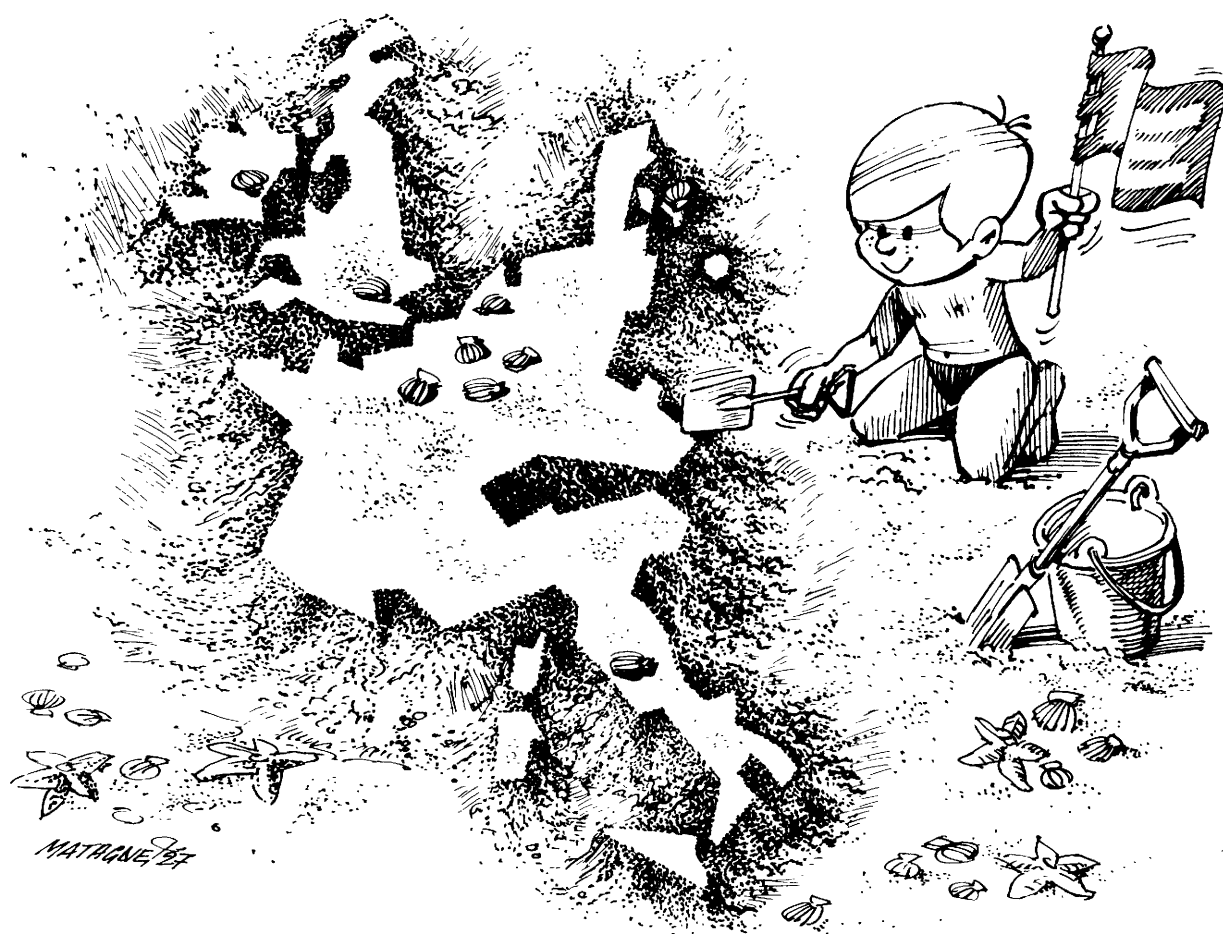


euroforum

europa day by day

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HAVE A NICE SUMMER !

Euroforum is off on holiday. The next issue (n° 31/77) will appear on the 6th September 1977.

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++ THE UNKNOWN POVERTY

Extreme poverty - when it's other people's poverty - is invisible. It is also unknown, and its existence denied by more than 50% of Europeans. This is perhaps the most disturbing conclusion to emerge from the European Commission's opinion poll entitled "The Perception of Poverty in Europe" which has just been published.

In Annex 1 Euroforum presents further sinister statistics from this unique survey.

++ ECONOMY : CONSUMERS ARE CAUTIOUS

Fears about unemployment and inflation have generally turned the European consumer into a rather cautious being. This is the overriding conclusion of an economic survey recently carried out among 20 000 households in the Community.

In Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands a growing number of households expect unemployment to increase, though the fear of unemployment has subsided considerably in the UK, Belgium and to a lesser extent in Italy and Ireland. Dutch consumers, paradoxically, expect a simultaneous increase in unemployment and an improvement in the overall economic situation. This is probably because they do not think that an economic revival will necessarily provide jobs for those out of work.

In all countries, except Germany, consumers think that prices have increased considerably over the previous twelve months. In the twelve months to come, the Dutch, French and Danish all expect an acceleration in price rises. Other countries expect inflation to cool down somewhat.

The views of these households on their country's economic situation, on unemployment, prices and the financial situation naturally influence their attitude to spending and saving in the future. In Germany and France households will be rather cautious about spending. In the UK, Netherlands Belgium and Ireland, no-one expects consumption trends to rise very substantially. In Italy and Denmark, by contrast, attitudes have become more favourable to spending since January when the last survey was undertaken.

++ SEVESO : EUROPEAN SCIENTISTS CONFER

European toxicologists and dermatologists have recently been meeting in Milan at the invitation of the European Commission and the authorities of Lombardy to examine some of the longer term effects of the Seveso accident.

Specialists under the leadership of Professor Pucinelli have been studying the symptomatology of the skin abnormalities which are still evident at Seveso one year after the accident, and they have also been examining similar cases that have been observed elsewhere by Professor Schuppli (Switzerland) and Professor Taylor (USA).

To quantify the injuries more easily , a provisional classification system has been drawn up for use with the Seveso population.

The effects on children under ten years old is particularly disturbing and will be studied in depth by the scientists using available data and further examinations. Detailed investigations undertaken in February and March of this year on children under ten years old have raised fears that the various skin abnormalities could be due to exposure to dioxin subsequent to the accident . These children will be subjected to further examination in October and November 1977. A comparison of these results will be made with sample populations from another region in Italy.

These same scientists have decided to have another similar meeting towards the end of the year when all the data requested by the Milan meeting is available.

++ SAFER FOOD

There are only about fifty substances which are permitted for use as emulsifiers, stabilisers, thickeners and gelling agents in the Community's food. Specific purity criteria for these substances have just been proposed by the European Commission to ensure there is no risk to human health.

Gum arabic , for example, made from the Senegal acacia tree, may not contain more than 1% of substances insoluble in hydrochloric acid, and losses through drying for five hours at 105°C, should not be more than 15%.

When adopted by the Council of Ministers, Member States would have eighteen months in which to bring their laws and regulations in line with the Community directive.

++ MIGRANT WORKER HANDBOOK

What should a worker (French) do if he becomes stricken with toothache in Gibraltar (UK) and has to have it treated immediately before going to work in Udine (Italy) where he will have to continue the treatment? What pension rights should an Italian technician expect to receive if he works for a while in Karlsruhe (Germany) and then in Delft (Holland) ?

The answers to these and many more questions are to be found in a booklet "Social security for migrant workers: Guide N°3" which has just been published by the European Commission. This third guide gives precise indications of workers' rights and obligations with regard to social security throughout the Nine countries of the European Community, for workers posted abroad or employed in more than one Member State. The guide will be of particular use to international transport workers , workers posted to another country and commercial travellers whose business covers several countries.

This "practical guide" will be available from social security authorities in each country of the Community.

++ EURO-PLANES AWAIT CLEARANCE

Helicopters and airframes have been given priority in the Aeronautical Research Programme which the European Commission has just proposed to the Council of Ministers.

The overall objective of the programme is to promote collaboration between industry and research centres in areas in which there would otherwise be wasteful duplication of effort. The European Commission also hopes that the efficiency of research expenditure and the use of research facilities in the Member States would be improved by the programme. It is also expected that there will be collaboration at the industrial level on future civil programmes.

The technological objectives for the helicopter sector are to widen the scope for the use of helicopters in the civil field by way of improvements in fuel economy, safety, instrument flight capability and environmental improvements relating to noise and vibration.

The airframe proposals are aimed at increasing structural life and reducing maintenance costs through better understanding of fatigue and fracture mechanics in metal and composite structures.

In addition to these industrial programmes the Commission points out that certain infrastructure facilities need to be supported in the Community. The most important of these is a large trans-sonic windtunnel, where cost and scale do not justify any one nation going it alone. The Commission will make a proposal in 1978.

++ COMPETITION : RADIATORS FIND IT HOT

The Swedish firm AGA Radiator AB has had to modify a patent and licensing agreement with the UK firm Steel Radiators Ltd. which gave the British firm an exclusive licence to manufacture and sell its radiators in the UK. Certain clauses in the agreement which among other things prohibited Steel Radiators from exporting the licenced products to other European countries in the Common Market or elsewhere, are against the fair trade laws of the Treaty of Rome.

When notified of the agreement between the two central-heating radiator manufacturers, the European Commission took the view that a number of clauses were restrictive and inhibited free trade in that sector. The Commission sent the two firms a statement of objections and the radiator manufacturers have removed them from their agreement.

The Commission is very watchful of exclusive sales licences and export bans as they constitute direct barriers to the free movement of goods in the common market. Exemptions should only be given where it is found that the licenced territory is not too extensive, that there are similar products that compete in that territory and that parallel imports are still possible.

++ RADIOPROTECTION

Sixty-three scientists from 37 laboratories participating in the European Commission's programme on the genetic effects of radiation have recently met for three days at the Carlsberg Institute in Copenhagen.

The meeting which was organised jointly by the Commission and the Carlsberg laboratory was to enable an informal presentation of results and research intentions in advanced fields such as DNA repair in microorganisms, mutation yields and dose-effect relations, radiosensitivity of germ cells and analyses of human meiosis, andfinally.... the genetics and biochemistry of sensitivity and repair in cultured cells of man.

++ CONSUMER OPINION POLL

The preoccupations and aspirations of the European consumer was examined in an opinion poll conducted by the European Commission in 1976 (see Euroforum n° 27/76). The European Commission has just published the main results of this poll in a series of brochures aimed at informing and educating consumers.

This forty page document can be obtained from the Community's office for official publications in Luxembourg (P.O.Box 1003) and is priced 80 pence (FB 50. Dkr 7.90, DM 3.35, FF 6.75, Lir 120, Fl 3.40, or 1.35 US dollars).

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THE UNKNOWN POVERTY

Extreme poverty -other people's poverty - is invisible , unknown and denied by more than 50% of Europeans. This is perhaps the most staggering conclusion to emerge from the European Commission's latest opinion poll which has just been published.

Unique survey

For the first time in Europe an international survey has been devoted to the problems of poverty. A total of eight thousand six hundred people were interviewed in their homes by trained interviewers with the aid of a questionnaire containing some thirty questions ,carefully chosen and standardised for all nine Community countries.

The European Community is committed to fighting poverty (see Euroforum n° 41/76) and the European Commission is already involved in a number of projects aimed at reducing poverty in certain fields (see Euroforum n° 5/77). More has to be known about the specific areas of poverty and the underlying causes so that the most appropriate action can be launched. At present there is even absence of agreed criteria for defining poverty or extreme poverty. Neither statisticians, sociologists nor economists are yet able to give precise estimates,nor even a description,of these people.

It is not enough , in any case, simply to be aware of the poverty which encompasses ten million Europeans at this very moment. It is also necessary to know what all the Europeans think about it and , more importantly, their awareness of it. Removing or at least reducing poverty requires their solidarity and their commitment both at the individual and the collective level.

Poverty- oh so discreet

In most Community countries the general public does not see extreme poverty close at hand. And worse than this, the majority of Europeans are simply not aware of poor people living in their own village, town or immediate neighbourhood, and conclude that such poverty does not exist in their areas of concern.

Here are some figures to illustrate this lack of awareness:

	Often see people in poverty	Think there are but don't see them.	Don't think there are or don't know.	
Belgium	5	31	64	100
Denmark	3	13	84	100
Germany	8	39	53	100
France	10	36	54	100
Ireland	10	34	56	100
Italy	17	50	33	100
Luxembourg	5	47	48	100
Netherlands	3	21	76	100
United Kingdom	8	28	64	100
<u>COMMUNITY</u>	10	37	53	100

What are the authorities doing

The public does not, however, believe that poverty will disappear without encouragement, and naturally looks to the authorities for action. Fifty four percent of Europeans think that the authorities do not do enough but seven percent think they are already doing too much.....

If the authorities are not doing enough, are individuals prepared to do more themselves? In the European Community 48% are prepared to give a little more money and 60% a little more time. Without being too reassuring these figures are at least a little encouraging.

Assessment of the authorities' contribution to combatting poverty:

Think the authorities do:			Don't know	Total
too much	about right	too little		

Italy	2 %	12 %	75 %	11 %	100 %
France	2	23	68	7	100
Belgium	2	25	55	18	100
Ireland	7	39	50	4	100
Germany	6	40	46	8	100
Netherlands	7	34	40	19	100
Luxembourg	10	34	39	17	100
United Kingdom	20	35	36	9	100
Denmark	10	48	31	11	100

COMMUNITY (1) 7 29 54 10 100
 (1) Weighted average

Propensity to give money or time to combat poverty:

	UK	B	DK	D	F	IRL	I	L	NL	EC
<u>Give money</u>										
agreeable	41	55	57	42	53	71	53	56	57	48
not agreeable	46	27	25	35	37	17	30	22	26	36
don't know	13	18	18	23	10	12	17	22	17	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<u>Give time</u>										
agreeable	61	61	71	50	67	80	62	69	61	60
not agreeable	26	21	17	29	13	10	19	11	21	24
don't know	13	18	12	21	10	10	19	20	18	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(1) Weighted average.

At the present time it would seem that in default of real information a European's awareness of extreme poverty and the form it takes, is based on the individual's philosophical and political conceptions. Most Europeans hold an abstract view of the phenomenon involved which has little to do with their own position in the social spectrum. In particular it is apparent that the less rich do not feel any nearer to the poor than others in the population. No doubt they have more opportunities of observing poverty, but they tend to blame the poor rather than seek to understand them.

This opinion poll entitled "the perception of poverty in Europe" has shown that any programme to combat poverty must aim at the same time to remove the objective causes of poverty and enlighten those who are not poor and those who are less poor about the situation surrounding them and which their own culture and their own role in society often prevent them from seeing.

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