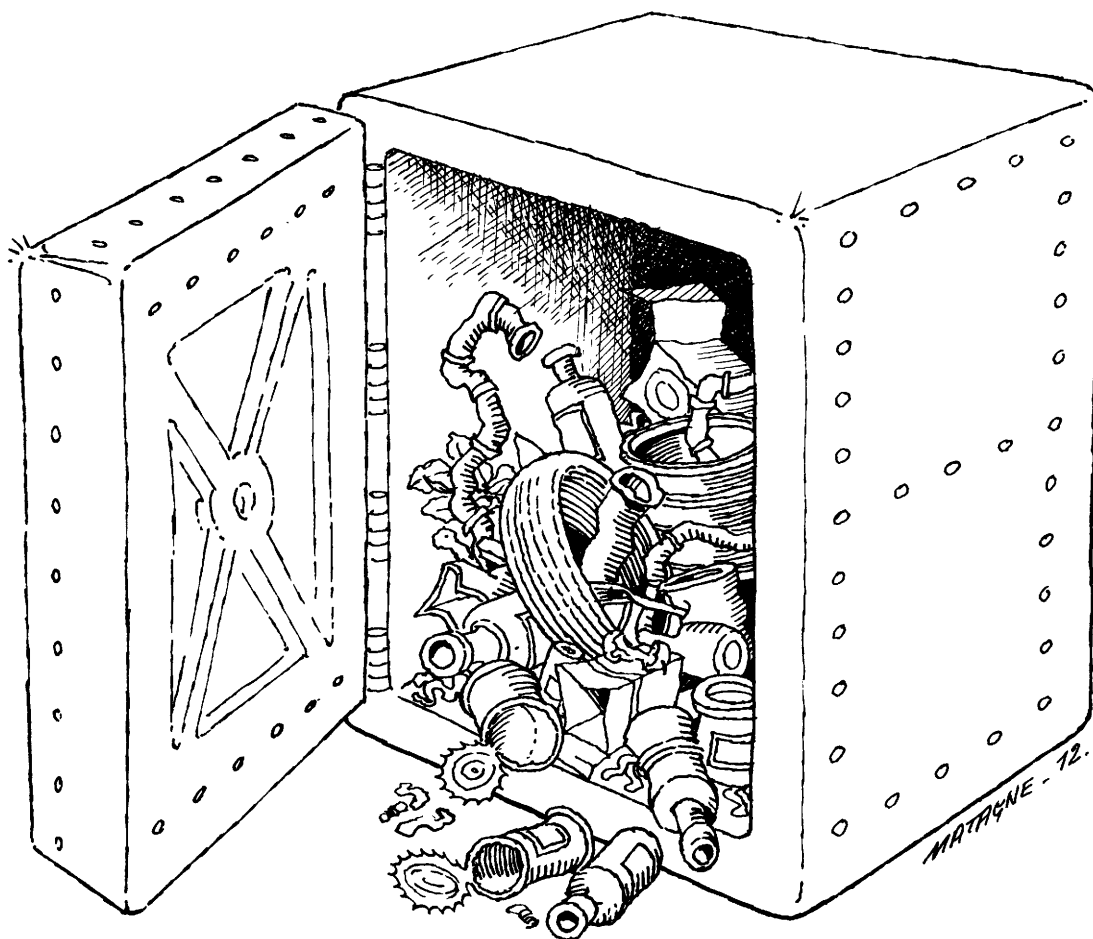


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Thirteen billion dollars worth of rubbish just thrown away.....how do we best retrieve it? (see page 3)

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IN THIS ISSUE

- ++ Nuclear direction of the Community (p. 3)
- ++ Waste and wealth (p. 3)
- ++ Immigrant workers and good faith (p. 3)
- ++ Jobless - stationary (p. 3)
- ++ Food prices and costs (p. 3)
- ++ Serving the flag (p. 4)
- ++ Energy saving (p. 4)
- ++ Controlling chemicals (p. 5)
- ++ Fourth world aid (p. 6)
- ++ Saccharine and health (p. 7)
- ++ Air compressor noise (p. 7)
- ++ Training courses in the Commission (p. 8)
- ++ Health and environment catalogue (p. 8)

++ NUCLEAR DIRECTION OF THE COMMUNITY

The European Commission has just put the finishing touches to its conclusions from the public hearings on nuclear energy held in Brussels last November and January (see Euroforum 43/77, 44/77, 2/78 and 3/78).

A summary of the Commission's public statement is presented in Annex 1.

++ WASTE AND WEALTH

Consumer society produces millions of tons of waste every year but how realistic is it to recycle and re-use our rubbish?

Annex 2 presents the conclusions of a report on the economics of material reclamation undertaken for the European Commission.

++ IMMIGRANT WORKERS AND GOOD FAITH

Illegal immigration and undeclared work continue to exist in Europe but the European Commission is proposing stiffer sanctions for those who benefit from this traffic, and increased protection of the basic rights of those workers enticed into illegal work.

The proposals are outlined in Annex 3.

++ JOBLESS - STATIONARY

Between January and February 1978, the unemployment situation in the Community saw little change. The number of jobless was still close on 6.3 million - 5.9% of the working population (against 6% last January and 5.5% in February 1977).

In several countries, unemployment has fallen : - 4.9% in Luxembourg, - 3% in Belgium, - 2.6% in the Netherlands and the U.K., - 0.5% in Ireland (data not available for France).

The percentage of women out of work in February 1978 fell compared to the month before : - 1.7%. In comparison to February 1977, the unemployment trend for the whole Community showed a general increase of 8.4% composed of 6.4% men and 11.6% women.

++ FOOD PRICES AND COSTS

The proportion of basic agricultural produce costs in the final price of foodstuffs averages 30-40%.

The percentage varies greatly however, according to type of product and also according to country. It is relatively large for those goods that undergo little processing, such as eggs and potatoes (60 to 61%) and is progressively smaller for products that go through many intermediary stages before reaching the consumer (e.g. drinking milk averages 50%, beef 40%, sugar 30-35%, cereals 20-30%).

A report on production costs, intermediary profit margins and final consumer prices for farm produce is currently being drawn up by the European Parliament.

++ SERVING THE FLAG

A number of Community countries still require young people to undertake military service and this naturally enough has some effect on the job market, though the importance varies considerably from country to country:

	<u>Number of under 25s doing military service (July 1977)</u>	<u>Length of military service</u>
Belgium	27 000	8 - 10 months
Denmark	12 000	9 "
Germany	235 000	15 "
France	274 000	12 "
Italy	211 000	12 - 18 "
Netherlands	49 000	14 - 17 "

Compulsory military service is no longer required in Ireland, Luxembourg and the UK.

++ ENERGY SAVING

Close to 69 million European units of account (1 EUR = + 1.2 dollars) were spent in the Community last year on research and development into energy saving techniques. Expenditure is expected to increase considerably during 1978. Country by country expenditure in EUR is:

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>
Belgium	1.65	?
Denmark	7	12
France	7	7
Germany	24	28
Ireland		
Italy	10	13
Netherlands	12.5	12.5
UK	3.2	6.4
Community programme	3.6	3.6

++ CONTROLLING CHEMICALS

The USA has recently adopted the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) aimed at protecting man and the environment from risks involved with certain chemical compounds. The application procedures for this law are, however, of great interest to the Community from two points of view : firstly, because the Community's own Environmental Protection Programme deals with the problems of chemicals and their toxicity, and secondly because the US legislation also applies to chemicals coming from the Community, implying that the two parties should arrive at an agreement on which procedures to follow to ensure that US law does not unwittingly hinder the import of European chemicals.

In addition, the European Commission has recently advised the Council to open negotiations with the USA on problems presented by the TSCA.

In the same context of chemical control, the European Commission will be taking part in the meeting in Stockholm April 11-13, together with the 15 major western countries and representatives from the main international organisations.

++ FOURTH WORLD AID

The Commission has just adopted a series of projects and pilot schemes in order to extend the Community's anti-poverty programme. The aims of the projects are:

- to study the specific aspects of poverty which affect nomadic peoples (gypsies). This transnational study will look at, in particular, the attitudes of public authorities and local populations to the nomad groups, their way of life, work, the cultures of the different groups, and finally the special education programmes already set up in four countries;
- to study the role played by charitable organisations in combatting poverty. This will be undertaken in at least three Member States to evaluate the effectiveness of these organisations and examine whether legal measures could help them in their work (both of these studies will be entirely financed by the European Commission);
- to combat social and cultural poverty in four major centres (H.L.M.) in France where the inhabitants look after handicapped people;
- to draw up a number of social remedies to be applied to an impoverished quarter of the Bavarian town of Amberg which has a particularly high level of crime and unemployment, and where many dwellings are overpopulated. These efforts will be concentrated on the problems of poverty and ethnic minorities;
- to create social centres in two areas of Giugliano (Naples) to accommodate workshops for children, discussion groups and schemes for women, and groups involving elderly people and children, etc.

The cost of these projects will be shared by the Commission and local authorities.

- to study the persistent poverty in seven regions around Luxembourg (Saarbrücken, the Belgian province of Luxembourg, the region of Metz-Thionville etc.) and examine ways of reducing or eliminating this poverty. The Community is covering the whole budget for this study.

Two other current projects will be continued:

- an international study of the comparative effectiveness of social policies in high unemployment regions in the UK, France and Germany;
- research into ways of making poor people more aware of, and better able to use, the social benefits which they have a right to (in certain areas of Belfast).

The Commission has also decided to set up a group of independent experts to evaluate the results from the various programmes.

The total cost of these projects will be 635 146 European units of account (1 EUR = ± 1.2 dollars).

++ SACCHARINE AND HEALTH

The use of saccharine should be restricted according to the Scientific Committee for Human Foodstuffs, and in support of its view, the Commission has recommended Member States :

- to introduce national regulations controlling the use of saccharine in food, to limit the daily dose to an acceptable level, and to reduce child consumption of saccharine to a minimum;
- to ban the use of the substance in baby foods;
- to ensure that the presence of saccharine is fully in evidence on the label;
- to use appropriate labelling for saccharine tablets to inform the purchaser of the possible dangers of excessive consumption, particularly regarding pregnant women and children.

++ AIR COMPRESSOR NOISE

The Commission has just sent the Council a proposal for a directive to limit the sound emissions from air compressors (machines used in factories to compress or move air). This directive forms part of the Community's Environmental Action Programme aimed at reducing acoustic nuisances and is a supplement to the directive proposed by the Commission in 1975 to limit the noise from pneumatic jack hammers.

++ TRAINING COURSES IN THE COMMISSION

During 1977, the European Commission was able to offer 330 training courses ('stages') within their departments to Community nationals, and 89 people from third countries.

++ HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT CATALOGUE

A catalogue of works published by the Commission's Health and Safety Directorate covering public health and the environment has now been made available. The brochure which covers directives, conference reports, scientific reports, etc. between 1971 and 1977, can be obtained from the European Commission's Directorate for Health and Safety, Bâtiment Jean Monnet, Plateau du Kirshberg, Luxembourg, P.O. Box 1907.

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NUCLEAR DIRECTION OF THE COMMUNITY

The European Commission has just finalised its conclusions on the public hearings on nuclear energy which it organised in Brussels last November and January (see Euroforum N°s 43/77, 44/77, 2/78, 3/78).

"The conditions in which the open debates took place make it difficult to draw unanimously acceptable conclusions. Nevertheless, it seems possible with a maximum of impartiality to pinpoint some of the dominant ideas:

1. The development of energy from nuclear fission appears to be an inescapable necessity, if we adopt the hypothesis of moderate growth in our type of society and if we consider the probable trend of world energy demand over the coming decades. Of course such development must be subject to a number of conditions:
 - nuclear energy must be considered as one among various forms of energy, i.e. a form of energy to which an excessive role should not be assigned given the development and possible use of other types of energy sources, (renewable and environmentally acceptable energy sources). It must therefore be developed in line with the needs determined by reasonable economic growth;
 - safety requirements must continue to be subjected to close and constant scrutiny;
 - decisions on the use and siting of nuclear installations should be taken democratically, i.e. the Parliaments and elected assemblies in general - and the European Parliament in particular - should play an important part in the decision-making process.
2. In order to limit the use of non-renewable sources of energy, in particular hydro-carbons, without allowing the nuclear sector to occupy a position out of proportion to its importance, we must step up research and financially encourage practical applications involving new forms of energy and help the old established sources of energy - coal, in particular - to hold their own.
3. Without creating upheavals in our present-day society, we must nevertheless redirect our activities and the habits of our citizens towards a new conception of the role of energy, and in particular towards conservation and energy-saving.

Lastly, the problems of energy in general (and not only nuclear energy) have assumed such significance for future generations that public opinion should be informed on the subject as fully and as objectively as possible, so that it can, with a full knowledge of the facts, judge the desirability and advisability of the options available."

The European Commission is already extensively involved in the fields of nuclear safety, radiology and research into new energy sources. The conclusions which the Commission has drawn from the nuclear hearings has prompted it to take the following measures:

- a) to stress the environmental aspects in all of its proposals in the energy field, particularly nuclear energy;
- b) give a fresh impetus to those Commission initiatives which correspond closely to the conclusions reached in the debates;
- c) prepare new proposals and measures designed to accommodate some of the wishes expressed during the hearings, particularly in the fields of transport of radioactive substances, the relationship between economic growth and energy demand, and finally, extending public information on energy problems.

The Commission will also set up a systematic information procedure for the European Environment Bureau covering the Community's energy policy.

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WASTE AND WEALTH

Consumer society produces millions of tons of waste every year and though recycling is one way of tackling the problem, the economic and ecological benefits are not clear. To clarify the answers to questions such as these and take stock of the state of recycling technology before embarking on a Community materials reclamation policy, a group of experts have been examining the economics of material reclamation at the request of the European Commission. The following article is based on the conclusions of their report.

In an average week, an average household (3 persons) will throw out : 3.4 kg of ash and dust, 4.8 kg of boxes and paper, 1.5 kg of glass, 1 kg of metals, 0.6 kg of plastics, 0.6 kg of textiles and 1 kg of other rubbish - a grand total of 16.6 kg.

Total household rubbish in the Community amounts to some 72 million tonnes per year and on top of this, there are 55m tonnes per year of other materials to be disposed of (cars, tyres, refrigerators, waste oil, etc.). Less than 20% of these consumer by-products are recycled.

On the production side, the situation is also quite disconcerting and though part of industrial waste (70m tonnes) is recycled, the same is not true for the residues from mines and power stations (300m tonnes), farming (1 billion tonnes), chemical industry (48m tonnes) and food industry (100m tonnes) where the rate of reclamation is relatively low.

As a result, most of the left-overs from the affluent society are thrown away, usually without any control, in the urban or rural environment.

A lot of this waste is in fact worth money as the following table shows:

<u>Materials</u>	<u>Tonnage consumed in the Community</u>	<u>Tonnage available for recuperation</u>	<u>Potential value of recycled goods</u>
	(million tonnes per year)		(million dollars)
Ferrous metals	136.8	10 - 20 (vehicles: 0.8, tin cans: 3.7)	2 500
Non-ferrous metals	9.2	1-2 (aluminium 0.76)	1 000
Paper	30.3	20	2 000
Glass	13.7	6	100 - 500
Plastics	12	3.1	1 000
Rubber	2.1	1.53	500
Textiles	2.7	2	1 000
Chemicals	35	5 - 10	1 000
Lubricating oils	4.6	1.2	200
Mines and power station residues	300	200	500
Farming food	1100	40 - 60	3 000

The total value of the reclaimed waste (13 billion dollars) is by no means negligible.

Advantage of these financial gains has not been taken for a number of reasons : lack of encouragement from public authorities, lack of information and documentation on the existing possibilities, etc.

Solutions

Apart from the straight financial gain, reusing waste can help resolve a number of pressing economic and ecological problems:

- alleviate the shortages of a number of raw materials and permit more rational use of available resources; the

recycling of paper for example, is a useful way of tackling the problem of deforestation;

- recuperating energy released when waste is incinerated can save fuel;
- avoiding the need to dump waste in the countryside and consequently pollute and destroy the environment, (public dumps, car graveyards, etc.) will help prevent more insidious dangers such as the pollution of underground waters by way of harmful substances filtering through the ground;
- even the Community's trade balance could be favourably influenced by the rational use of waste : 5.7 million dollars could be saved from an annual import bill of 200 million dollars - every little helps.

One goal, many approaches

There are currently many materials reclamation techniques:

- re-use, where the product is used again for a similar purpose, as with milk bottles;
- recycling where the recovered material is used for the production of more of a similar material, as with the recycling of aluminium reclaimed from tin cans or cars; the value of the reconstituted product is ten times greater than the cost of recycling;
- incineration of waste and the use of the energy released or the gas given off.

The majority of wastes are mixed in form and any reprocessing requires prior sorting, either at the source or in specialised centres. Selective collection of the materials at source is preferable since the cleaning and decontamination operations are thereby kept to a minimum. But this is not always possible.

Factors such as the cost of transport, the type and quality of the reclaimable material, the volume of waste available within a given catchment area should determine the most advantageous way of reclaiming waste.

Prevention not cure

A serious question arises as to whether there are sufficient outlets for these reclaimed products. This is basically seen however as a question of ingenuity, and even old fashioned

ways such as making patchwork quilts have proven that new can profitably be made from old with a bit of thought.

To make material reclamation generally useful, it has to be part of an overall policy:

- governments should have a data bank at their disposal to provide all the necessary information : catalogue of all dump sites, inventory of recycling techniques, outlets, etc.;
- taxes and subsidies are particularly effective weapons of dissuasion or persuasion. To be able to use them, the public authorities require appropriate legislation on waste disposal and reclamation (as, for example, has existed in France since 1975);
- imposing compulsory production norms could also be very effective : by requiring standard size and shapes for bottle manufacturers, Denmark has greatly facilitated the re-use of glass;
- the reticence of consumers and producers towards waste recovery has also to be overcome. The media could play an important part in this respect.

The main need is to attack the problem of waste at source. Production should be designed with waste reclamation in mind, since prevention is undoubtedly better than cure.

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IMMIGRANT WORKERS AND GOOD FAITH

During a police inspection of a Brussels factory, five Turkish workers were found to have no work permits and, as illegal immigrants, were ordered to leave the country. But before they were expelled from the country, their remaining days had to be spent in prison since they had no visas or visitors permits.

These workers had left their native Anatolia at the bidding of a "head hunter" - a recruiter of workers for European industry. Unaware of Belgian law and the language of the country, they believed, in good faith, that they were doing no wrong. However, they had to pay the consequences themselves for their unlawful presence in the country. Their employer will only receive a standard administrative fine of probably £150.

Giving jobs to undeclared workers goes on all the time in several European countries and is nothing very new. The European Commission itself has proposed a directive to strengthen cooperation between Community countries in combatting illegal immigration and undeclared work.

When the subject was discussed at the European Parliament and in the Economic and Social Committee, the members took the view that it was regrettable that the proposed directive totally overlooked the basic principal of employers' obligations, and protection of the rights the workers have gained through the work they have performed. Their reasoning has persuaded the Commission to modify its proposal as follows:

- there is a working relationship between an employer and a migrant worker even if such employment is against the regulations. Certain rights and obligations arise out of the act of employing an illegal migrant worker. It is then up to the authorities to ensure that these rights are respected;
- also, employers of an illegal immigrant should fulfil all the obligations as if he were dealing with a fully legalised worker : wages, social security, taxation, pay for holidays not taken, etc.;
- on the other hand, the undeclared worker should be able to exercise his rights (in particular to have the opportunity to prove he has a contract whether written or verbal). He should be able to benefit from free legal assistance.

In addition to these measures affecting employers, the proposed directive sets out an arsenal of means of combatting illegal immigration (already contained in the original proposal), in particular:

- informing future immigrants of the relevant national laws and regulations which must be observed;
- ensuring adequate immigration control, particularly by checking employers and head hunters;
- to punish persons who organise aid or abet illegal immigration and illegal employment. These sanctions should include prison sentences for serious offences;
- mitigate the wrong suffered by illegal immigrants who acted in good faith, by ensuring the right of appeal against deportation. Any repatriation costs should be covered by the employer;
- strengthening collaboration between member States against illegal immigration.

The Commission also takes the view that illegal immigrants should not benefit from the provisions of this directive if the judicial authorities establish that they have acted in bad faith.

EEC nationals are not affected by these measures since they have the statutory right to work in any Community country.

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