely reprints taken from the Financial Times, New York Times or Wall St. Journal. A recent article in the Australian Financial Review about the discussions in Brussels between the Minister for Overseas Trade and E.E.C. Commissioners (copies attached - Annex II) illustrates the present attitude there towards the E.E.C.

When the Prime Minister returned from his overseas trip in January he made a television "Report to the Nation" in which he made the point that the E.E.C. was Australia's second greatest trading partner, that it buys - or refuses to buy - agricultural products as a unit and that never before his visit had there been contact with the Community by the head of an Australian government. "The overall result of my mission has been that we have been able to present Australia's view thoroughly, comprehensively and authoritatively on issues that matter in nations that matter". Examples of the Australian press coverage of his Brussels visit are attached (Annexes III and IV). Mr. Whitlam made a statement about his European trip in the House of Representatives on 11 February, 1975, the text of which is attached (Annex VI).

At a press conference in Jamaica during the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in early May, 1975 Mr. Whitlam expressed support for Britain's continued membership of the E.E.C.

(B) What Has Been Done By The Diplomatic Missions

At the beginning of 1974 a composite list of persons to whom information material could be sent was compiled. It includes politicians, civil servants, academics and press representatives. They have received the texts of important statements, e.g. those issued after meetings of the European Council (heads of State).

(C) Further Measures That Can Be Taken

(i) By the Diplomatic Missions

Influential Circles : The Communities' image in Australia at the political, administrative and media levels will remain unsatisfactory as long as the only occasion when the E.E.C. is talked or written about is when Australian agricultural producers encounter difficulties in selling to Europe. This situation will only be overcome if the Australian public gets a regular inflow of information about the Communities' achievements and gets acquainted with the process of political unity. In this respect the many positive aspects of the Communities, the progress in political co-operation between Member States and common foreign policy initiatives should be emphasized more strongly in the dealings of the appropriate European authorities with their Australian counterparts, such as visiting journalists and other visitors (like visitors from other major countries, which no doubt share with Australia some of the misunderstandings stated above about the E.E.C.). Particular attention should be drawn to regular consultations between E.E.C. and Australian officials, which were agreed upon during Sir Christopher Soames' visit to Canberra, in September, 1974. Such meetings may give an opportunity to balance the positive and negative aspects of the policies of both the E.E.C. and Australia and to give their true perspective to the relations between the two.

The Australian National University, Canberra, at least, should be given the status of European Documentation Centre. Other universities could also be included.

The diplomatic missions in Canberra have no control over media reports of day-to-day happenings in the Communities and little influence over the way the E.E.C. matters are presented to the public in general terms. Apart from what they can achieve through the personal contacts of their officers with media representatives in Australia, the way they can best help is to keep the Directorate-General of Information advised regularly about persons who should receive information material.

Schools, Libraries Etc.: All the missions are anxious to distribute basic information material to schools etc. in a co-ordinated way. They request that a supply of basic brochures in English be made available for their perusal so that they can decide which is the most suitable for Australia. The Information Offices in London, Dublin and Washington may have this material.

Important visitors to Brussels : The diplomatic missions keep one another informed about Australian journalists visiting E.E.C. countries who could be encouraged to visit the Commission or other E.E.C. countries. They have agreed to co-operate also in sharing information about other visitors, e.g. university professors who are interested in visiting the Commission.

(ii) By or Through the Directorate-General of Information of the Commission

Influential Circles : The diplomatic missions feel that the establishment of an E.E.C. Information Office in Australia should be considered, but that timing is important. In the meantime information material should be made available direct from Brussels (or from London, Dublin or Washington if preferred) to people in influential circles, e.g. government and administration, parliamentarians, trade unions, universities, farming organisations. This should include basic information about the Communities as well as a periodical such as "European Community". Other publications, e.g. "European Report", "Industry and Society" and "Information (Economy and Finance)" could be sent to selected people on the list. "Priority" subjects as far as Australia is concerned include

- trade questions and GATT negotiations,
- the common agricultural policy and the need for it,
- energy,
- social policy and environment policy
- the Community institutions,
- progress towards political unity, including direct elections to European Parliament.

The total number of people to get this material would be about 200. The list will be supplied by the diplomatic missions when the Directorate-General of Information indicates that this procedure is acceptable and sends specimens of the publications which would be used.

Schools, Libraries Etc. : Basic information material in English about the establishment and enlargement of the Community and the working of the institutions is required for wide distribution through schools, libraries etc. The "Uniting Europe" booklet is considered to be too Britain-oriented. Up to 20,000 copies per year for the eight missions might be required.

The missions would appreciate it if specimens of the brochures or booklets that could be used could be sent to them so that they can decide which to use. The brochures or booklets would be sent unsolicited to persons looking for information about the individual E.E.C. countries. They would be accompanied by a short information note about relations between the E.E.C. and Australia which would be prepared by the diplomatic missions in Canberra.

Films : The National Library of Australia, Canberra has a large film collection which is available to agencies of the Australian government, universities and other tertiary educational institutions, industry and organisations in the two Territories. Films from the collection are available to borrowers in the States through the six State Film Centres. (a) The National Library has, at present five films on the E.E.C. which are out-of-date. (b) Perhaps the Directorate-General of Information would indicate which more recent films are available. It would be preferable that more than one copy be made available so that one or more State Libraries could get a copy in addition to the National Library.

Contact with News Agencies and Journalists in the E.E.C. : The Directorate-General of Information is in a better position than the diplomatic missions to judge whether it is possible to influence the way in which press agencies and individual journalists report about the E.E.C. The AAP/Reuter agency in London is used by most Australian Newspapers. There is a noticeable lack of analytical or "in depth" stories about the workings of the E.E.C., the problems that are being overcome, the objectives that have been set etc. Particular attention might be given to arranging suitable and regular visits for Australian correspondents based in London to familiarise them with the workings of the Communities and their achievements.

(a) Annex VI (b) Annex VII

# EEC in a battle for survival

A N N E X I

From our WORLD CABLE SERVICE

**ECONOMIC** crisis swept down upon the European Economic Community in 1974 and caught it unprepared.

At year's end, the economic furies of inflation, oil and unemployment were joined by political problems like strikes and the threat of communist gains.

The EEC, formed 16 years ago to give Europeans joint economic power, proved to be no shelter from the storm and, for the most part, was ignored by its nine member nations.

Transatlantic quarrels were patched up as Europeans sought U.S. help and cooperation.

The oil crisis bit deeply into European reserves. Europe, almost totally dependent on Arab Oil, ran up a \$U.S. 40 billion deficit in 1974 because of higher oil prices.

France became the first nation — but probably not the last — to limit oil imports.

The crisis worsened an already gloomy situation. Inflation reached 25 per cent in Italy and Britain and hit double figures in all other EEC nations except West Germany.

But governments appeared even more worried about unemployment, which EEC experts predicted would leave 4.1 million persons jobless in the nine nations this winter.

Strikes swept France and bombings frightened Britain. Italians joked that kidnapping was their only growth industry. The fear of hijackings kept airports under siege — even tanks appeared at London's Heathrow airport. And a demented man tried to kidnap Princess Anne.

Communism benefited from unrest. Fears that communist parties may take power in Italy, France and other southern European nations were greater in Washington than in Europe itself.

But a socialist-communist front won 49 per cent of the vote in a French presidential election and Italians talked about a "historic compromise" to bring their powerful Communist Party into a coalition cabinet.

Arrayed against these threats were unstable and generally inexperienced governments.

The year 1974 saw the arrival of new governments across the Continent. Only three of the nine EEC nations — Ireland, Holland and Denmark — began and ended the year with the same leaders. In the EEC's "big three" — West Germany, France and Britain — the baton was passed.

West German Chancellor, Mr Brandt resigned after a communist spy was found among his top aides. Helmut Schmidt, a tough and sardonic politician with a strong belief in the Atlantic alliance, took

French President, Mr Pompidou, acolyte of Gen Charles de Gaulle, died a lingering death. Mr Giscard d'Estaing narrowly beat a socialist-communist candidate to become the new president. A gaullist candidate was badly beaten and gaullism appeared to be finished as France's guiding philosophy.

Britain, choked by a coal strike, went on a three-day work week. Resentful voters turned out Prime Minister, Mr Heath in February and brought back the Labor Party's Mr Harold Wilson.

For eight months the leader of a minority government, Mr Wilson won a three-seat parliamentary majority in another election in October — enough to make him the head of the only single-party majority government in the EEC.

Interestingly, all three leaders — Schmidt, Giscard and Wilson — made their early reputations as economics and finance experts.

France, after heavy politicking, won the right to host a European summit meeting in December. The meeting decided little beyond formalising the growing belief that unemployment is more dangerous than inflation.

As the leaders met, members of the European movement, which favors more unity, demonstrated across the street, their protest symbolising the distance Europe still must travel to reach union.

Mr Schmidt, Brandt's successor, led proposals for reform, especially in farming. Germany has been Europe's strongest nation economically for years but, traumatised by war memories, has never used that power to gain political supremacy.

German officials said Mr Schmidt is less shy than his predecessors of taking this leadership. He may, in fact, have it thrust upon him if Germany becomes the only major European nation to

Arab oil money is expected to go increasingly to the U.S. and hence must be recycled through American hands to get back to Europe.

As Europe approached new economic disaster, Washington might be gaining a voice in European affairs perhaps unmatched since Marshall Plan days.

It was a drastic change in transatlantic relations from a year ago, when the alliance was just recovering from hard feelings caused by the Middle East war.

In that war, the Europeans — except for Portugal — refused landing rights to U.S. planes ferrying supplies to Israel and President Nixon responded with a threat to pull U.S. soldiers out of Europe.

The allies quickly papered over the dispute with a "declaration on Atlantic relations." Meant to revive the alliance, it amounted to little more than platitudes.

Mr Nixon, barely one month before his resignation, came to Brussels to sign it, but that visit and the declaration had much less impact than the new sense of common purpose which the oil crisis brought.

## 'Dreams of progress toward economic, monetary union died

The EEC staggered from one defeat to another. Agreements by prime ministers of the nine nations to frame a European energy policy fell apart only three weeks later.

Dreams of progress toward economic and monetary union died when France cut its franc loose from an EEC monetary alignment and let it float.

Buffeted by economic problems, the EEC abandoned new projects and tried to protect what it already had — a customs union and a single farm policy.

But balance of payments problems forced Italy at one point to block imports from its allies and currency fluctuations destroyed any pretence of EEC farm prices.

Mr Wilson's Labor Party has a strong anti-EEC wing and he demanded that the other eight members of the EEC give Britain better terms than those under which the Heath Government entered the bloc in 1973. Otherwise Britain might quit he warned. At year's end, the issue was undecided.

Britain's defection could rip the EEC apart. But Mr Brandt, in his most important post-resignation speech, implied Britain and Italy were liabilities anyway and suggested the others seek new unity without them.

escape a depression.

Mr Schmidt and Mr Giscard are friends from the days when both were finance ministers. Chatting frequently by telephone in English, they revived the old German-French alliance that flourished under de Gaulle and Mr Adenauer.

But by the end of the year, Mr Giscard was under attack in France for indecisive leadership and inspired articles in the German press reported that Mr Schmidt was disillusioned with his old friend.

Perhaps the key event of 1974 — both for Europe and for European-American relations — was the Washington energy conference in February, called by Secretary of State, Mr Kissinger, to work out a common response to the oil crisis by the industrial nations. The EEC arrived with a mandate — dictated by France — that permitted only the narrower kind of cooperation.

In Washington, the European front splintered. Eight EEC nations joined America in calling for wide-ranging cooperation but the then French Foreign Minister, Mr Jobert pulled France out of the deal.

Mr Kissinger also proposed a \$U.S.25 billion arrangement to help nations with severe payments problems caused by the oil crisis. The U.S. promised to put up a third, but most observers predicted its actual role will be much larger.



ANNEX VI

State Film Centres

The Secretary,  
N.S.W. Film Council,  
1 Francis Street,  
EAST SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2000

The Secretary,  
State Film Centre,  
1 Macarthur Street,  
EAST MELBOURNE, VIC. 3002

The Film Centre,  
Nantham Avenue,  
ASHGROVE, QLD. 4000

South Australian Film Corporation,  
164 O'Connell Street,  
NORTH ADELAIDE, S.A. 5006

State Film Library,  
91 Murray Street,  
HOBART, TAS. 7000

State Film Centre,  
296 Vincent Street,  
LEEDERVILLE, W.A. 6007

ANNEX VII

Films now in National Library, Canberra

1. "History 1917 - 1967: 'The New Europe'"  
25 minutes black and white B.B.C. 1969
2. "History 1917 - 1967: Britain and Europe"  
22 minutes black and white B.B.C. 1969
3. "Partners or Satellites"  
(Contrasting E.E.C. and COMECON)  
35 minutes N.D.R. 1961
4. "Commonwealth Crisis"  
(Australia's, New Zealand's and Canada's views on  
British entry to Common Market)  
64 minutes P.B.C.,  
Unites States 1962
5. "Mr. Europe and the Common Market"  
National Film Board of Canada  
52 minutes CBS 1962