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## europa day by day

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Medicines : some people take more than a spoonful too much. See page 3.

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**++ CONTROLLING THE USE OF DRUGS**

Between 1966 and 1975, the total consumption of pharmaceutical products increased by 67% in the United Kingdom, by 156% in France, 135% in Italy, 80% in Germany, 69% in the Netherlands and 41% in Denmark.

The Community has indeed adopted directives to align measures controlling the marketing of medicines which are not totally safe to public health, but no direct action has been taken at the European level concerning prices, medical practices nor consumer behaviour.

Annex 1 presents details from a report on the consumption of pharmaceuticals drawn up for the European Commission by a British and a French expert.

**++ EUROPE AND THIRD WORLD EXPANSION**

Developing countries are selling more and more of their manufactured goods to industrialised countries and the question is whether this is adversely affecting jobs in Europe.

Experts consulted by the European Commission say no, and maintain that third world imports only have a minor impact on unemployment. Europe must avoid restricting access to its markets for competitive products from the third world - if it doesn't the net result could be dangerous for Europe.

The experts' conclusions are presented in Annex 2.

**++ SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SEMINAR**

At the initiative of the European Commission, five scientific magazines in Europe have set up the "Euroarticles" project to improve the circulation of scientific information throughout the Community.

Annex 3 discusses the round table meeting being organised on the theme "does the scientific and technical education in our schools correspond to the needs of universities and industry"?

**++ THE BIRTH OF EMS**

A success, in as much as it was possible to sort out the details of the European monetary system which will come into operation on January 1st coming. But a limited success, in as much as it would have been preferable to see all nine Community countries in at the start.

This was the conclusion of Roy Jenkins, President of the European Commission following the European Council of the heads of Community governments, December 4 and 5.

"I would have liked to have seen acceptance of a more substantial transfer of resources (to the less prosperous countries)" added Mr. Jenkins "but the transfer of funds envisaged is already considerable .... and I have not given up hope of seeing Italy and Ireland participate in the European monetary system from the very start".

In any case with the Six (without the United Kingdom, Italy and Ireland) or the Eight (without the U.K.), or with all Community countries, the European monetary system will be introduced on January 1st, 1979. EMS is born and endowed with a European fund of 25 billion ecu (1 ecu = 70 pence or BF 40) as a sign of Community solidarity to support European currencies.

1 ecu = approx DM 2.5, FL 2.7, FF 6, DKr 7, Lire 1120, F Lux 40.

#### **++ POOR PEOPLE IN EUROPE**

Identifying the "threshold of poverty" i.e. the income level below which a family is classified as poor, is the objective of the study which the Commission has requested from the Research Centre for Public Economics at the University of Leyden (Netherlands).

Research will be carried out in the form of a questionnaire which will be added to the major "consumer survey" to be made in October 1979. The results which are expected before the end of 1980 will permit the Community to better organise work to combat poverty in the Nine.

Besides identifying the poverty line, the survey will also provide data on:

- income distribution in the Nine;
- the number of families below the poverty line;
- a quantitative estimate of the seriousness of poverty;
- an indication of the causes and distribution of poverty;
- the impact of social assistance in the Nine.

**++ SPAIN AND THE EEC**

The entry of Spain (into the European Community) represents for the Community an important test of its capacity to strengthen itself or conversely to dilute its strength, or even worse to pull itself apart, stated Mr. Lorenzo Natali, Commissioner responsible for enlargement negotiations for the three candidate countries.

The Commission has just presented its opinion on the entry of Spain and has stated that it welcomes the prospect of seeing a democratic Spain joining the Nine.

The Commission has not forgotten the economic and social difficulties which would be involved in integrating Spain into the Community. The Commission also recognises the need for a transition period sufficiently long (determined case by case and sector by sector) during which measures could be introduced to ensure a smooth integration of Spain into the Europe of the Nine.

**++ CRICKET ALERT**

Together with drought, famine, and crop eating insects, mice and birds, crickets are one of the endless plagues of Africa. When a cloud of crickets descends on fields and trees, no blade of grass nor twig remains. In recent years swarms of locusts have met their match in the pest control specialists who predict insect movements and destroy the insects before they take to the air and cause havoc. But this year these "cowboys of the sky" have not been able to operate as planned due to the war in East Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea). In 1978 the cricket invasion has consequently been the worst on record for 16 years in five ACP countries linked to the Community : Ethiopia, Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya.

To counter the agricultural damage in these countries, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has introduced an emergency programme costing more than 2.5 million European units of account (1 EUA = + 1.3 dollars). The European Commission has decided to participate financially in the programme to the extent of 1.3 million EUA. Together with the contributions from four European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands and the United Kingdom) the Community's contribution will cover 70% of the cost of the programme.

**++ UNCOORDINATED THIRD WORLD INVESTMENT**

The Commission has been sounding the alarm over the fact that certain developing countries intend to considerably

increase production in sectors which are already saturated - a course of action which could threaten the profitability of their exports and cause problems in the European and world markets.

One of the reasons for this is the lack of coordination that exists between the various financial assistance measures in existence which aim to encourage industrial investment in developing countries.

In a report to the Council of Ministers, the European Commission cites one particularly alarming example, that of sugar cane. Between 1976 and 1978 world production of unrefined sugar rose from under 83 million tonnes to 92.5 million tonnes. Consumption is not sufficient to absorb this output and final stocks have risen from 20 to 30 million tonnes. Prices (world, free market) have slid over the same period from 274 EUA (1 EUA =  $\pm$  1.3 dollars) per tonne to 130.6 EUA per tonne.

Despite the serious structural surplus which is causing the substantial drop in prices, 14 ACP countries (African, Caribbean, Pacific) linked to the Community through the Lome Convention plan to increase production considerably. Investment in course or envisaged by 1981 in the 55 ACP countries shows that:

- the quantities of sugar available for export in ACP countries will increase from the current 2 million tonnes to 3 million tonnes;
- two thirds of these investment projects will receive public or private support from Community countries.

In the sugar sector, for example, the Commission proposes that greater coordination be organised for all actions involving direct or indirect support. In general terms, the Commission has brought the Council's attention to the danger that certain policies may encourage industrial investment in developing countries and that this may not be compatible with the Community's responsibility to its third world partners.

#### ++ COMMUNITY DIALOGUE WITH INDUSTRY

Industry in the European Community provides jobs for close on 41% of the Community's working population (as against 28.9% in the USA and 35.8% in Japan) which underlines the importance of having an effective dialogue between industry and Community institutions.

Some twenty years ago, European industry set up UNICE - the Union of Industries of the European Community - to fulfil this need.

To mark its 20th anniversary, UNICE organised on December 7th a "European day" on the theme "Enterprise needs Europe, Europe needs enterprise". Some 500 heads of industry were able to witness a dialogue between the European Commission and representatives from industry in the form of a debate introduced by Mr. Guido Carli, president of the Confederazione Generale dell' Industria Italiana. The discussions enabled President of the European Commission, Mr. Roy Jenkins and Commissioners Ortoli, Vredeling and Davignon to reply to questions and sometimes criticisms from the presidents of European industrial associations concerning Community policies (economic, social and industrial).

The German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt - acting President of the Council of Ministers - also spoke before Mr. Provost, the president of UNICE closed the proceedings : a day marked by the willingness of European Industry to be fully associated with the construction of Europe.

#### ++ STEEL FORECASTS FOR 1979

The Community's advisory committee on coal and steel, which represents producers, trade unions and users, has declared itself unanimously in agreement with the forward steel programme drawn up by the European Commission. Crude steel production in the Community is set at 34.1 million tonnes for the first quarter 1979. During the third quarter 1978 31.46 million tonnes were produced.

#### ++ DIRECT ELECTIONS POSTER COMPETITION

Eight large-circulation women's magazines in the European Community have simultaneously publicised a competition open to their readers, to find the best electoral poster on the theme "Women and the election of the European Parliament". To the list of magazines published in Euroforum N° 41/78, should be added the Belgian magazine "Het Rijk der Vrouw".

#### ++ EUROPE OF TWELVE

"A Community of twelve? The impact of the new enlargement on the European Communities" : this was the theme of a colloquium held at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium, last march. The proceedings of the colloquium have just

been published in English and French and are available at a cost of BF 900. Orders should be sent to : College of Europe, Dyver 11, B-8000 Brugge.

The document presents the contributions of European officials and independent experts and speakers from the candidate countries, and contains summaries of the discussions and debates.

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### CONTROLLING THE USE OF DRUGS

Between 1966 and 1975 total consumption of pharmaceuticals increased by almost 67% in the United Kingdom, by 156% in France, 135% in Italy, 80% in Germany, 69% in the Netherlands and 41% in Denmark. Apart from the adverse health implications, the financial burden on national health budgets is now substantial.

A number of interests are at stake in this sector and this forces the public authorities to keep a close watch. The sector provides many jobs and is in some cases, a source of foreign exchange. On the other hand the sector is backed by strong pressure groups.

Measures to limit or control consumption of pharmaceuticals in Community countries have up until now been dictated by local situations and attitudes which frequently diverge considerably from one country to another. Generally speaking these measures have not had the anticipated effects.

The opening up of the frontiers between Community countries also poses the short term risk of reducing the protective ability of national health legislation. Action at the Community level is consequently more than desirable.

These are the main conclusions of a report on "Pharmaceuticals consumption" drawn up for the European Commission by Mr. B. Abel-Smith of the London School of Economics and Mr. P. Grandjean, adviser at the "Cours des Comptes" in Paris. The report (not yet available to the public) reflects the views of its authors and not necessarily those of Community institutions.

### A spoonful too much

According to Mr. Abel-Smith and Mr. Grandjean, the increased consumption of medicines in Community countries is due to the following factors:

- increased longevity of the population;
- increase in production and distribution costs combined with the replacement of old medicines with new more expensive varieties;

- extension of health insurance schemes and, in the case of Italy, the transfer of part of the population from the reimbursement system to a direct indemnity system;
- progressive changes in types of illnesses and methods of treatment;
- increase in the number of medical consultations and medicines prescribed by doctors;
- increased selling effort by the pharmaceuticals industry directed at doctors.

Each of the elements has a different importance in individual countries. In Luxembourg for instance, it has been calculated that around 40% of the increase results from price rises and the cost of replacing old medicines by new medicines, and 60% is due to the increase in the quantity of medicines prescribed. In Italy and France, the increase in the number and the cost of prescriptions is the most significant factor, whilst in the United Kingdom there has been a greater increase in the price index for pharmaceuticals than elsewhere.

In countries where forecasts have been made, it appears that the average increase in medicine consumption (in France for example) between 1975 and 1980 will be between 9 and 11%. In the United Kingdom public expenditure on medicines should increase by 27% over the same period.

The wide divergence in the quantities of medicines prescribed per head each year (varying from 4.5 in the Netherlands to 21 in Italy) can be explained in the main by the different medicine cost structures in these countries. The authors of the report have also confirmed that the quantity of medicines prescribed per person is lower in the three countries where doctors are not directly paid by the patient than in the four countries where they are.

In relation to the total cost of medical care, the cost of medicine amounted to one third of total expenditure in Italy, one quarter in France and less than a fifth in other countries. In the United Kingdom the percentage was even lower at 14% and in Denmark 11%. In relation to national income, pharmaceuticals consumption costs amount to about 1-2%.

#### Health guarantees

Measures taken in Member States to guide the pharmaceuticals sector have been governed by two major concerns the report maintains:

- to exercise control from the health standpoint;
- to influence the costs and volume of consumption so as to reduce public expenditure.

On the health side the principal concern has been to control the marketing of drugs and to ensure that sensible use is made of the products actually put on the market.

Community efforts to align national legislation have concentrated on the quality control guarantees needed before marketing medicaments. The three Community directives which have come into force aim to make guarantees for public health comparable in all Nine Community countries, with a view to eliminating obstacles to the free movement of pharmaceutical products.

The first European directive sets down marketing authorisation procedures and the labelling requirements for specialty pharmaceuticals.

The second directive lays down authorisation procedures for marketing medicines in more than one country and the inspection and quality norms necessary for authorisation.

To facilitate cooperation between the competent authorities in each country, the directive specifies the creation of a committee for specialty pharmaceuticals which gives its opinions on authorisations for marketing in several countries.

The third directive sets down uniform regulations for testing products being marketed, drawing up files and examining marketing authorisation requests.

The introduction of a body of regulations on the Community scale helps ensure that national legislation is able to protect public health. In addition, the simplification of controls and procedures should help produce substantial savings over production and marketing costs for medicines.

No direct action, however, has been taken at the Community level concerning prices, medical practices, or consumer behaviour, and there are still considerable disparities between Member States. The laws of the market in this sector only have an indirect effect and a reduction in production costs can only have a limited impact on medicine expenditure and therefore on the financial problems of national health schemes.

A study of national policies over the last ten years shows that public authorities have tried to intervene with obligatory measures to influence the two elements of cost : prices and the volume of consumption.

#### Price limits

Pharmaceutical prices are not totally free in any Community country. The "price framework" comes into action:

##### at the production level:

- by fixing ex-factory prices and the prices of packaging;
- by 'a posteriori' control of profits;
- or by limiting publicity expenditure and the distribution of samples which has an influence on selling prices.

##### at the different marketing stages

- retailers in practically all countries are subject to a single compulsory profit market for all products or homogeneous categories of products;
- certain countries voluntarily restrict the possibility to create new pharmacies to ensure that existing pharmacies earn sufficient income.

The two experts stress however that the desire to retain a certain amount of liberalism in such an economically important sector has always prevailed in pricing policies, inspired by the concern to limit public social security costs.

#### Consumption restrictions

To reduce the quantities of medicines consumed by patients, certain European countries have taken action to reduce the length of treatment or possibilities for renewing prescriptions.

##### Action taken so far consists of:

- drawing up a limited list of products which will be reimbursed or paid for directly;
- taking sanctions against doctors who systematically prescribe expensive and non-indispensable medicines.

Action by Member States is limited by the fact that over-restrictive measures can easily be interpreted as an attack on individual liberty by the medical profession, by pharmacists or by consumers, and this can consequently make any action unpopular.

Action by public authorities has also been very timid.

They can act directly:

- by increasing the proportion of cost for the patient;
- by encouraging health and social education programmes to make all interested parties aware of the economic problems.

or act indirectly:

- by informing doctors or applying economic pressure on them and by removing "piece work" payment (as is found in countries such as Belgium);
- by introducing a system for educating and monitoring patients.

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## EUROPE AND THIRD WORLD EXPANSION

The industrialised countries are buying more and more goods from the developing countries and in terms of imports this represents (in billion dollars):

### Imports from non-oil exporting developing countries:

|                  | <u>1972</u> | <u>1976</u> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| to the USA       | 11.65       | 27.60       |
| to Japan         | 5.21        | 13.95       |
| to the Community | 13.75       | 30.93       |

### Imports from oil exporting developing countries

|                  |       |       |
|------------------|-------|-------|
| to the USA       | 2.69  | 25.01 |
| to Japan         | 4.57  | 21.85 |
| to the Community | 13.23 | 46.27 |

Developing countries are therefore becoming increasingly important economic partners. They are no longer limiting themselves to selling raw materials in return for manufactured goods. From 1972 to 1976 the total value of manufactured goods sold by non-oil exporting third world countries to industrialised countries increased on average:

- by 24.8% for goods sold to the USA;
- by 39.5% for goods sold to Japan;
- by 32.6% for goods sold in the Community.

### Closing frontiers?

In the new international division of labour which is coming about, the European Community still occupies (for the moment) a privileged position. It is the main exporter of manufactured goods to the developing countries and at the same time is not threatened to the same extent as the USA or Japan by competition from third world goods. But this situation could change rapidly.

The Community has to avoid the temptation of restricting access to its market for competitive products from developing countries. Such a solution could be dangerous for Europe. It

would harm its own competitive position towards other industrialised countries and cut its own supply of low priced semi-finished or finished products from the third world. On the other hand it would run the risk of shutting off the most dynamic parts of the third world market. The alternative to protectionism is to readjust the structure of European industry and make it more competitive. This reorganisation would imply transferring factors of production from stagnant or declining industrial sectors to those with a more promising outlook.

#### Factors of change

To what can we attribute the growing competitive capacity of the industrialising third world? Too often the role of multinational companies has been overestimated : in 1972 of all foreign private investment in developing countries only 10% was directed towards the use of cheap labour for export goods.

The strategies of the developing countries have changed. Four main strategies can now be identified:

- exploitation of energy resources (by oil-producing countries) and raw materials;
- production of goods for mass-consumption in industrialised countries (by countries in south east Asia);
- industrial sub-contracting work (several southern Mediterranean countries);
- increased interest in external markets by countries with a long tradition of industrialisation and which formerly did not need to import (India, Brazil).

In the future industrialised countries should examine the complementarity between their new forms of expansion and the industrial development of developing countries. For Europe, in particular, this implies that its industrial direction should be systematically "confronted" with that of its third world partners.

#### Reduce unemployment

Increasing imports from third world countries are thought by many to be likely to increase unemployment in industrialised countries. Experts consulted by the European Commission take the opposite point of view and consider that competition from developing countries can only have a minor impact. It should not be forgotten that industrial employment in the

Community started to stagnate back in 1965 and has even deteriorated since 1973. Also, since 1973 the slow down in the creation of new jobs in the service sector has reduced its ability to compensate for jobs lost in industry which have accelerated since the beginning of the recession.

Other factors have helped aggravate the problems of jobs, in particular:

- the substitution of labour by machines ;
- the concentration of production facilities;
- changes in demand;
- increase in the supply of labour (population changes have brought more young people onto the job market), etc.

On the other hand external demand - that in the developing countries - has been an important element to sustain industrial activity and has enabled the cutback in jobs to be limited.

Taking the United Kingdom as an example, job losses between 1970 and 1975 have been examined in those sectors most threatened by third world competition and the results showed that only 0.05% of jobs lost in the textile sector (fibres) are attributable to this competition, and only 0.4% in the shoe industry, 0.8% in cotton fabrics and 1.7% in clothing.

By contrast the real problem is the negative job impact of the new international division of labour which is concentrated on certain categories of jobs, companies and regions whilst the positive effects are dispersed more widely geographically and are forcing European workers to change industrial sectors, and sometimes even their profession.

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SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SEMINAR

Keeping up to date with scientific and technical developments is no easy business, but the problems involved are nothing to do with the media. Europe possesses a large number of specialised publications; some are 'super technical', others are of more general interest aimed at a wider audience. Without the time available for reading, and without perhaps the linguistic ability to read further afield, the European scientist can find it difficult to keep up with events in the European Community. A French scientist may read for example "La Recherche" and perhaps Britain's "Endeavour", but there is little chance he would read comparable publications in Germany, Italy or the Netherlands.

To improve the circulation of scientific information throughout Community countries the "Euroarticles" project was launched last year on the initiative of the European Commission together with the following five European publications:

- "Endeavour" in the U.K.
- "Umschau in Wissenschaft und Technik" in Germany
- "La Recherche" in France
- "Annuario della Enciclopedia della Scienza e della Tecnica" published by Mondadori in Italy
- "Natuur en Techniek" in the Netherlands

Collectively this group decides twice a year on subjects to be dealt with in common, and which scientific personalities should edit the articles. The articles are then published in the five magazines in their own language with the European Commission taking care of translations. The aim of the operation is to offer the European audience (currently more than 200 000 readers) subjects of particular interest and thereby develop European identity in the scientific field.

In addition to articles written by specialists, the members of the 'Euroarticles' project distribute dossiers drawn up at round table in-depth discussions. This year two such round table meetings have been held, one on energy problems (energy savings, and the conservation of energy resources) and the other on rural planning. A third will be held in Luxembourg, April 6 1979, on "Scientific and technical education" - currently a very topical problem in the Community. Eminent experts from various Community countries will be requested to examine whether the education given in our schools corresponds to the needs of universities and colleges who in turn educate those individuals who will hold the key posts in industry.

This round table meeting on scientific and technical education will be an occasion for the European Commission to invite journalists working in this field to a seminar on scientific education in Europe and the problems of scientific and technical communication in general.

The journalists present will have the possibility of participating in the round table. They will be given an expose on Community research programmes and on the means of distributing information and the participants will have the opportunity to consult "Euroabstracts" - the automated data bank which gives direct access to the results of these programmes. A sketch of the way the Community has tried to overcome linguistic barriers to communication will also be given (in particular the development of automated translation). Participants will also be able to consult the automated dictionary "Eurodicautom" - a translation aid used daily by the Commission's services - which will soon be made available to other users. Finally, discussion will turn to the "Euronet" system for giving "on line" access to scientific information in Europe.

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