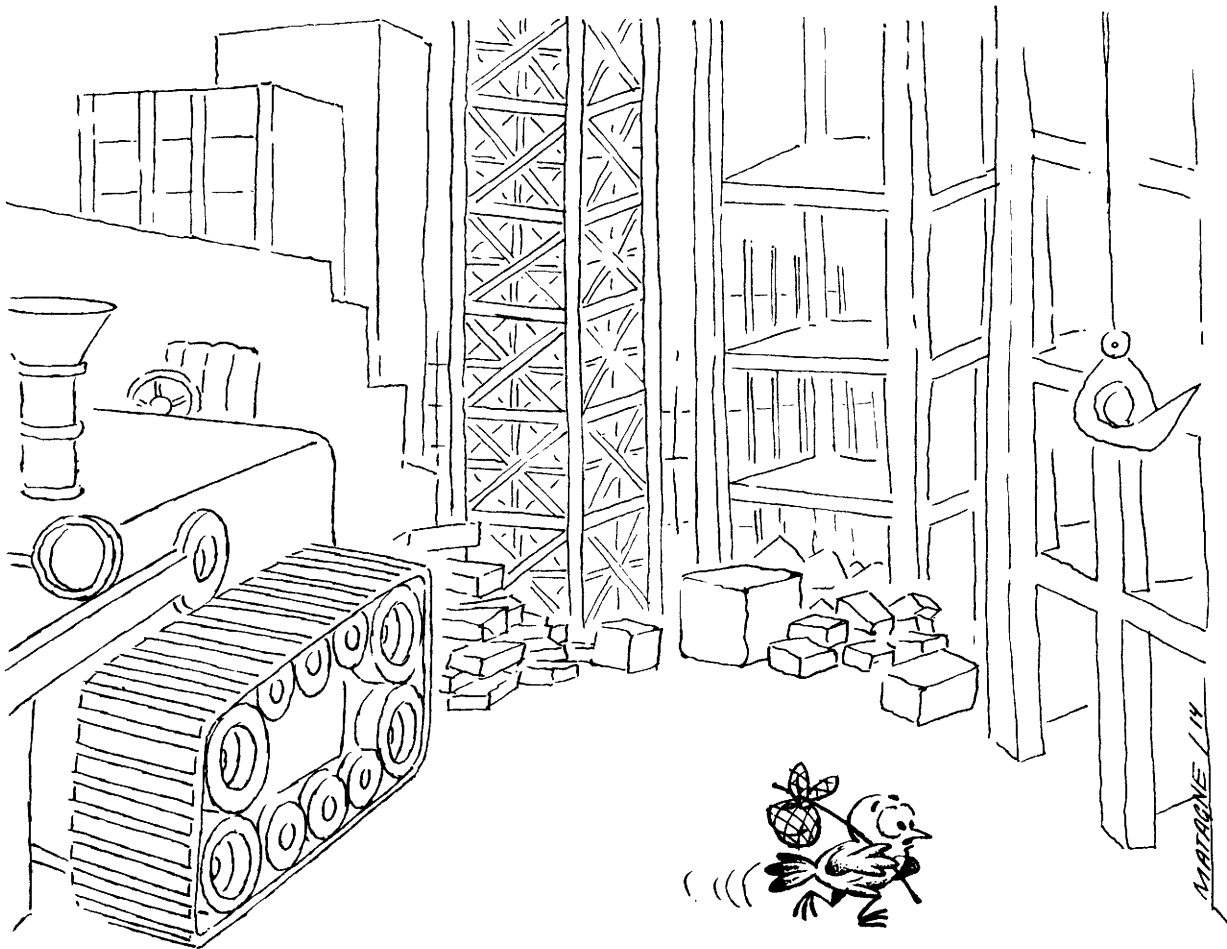


euroforum

europa day by day

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The Community's feathered friends have been disappearing
(see page 3)

X/270/77

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++ CONFIDENCE IN EUROPE

The confidence Europeans have in each other is increasing but still leaves a lot to be desired. In Annex 1 Euroforum presents a study on each nation's view of each other, based on the results of the Eurobarometer opinion polls.

++ THE COMMUNITY'S 408 BIRD SPECIES

Out of the 408 species of bird wildlife in the Community, 221 are dwindling disturbingly in their numbers. In Annex 2 Euroforum takes up a defence of the Community's birds.

++ AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

At the last session of the European Parliament, several of the Community's most needling problems were brought up.

In Annex 3 Euroforum outlines some of the ideas and arguments suggested by Parliamentarians.

++ STEEL INDUSTRY CRISIS

One in seven jobs in the steel industry is in danger. The political overtones of this largely social problem are immense. The fact that the old industrial regions at the very heart of the Community are the ones most affected makes this political problem even more serious. Any plan to help the steel industry must first resolve this employment dilemma.

The steel industry is a key element in the Community's political independence. It therefore cannot risk trusting the production of vital iron and steel to the outside world in the name of the international division of labour.

Any solution, however, must avoid two errors: that of isolating the European market through protectionist measures, and that of isolating each national market within the Community itself through ill-considered governmental aid.

To guarantee effective competition in this industry, complete restructuring is consequently necessary. Capacity cannot be increased since production is already excessive. Any modernisation in the industry must necessarily go hand in hand with a reduction in employment. This can only be politically and socially acceptable if alternative employment opportunities are created in the regions most affected, and coordinated at the Community level.

++ UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

250,000 unemployed managed to find jobs in the Community in March 1977. Some 5,500,000 were registered as unemployed, equivalent to 5.3% of the Community's civilian working population. This slight improvement in March was essentially the result of seasonal fluctuations.

The size of the reduction, however, varied considerably from country to country : 11% in the Federal Republic of Germany, 8% in the Netherlands and Denmark, 3% in France and the United Kingdom, 2% in Belgium and 1% in Italy and Ireland.

The only countries to record a decrease compared with the same month last year were the Federal Republic of Germany (-9%) and the Netherlands (-8%). In the other countries unemployment increased : +27% in Denmark, +16% in Belgium, +9% in France, +8% in the United Kingdom and +6% in Italy.

++ CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

Attitudes to the economic future are changing in rather different ways from country to country, according to a consumer survey on the economic situation conducted at the beginning of 1977. In Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, consumers expect an improvement in the economy and the financial outlook for families, while in Germany and Belgium, consumers have become more reserved about the economic and employment outlook.

As regards the general economic outlook, unemployment has created much uncertainty in the minds of consumers. Even though a large percentage of consumers still think that unemployment will rise, some optimism is apparent in Ireland and the Netherlands. Little change is foreseen in France, Italy and the United Kingdom. On the other hand, people in Denmark and Germany were optimistic last October about a decrease in unemployment. Belgian consumers fearing an increase in unemployment are more numerous than in October 1976.

The number of Danes, Germans, and Irish who believe that it is best to save, because of the general economic situation, has dwindled, whilst the reverse is true in the other countries.

++ WATER, THE PRICE OF WINE

In a written question to the Commission, Mr. Willi Müller of the European Parliament pointed out that some filling stations and department stores are selling one litre bottles of distilled water at prices which would easily buy a good bottle of wine, when the same water can be bought from chemists or druggists for a fraction of the price.

The Commission pointed out, in their reply to this question, that neither garages nor large stores occupy a dominant market position, as it is possible to obtain distilled water from other suppliers. The European Commission and consumer associations are endeavouring to inform public opinion of price discrepancies within the Community. In the last resort, it is, of course, the consumer who must make the final choice.

++ SAVING IN THE COMMUNITY

Savings recorded by the Community's savings banks for January 1977 were greater than for the preceding month. Though this is a seasonal result, it is unusual because for the first time since December 1973, the net issue of savings bonds, at 931 million units of account (1 ua = approx. 1.12 US dollars), has been greater than the surplus of savings deposits (694 million units of account). Ninety per cent of these extra deposits have been in German savings banks where clients have been showing a preference for more long term deposits by buying savings bonds. It is interesting to note that the same preference, though in different proportions, has been registered in Belgium which, like Germany, has one of the lowest inflation rates in the Community.

++ PIRATE RECORDINGS

In Hong-Kong and the United States, "music pirates" are reproducing innumerable works on tape without paying copyright fees or taxes and then flooding the market with them (including Europe), to the detriment of the more scrupulous suppliers. In reply to a question from Mr. Calewaert of the European Parliament, the European Commission has stated that it is aware of the problem, but that it does not have sufficient facts to gauge the full extent of this practice.

The 1971 Geneva Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms exists to guard against unauthorised duplication, but the measures anticipated by this Convention are a matter of national law. Only Denmark, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom have ratified the Convention. The Commission is at present examining the situation to see if special Community measures would be appropriate.

++ THE CONSUMERS' CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

At their April meeting in Brussels, the Consumers' Consultative Committee (CCC) concentrated on the problem of the agricultural prices proposed by the Commission for the 1977-78 marketing year. It was decided to examine those agricultural problems still in doubt : monetary compensatory amounts, world reference prices, situations of the different markets, etc.

The Committee made a preliminary examination of what its role should be over the next few months.

Finally it concentrated on improvements that could be made, with the cooperation of the information services of the Commission, to inform European consumers.

++ BOTTLED COAL!

Liquefying coal is a possibility for the future and the European Commission has been continuously monitoring technical progress achieved in the United States and in the countries of the Community. Some of the current research work is part-financed by appropriations from the budget of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

Most new developments are still on a laboratory scale or have as yet only reached the stage of small experimental plants. The introduction of liquified coal on a large scale at the present time is therefore unlikely. The Commission is counting more on the gasification of coal which is closer to the stage of industrial application.

++ CONSUMERS AND THE RADIO

B.R.T. (the Flemish speaking Belgian radio station) presents various information on all subjects of interest to the consumer in the programme "Van Mensen en Dingen" (people and things) each day from 8.15-9.00h. This concerns not only current information but discussion of the problems brought up. "Van Mensen en Dingen" also indicates the daily trends in the most important food prices.

"Maat-schappelijk" (a play on the word "socially") presents an edition for consumers every Thursday afternoon from 15.30-16.30h. The first half hour discusses the different aspects of such concepts as "consumption", "consumer society", "consumers" and the second half hour gives critical information on goods and services.

There are also the programmes "Kwaliteit van het Leven" (standard of living) and "Welzijnzorg" (welfare) which give consumer oriented information.

++ US - EEC Trade

The EEC is the USA's most important trade partner both for exports and for imports. Below are the US trade figures for trade with the Nine (in billion units of account - 1 ua = about 1.12 US dollars) :

	EEC Imports	EEC Exports	EEC Balance with USA
1958	3.952	2.622	- 1.330
1969	10.473	8.524	- 1.949
1970	12.300	9.306	- 2.994
1971	12.149	10.758	- 1.391
1972	11.783	11.594	- .189
1973	14.433	12.592	- 1.841
1974	19.430	15.205	- 4.225
1975	19.333	12.416	- 6.918
1976	22.288	14.296	- 7.992

Source : ECSO (European Community Statistical Office).

These massive EEC trade deficits with the USA are due less to large increases in exports to the Community than to the slump in American imports from the Community which fell some EUR 2.6 bn in 1975.

Among the traditional Community exports which did particularly badly in 1976 over 1975 were (U.S. figures) iron and steel down from \$1.4 bn to \$0.98 bn, transport equipment down from \$3.2 bn to \$3.1 bn (including passenger cars down from \$=.3 bn to \$2.2 bn) and non-electric machinery down from \$3.0 bn to \$2.9 bn.

On the other hand U.S. imports of chemicals from the EC rose by 32% to \$2.0 bn.

++ NOISE AND THE LAW

An international symposium on European legislation on noise entitled "FASE 77", is due to be held at Wembley (Great Britain) on November 14-17, 1977.

The conference will try to encourage a common and more positive attitude towards noise reduction and its consequences in the whole of Europe. The first of its kind in Europe, the conference is open to all people involved in the study of noise, its consequences and its legislation.

Introduced by Denis Howell, British Minister for the Environment, "FASE 77" is organised by the Institute of Acoustics in the name of the Federation of Acoustical Societies of Europe, in association with the British Society of Audiology and the British Ministry for the Environment. Further information may be obtained from : FASE Symposium Secretary, Owles Hall, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, Great Britain.

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This confidence in one's own people appears to be a collective cultural characteristic which does not seem to vary much with sex, age, educational background, etc. The only exception is Northern Ireland where the young people do not have the same confidence in the British as the young people of the same age and sex in England, Scotland and Wales.

Confidence in others

Each individual has his own image of the geography of the world, distorted in many ways and containing many hazy areas about which he knows little. To be able to make a judgement about the people of another foreign country, the individual must at some point have given some attention to the country to have been able to form a judgement. The survey indicates that the small countries have less awareness of other small countries than the larger countries do. The Danish and Irish public for instance were less frequently able to talk about the Luxembourgois and the Belgians than those interviewed in other Community countries.

Beyond the frontiers of the Community some countries have particular importance in the eyes of Europeans, notably Switzerland, USA, China and Russia.

The Swiss obtained the highest confidence rating. Two-thirds of the people (67%) interviewed in the Community expressed confidence in the Swiss and only 15% were of the opposite opinion.

After the Swiss the peoples most frequently cited were the Danish, Dutch and the Luxembourgois, followed by the Belgians, Americans, and Germans. The positive-negative balance was also favourable for the British and the French. It was negative for the Irish and Italians and last of all came the Chinese and Russians.

The confidence in small countries is undoubtedly due to the fact that people believe they have less to fear from small countries than large ones, as has been shown by history. The negative view of the Irish probably results from a confusion in the minds of those interviewed between the Irish Republic and the Northern counties. A confused image of a people involved in armed conflict does not encourage confidence.

The lack of confidence in Italians is probably only a reflection of their own lack of self-confidence.

CONFIDENCE IN FOREIGN PEOPLES

(whole Community)

	Positive responses	Negative responses
Swiss	67%	15%
Danish	55	14
Dutch	59	16
Luxembourgeois	53	14
Belgians	57	17
Americans (USA)	61	28
Germans	57	30
British	50	38
French	48	37

Irish	35	40
Italians	33	52
Chinese	23	55
Russians	22	61

THE COMMUNITY'S 408 BIRD SPECIES

Millions of migratory and song birds are captured and killed each year in Europe. Though this provokes worldwide protests against the countries which tolerate it, there are reasons to be concerned above that of the killing of our feathered friends. This massive destruction provokes a serious threat to the ecological balance in Europe, because it causes plant parasites to proliferate. As a result, the campaign against such parasites requires use on a wider scale of insecticides which are sometimes harmful to man and to the natural environment.

Danger to man and bird

The main conclusions of a study on the various aspects of bird protection carried out on behalf of the Commission by the 'Zoologische Gesellschaft von 1858' of Frankfurt-on-Main under the direction of Professor Dr. Bernhard Grzimek indicate that of the 408 species of wildbirds living in the Community, 125 are increasing their number whereas 221 species are on the decline, in some cases very rapidly. In the Community as a whole, the number of species threatened with extinction is 58.

It is difficult for birds to live to a ripe old age if they live in the European Community. They run the risk of being killed by man (hunting, trapping, etc.), losing their habitat due to various types of developments (drainage schemes, ill-considered land-reallocation projects, urbanisation, tourist development, etc.) or being poisoned through the pollution of their environment and food.

Given the important role played by birds in maintaining the ecological balance, the quality of the natural environment is seriously jeopardized by the excessive mortality rate of nearly half the autochthonous species in Europe. This situation is not confined to the territory of countries which give inadequate protection to birds but also extends to the territory of other countries which constitute migration areas. This is therefore a typical trans-frontier and international environment problem and cannot be solved by isolated measures taken at national level.

Public opinion is fortunately coming to consider migratory birds increasingly as a common heritage and not as the exclusive property of the country where they may be at any given time. The killing off of thousands of birds is not only a problem of ecological balance. It also has repercussions in various economic sectors (agriculture, tourism) and several scientific fields (biology, ornithology, ethology, sociology etc.). On the other hand a sensible restriction on the hunting of birds would have a sizeable impact on sales of hunting weaponry and ammunition.

Waterfowl

The Community's Environmental Action Programms has taken a stand against the massive destruction of birdlife and also, more generally, for the preservation of certain animal species which are threatened with extinction.

The European Commission takes the view that the protection of birds and certain flora and fauna species could be greatly improved if all Community Member States adhered to the 1950 Paris Convention on the protection of birds, and also to the 1971 Ramsar (Iran) Convention on Wetlands, which is an important habitat for Waterfowl (the collective name for wild birds).

The Paris Convention introduced an ethical argument (article 5) by making it an offence to inflict wanton suffering on birds. This Convention, most importantly, applied without exception to all wild birds. It aimed in particular at providing strict protection for all species during the mating and migration seasons. Species threatened with extinction or which are of particular interest are given round-the-year protection.

The Ramsar Convention is generally regarded as being of vital importance for the protection of the ecological balance and the irreplaceable natural heritage. In scope it went far beyond that of protecting waterfowl habitats.

This information is taken from the 'First report on the state of the environment' which has just been published by the European Commission and is on sale at the Community's office for official publications at P.O. Box 1003 in Luxembourg.

AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Work at the European Parliament has been overcast by the announcement of the death of Sir Peter Kirk, Chairman of the European Conservative Group. In his maiden speech on January 16 1975, Peter Kirk pleaded for the adoption of Westminster parliamentary procedures by the European Parliament. Innovations brought in by the Assembly under Kirk's inspiration include question time and emergency debates. Sir Peter Kirk, who was 48 years old, died in his sleep. His premature death backed up the claims of those who maintain that one single man cannot take on the dual mandate of both the national and European parliamentarian.

The Multinationals

The European Parliament voted unanimously for a resolution from its economic and monetary committee advocating an international accord limiting multinational corporations.

The rapporteur, Mr. Erwin Lange is the co-author with his American counterpart Sam Gibbons (Democratic representative for Florida) of a draft code of conduct for multinationals. This draft is based essentially on the requirement that multinationals provide open, complete and detailed information on their structure, operations and their policies to prove that they are respecting competition rules and regulations, protecting their workers and are not avoiding taxation.

Can multinationals be expected to voluntarily adhere to such a code of good conduct, or will they have to be forced by law? After a vigorous debate the European Parliament chose the latter solution.

The Nuclear Debate

The European Commission is proposing to organise an open debate on the advantages and dangers of nuclear energy in the form of 'hearings' of the proponents and adversaries, it was stated to the Parliament by European Commissioner responsible for energy, Mr. Guido Brunner. Such a debate, Mr. Brunner pointed out, would only be fruitful if the nuclear problem ceased to be used as an instrument of propaganda in a much wider political battle.

Ice Cream

'EEC bans our ice cream' was the alarmist headline in one of the British Sunday papers but was it justified? Is this really the end of ice cream? During question time at the European Parliament, Finn Olav Gundelach was able to reassure Mr. Tom Dalyell to the contrary. It's not a question of depriving people of one of their favourite delights but only of mentioning clearly on the packaging the true composition of the product.

European Social Fund

Projects financed under the European Social Fund are half paid for in principle by the Community and half by the national governments. This according to Mr. Caro is too great a burden on some countries and helps maintain the imbalance between rich and poor countries in the Community. Mr. Caro also brought up the basic criticism of the European Parliament that there were too few Community officials managing and controlling the European Social Fund.

Regional Policy

During the debate on the Community's regional policy, the Parliament stressed the need for better coordination of the Community's Funds. Mr. Giolitti, Commissioner responsible for Regional Policy, underlined the point that the present economic crisis makes the Regional Policy even more urgent in as much as the Community's cohesion is diminished by the regional imbalances.

Environment

The difficulties of environmental protection were also brought up at the European Parliament's last session. The Assembly took the view that proposals to effectively counter waste were imperative. The development of solar energy should also be encouraged by the European Commission through the development of appropriate technology so that developing countries use it for their domestic requirements in place of their forestry heritage.

Cars

Eleven draft directives on technical aspects of cars have now been adopted by the European Parliament including ones concerning rear fog lamps, wipers, and heating.

During a debate on this subject, the Parliament expressed its regrets that so little respect had been shown by Member States for the directives already adopted and it encouraged the European Commission to strengthen its efforts to remedy the situation quickly.

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