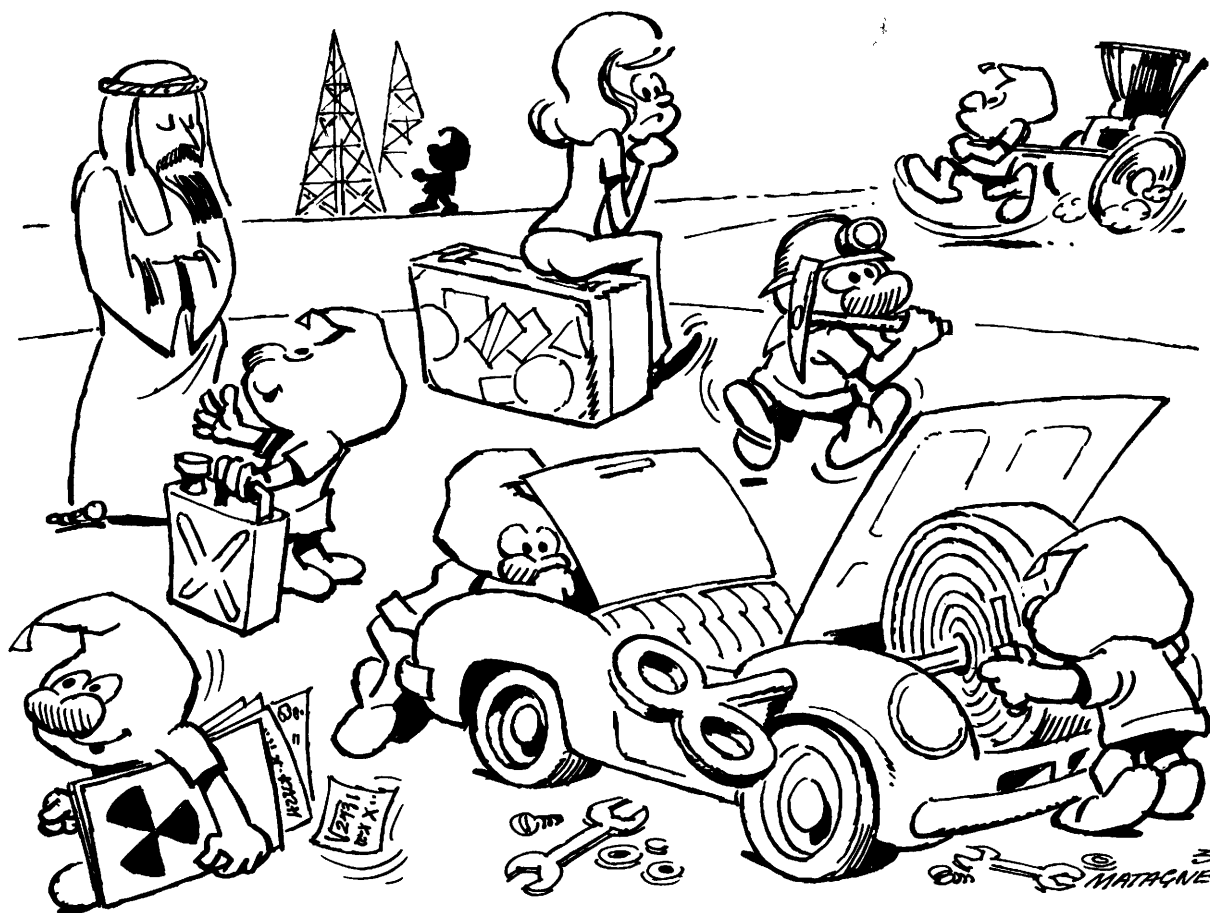


Brussels, 27 January 1976

No 4/76



### EURO-WHITE AND THE NINE DWARFS

Episode Three: A mysterious spell deprives the Nine Dwarfs of the magic potion they use in their cars, stoves and lamps.

X/52/76-E

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*The information published in this bulletin covers, very freely, different aspects of the European Communities' activity. It is, therefore, not limited to recording official Commission decisions or opinions.*

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\*\* ENERGY: SOLIDARITY, CONSERVATION AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The European Commission recently proposed a floor price of 7 dollars per barrel fob for oil imported into the Community.

ANNEX 1 explains how this price fits in with the Commission's three-point plan for energy: solidarity, conservation and self-sufficiency.

\*\* FARM PRICES: THE DEBATE BEGINS

The European Commission has proposed an increase of approximately 7.5% in the general level of farm prices for 1976/77.

ANNEX 2 explains how the Commission arrived at this figure.

\*\* EUROPE FIGHTS POLLUTION

Red mud off the Italian Coast, dubious scum on the waters of the Rhine, lowering smoke clouds above the Ruhr, lead and sulphur contaminating the air we breathe ... What is the Community doing about it?

Euroforum answers this question in ANNEX 3 which contains an extract from a booklet entitled "L'Europe contre la pollution" published by the Paris Information Office of the European Communities.

\*\* LEARNING MORE ABOUT LABOUR MARKETS

The European Commission is to finance a series of studies in an attempt to learn more about the labour market. The topics to be examined include:

- . Work-force retraining in the car industry
- . Structure of unemployment in Ireland
- . International comparison of unemployment rates
- . Critical documentation and reference system for national labour market surveys
- . Structure of unemployment and characteristics of the unemployed.

\*\* "CRIMINAL RECORDS" FOR TOXIC PRODUCTS

The European Commission is to finance a study on the organization and operation of an index of toxic products as part of a pilot project on the creation of a data bank on environmental chemicals. The task is being entrusted to a toxicologist who has already produced an initial study on the organization and collection of toxicological data.

\*\* THE PHARMACEUTICAL COMMITTEE AND ITS PRIORITIES

The Community's Pharmaceutical Committee set up in May 1975 has held its first meeting in Brussels. As is customary, the first item on the agenda was the adoption of the Committee's rules of procedure. Next came a discussion which enabled the Committee to identify areas calling for priority treatment. The Committee selected, in descending order of importance, the marketing of proprietary medicinal products; problems associated with advertising and medical information; and the effect which the pricing and reimbursement policies of national insurance institutions have on the free movement of medicines.

\*\* FUNDS FOR FORWARD-LOOKING FARMERS

In all 318 farm improvement schemes will receive financial assistance from the first instalment of the Community's European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) for 1975.

The breakdown was as follows:

|                | <u>Number of schemes</u> |      | <u>Aid (in national currency)</u> | <u>Aid (in u.a.)</u>    |
|----------------|--------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Germany        | 99                       | DM   | 96 609 816                        | 26 396 125              |
| Belgium        | 34                       | Bfrs | 311 305 202                       | 6 226 104               |
| Denmark        | 10                       | Dkr  | 38 892 853                        | 5 185 714               |
| France         | 34                       | FF   | 105 873 499                       | 19 061 915              |
| Ireland        | 14                       | £    | 2 757 581                         | 6 618 189               |
| Italy          | 63                       | Lit  | 17 548 624 440                    | 28 077 799              |
| Luxembourg     | 1                        | Lfrs | 753 500                           | 15 070                  |
| Netherlands    | 38                       | Fl   | 29 287 479                        | 8 090 464               |
| United Kingdom | 25                       | £    | 3 468 192                         | 8 323 654               |
|                | <u>318</u>               |      |                                   | <u>107 995 034 u.a.</u> |

(1 u.a. = approx. US \$1.2)

\*\* INVENTORY OF EUROPEAN ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH

A computerized inventory of sources of information on the environment is to be compiled by the European Commission. The inventory, which will be based on information supplied by the Member States, will list research projects planned or already in progress, thus helping to reveal gaps in scientific and technical knowledge, to guide research and to avoid duplication.

\*\* BEEFALO BULL?

A written question tabled by a Member of the European Parliament on the "beefalo", a cross between a cow and a North American buffalo, produced some interesting information from the European Commission.

It seems that livestock breeding policy will continue to be a purely national matter until such time as the European Commission's livestock breeding proposals are adopted by the Council of Ministers. The individual Member States are therefore free to authorize importation of stock from outside the Community, though they must see to it that any cattle imported comply with Community health regulations.

\*\* A COMPUTER FOR TRANSLATORS

The European Commission is experimenting with the machine translation of scientific texts. Two systems are being investigated with a view to their practical application. With the first system, a French one, texts must be drafted in controlled syntax but simultaneous translation into a number of languages is possible. With the second system, an American one, any text can be handled but for one pair of languages only.

\*\* A CONSUMER FOREWARNED IS A CONSUMER FOREARMED (contd)

The commercial radio station, London Broadcasting (LBC), devotes a considerable amount of time to consumer broadcasts. These include brief three- to four-minute consumer information flashes at half-hourly intervals during a magazine programme which goes on the air between 1.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, a Saturday morning shopping guide, and a 15-minute programme broadcast at 2.30 p.m. each day which allows consumers to 'phone in with queries on the day's topic. Consumer problems are often discussed with experts in a general phone-in programme broadcast from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. every day.

Details of consumer broadcasts in other Community countries were given in an article bearing the same title in "Industry and Society" No 41/75.

\*\* REDUCING SITE NOISE

The main sources of noise on building sites are tower cranes and current generators which is why the European Commission has presented a proposal to the Council of Ministers for a two-stage reduction in permissible sound emission levels. The levels proposed for the first stage (ending on 30 June 1980) reflect the best existing technology. Those proposed for the second stage are based on laboratory trials and hence call for considerable progress in this area.

If the European Commission's proposal is adopted, noise from building site equipment will have to be kept within the following limits:

|   | Permissible sound emission level<br>(Acoustic power in dBA/referred to 1pW) |                            |
|---|---|----------------------------|
|   | <u>up to 30 June 1980</u>   | <u>as from 1 July 1980</u> |
| Tower cranes                            | 108   | 103                        |
| Current generators<br>for welding:      |   |                            |
| 200 A or less                           | 107   | 102                        |
| more than 200 A                         | 103   | 98                         |
| Current generators<br>for power supply: |   |                            |
| 8 kW or less                            | 103   | 95                         |
| 8 kW to 60 kW                           | 103   | 98                         |
| 60 kW to 240 kW                         | 105   | 100                        |
| more than 240 kW                        | 107   | 102                        |

**\*\* THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE "SOCIAL PARTNERS"**

The European Commission is eager to keep in touch at their request with organizations representing the "social partners". To keep consultation within bounds however it endeavours to hold combined meetings on aspects of Community policy which are of interest to a number of them.

On this basis it maintains regular contact with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Employers' Liaison Committee (including the Union of Industries of the European Community (UNICE), the Committee of Commercial Organizations in the EEC countries (COCCEE), the Union of Master-Craftsmen of the EEC (UACEE), the European Insurance Committee (CEA), and the Banking Federation of the EEC), the Committee of Agricultural Organizations in the EEC (COPA) and the European Centre for Public Enterprise (CEEP).

**\*\* COMMUNITY BRIEFING**

Senior officials responsible for consumer affairs in the nine Community countries are to meet in Brussels on 24 February at the invitation of the European Commission. They will be briefed on the current status of the Community's consumer protection and information programme and given an opportunity of learning more about the latest developments in national consumer policy.

ENERGY: SOLIDARITY, CONSERVATION AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The European Commission recently proposed a floor price of 7 dollars per barrel for imported oil as a follow-up to the action requested by the Heads of State and Government at their meeting in Rome on 1 and 2 December 1975.

The aims of the energy policy devised by the European Commission - now ready for discussion by the Community's Council of Ministers - are three-fold: solidarity, conservation and self-sufficiency.

Solidarity

The "I'm-alright-Jack" approach adopted by a number of Community countries during the 1973-74 oil crisis is hard to forget. To make Community solidarity a force to be reckoned with in a further crisis, the European Commission proposed in 1974 that the Community should fix itself a target reduction in oil consumption and monitor intra-Community trade in crude oil and petroleum products.

Conservation

The rational utilization of energy is a relatively recent concept. It took an oil crisis to cure wasteful habits and make conservation a political option.

The European Commission was notified of economy measures adopted by the different Community countries and has used these to frame a series of recommendations which should meet with general approval.

The first and most important deals with the adoption of reference standards for the thermal insulation of buildings. These would be implemented by stages and by category of building, beginning with offices and public buildings.

For existing buildings the European Commission recommends the installation of automatic heat programming and control systems, a temperature of 20°C being considered adequate for offices and public buildings. Each office or room would be equipped with an independent thermostat which would ensure that the recommended maximum was never exceeded.

For dwellings a distinction is made between houses - detached, semi-detached or otherwise - and apartment blocks with communal central heating systems. For houses the European Commission advocates the installation of controls regulated in relation to outside or inside temperature. For apartments heating would be regulated in relation to outside temperature, each apartment having its own heat meter or distributor.

Regular inspection and maintenance of heating facilities is also important, even for units with a capacity of less than 30 000 Kcal/hr.

Driver behaviour could make a significant contribution to energy conservation. Car manufacturers will be therefore urged to include practical information on fuel saving in driver's handbooks. Radial tyres (even on goods vehicles) and correct ignition and carburettor settings would also help.

The European Commission goes on to recommend a number of steps to encourage the rational use of energy in urban passenger transport. They include the improvement of public transport services, the introduction of bus lanes and the programming of traffic lights to speed up traffic flow.

Electrical household appliances use more energy than we imagine. To ensure that consumers are put in the picture the European Commission recommends that unit energy consumption, calculated to harmonized standards, be clearly marked on all appliances.

#### Self-sufficiency

The European Community has already launched a series of major investment projects to reduce its dependence on imported energy and it is to safeguard this investment that the European Commission has proposed a floor price of 7 dollars per barrel for imported oil.

If oil prices were to drop to their pre-crisis level, expenditure on the development of nuclear energy would no longer be justified, North Sea oil would cease to be competitive and so on. By guaranteeing a price of 7 dollars per barrel the European Community is making sure that efforts to reach the goal of self-sufficiency will be sustained.

The target the Community originally set itself was to reduce dependence on imported energy to 50% or even 40% by 1985. However there is little room for manoeuvre in the present economic situation. If, for instance, economic growth - and with it the demand for energy - proved to be slightly higher than forecast over the next ten years 50% self-sufficiency would be impossible. Higher economic growth would mean that additional demand could only be met by imported oil since investment in the development of internal resources would not have been made in time.

Even if economic growth proved slower than forecast between now and 1985 50% self-sufficiency might still remain out of reach. Economic difficulties could, for instance, keep North Sea oil output down to the minimum level forecast or, indeed, slow down investment in nuclear energy.

The European Commission feels that if this delicate balance is to be maintained there is an urgent need to control the growth of energy demand, develop and protect the Community's existing energy sources and expand into new sources.



FARM PRICES: THE DEBATE BEGINS

What hard facts and figures confronted the European Commission when it came to formulate its farm price proposals for 1976/77?

Constraints and objectives

First and foremost it was faced with four constraints represented by the economic recession, inflation, market imbalances, and the farm budget (a little over 5 000 million units of account: 1 u.a. = approx. US \$1.2). The European Commission has to manoeuvre among these uncertainties in pursuit of its objectives which are also four:

1. To improve farm incomes: the general price level must enable modern farms to maintain an income comparable to income from non-agricultural occupations;
2. To promote consumer interests: consumers expect the common agricultural policy to give them security of supply, market stability and reasonable prices;
3. To establish lasting market equilibrium: it is clearly in the interests of farmers, consumers and taxpayers that the Community should remedy the persistent structural imbalances on a number of key markets;
4. To maintain a single agricultural market: "monetary compensatory amounts", which monetary instability and the lack of progress towards economic and monetary union have made a necessary evil, are unacceptable because they disrupt the single agricultural market and distort competition.

Farm prices and the consumer

Against this background the European Commission has proposed an increase of approximately 7.5% in the general level of farm prices. But this will only mean a limited increase in consumers' expenditure - somewhere in the region of 0.65% - because various other measures which will benefit Community consumers have also been proposed. These include:

- . measures to promote production of high-quality produce such as durum wheat, common wheat for bread-making, colza, wine, beef and veal;
- . an active stockpiling policy to guarantee supplies of commodities such as common wheat for bread-making, sugar and skimmed milk powder;
- . a better price structure for cereals;
- . adjustments in production potential in sectors, such as milk, beef and veal, wine, apples and pears, dogged by structural imbalances.

The European Commission has also suggested ways in which consumers could derive greater benefit from any surpluses which do arise. In the milk sector, for example, it has proposed

subsidies to encourage the milk-drinking in schools, to promote butter consumption and to permit the sale of cut-price butter to the socially disadvantaged.

The possibility of further world shortages of certain key commodities during 1976/77 cannot be ruled out but even if the worst happens the common organization of Community markets will guarantee consumers security of supply.

#### Farm prices and the taxpayer

Community taxpayers will be pleased to note that the Commission's proposals are kept within the overall budget for 1976 and will welcome the news that the Commission is proposing measures to eliminate structural imbalances in a number of sectors.

In the dairy sector the Commission advocates a cautious price policy. Milk prices would be fixed in two stages (2% on 1 March and 4.5% on 16 September) the present fat/protein ratio being retained. Price policy for summer production, which accounts for approximately two-thirds of total milk output, would thus be rather conservative, particularly when viewed in the context of the agricultural-cum-monetary measures due to come into force on 1 March.

As regards supply, the Commission recommends payment over a five-year period of bonuses to farmers withholding milk from the market. This should lead to a permanent reduction in deliveries to creameries.

As regards demand, the Commission feels that the consumer-orientated measures to promote sales of milk and butter already mentioned should be backed by a special programme to dispose of 800 000 metric tons of skimmed milk powder. By obliging manufacturers to incorporate milk powder in compound feedingstuffs for a limited period an additional 600 000 metric tons of milk powder could be disposed of at no extra cost. A further 145 000 metric tons would be disposed of by increasing the food aid programme from 55 000 to 200 000 metric tons. Finally, a scheme to promote the production of whole milk powder should relieve pressure on the market in skimmed milk powder.

Furthermore, to make for greater flexibility in dealing with the market situation, the Commission proposes that a tendering procedure be introduced for support buying of skimmed milk powder as from 16 September. Intervention agencies would be authorized to buy powder in bulk provided the buying-in price were reduced in line with costs.

In the cereals sector the Commission suggests that what amounts to a single intervention price be fixed for all coarse grain, including common wheat which is not suitable for bread-making. The market price for coarse grain would be determined by the fodder value of each crop within a bracket formed by the threshold price for maize (+9.5%) and the intervention price for barley (+5.5%). Since the Community does not produce enough coarse grain to meet its requirements, intervention would be virtually ruled out and the denaturing premium for common wheat abolished once and for all.

In the apple and pear sector new measures are proposed to rationalize the Community's "orchard" by granting a premium for grubbing "Golden Delicious" apple trees and "Passe Crassane" pear trees. An area of slightly more than 14 000 ha would be affected and grubbing would be completed by 1 April 1977.

#### The future of Europe

When it presented its farm price proposals for 1976/77 the European Commission stressed that the common agricultural policy is and should remain an essential factor in the building of Europe.

Lack of progress towards economic and monetary union does not only hold back future integration. It also - and this is perhaps even more serious - places the achievements of the common agricultural policy in jeopardy.

EUROPE FIGHTS POLLUTION

Red mud off the Italian coast, dubious scum on the waters of the Rhine, lowering smoke clouds above the Ruhr, lead and sulphur contaminating the air we breathe ... What is the Community doing about it? A booklet entitled "L'Europe contre la pollution" recently published by the Paris Information Office of the European Communities provides the answer. A Euroforum translation of one section of it - "Comment agit la Communauté" - is given below for the benefit of our English-speaking readers:

Environmental protection - a medical science

No positive action can be taken to combat pollution until we understand the mechanics. We also need up-to-date information on the environmental situation in the various regions and countries, on the effect of pollutants on different sections of the population, on maximum toxicity levels, and so on.

This is precisely why scientific research is being conducted at European and Community level. Two types of research are involved: Community research, which is wholly or partially financed by Community funds, and joint research, which is largely financed by national funds but carried out under a programme agreed by the Nine.

What sort of research?

The European programmes are in a sense an amalgam of national research programmes and the Community's action programme on the environment. More of this later.

The main objective of Community research is to establish criteria, that is to say, the relation between exposure and effect, for the major pollutants. The Community's second research programme is to concentrate on heavy metals (lead, cadmium, mercury), organic micropollutants, asbestos, new chemical substances, waste heat and noise.

One of the Community's priorities here is the joint management of environmental information.

Research as such concentrates on two areas: the reduction of pollution (research into the biological and physico-chemical treatment of waste water, the treatment and utilization of sewage sludge, the treatment of effluent from certain industrial activities, waste disposal etc.) and the improvement of the environment (reclamation of waste land, development of national parks, remote sensing of environmental pollution etc.).

What has been achieved?

The Community's first environmental research programme is already producing tangible results.

- an epidemiological survey is being conducted into the effects of atmospheric pollution on respiratory diseases; 20 000 children throughout the Community are covered and the survey should provide vital information for the establishment of air quality standards;
- a pilot project for a data bank on environmental chemicals (ECDIN project) is compiling data on production, utilization, physical and chemical properties, toxicity, environmental path, ecological effects and so on of several thousand synthetic chemical compounds; once these data have been fed into the computer it should be possible to provide environmental management authorities and the chemical industry with a rapid and effective information service;
- a whole range of tests devised by a number of laboratories are being used to analyse more than 1 000 micropollutants; this combined approach should speed up assessment of the associated genetic risks;
- a group of laboratories is developing remote sensing systems using laser beams and other optical methods to detect atmospheric pollution;
- a study on the characteristics of sewage sludge from liquid effluent treatment plants has now been completed; this should make it possible to devise better treatment and utilization techniques.

Under the action programme on the environment proposed by the European Commission and adopted by the Ministers of the Nine, urgent problems and those which must be handled at international level are referred to Brussels, the Community's capital, where the European Commission has created a specialized environment service. It drafts proposals which are referred to national experts before being discussed and adopted by the Ministers concerned. Once adopted these texts are binding in law and are uniformly applied in all Common Market countries.

But this is not enough. Community countries must also be able to draw on the resources and achievements of their partners.

A very simple system has been worked out to deal with this: whenever a Community country produces a bill or a draft regulation on air, soil or water pollution it forwards the text to the European Commission which examines it and decides whether this particular piece of national legislation could usefully be turned into Community legislation applicable in all Member States.

Let's take an example: both France and the Netherlands produced draft regulations on the collection, disposal and recycling of waste oils. This is a vital issue. Waste oils account for something like one quarter of all industrial pollution and until recently disposal of 20 to 60% of waste oils was completely uncontrolled.

The European Commission was quick to see that Community legislation was needed here. The result: a regulation adopted by the Ministers of the Nine which means that Paris, Rome, Amsterdam and London are now applying the same set of rules to the disposal of waste oils.

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