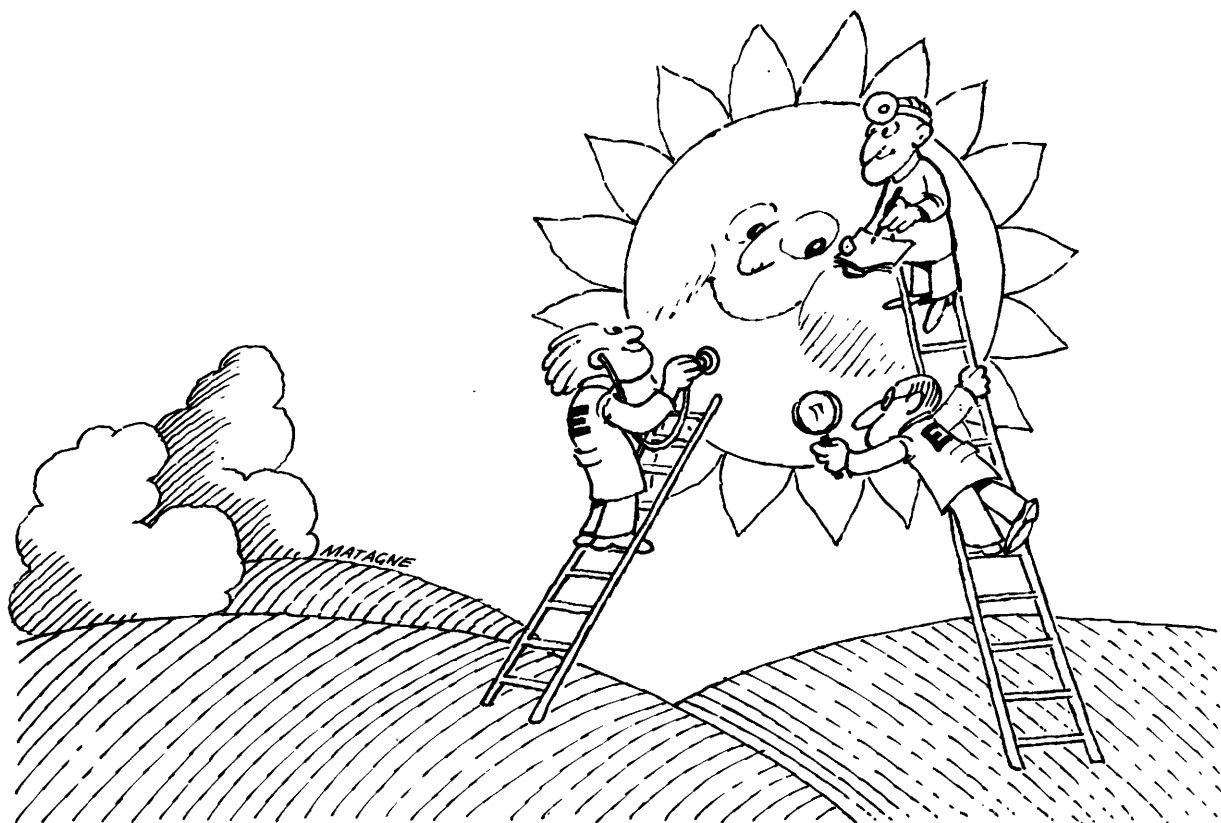


Brussels, 12 September 1978

N° 31/78



A threefold increase in funds for research into new energy sources has been requested ( see page - 3 - )

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KINGDOM AND THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND (p. 6)

++ MEDICAL RESEARCH : NEW PROPOSALS

Analysing the increase in attempted suicide amongst young people, detecting signs of thrombosis, improving hearing difficulties, examining illnesses and mortality amongst new born children, improving interpretation of electrocardiograms through automation - these are the five new research areas proposed by the European Commission in its second Community medical research programme.

The importance of these research projects and the need for co-ordination at the Community level are discussed in Annex 1.

++ ENERGY : TAMING THE SUN AND BURNING SEAWEED

Solar power stations, energy savings and "green fuel" from processed vegetal wastes are some of the European Commission's proposals in the new energy research programme.

Further details of the programme in Annex 2.

++ TEXTILES : THREE YEAR BREATHING SPACE

Europe's textile and clothing industry which employs 10% of wage earners in the Community, is in trouble and the main reason is increase in cheap textile imports.

The Commission's suggestions for adapting these industries to the new competitive conditions over the next three years are outlined in Annex 3.

++ INCOME TAXES

Income taxes paid in Europe vary considerably from country to country and since tax systems are also very different, direct comparisons need considerable care. Bearing this in mind, the percentage of income tax paid by an average worker in industry (paid for 52 weeks per year with no supplementary income from wife, and not including contributions for social security, except for Denmark, but with family allowances deducted,) is as follows:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Single</u>	<u>Married</u>	<u>Married with two children</u>
Belgium	16.5	15.7	* -0.6
Denmark *	37.9	32.3	28.3
France	9.7	3.8	* -8.2
Germany	17.8	11.9	5.9
Ireland	25.2	20.6	12.7
Italy	7.1	5.2	* -1.0
Luxembourg	20.2	11.6	* -2.2
Netherlands	17.7	15.3	6.0
United Kingdom	27.2	23.4	15.7

\* Family allowances exceed income tax

++ STEREOS AND COMPETITION

At the beginning of the year, Japanese manufacturers of stereo equipment announced price increases of 4 - 8%, whilst notifying their dealers by internal correspondence that the price increases would be reimbursed in the form of goodwill bonuses.

This price manipulation and a number of other commercial agreements and practices in the leisure electronics sector are currently being examined by the European Commission to see if they are compatible or not with the Community's competition rules.

++ WHISKY AND WINE

Certain Community countries impose higher taxes on Scotch whisky and on imported general grain spirits than on their domestic brands: -

- in Denmark, national products such as akavit and other clear schnapps, have a 42% lower tax burden than imported spirits.
- in France, national products, such as cognac, armagnac and calvados, are taxed 30% less than whisky, for example.
- in Italy, excise duties are six times heavier on cereal spirits than on wine-based spirits such as brandy or grappa.

By contrast, in the United Kingdom, wine is adversely treated, relative to beer, with excise duties five times as high.

These practices constitute infringements of Community free competition rules. Commission efforts over the years to bring about changes have not met with success and it has now approached the European Court of Justice. Cases have been brought against Denmark, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. The Court's judgement will, by analogy, enable the Commission to deal with the alcohol tax problems in other European countries.

++ FARM WORKERS PAY

In the European Community, Danish farm workers are paid the most and their Irish counterparts the least. Lowest farm wages are found amongst non-qualified workers and the Italians are the worst affected, whilst unqualified Danish farm workers find themselves fairly well up the league.

Average gross hourly wage for farm workers in 1976 in European units of account (1 ECU = approx. 1.2 dollars).

<u>Country</u>	<u>Permanent</u>	<u>Permanent un-qualified</u>
Denmark	4.20	3.00
Netherlands	3.40	2.62
Luxembourg	3.39	1.82
Germany	3.13	2.59
Belgium	3.04	2.66
France	2.31	1.91
Italy	1.64	1.33
United Kingdom	1.79	1.54
Ireland	1.53	1.41

++ TARTRAZINE

The European Commission has just requested the Committee for Human Foodstuffs to give its opinion on the dangers in the use of tartrazine (colourant E 102). According to the Committee's opinion, the Commission will decide whether or not to request a ban on its use.

++ EEC - ACP TRADE FLOURISHES

Trade between the European Community and the 53 associated ACP countries from the third world - i.e. from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific - is flourishing:-

- exports from the Nine to these countries increased 27% in 1977 in relation to 1976 and by 54% in relation to 1975.
- imports in 1977 increased 19% in relation to 1976, and 43% in relation to 1975.
- the trade balance which has been in deficit for the Community over the previous two years reached equilibrium in 1977.

Community countries exporting to the ACP countries are, in order of volume, France, United Kingdom and Germany. Italy also has significant export trade with these countries, which has almost doubled in two years (in value terms). The principal clients for the ACP countries are France, followed by Germany and the U.K.

++ LONDON SYMPOSIUM ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste paper, packaging, toxic and dangerous wastes, the re-use of waste in agriculture and use of waste as an energy source are the topics to be discussed at a major European symposium on waste management.

The symposium will be organised by the European Commission in 1980 at the same time and place (London) as the Congress of the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA). The main interest in holding these two conferences together is their complementary nature: the ISWA conference will be, essentially technical, and will bring together participants

from all over the world, while the other will concentrate on waste management in its broad sense and cover the European spectrum.

++ SMOKING (cont.)

A further reaction to the article published in "Euroforum" N° 38/77 entitled "Killer In Every Packet" : the European Confederation of Tobacco Retailers (C.E.D.T.), composed of 500,000 retailers and their families, has called upon all politicians and family organisations "to objectively examine an issue which is being unilaterally exploited to the detriment of consumers and the tobacco sector, and to express strong opposition to the main tenets of the proposed anti-smoking campaign as proposed by the Consumers Consultative Committee". C.E.D.T. regards these tenets as debatable from the scientific, medical and political points of view and judges the economic consequences of the campaign to be intolerable.

++ ABC OF THE CAP

Monetary compensatory amounts, EAGGF guide prices, floor prices, intervention prices - the Euro-jargon in agriculture, can sometimes be baffling, even though, to understand the Community, it is important to be able to unravel and comprehend its common agricultural policy which concerns 9 million farmers and affects 260 million consumers. Things may now be a little easier with the publication of a new book on the CAP by Adrien Ries, principal advisor to the European Commission who works on general economic questions concerning agriculture. His easy-to-understand book entitled "The ABC of the Common Agricultural Policy" is available from Labor- Fernand Nathan publishers (Labor-Nathan, 342 rue Royale, Brussels, (Tel: (32 2) 219 09 19). Or from bookshops, priced at 265 Belgian francs or the equivalent.

++ QUARANTINE FOR ANIMALS ENTERING THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Contrary to what was mentioned in No 29/78 of "Euroforum", the standard period of quarantine for rabies, which affect dogs, cats and most other mammals entering the United Kingdom, is 6 months (NOT 9 months). The Republic of Ireland operates compatible controls regarding quarantine, so that similar anti-rabies policy can be operated throughout the British Isles (Including the Channel Islands).

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MEDICAL RESEARCH : NEW PROPOSALS

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A second medical and public health research programme has just been proposed by the European Commission to the Council of Ministers. Its aim is to share out research work and co-ordinate at the European level all work being undertaken in Member States. The basic objective is to assist Europe's brainpower in resolving a number of urgent medical problems in the shortest possible time.

This new research programme covers five subjects, and each project covers a period of three or four years:

1. Analysis of the increase in attempted suicide amongst young people

In recent years, the mortality rate amongst old people has been declining spectacularly in Europe. By contrast, all Community countries have become concerned at the increase in attempted and successful suicides amongst young people. The cause of this increase is not fully understood - with one exception : excessive prescription and consumption of psychotropic drugs and other tranquilisers which are currently causing an epidemic of overdose cases.

The proposed research programme should enable such drug abuses to be more carefully controlled. They should also enable the effectiveness of the various services who receive persons who have attempted suicide, and identify the other cultural and social factors at work. They should also evaluate the effectiveness of the various preventive services which counsel the persons who attempt suicide and develop techniques for saving those intent on succeeding.

2. Detecting thrombosis

Thrombosis, or the formation of blood clots in blood vessels or the heart, is an important factor in many serious illnesses and deaths. Prevention is essential and timely diagnosis can avoid many a serious or fatal stroke. Research into the nature of thrombosis and the improvement of detection techniques can be accomplished more successfully if European researchers co-ordinate their efforts. Such work requires close multidisciplinary collaboration between specialists and research organisations.

3. Examining and improving hearing problems

More than 250,000 persons in the Community are handicapped by poor hearing. This number is also expected to increase, particularly due to the noisy environment many of us are subjected to. Deafness has always had serious consequences, particularly for children, as it hinders the learning of language and retards mental development. Amongst adults,

even slight hearing difficulties can cause social problems and reduce self confidence. Science has a long way to go in this field however. The results of treatment so far are rather disappointing and correction through early diagnosis is still difficult, and in many cases, impossible. The proposed research programme aims at improving prevention and early diagnosis of deafness and improving treatment techniques. Three years has been proposed for this programme, though this is only an initial phase, after which a new programme will be introduced.

4. Detecting illnesses affecting new-born babies

In Community countries, mortality among new born babies varies between 10-20%, whilst in Sweden the mortality rate is only 9% (1976). On top of this, it has been established that a large number of physically and mentally handicapped are the result of difficult pregnancies. It is essential to extend research into the causes of perinatal depression (what happens before, during and after labour).

Research co-ordinated at the Community level is required to obtain sufficient data on patients and on methods and techniques being used. The four year programme is, once again, only the initial phase of a lengthy project.

5. Better interpretation of electrocardiograms through automation

Cardiac and circulatory illnesses are responsible for 50% of deaths in Western countries. In addition, the after-effects of heart attacks and angina pectoris also result in premature invalidity. Electrocardiographs are a key method of detecting heart problems. More than 50 million electrocardiograph tests were carried out in 1975. Since only a small percentage of cases were detected by the cardiologists, the percentage of error is considerable (estimated at 20-50%).

To reduce the numbers of erroneous interpretations, European and American researchers have been developing programmes for computer analysis of electrocardiograms. Research proposed by the European Commission should permit common measurement criteria to be drawn up, which would facilitate the transition to automation. Not one of the 15 interpretive electrocardiographs currently used in the Community is regarded as satisfactory from the scientific point of view.

This five point research programme will commence on January 1st 1979, if it receives the go ahead from the Council of Ministers and is allocated the appropriate funding to ensure research co-ordination in the Nine. The budget will amount to 2.70 million European units of account (1 EUA = approx. 1.3 U.S. dollars. Costs of re-



search work (37 million EUA) will be borne by the participating countries.

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ENERGY : TAMING THE SUN AND BURNING SEAWEED

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Completing a pilot solar power station being built by a consortium in Sicily, improving techniques for solar heating of homes, studying the use of solar energy in agriculture and industry, perfecting insulating techniques for buildings, experimenting with the conversion of organic residues (straw, wood chippings, seaweed) into "green fuel", - the new research and development programme proposed by the European Commission has plenty to do. The programme demonstrates a new trend of exploring the so-called alternative sources of energy, and intensifying energy savings.

If the Council of Ministers follows the Commission's suggestions, allocations for research into solar energy will be tripled from 17.50 million units of account ( 1 EUA = approx. 1.3 dollars) for the 1975-78 programme, to 58 million EUA for the 1979-83 programme.

Allocations for energy savings research will increase from 11.8 million EUA to 25 million. The budget proposed by the Commission for the new programme (totalling 125 million EUA) will permit the Community to offer several hundred jointly financed contracts to industry, universities and national research institutes in the Nine.

War on energy wastage

In homes and offices, current heating and air conditioning systems cause considerable energy wastage : more than 55%. There are three remedies: - extending building insulation, improving the efficiency of heating systems, equipping homes with thermopumps, using air, water or the ground as a source of heat. In industry, energy losses are as high as 45%. Major economies can be achieved if residual heat is recuperated and reused. The transport sector beats all records for energy wastage. Whilst accounting for 36% of total oil consumption, 83% is simply wasted. To prevent such sizable quantities of hydrocarbons simply vanishing in smoke or exhaust gas, the Commission is proposing to intensify work on the electric car, and to improve the yield of existing engines.

Sun from all directions

Taking energy from the sun instead of our current polluting energy sources is no longer a utopian idea. The research programme drawn up by the European Commission recognises that in the current state of scientific knowledge there are no technical barriers to the future use of solar energy on a large scale in the Community. Scientists are, however, a little behind in their work on solar energy

since most serious work has only been promoted since the oil crisis. Conversion to new technologies in the energy field will take a number of decades in the view of Commission experts.

During its second research programme the Community should try to make up for lost time by constructing a number of prototype installations:

- pilot projects for heating village buildings through solar energy.
- completion of the 1 megawatt helio-electric power station being built at Contrasto, Sicily.
- construction of photovoltaic installations with total power of two megawatts, half in northern and half in southern Europe. One of these power stations could achieve an output of MW whilst in 1977 the maximum unit output was only 20 kilowatts. These photovoltaic cells are even able to convert diffused solar rays. It is the only effective way of producing electricity from the sun when the sky is cloudy - a familiar sight in northern Europe.
- construction of a large windmill.

#### Energy from straw, forests and seaweed

Using wood for fuel is not a very futuristic idea but the projects which interest the Community are not far removed from this. They aim to convert tree trunks or unused wood, or there again, straw or seaweed into liquid or gaseous fuel by way of a number of processes: pyrolysis, gasifications or fermentation of the "biomass". In addition to simply collecting the materials, these biomasses can be cultivated in forests using accelerated rotation, causing the species to grow rapidly in particularly fertile soil, also by way of seaweed farms with suitable conditions (warm water, presence of organic material) can be built to accelerate proliferation.

The pilot project to be promoted by the Commission aims to develop new methods to extract energy from forests which are currently unexploited. The project will cover all stages from the production to conversion into fuel using the most cost-effective cutting techniques.

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## TEXTILES : THREE YEARS BREATHING SPACE

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Europe's clothing and textile industries are in a bad way. And the crisis is having a serious consequence on jobs since the industry employs 10% of wage earners in the Community and has a high proportion of female labour who are being badly affected. The crisis is also serious for the economic balance of the Community since these industries contribute some 8% - in value added terms - to the Community's industrial activity and they work closely with the chemical sectors, mechanical industries and the service sector.

### Low price imports

The crisis has been building up for a number of years due to the low growth in domestic demand and expansion of the textile industry in the Third World. The situation deteriorated sharply in 1974-75 at the point when the "oil crisis" coincided with an expansion of low priced textile imports.

Faced with factory closures and redundancies, the European Commission began negotiating export limitation agreements with low cost textile exporters taking the pressure off Europe's industry until 1982. The industry is to use this breathing space to adapt to the new competitive conditions. Successful adaptation is particularly urgent with the possible arrival of further textile producers - Greece, Portugal and Spain - in the Community.

The European Commission takes the view that the European textile industry needs to use all its trump cards - technology, specialisation and creativity. It's a matter of launching new materials and, in particular, new products suited to changing fashions, particularly in the areas of sport, leisure and furnishings.

### Charting progress

On the other hand, the European Commission considers that a continuous flow of information is a basic essential to ensure success for the industry's efforts. The Commission will soon be introducing a quarterly progress chart for the textile/clothing sector which will be used to update the latest basic data and show the short and medium term trends of factors such as production, employment, foreign trade, domestic demand, etc. The Commission also proposes undertaking regular surveys to obtain information on stocks and final consumption trends. This is the sort of information which small and medium size businesses lack and which is vital to their management policies.

Finally, the Community which is the world's leading textile

and clothing exporter, needs to strengthen its efforts in new markets since domestic demand is weak. Whilst trying to reduce obstacles to international trade, the Community hopes that its trading partners will do the same and it invites Third World countries to diversify their activities rather than concentrate on the textile and clothing sector.

The European Commission proposes to enter into consultations before the end of the year with companies in the textile clothing sector trade unions and governments. Following these discussions, it will make concrete proposals for modernising the sector and getting out of the crisis. The main effort has to come from the enterprises themselves, however, but they should, in the Commission's view, be able to count on support from public authorities.

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