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# *European Community*

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"The European market  
is one in which  
Britain must succeed  
if she is to survive  
as a major industrial  
and trading nation."



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## The Community in November

November 3-7	European Parliament (Budget) Luxembourg
November 10-11	Agriculture Council
November 17	Energy Council
November 17-18	Fisheries Council
November 17-21	European Parliament Strasbourg
November 18	Development Council
November 24	Eco-Finance Council
November 24	Budget Council
November 24-25	Foreign Affairs Council
November 27	Social Affairs Council

## UK exports to EEC countries rise faster than imports

The tangible, dynamic effects of British membership of the Common Market have been working through into Britain's trade figures. Increasing numbers of Britain's jobs are now created and sustained by intra-Community trade.

Well over 40 per cent of the United Kingdom's trade is with the eight other member countries of the European Community. In the first six months of this year, 43 per cent of UK visible exports went to EEC countries and 41 per cent of UK imports were bought from the Eight. West Germany is now Britain's biggest export market and all the member states except Luxembourg are among the UK's 10 biggest markets. Since 1972, the trade gap with the eight other EEC countries has narrowed in real terms. Visible exports to EEC markets amounted to 94 per cent of imports in the first half of 1980, compared with 73 per cent in 1973 when Britain joined the EEC and 81 per cent in 1972 (see table).

These latest six-monthly figures continue a trend which has been apparent for some years. The final figures for 1979, given in the latest Pink Book (United Kingdom Balance of Payments, 1980 edition) show how much Britain's trade with the other member countries of the Community has increased as a proportion

of its total trade since 1972, the year before British EEC entry.

The background to these figures has been a world recession approaching that of the 1930s. The remedy then was sought in nationalist protectionism leading to beggar-my-neighbour policies in Europe and elsewhere that contributed to a disastrous European and eventually world war. There are not lacking those, even within British business itself, who seek a similar remedy today. This despite the fact that the option of imperial preference, the foundation of British protectionism in the thirties, has long since been closed. The Commonwealth now takes only about 14 per cent of total UK exports.

### Stable and expanding market

It is clear that membership of the Community does not provide any automatic increase in sales for British companies; such an increase has to be worked for. Less competitive sectors certainly find it increasingly difficult to maintain their market share in the face of imports from other countries, the motor vehicle industry being the most dramatic example.

Nonetheless, the Common Market

#### UK visible trade 1972 and 1979 (£ million)

	total UK trade		UK trade with Eight		EEC as % of total	
	1972	1979	1972	1979	1972	1979
Imports	10,184	44,093	3,427	19,793	34%	45%
Exports	9,423	40,689	2,780	17,039	30%	42%
Exports as % of imports	93%	92%	81%	86%		

offers a stable and expanding outlet for British exporters, which is not fully exploited. To quote the magazine *British Business*, produced by the UK Departments of Industry and Trade: 'Seven out of 10 of our biggest export markets are in the European Community but many British firms are still not taking full advantage of membership. Information is surprisingly easy to track down although relatively few firms make use of it'.

As a sales region for British exporters, the EEC has proved a much less volatile market than many others, as the trade analysis indicates. It is also less likely than other markets to succumb to protective measures against imports, although much remains to be done to remove non-tariff barriers within the Community and to prevent the erection of new barriers.

The record of the years since Britain joined the Community in 1973 shows that after initial hesitation UK exports to the Eight have consistently expanded faster than imports. Before British entry, the trade balance was deteriorating; in 1972, the year before entry, exports were sufficient to cover only 81 per cent of imports. In 1973, '74 and '75 things became worse still, as the export/import ratio slumped to a low point of 70. Since then the picture has been steadily improving.

For 1979 the export/import ratio was 86. In the first six months of 1980, visible exports to the Eight covered 94 per cent of imports. Although the trade deficit has sometimes widened in money terms, it has been narrowing markedly in real terms. Furthermore, the trade balance has been improving faster with the Eight than with the rest of the world.

## Special factors

Special factors, such as the switch to European suppliers for basic foodstuffs, influenced the figures in the early days of British membership; only now are British food and agricultural exports beginning to make substantial inroads into continental markets. These exports now equal about half the food imports into the UK from other EEC countries, compared with less

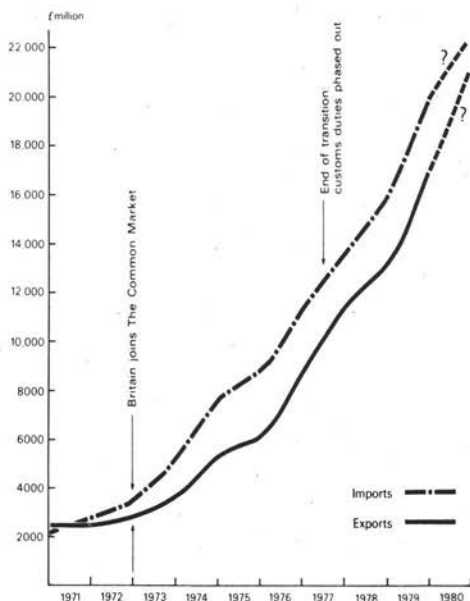
than 20 per cent before entry.

The increase in UK oil exports is speeding the improvement in the balance of payments with Britain's EEC partners and represents a transfer of wealth to Britain, but even excluding oil, the Eight have provided 39 per cent of the total market for British exporters. In 1979 British manufactured goods sold in the Eight were 82 per cent of imports; if motor vehicles are excluded the figure rises to 91 per cent. The dramatic improvement in the export/import ratio in the first half of 1980 also owes much to the cutback in UK consumer spending during the current recession.

The EEC is now by far the most important market for British industry. Entry to the market is guaranteed in a way that entry to other markets — Japan, the United States, Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth, the Middle East, East Asia — cannot be.

The European market is one in which Britain must succeed if she is to survive as a major industrial and trading nation. If Britain cannot compete in the EEC, she cannot compete anywhere else.

UK TRADE WITH THE EIGHT 1970 - 1980





## Britain's first European School now has 400 pupils

A valuable by-product of joining the EEC has been the launching and rapid growth of Britain's first European school. When it opened in September 1978 it had a mere 51 pupils; today it has 400, from all nine EEC countries. It stands on an island of soil at Culham in the Oxfordshire countryside that is controlled not by Britain but Brussels. The school has attracted little notice so far, yet it could well have considerable influence on the future development of the UK educational system.

One of the school's assets is its headmaster, Derrick Hurd, who as a believer in the European ideal helps others to grow likewise. His previous job was headmaster of a comprehensive school with 1,500 students. Now, after 30 years' teaching, he is glad to be running a school less than a third the size, because it has so much to offer.

The hopes he expressed at the start of this great venture (European Community March, 1979) are on the way to being fulfilled. He quotes with approval the words of Shirley Williams, that 'curriculum should reflect a sympathetic understanding of the different cultures and races which now make up our society.'

Now Mr Hurd can put this idea into practice. As an employee of the nine European countries, he is, as he says, 'only one-ninth answerable to Britain.'

There is no morning assembly with prayers or hymn singing. Religious instruction is given by visiting clergymen or priests to those who wish to receive it. Secularists, on the other hand, are given

non-religious ethics.

There are now 40 teachers — a high teacher-pupil ratio, anticipating the further rapid growth in numbers up to a probable maximum of 700. The curriculum, common to all European schools with only minor variations, is subject to occasional revision by working parties of teachers and inspectors.

More science is being taught as a result of this revision. Otherwise, the main characteristic of European schools is the fact that everything in the syllabus is seen with European rather than nationalist eyes. This applies particularly to literature, history — where the emphasis is more than usual on social history and the development of living conditions in the past two centuries — and geography, which includes the study of the Community's geographical characteristics as an entity.

### Strong on languages

Most of the teachers have already gained experience at European schools on the continent. A child of an EEC employee who moves from the continent to Britain can transfer from another European school to this one with the minimum of disturbance to his or her education, even in the middle of a school term.

Language-learning is of course crucial, and the whole environment is conducive to the learning of other languages. A second ('working') language — English, French or German — is that in which certain subjects are taught from the third year of secondary school (about age 13) onwards.

A useful addition to the curriculum is philosophy, which is compulsory in the last two years of secondary school, as it already is in some Community countries. There are no boarders and the school is co-educational.

Transport and catering are arranged by the parents' association. Midday meals cost 60p and are self-financing apart from the hidden subsidy in the provision of a cheerful dining room and the assistance of teachers.

The location of the school, in the village of Culham, between Oxford and Didcot, was chosen because the European JET project, an experimental nuclear energy plant, is just a mile away, and a redundant teachers' training college, dating from 1852, proved ideal for conversion. New extension buildings are ready and waiting for the school's further expansion.

Children of parents employed by the EEC either at JET, the European Medium Range Weather Forecast Office at Reading or the Commission's London Office qualify for education at the school

without charge. Furthermore, the headmaster has discretion to admit for a nominal fee of less than £100 a year the children of parents with suitable European associations. Clearly, the number of potential pupils are limited, but the number of children changing from one European school to another will accelerate as the European population becomes more mobile.

Classrooms at Culham, equipped with modern aids, are named after famous people down the ages, ranging from Plato to the modern architects of the common market. The current controversy about changes in the examination system in Britain are irrelevant here: the syllabus is simply aimed at taking the European Baccalauréat at 18.

It is the nature of European schools to grow rapidly from small beginnings. The biggest has 2,600 pupils. Brussels, with its many EEC employees, has two European schools and may soon have a third.

*Jack Ellis*



*Children of Europe united – pupils from each of the nine member states at the Brussels European School.*



## Pockets of prosperity cannot survive in a starving world

**The report of the Brandt Commission — the Independent Commission on International Development issues, made up of distinguished world statesmen including former British Prime Minister Edward Heath — was widely acclaimed when it was published earlier this year. Its Chairman Willy Brandt, once the German Federal Chancellor, here sets out his priority targets.**

In recent months, we have become more conscious of the close interaction between East-West and North-South issues. We are realizing that what happens in far parts of the world also has a direct impact on Europe. Events in Iran and Afghanistan — and in the Middle East, South East Asia, Southern Africa and Central America — have dramatically proved that the balance of interests between North and South, between industrialized and developing countries, is just as important for the pursuit of peace as East-West détente.

The world is starting to recognize that peace is not only menaced by power rivalries and conflicts between extreme ideologies but that the future of mankind is threatened just as much by mass starvation, economic collapse and ecological disaster. It is a dangerous illusion to think that fenced-off pockets of prosperity and security can survive indefinitely in an age when one-fifth of the world's population, concentrated mainly in the Southern hemisphere, is suffering from starvation and malnutrition.

The great interest already shown in my

report, in the European Parliament, the national parliaments and the media shows that Europe is beginning to acknowledge its duty to act as a factor for peace and equilibrium on the world scene. But greater efforts are needed to give North-South issues greater prominence in the European Parliament, to foster public awareness through the media and, jointly with the representatives of the major social groupings — the unions, the Church, youth organizations — to make the Governments of the member states put forward proposals that may help to find a solution to this vital social issue of the late twentieth century.

### Priority targets

In the Independent Commission's report we have therefore tried to frame recommendations on the focal areas of North-South relations, taking as our main theme common interests and international solidarity. Four targets are considered to be priorities for the five years ahead:

□ Through a *massive infusion of resources*, both the poorest countries in Africa and Asia and the middle income countries should be given the chance to develop their own economic momentum or pursue their economic growth, as the case may be. It will therefore be necessary for those industrialized countries that have made the commitment and are able to meet it to allocate 0.7 per cent of their Gross National Product to official development assistance by 1985. If the industrialized Eastern-bloc countries and

*Continued on page 10*



## The tantalizing idea of a Channel tunnel seriously studied again

No project could more clearly show the unity of Europe than a fixed link between the old rivals, Britain and France. In 1802 Napoleon saw the military value of a fixed link and encouraged designs for a tunnel rising for ventilation on artificial islands — the Varne and Le Colbart banks — in mid-Channel. In 1974, 172 years later, a new Labour government in Britain cancelled an agreement with France to build a Channel tunnel as part of its public expenditure cuts.

Today, the prospect of a Channel link has been revived and encouraged by the European Commission. New studies have been completed and a fixed link is again a possibility.

The renewal of enthusiasm can be traced back to an encouraging remark made by the German transport minister, Herr Gschiedle, when on a visit to London in 1978. And in September of that year, the British Minister of Transport, Mr William Rodgers, met his French counterpart, M. Joel le Theule in Paris and reopened discussions on a 'fixed link', a term which covers both the bridge and tunnel options.

A few days later, British Rail announced that it was seeking funds for a full-scale feasibility study for a single track bored rail tunnel, to be worked jointly with SNCF. The same day, the 'Channel Tunnel Island Project' group, engineers and academics led by Sir David Nicolson (now Central London's MEP), revealed that they had already written to the government with plans for a larger road and rail scheme, rising up on the

same artificial islands which Napoleon had considered.

Soon afterwards, the Greater London Council sponsored a seminar on the Channel link, itself supporting a bridge scheme with motorways terminating in London's redundant docklands — where a local MP also suggested that the European Parliament should be permanently sited. The bridge scheme supported by the GLC would have cost £4,500m, against the less expensive Channel Tunnel Island project and the minimum cost BR/SNCF rail tunnel at about £500m. The Channel link debate was on again, in earnest.

British Rail and SNCF announced on 9 February 1979 that their engineers had completed their preliminary technical studies. They concluded that a single rail tunnel could be in operation by 1990, with a capacity of eight million passengers per year and eight million tonnes of freight. The only ancillary costs — such as the high speed line between Dover and London, which had stopped the 1974 tunnel — would be £100m for new rolling stock.

There was speculation that the European Community might sponsor — or even finance — the Channel link. However, despite the ministerial meetings and the BR/SNCF discussion on a technical level, there had been no major response from France to the renewed debate in Britain.

### Commission steps in

The European Commission then stepped in by appointing two firms of consultants to prepare a study into a fixed link. One



firm was the Paris-based SETEC Economie and the other Coopers and Lybrand of London.

The direct elections to the European Parliament in June 1979 were expected to give a political dimension to the Channel link debate. Indeed, members of the European Democratic group had been expressing their support for a tunnel during their election campaigns.

In October 1979, Sir Alec Cairncross — an expert in Channel link studies — was appointed by the British Minister of Transport as his special adviser. Simultaneously, the European Commission's transport infrastructure plan — to include a fixed Channel link — was published. However, Roy Jenkins, President of the Commission, was unable to give formal backing to the BR/SNCF scheme when he was visited in October by officials from both organisations. He said that the decision to go ahead must be taken by the French and British governments.

To reinforce the point, Transport Commissioner Richard Burke told the European Parliament's October session that the Commission was awaiting an initiative from a national government before taking further action on a Channel link.

Throughout the winter of 1979/1980, intensive work was undertaken by all those interested in a Channel bridge or

tunnel. It became clearer that the chances of a bridge were fading fast. But neither the British or French governments made any comment.

In March 1980, Commissioner Burke published the results of the Coopers and Lybrand/SETEC Economie study. At a Press conference in London he made a strong appeal to national governments:

'The time has come to make up our minds. The time is historically attuned to this great enterprise. Let us decide to do it or stop messing about! I hope that Ministers will consider the results of this study, not only in relation to the light it throws on the need for a Channel link, but also the evidence it provides that Community action is justified'.

The study showed that there would be an overall benefit to the Community from the link because it would link Britain — a major trading partner with every member state — with continental Europe and represent a tangible sign of community.

## Britain to make next move

Following Mr Burke's enthusiastic statement, and the positive conclusions of the study, the simmering debate went on the boil. On 19 March this year, in the House of Commons, the Minister of Transport finally announced the British government's view: a Channel tunnel could be built, but no public money would



### A PLEDGED M.P.

M.P.'s BRIDE. "Oh! William dear— if you are—a Liberal—do bring in a Bill—next Session—for that Underground Tunnel!!"

This cartoon depicting the horror of the Channel crossing originally appeared in "Punch" in 1869.

go towards it. The government would look at some form of financial guarantee, he said, but it was up to the private sector to take the lead in finance.

The same day, a consortium of British, Dutch, French and German contractors — the European Channel Tunnel Group — made a bid for the work by publishing its 'Technical Report'. The Report was an extensive study of five tunnel options, arising out of the Channel Tunnel Island Project, on which the consortium had been formed. The consortium's favoured recommendation was for a minimum cost single-rail bored tunnel, similar to the BR/SNCF scheme but built at a lower cost and therefore yielding a higher return on investment.

At the beginning of April 1980, the House of Commons Select Committee on Transport announced that it would be

studying the various options for a fixed Channel link, before submitting a report to the government in the autumn.

The Select Committee took evidence from British Rail, the European Channel Tunnel Group, 'Link-into-Europe' (a proposal for a bridge with dual two-lane carriageways), the 'Eurobridge' scheme, (incorporating an artificial island on the Varne Bank) and also studied the twin-rail track scheme abandoned in 1974.

The committee's eventual recommendation is likely to carry weight with the British government, and it is reasonable to expect the British to make the first move this time. The French government has made no official comment throughout the recent debate, but is unlikely to have changed its mind on the desirability of the project.

*Edward McMillan Scott*

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better-off developing countries also contributed their share to this transfer of resources, this drive could be even more effective.

□ *Energy* is the second priority sector, with particular emphasis on oil. Regular oil supplies with foreseeable price trends must be suitably combined with the promotion of energy saving measures and the simultaneous development of alternative sources — carried out in such a way that the oil-exporting countries can participate fully in research and development.

□ Thirdly, *food production* in all countries which in recent years has become dependent on imports must be significantly stepped up. All misery that cannot be remedied speedily by programmes to promote agricultural production must be alleviated by increased food aid (and the signing within the near future of an international grains arrangement).

□ Finally, serious steps must be taken to reform international *economic and financial* relations, to be accompanied by national measures on the part of the developing countries. A critical

assessment should also be made of existing international organizations.

Giant conferences are scarcely a suitable means of attaining the targets I have outlined. Experience has shown that often they only produce intransigent blocs leaving no leeway for negotiation. It is far preferable to do as our Commission suggests and arrange selective top level meetings on a regional basis or according to the subject matter of the negotiations. The composition of these meetings should be such that the leading politicians taking part did not just express the positions of their own countries.

A first meeting along these lines will probably be held at the beginning of next year at Mexico's instigation. This could be a good start towards reactivating the deadlocked North-South dialogue. At the present time, many developing countries are indeed searching for lasting and reliable partners that do not make the demands that the great powers do and are not motivated by strategic calculations. Europe should be the very one to stretch out its hand to them and to work towards an equilibrium on which, for us in Europe, peace for the future and security of employment equally depend.



# Tanker Safety

## The Community acts to prevent another Amoco Cadiz

The final cost of the Amoco Cadiz disaster on 16 March 1978 will perhaps never be worked out, but the clean-up operation is estimated at £46m, the cargo of 230,000 tonnes of oil was worth £8m, and compensation claims totalling £670m have been lodged. A small army of 8,000 people were involved in cleaning up 245 miles of blackened coastline for over three months afterwards. The Amoco Cadiz disaster is a landmark in a long history of similar disasters in which names such as the Torrey Canyon, Eleni V, Christos Bilas, Andras Patria, Betelgeuse, Argo Merchant, are enshrined. After the Amoco Cadiz, those who care for the sea and look to it for their livelihood swore that it would never happen again but then in March this year, almost exactly two years later, the Tanio polluted almost the same stretch of the beautiful Brittany coastline. It has been estimated by the National Academy of Science in Washington, that 6m tonnes of oil gets into the sea each year.

Solving a problem of this magnitude requires international cooperation of the highest order and quite rightly the European Community feels itself called upon to take a leading role. It has adopted a two-pronged approach; one preventative and the other curative. Both are essential to deal with a situation which has sprung up so quickly. As fast as Europe's enormous appetite for oil has grown, so has the need to transport ever bigger quantities of oil in ever huger ships. The Amoco Cadiz itself, with a cargo carrying capacity of 234,000 tonnes is

dwarfed beside the latest ultra large crude carriers which sometimes have capacities of 500,000 tonnes. They are so large that the crew use bicycles to move around the decks. The trouble starts when the tankers converge on their way to Europe's major ports, on the West coast of France, and then lumber round the dangerous rocks off Ushant and go up, what is for ships of this size, the narrow bottleneck of the Channel. On the way up, they stick to the right-hand side and then return with empty tanks on the left-hand side.

### Action Programme

The European Commission in examining the problem has looked at three questions: how to ensure that the tankers are fitted out to the highest safety standards and that the crew are properly qualified, how to ensure that the movements of all the ships are properly monitored, and how to make sure that everything that is needed to combat a disaster is ready and available.

Although the Community will have 30 per cent of the world's shipping under its jurisdiction when Greece joins in 1981, it must not be forgotten that the Community must work in harness with other international bodies. Among the most important of which is the United Nation's organisation, the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organisation (IMCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). IMCO draws up and adopts conventions setting standards to be met by shipping and it and the other organisations have

produced important internationally agreed conventions and agreements.

Some of the EEC member states have been slow to ratify these conventions, which, if they had been in force and enforced, would have prevented anything like the Amoco Cadiz disaster from happening, but the EEC's Council of Ministers reacted swiftly to the disaster. Already three weeks after it happened, the Council resolved that the prevention and combatting of marine pollution should be a major Community objective, and a few months later in June the Council gave the go ahead to a Community action programme. France and Britain, the countries most hard hit by tanker accidents, have been the driving force behind a united Community programme, while the other member states have been more reluctant to give the Commission powers which had previously rested in the hands of other authorities. As a result of the research carried out under the Community action programme, the Commission has now put forward two proposals to the Council. One is a draft directive dealing with tanker safety and the other is a communication which presents an emergency planning scheme.

## **Bitter lessons**

Bitter lessons were learned from the failure of the French POLMAR plan when the Amoco Cadiz went aground. First of all the accident was not foreseen because of an inadequate surveillance system — nobody at the time thought it was their responsibility to notice or question the tanker's dangerous position — and so the Commission is now proposing that all relevant and existing data on tankers and their movements be put on a computer. The second lesson learnt was that the means to cope with the oil spill were as inadequate as the organisation so that swift and effective action at the important early stages of a disaster when perhaps most of the oil is still in the ship was not taken. The Commission has looked at measures to enhance the cooperation and effectiveness of the emergency teams in the member states, the development of designs of

clean-up vessels and all the other equipment needed to treat the oil effectively. The Commission's communication proposes setting up an EEC Information Service. A computer would be fed with a permanent inventory of all staff, equipment, and products needed to combat oil pollution, plus a compendium of national and regional emergency plans. This means that when disaster strikes again, it will be possible to launch a military like operation, with every known and necessary weapon ready to be brought to the scene from every part of Europe. Not all oil requires the same weapons, and the Commission proposes creating a manual with all the latest data on the chemical properties of every grade. This would be particularly useful when dispersants are used, as, if wrongly applied, they can themselves be highly toxic. The Commission intends to present the Council a directive dealing with the methodology to be followed by the member states when they draw up contingency plans for dealing with a major oil spill. Another useful tool that the Commission proposes is an oil tanker file containing everything relevant about the design of the tanker, its owner's identity, its history and its past infringements of international conventions. It is proposed that the whole information system be linked up with the EURONET system and it is calculated that the whole scheme would cost about £10,000 in 1981 and that it would also include money for training schemes, pilot experiments and the opening of equipment testing centres.

Who would be in charge of this plan? The Commission has already set up an Advisory Committee which includes experts from all over the Community — to advise the Commission and act as a forum, where information and experience can be pooled.

## **Latter-day pirates**

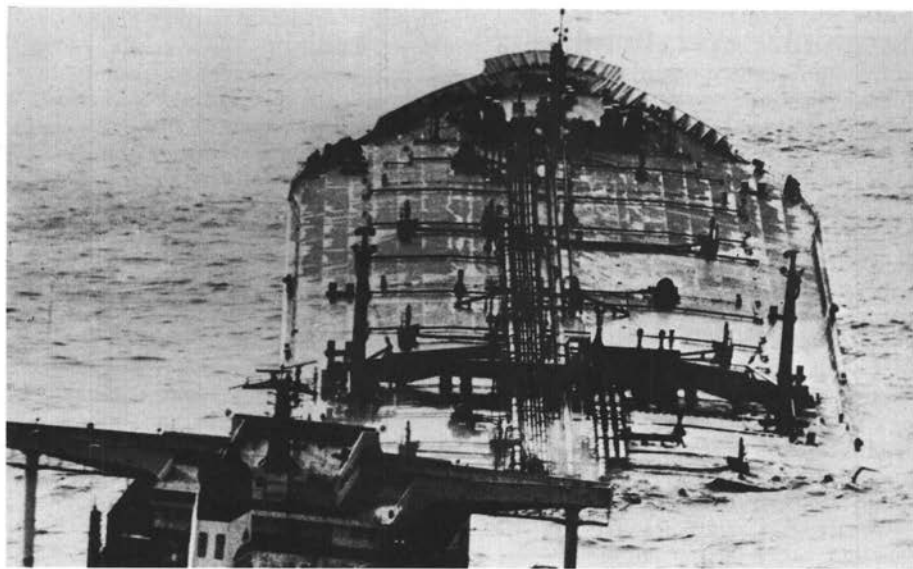
As for the tankers themselves, the Commission proposes that they should be dealt with in a draft directive — the second prong of the action programme — that deals with the enforcement of the

international conventions for ships using the Community's ports. Much of the anger after the Amoco Cadiz accident was directed against the owners. The multinational oil companies were viewed as laterday pirates flying flags of convenience, who flaunted all attempts at supervision and control in the pursuit of their vast profits. In reality it is not the oil companies' ships which are chiefly to blame but rather the independent shipping companies who continue to use outdated vessels. The trouble with the international conventions and organisations such as the IMCO is that they have no powers to enforce anything; that is left to the contracting parties, and many of the member states still have not ratified them. It is the flag states which should bear the responsibility for the ships which sail under their flags and not unnaturally many show little interest in checking on standards. The Commission's directive proposes that member states be compelled to enforce safety standards on all the ships which call at the Community's ports. The draft directive partly follows on from the North Sea Agreement signed in the Hague in 1978 by six member states (Belgium,

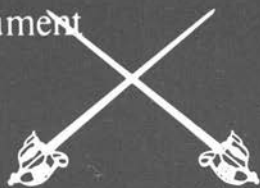
Denmark, Germany, France, Netherlands and the UK) together with Norway and Sweden, who, it is hoped, would also be prepared to agree to the provisions of the directive. It is essential that all agree to the conditions at the same time so that no one attracts the custom which is frightened off by the stiff port control of the others. If the Council of Transport Ministers agrees to adopt the directive, then port authorities will be empowered, in fact obliged, to inspect ships, their certificates, and crew's qualifications and will then be able to fine or even imprison anyone infringing the conventions and prevent ships from leaving until any necessary repairs have been made. What is more, the directive proposes setting up a shipping information system that would use a computer which member states' authorities would be able to consult about any ship due to arrive at their port.

Information is the key to the prevention of major disasters like the Amoco Cadiz. The speed of action taken depends on the quality of information available. The Commission's role is to provide that information.

*Jasper Becker*



*The world's worst oil spill – supertanker Amoco Cadiz aground off the French coast, March 1978.*



## Questions about the European Community

**According to a survey organized by the European Commission at the end of 1979, 58 per cent of the Community thought that the EEC was a good thing, 12 per cent thought the opposite and 30 per cent didn't know. The proportion of dissatisfied people was 41 per cent in the United Kingdom, 27 per cent in Denmark, but only 12 per cent in Ireland, six per cent in France and two per cent to three per cent in other countries. Here and in future issues of *European Community* we try to reply to some of the criticisms frequently made about the European Community.**

### **The Community wants to harmonize everything?**

EEC countries put into practice European directives harmonizing national legislation on items as varied as car seat-belts, horn and engine noise levels, the use of colourants in foodstuffs, the wording of labels on pre-packed foods, the conditions required for a product to rightfully bear the label 'honey' or 'fruit juice'. Why is this necessary? Because the harmonization of legislation enables non-customs barriers to trade to be eliminated between the Nine. This opens up trade between the nine Member States and, in turn, creates greater competition between manufacturers. The result of this competition leads to a wider choice of goods for the customer and helps keep down prices. Does this mean that the Community obliges us to consume everywhere between Edinburgh and Palermo the same types of beer, bread,

etc. adapted to the taste of the average (and non-existent) consumer?

In the past, certain proposals from the European Commission were criticized in this way, but the drafts were withdrawn or modified. The Commission now only draws up proposals for harmonizing legislation if they eliminate technical barriers to trade and are in the economic interest of the sector concerned.

The elimination of technical barriers does not always require the harmonization of legislation. The principle of mutual recognition of national standards permits the Commission and the European Court of Justice to safeguard freedom of trade and ensure diversity of products while at the same time ensuring that health and safety standards are no less respected in one country than in another. Only when there is a risk to the user does the Commission propose to take national concerns for health and safety to the Community level.

Each of the Commission's proposals is the result of awareness of the importance of intra-Community trade and of the barriers to such trade; each is also the result of preparatory work undertaken in collaboration with industry, consumers and experts from national administrations. The methods ultimately employed depend on the size of the problems encountered.

In numerous cases, and particularly for industrial products, measuring instruments etc. 'optional' harmonization enables producers who conform to Community standards to gain access to

the whole of the European market, without preventing other models or products continuing to sell on the local markets, conforming to national rules or traditions only.

When environmental protection or user-safety demands it, Community standards replace national norms. Such total harmonization applies, for example, to the use of certain dangerous substances in cosmetics. In such a case, setting European limits or defining European characteristics help to increase consumer protection without hindering trade in such a wide range of products.

## **The Community is one enormous bureaucracy?**

There are around 16,000 European civil servants. The European Commission employs 11,350, of whom 2,770 are involved with scientific research. The remainder work either in the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors or the Economic and Social Committee. The number of civil servants employed in member countries is almost one thousand times greater! For every 100,000 Europeans there are 4,200 national civil servants but only six 'Eurocrats'.

The European Commission has a full-time staff of 1,200 interpreters and translators. Including the typists who assist them, this means that about one-third of the European civil servants are employed in linguistic work.

An expensive Tower of Babel? Maybe, but it is accepted that the Community addresses Europeans in their own languages. It is also to be expected that representatives from one Member State could not give priority to some other country's language. And even if they could, which language would be selected? If more than one were chosen, where would we stop? Within the Community's administration, everyday work is facilitated by the fact that European officials must know a second language. Many know several.

Are there still too many of these

European civil servants for the work they do?

The Community's agricultural policy is handled by fewer than 700 European civil servants. In Germany, to cite just one example, the Ministry of Agriculture has over 20,000 employees. The figures are similar, proportionally, for other countries.

Trade agreements with non-Community countries are now negotiated by the European Commission and not by individual Member States. More than 100 countries have established relations with the Community. The whole of the Community's external relations is handled by only 520 senior officials, 220 of whom are located abroad.

As for food aid to the third world, twenty-eight Commission officials manage programmes involving some £300m. At the United Nations, a programme of similar scope is managed by a staff of over 300.

## **The Community is not concerned about the third world?**

The Community is sometimes portrayed as a 'rich man's club' which ignores the problems of international development. This is not the case. The Nine constitutes the premier source of public aid to the third world (0.5 per cent of the gross national product, compared to 0.02 per cent for East bloc countries). The public aid is composed of financial as well as food aid of over a million tonnes of cereals annually.

But financial and food aid is not enough to assure the development of third world countries. Markets must be opened for them, markets as stable as possible, to assist their agricultural and industrial progress.

The Community has eliminated customs duties for almost all (95.5 per cent) exports from the sixty African, Caribbean and Pacific countries which signed the Lomé Convention. It has also done the same for the industrial and often agricultural exports from southern Mediterranean countries, without

demanding reciprocal measures for its own exports. On top of this, there is technical and financial aid of £750m per year.

Preferences — removal or reduction of duties — are accorded to all other developing countries (numbering over 150) for the export of certain quantities of the majority of their industrial and semi-finished and some 300 processed agricultural products, including jute and cocoa products which are vital for the economy of the Indian sub-continent. The maximum volume of this liberalized trade represents an annual value of some £6,000m

In addition, non-preferential agreements to help develop commercial and industrial cooperation with numerous developing countries in Asia (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand) and in Latin America (Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and soon Bolivia, Colombia, Equator, Peru and Venezuela). Financial and technical assistance — as yet a modest £70m per year — is accorded to these countries

The availability of stable resources in third world countries is a fundamental factor in their development. Thus the Lomé Convention has permitted the development of an original mechanism to stabilize export earnings: the 'Stabex' offers the ACP countries a kind of insurance against a drop in the price of the basic goods they export. In cases of poor harvest, the closure of a mine or a fall in world market rates — annual fluctuations of around 30 per cent occur frequently and sometimes are as much as 75 per cent — the Community compensates the lost earnings with advances which are only repayable by the better-off countries. In the case of sugar, guaranteed export prices and volumes have been agreed with the ACP countries and India. An additional step towards a new international economic order has been made by the Nine who, speaking as one body, have come out in favour of the creation of an International Fund which would help stabilize raw material market

rates and benefit the whole of the third world.

Community cooperation, developed initially with Africa, through the historical links of certain European countries — a heritage of the colonial era — is progressively being extended to the whole of the third world. The Community knows that aid is all the more acceptable when it is politically neutral; it refuses, therefore, to favour any particular model of economic or political development and it places itself outside the conflict which can divide third world countries.

But, it is said, does this cooperation not cost us too much in times of economic crisis? The answer must be 'no'. Development aid is not only a moral duty, it is also justifiable in terms of economic and political interest:

- in the third world, 20 per cent of the population suffers from hunger. The annual income per inhabitant is often below our weekly incomes, and maintaining such inequality threatens the stability of world peace
- economically, Europe and the third world are interdependent. We import 75% of the basic products which are indispensable for our industries, products which we purchase whilst selling the third world 36 per cent of our extra-Community exports. It has been calculated that a 50 per cent increase in the industrial growth of developing countries between 1972 and 2000, through our technical aid and capital, will raise their exports by around £16 billion, but it will also increase their imports by £20 billion. Which is to say that the development of the third world will open up new markets, whose attraction considerably exceeds the adjustment problems, sometimes difficult, which are created for one or other of our industries.