

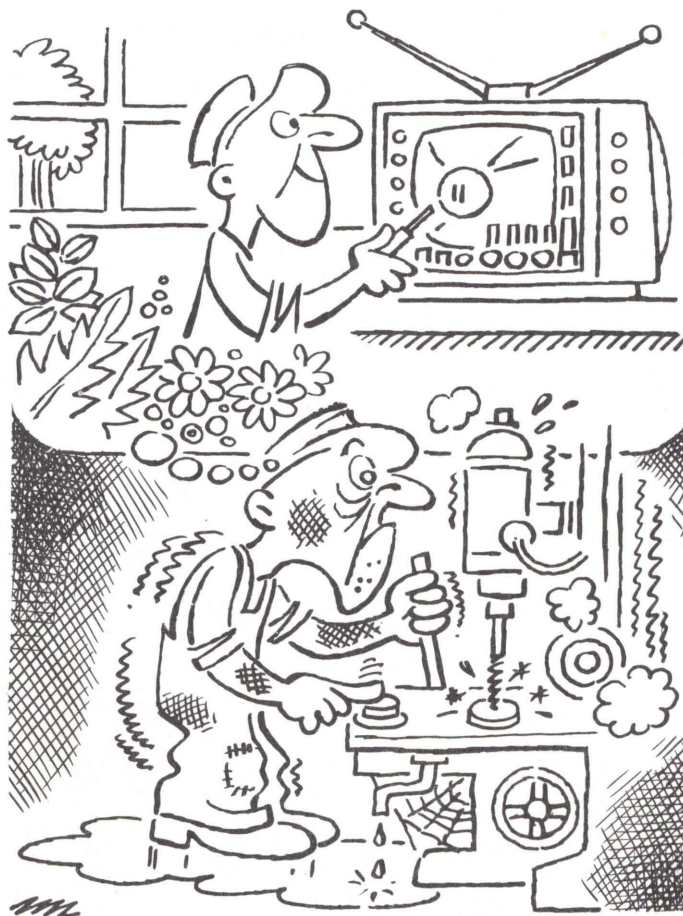
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** The European Commission held a Conference in Brussels from 5 - 7 November on the threefold topic of WORK ORGANIZATION, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND MOTIVATION OF PEOPLE (see I&S No 40/74).

ANNEX 1 summarizes some of the main ideas and practical proposals which emerged.

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The information published in this bulletin covers the European Communities' activities in the fields of industrial development, protection of the environment and consumer welfare. It is therefore not limited to recording Commission decisions or opinions.

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** The majority of Belgians (61.3%) feel that the EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOES NOT DO MUCH ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT and almost half of the population (47.1%) feels IT SHOULD DO MORE. These are the findings of a survey carried out on a representative cross-section of 1 500 people by the Institut belge d'information et de documentation (Belgian institute of information and documentation). The aim was to try to define the "attitude to the environment" in Belgium.

ANNEX 2 gives details of the results.

** OVER 125 000 DWELLINGS FOR MINERS AND IRON AND STEEL WORKERS have been built or modernized with the help of Community finance. The Commission has just authorized a further grant of 25 million units of account (1 u.a. = approx. US \$1) for the first phase of a building programme for 1975/76. If the Council's opinion goes in favour of this eighth housing programme, the total amount granted by the Community towards the building of such dwellings will rise to 178 million units of account.

See ANNEX 3 for details.

** Presenting to the press the new proposals for an energy policy, which the European Commission has just forwarded to the Council of Ministers of the Community, Mr Simonet, Vice-President of the Commission, made the following points: "We are living at a time when we have to make choices. The first concern of every government is the impact on economic and monetary policy of the ENERGY crisis which is now beginning to make itself fully felt in our countries. Major steps have been taken to generate the will to find solutions both in the oil consuming countries, and through establishing a dialogue with the producer countries. Confident of its unique character and potential, Europe has a duty to itself to be present at this dialogue. And that means making choices."

The first document involved establishes the Community energy policy OBJECTIVES FOR 1985. It is a case of increasing Community oil independence by every possible means. The Commission feels therefore that the best way to ensure energy supplies in the future is to rely to a large extent on nuclear energy, keep up coal production, increase coal imports, practically stabilize crude oil consumption, and make more use of natural gas. The Commission has also proposed that the Council of Ministers adopt a Community action programme on the RATIONAL USE OF ENERGY. Implementation of the programme could lead by 1985 to a saving of 15% of Community needs, which means some 240 million tons of oil equivalent. In the domestic and tertiary sector, the programme calls for more effective thermal insulation, regulated ventilation, better regulated heating, improvements in furnace burners and heating systems' maintenance, plus improved performance in heating equipment and installations.

In the transport sector, the programme provides for optimum ignition timing and carburettor setting for vehicles, improved vehicle construction, and the promotion of diesel engines, and of public transport. A third document shows that the Commission intends to guarantee Community supplies of NUCLEAR FUELS at reasonable prices, taking account of the fact that demand for these fuels in the next decade will rocket. Finally, the Commission has adopted guidelines for a Community ELECTRICITY policy. The aim is to ensure that electricity makes the maximum contribution to the economy and security of the Community's energy supplies.

** At the beginning of the autumn EMPLOYMENT difficulties in the Community became more acute. In all the member countries the seasonally adjusted number of unemployed has risen further in recent months. The unemployment rate changes from 2.4% in Germany to 6.6% in Denmark. In most countries it is around 3%. Also, the rise in consumer PRICES again accelerated in most Community countries. Compared with the same period a year ago, the rate of increase in consumer prices was between 23% in Italy and 7.3% in Germany. INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY in the Community has stabilized at a high level. The capital goods and basic materials industries in particular are still running near capacity.

** The Consumers' Industrial Information Service has commissioned a study on NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH AN INTEREST IN THE ENVIRONMENT, in the Community countries. The study will make it possible to answer two outstanding questions: "Who does what?" at non-governmental level in Europe, in the field of environment, and "Who wants what?" by way of information on the environment, as supplied by the European Commission. The results of the survey will help to make information better adapted to user requirements. The Consumers' Industrial Information Service and the editors of "Industry and Society" are interested in any additional information concerning such non-governmental organizations. Lists of addresses, catalogues, directories, and membership lists of federations of associations, or of international associations would be very welcome.

** In Europe, as in all industrialized countries during the last few years, the COST OF LIVING has risen sharply. The following table gives a summary of retail price increases in the European Community. Using the general price index OVERALL TRENDS IN CONSUMER PRICES since 1970, in the different member countries, can be compared. Indices for the products chiefly responsible for the general price increase are also shown.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX IN AUGUST 1974 (1970 = 100)

	Germany	France	Italy	Nether- lands	Belgium	Luxem- bourg	United Kingdom	Ire- land	Den- mark
General index	128	139	150	139	136	129	150	157	144
Bread	134	144	155	143	144	139		165	157
Meat	121	141	155	125	128	128	179	173	144
Milk, butter, cheese	124	141	150	131	123	125	125	162	145
Fruit and vegetables	132	148	151	125	118	121		179	139
Rent and water	126	132	107	139		133	145	136	137
Clothing and shoes	130	135	151	146	133	129	149	210	206
Household appliances	123	130	146	125	125	118	137	160	141
Fuel and energy	148	162	147	147	149	126	150	210	206
Services	133	139	145	156	147	137		152	146

** It is up to each government to introduce the measures necessary to ensure that LOW QUALITY RETREAD TYRES (sometimes known as "killer tyres"), which are solely for use on agricultural vehicles to be driven at a maximum of 30 kph, are not fitted to motor cars. However, a directive on new tyres intended for motor cars is being drafted by the Commission's departments. Its provisions will apply to 90% of all tyre production. Other types of tyres, such as retreads and snow tyres, will be included at a later stage, if necessary.

** In LUXEMBOURG several events have occurred in recent months on the CONSUMER PROTECTION front. The following article has been sent to us by the ULC (Union des consommateurs luxembourgeois = Luxembourg consumer's union).

- (i) The Head of the Luxembourg Government has unreservedly admitted that the excessive price increases on the Luxembourg market, brought about by the activities of firms with head offices outside the country, are unacceptable, not to say intolerable. The Head of the Government has proposed that the ULC set up a working party, including government representatives, to draft proposals for measures to remedy the situation quickly.

- (ii) In the matter of controlling food products, the Minister of Health and Environmental Matters has pledged his full support, and if necessary even financial support, for ULC projects.
- (iii) Contacts with the Ministry of Education, initiated by the ULC, have had encouraging results, and the ULC education working party will now have to go all out, in the coming weeks and months, to develop the various lessons and teaching aids on consumer protection, which it has devised, and which the Ministry of Education hopes to include in educational programmes.
- (iv) With regard to income tax levied on wage earners and salaried staff, and consumer credit, the Minister of Finance has accorded favourable consideration to the ULC's proposals. In this field too, therefore, something should be achieved in the near future, especially as regards the possibility of deducting, from taxable income, subsistence allowances, and the cost of transport to place of work, as well as exemptions for special expenses arising in households where both husband and wife are out at work.
- (v) Finally, as a protest against the large increase in compulsory car insurance premiums, Luxembourg motorists, launched "Operation snail", initiated by the ULC and the Luxembourg Automobile Club. They disrupted traffic in the capital for one hour, by driving at 10 kph.

** Two German fruit importers have been acquitted by a Frankfurt court, although they imported FRUIT TREATED WITH large doses of health-endangering PESTICIDES, from France. This case illustrates the problems created by the regulation guaranteeing the purity of foodstuffs. The Commission, cooperating with experts from Member States, has begun study of a large number of methods which will be duly submitted for the opinion of the various regulating committees of the Member States. It is particularly difficult to keep track of pesticides, since treatment is carried out on the growing plant, and does not necessarily mean that residues are present in the fruit when it is harvested; again, when such residues are present, their chemical composition may differ from that of the pesticides used. In these circumstances, a declaration by the exporter, describing the chemical products used in treating fruit, might not tally with the type and quantity of pesticide residues actually found on the fruit. However, in the matter of ensuring that Community Regulations are applied, the Commission will not relax its efforts to organizing effective control. A directive fixing maximum percentages for pesticide residues, on and in fruit and vegetables, has already been adopted by the six original members of the Community. It still awaits adoption by the three new Member States.

** The following publications are on sale at the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Case Postale 1003, Luxembourg, in the series "Environment and the Quality of Life".

- Etudes de différentes pollutions constatées dans le Bassin Rhénan
- Les problèmes de pollution associées à la production de bioxyde de titane (French only)
- Nitrogen oxide emissions from energy generation within the EEC: 1970-1985 (English only)
- Literaturstudie über die ökonomischen Konsequenzen der Schäden und Belästigungen, die durch die Luftverschmutzung durch Schwefeldioxyd sowohl bei Materialien und der Vegetation als auch bei Mensch und Tier hervorgerufen werden (German).

A NEW WORK CODE

What with the crisis, inflation, deflation and unemployment, we may well ask whether this is the best time to talk about improving working conditions. Is it not something of a luxury in hard times? One view, strongly expressed, is that, on the contrary, improving working conditions is not a luxury but a necessity. European society now admits that, whatever the circumstances, we must accord priority to matters concerning the quality of life. And work, which takes up so much of our time, is a major part of the life which we want to improve, in spite of circumstances.

Experiments cited by various people during the Conference on "Work Organization, Technological Development and Motivation of People" all have one thing in common - they show that we must not be afraid to take risks. To achieve improved working conditions we will have to go through a long period of successive readjustments, corrections, real setbacks and partial successes.

The governments of the Member States of the Community have already set up various institutions to try to cope. These may be information, research or experimental bodies, depending on conditions. They may take the form of a tripartite committee liaising with the Ministry of Labour, as in Great Britain; or of a specialized national agency, as in France; or extend the activities of an existing body, as in the case of the Belgian productivity office.

The huge research programme on humanizing work, launched in May 1974 by the Federal Republic of Germany, should also be classed as a government initiative, aiming, as it does, to provide a solid foundation for the objectives described in the 1972 law on works' councils.

Despite the interest shown by governments, States - which are themselves large-scale employers - have introduced scarcely any measures to improve working conditions. This is because, like any other organized body, the State is undecided as to what is already being termed the "new work code". Similarly, one can understand the hesitations of the social groups in the face of such radical change - trade unions, accustomed to social strife - are ill-prepared for the idea of cooperation; while employers, concerned over productivity, cannot imagine introducing a "quality of life" item into their annual report and accounts. In this protracted process everyone will perforce have to fight as much against his own preconceived ideas as against those of the opposition.

Can the Community possibly undertake to alter people's mental outlook and behaviour? Can we imagine Commission, Parliament and Council of Ministers discussing a directive on mental outlook and behaviour?

Every summit meeting of Heads of State and governments has been an occasion for conjuring up boundless prospects. Why should a "new work code" not have a place among them, since the

Community's role is precisely to help our society to adapt itself to these changing times? The concern remains the same throughout - although the guise is different - in defining employment policy, vocational training, social security, the right to work, or industrial health and hygiene. In this connection, we already know that a draft paper on the "European Foundation for Improving Living and Working Conditions" is due to be submitted to the Council of Ministers in December 1974 (see IRT No 213).

When the Foundation comes into being, it will probably make a detailed study of the Swedish experiment involving an investment fund to improve the working environment. Use of such a fund raises many problems - public money must not go to pay for errors of management. And how do we calculate the cost of an experiment?

If companies receiving aid from this financial source are expected to repay their debt to the fund, it may be possible to avoid a situation where management regards improving working conditions as an uneconomic proposition. Experience indicates that carefully thought out improvements are not a wasted investment. But to provide the proof, managers would have to open their ledgers.

Besides, profit and loss balance-sheets are not the only things involved. It has been proposed that the statute of the new European company should include an obligation to draw up a "social" balance-sheet. This would show the increase or decrease in accidents at work, the incidence of vocational diseases, the percentage of absenteeism, temperature and noise charts for the shop floor, and the activities of the company's social services.

Without going as far as to invoke the Ten Commandments, we can conceive of a kind of "good conduct code" being drawn up as regards working conditions. Such a code, clearly and graphically produced, would touch not only on health and safety rules, but also on human relations, mutual respect, and the art of not calling those who are keen, simply "over-enthusiastic".

The American magazine, Fortune, we know, awards a prize to the company that makes the highest profits, in proportion to the capital invested. It might be possible to envisage an annual prize, to reward, not necessarily the most expensive, but at least the most imaginative effort to improve the quality of life at the work place.

Technical or university education does little to prepare workers or engineers to exercise their critical faculties constructively at their place of work. On the contrary, everything conspires to the one end: to "fit them in", with little or no reference to the fact that conditions never stop changing.

On the basis of this discovery, the training of technicians, engineers and even accountants is being reexamined. It would be quite useful to teach each group how much its work affects the work of others. Recent industrial action has demonstrated how susceptible employees are to the behaviour of the "under-bosses", foremen or overseers. On another level, it would be useful to include in engineering courses material on working conditions, ergonomics and social relations.

A further step could be taken by machine manufacturers, particularly those making machine tools. A meeting between manufacturers and users would probably bring out various potential improvements, covering such matters as safety, noise, cleanliness and access to controls. Manufacturers would no doubt be surprised in addition, to learn that most customers would really appreciate improvements requested only by a few of the more demanding.

Nor can working conditions begin to be improved without the support of work councils. The rules of these councils vary greatly however from country to country. At an early date therefore, the European Commission should draw up a model acceptable to all of them. But, inevitably, harmonization of the rights of works councils throughout Europe will be the outcome - reason indicates it and the activities of multinational companies demand it.

THE BELGIANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The majority of Belgians (61.3%) feel that the European Community does not do much about the environment, and almost half of the population (47.1%) feels it should do more. These are the findings of an enquiry conducted on a representative cross-section of 1 500 people by the institut belge d'information et de documentation (Belgian institut of information and documentation). The aim was to try to define the "attitude to the environment" in Belgium.

According to the survey men, office workers, university staff and the inhabitants of medium-sized towns are the ones who feel most strongly that the Community should do more about the environment. Businessmen and those living in large towns, on the other hand, tend to see such problems as the internal concern of each country.

In order of importance, the Belgian public fears:

- nature-damage
- having little say in public affairs
- the increased pace of living
- backwardness in social facilities
- lack of work, business going badly
- poverty.

At European level, air pollution and the quality of water are seen as the big environmental problems. These seem to make the Belgian population conscious of the European, rather than the national, scale of the problem.

On the other hand, although a quarter of those questioned were undecided, most who did give an opinion felt that their mode of life would remain unchanged. People who felt things were going to change were divided equally between those expecting a change for the better, and those expecting conditions to worsen but the pessimists had a slight edge.

The prevalent feeling expressed in face of the changes involved is one of powerlessness. Most of those who felt "capable of doing something" were under fifty, office workers, university staff or the better off.

As for the place occupied by environmental problems in social communications, most of the public felt that the press, radio and TV did not give environmental problems sufficient coverage. Yet it was the general opinion that environmental protection was first and foremost a matter of informing and educating the public more thoroughly, rather than of imposing stricter laws.

Finally, the idea of limiting economic growth (a recent concept which might be thought to be limited to certain intellectual circles) found a favourable echo among one third of those covered by the survey.

The complete results can be obtained from INBEL, 3 rue Montoyer, 1040 Brussels.

DWELLINGS FOR MINERS AND IRON AND STEEL WORKERS

Over 125 000 dwellings for miners and iron and steel workers have been built or modernized with the help of Community finance. The Commission has just authorized a further grant of 25 million units of account (1 u.a. = approx. US \$1) for the first phase of a building programme for 1975/76. If the Council's opinion goes in favour of this housing programme, the total amount granted by the Community towards the building of such dwellings will rise to 178 million units of account.

1. Towards a reorganized programme

The Community's housing programmes for miners and iron and steel workers were originally set up in response to the general housing shortage, and have at a later stage helped the ECSC industries through an increasingly difficult period of reorganization. For example, the movement of iron and steel industries to the coast would have been impossible if there had not been a simultaneous programme of construction of new housing in the vicinity of such new iron and steel complexes as IJmuiden in the Netherlands, Bremen in Germany, Taranto in Italy and Fos and Dunkirk in France.

These programmes have now been extended to include housing for migrant workers and the handicapped, as well as special experimental projects involving the application of new techniques in the field of construction and architecture.

In those housing projects already completed in the nine Member States, with the aid of long-term 1% interest loans the loan has generally covered 20% of the cost. The amount and geographical distribution of appropriations depends on the level of activity of the relevant coal or steel industries, and on the requests made by different regional authorities to the Community.

2. Experiments in building materials

Under these programmes the Community has contributed financially towards experiments aimed at encouraging research into new types of social housing. Innovative projects have been completed in the six founder States, and a Community-wide architectural competition was organized. The aim was to reduce costs, speed up construction and improve the quality of social housing by using modern prefabricated components. The results of these experiments were then made public, so that they could be used in national housing construction programmes. Future experiments in building will probably emphasize thermal insulation techniques and energy saving.

To date, 1 000 separate family units have been completed by the Community, with a view to promoting the increased use of steel as a building material. A programme involving 2 000 units for multi-occupation included the use of standardized steel parts. In a further programme

involving five sites in five different countries, each comprising 400 dwellings, the aim was to adapt construction to plans covering all the needs of the community living there, and to anticipate in these models, the social housing of 20 years hence, when social progress enables workers to improve their mode living.