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EUROPE AGAINST CANCER: A matter of public concern

"Your health is in your hands" and together we, in Europe, can halve the incidence of cancer by changing our way of life. This was the message given to the press by Prof. Tubiana, one of the twelve cancer specialists invited to Brussels on January 24 by the European Commission. The twelve, one from each member state, have been asked by the Commission to prepare a report for the twelve governments on the measures to be taken at the level of the European Community in the fight against cancer.

The January 24 meeting, which is to be followed by another on February 19, marked the start of the action programme "Europe Against Cancer", launched by the European Commission at the end of last year, on the basis of a decision of the Community's heads of state or government at their Milan and Luxembourg summits last June and December.

"Europe Against Cancer", as envisaged by the Commission and the experts, would consist of three major areas of action: (1) a European regulation banning smoking in public places and a control on carcinogens, for example; (2) the coordination of research into cancer and its treatment and (3) a campaign to advise the public of what can increase - and reduce - the risks of cancer.

Better legislation regarding working conditions could reduce the risk of cancer for workers handling certain dangerous substances. Strengthening the controls on the sale of new medicines would also reduce the risk - as would a reduction in the levels of tar authorized in cigarettes.

A good deal has to be done in the field of research. At present some 45% of cancer patients can be treated effectively in Europe. However, by developing the actual possibilities of treatment this figure could be raised to 60%, but no higher, according to Prof. Veronesi, of the Institute for the treatment of tumours in Milan. Financially, the European Community could do more: its member states devote some US\$200 million a year to cancer research, as against US\$1,000 million in the United States.

But the fight against tobacco, "the primary aim of a health policy", according to Prof. Tubiana, must have priority. Tobacco, even more than alcohol, is the main cause of cancer deaths. If every European smoked fewer than three cigarettes and drank less than half a litre of wine each day, the number of cases of cancer would fall by 40%. Significantly, by the end of the press conference no journalist was to be seen smoking.

EUROBAROMETER: Poll shows Danes to be less "European"

The Danes are not very European at heart: the building of Europe means less to them, as a group, than to others in the 12-nation European Community. The Danes in fact are frankly hostile to European developments in certain areas. This emerges clearly from the latest Eurobarometer poll, which was carried out at the end of last year for the European Commission. Of course the pollsters did not ask the Danes how they would vote if asked to choose between staying in the Community or leaving it, nor what they thought of the reforms adopted by the European Summit in Luxembourg last December. The answers to these questions probably will not be known until the referendum, to be held shortly in Denmark.

Only 37% of the Danes who were interviewed favoured European unification, as against 75% in the 10-nation EC, 71% in Spain and 56% in Portugal. Some 51% of those polled in the 10-nation Community thought the creation, one day, of a United States of Europe would be "a good idea", a view shared by only 14% of the Danes. A United States of Europe was backed, however, by 53% of the Spaniards and 43% of the Portuguese who were polled.

While 35% of the Danes saw their country's membership of the EC as "a good thing", the corresponding figure for the 10-nation Community was 60%. It reached a peak of 80% in the Netherlands and Luxembourg, but fell to below 40% in the U.K. and Greece.

However, 49% of the Danes thought that membership had benefitted their country - as against 42% in Greece. In the U.K., however, 53% felt their country has not benefitted from membership. Even so, 53% on average of those polled in the 10-nation EC thought membership had been favourable to their country.

To solve their day-to-day problems the Danes, more than others in the EC, preferred national solutions. Denmark was the only member of the 12-nation Community in which a majority of those polled preferred action at the national, rather than Community, level to deal with unemployment. It was also, along with Greece and Ireland, the country in which a majority favoured action at the national level to fight rising prices. However, 60% of the Danes wanted environmental problems tackled at the European level - a figure close to the Community average.

Finally, 49% of the Danes wanted the Twelve to take all important decisions unanimously, while elsewhere in the EC, with the exception of Greece and Portugal, the preference was for majority voting.

JAPAN: Commission President Delors points the way to a more balanced relationship

The European Community's trade deficit with Japan last year probably was even larger than in 1984, when it reached 15,500 million ECU\*. It would have been only natural, therefore, had the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, devoted most of his recent official visit to Tokyo to a search for a solution to the Community's soaring trade deficit.

But the EC and Japan, together with the United States, play such an important role in the global economy that the Commission President found himself linking bilateral issues to world problems. As he told the Japan National Press Club, a common EC-Japanese approach to world problems was necessary if the two of them were to join the U.S. in discharging their responsibility to the international community. Changes in the Japanese economic system were necessary, however, so that Japan could fully accept its responsibilities.

Among the changes President Delors envisaged were the opening up of the domestic market to imports, especially of manufactured products; the liberalizing of capital movements and an international role for the yen. But these changes would also make it easier to solve the Community's bilateral problems with Japan.

The Commission President noted that the real solution to the EC's trade deficit was higher growth in Japanese internal demand. Joint ventures between Japanese and European firms required the participation of European banks - and therefore easier access for these banks to the Japanese market. As for the yen, it needed to be revalued not only against the dollar but also the ECU.

President Delors saw his proposal for a new committee to monitor the opening up of the Japanese economy as a new method of allowing global political decisions to solve political problems. He noted that the Community's earlier proposal for import targets to be set by Japan was also meant to help the Japanese government translate its political will into results. "I have too much respect for the Government of Japan", he told the Press Club, "to insist on one formula over another".

Evidence that the message was getting through to Premier Nakasone and his government was soon forthcoming. On January 24 the Japanese relaxed their rigid import restrictions on Community footwear. Under the new agreement Community manufacturers can export 2.4 million pairs of shoes during fiscal 1986, which is roughly twice as many as last year. The agreement also provides for a reduction in Japanese import duties on a number of products of export interest to Europe, among them tractors, measuring instruments and pharmaceutical equipment.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.62 or IR£ 0.72.

INFLATION: Rise in consumer price index held to 5.2% last year

Slowly but surely, the European Community seems to be winning the fight against inflation. Last year the consumer price index rose by 5.2% for the 10-nation Community, as compared to 5.5% in 1984 - and nearly 12% in 1981. Even so, the other major industrial powers did better. The United States held down its inflation rate to about 3.2% in 1985, while Japan managed an enviable 1.7%, according to the EC's statistical office.

In the Community's newest member states prices rose by about 8% in Spain and by 16.8% in Portugal. But the highest annual rate - 25% - was recorded in Greece, the lowest - 1.7% - in the Netherlands. Germany also did well (1.8%).

In four member states prices rose between 4 and 5% last year: Belgium - 4%; Luxembourg - 4.1%; France - 4.7% and Ireland - 4.9%. While Denmark kept price increases down to 3.6%, the U.K. had an annual inflation rate of 5.7% and Italy one of 9%.

Among the Community's neighbours, two which were more successful than most in holding down prices were Austria (2.8%) and Switzerland (3.3%).

UNEMPLOYMENT: Up 3% in 1985 in the 10-nation Community

Unemployment continues to plague the European Community. In 1985 the number of registered unemployed averaged 12.8 million over the year for the 10-nation Community. This was an increase of 3% over 1984 and represented almost 11% of the working population.

If the figures for Spain and Portugal are included, the number of jobless stood at 15.8 million last year.

Unemployment among the under-25s fell marginally by some 9,000 last year, and amounted to 37% of the total (as against 38.3% in 1984). The highest percentages were recorded in Italy and Luxembourg, where nearly one unemployed person in two was under 25 years. In Germany and Denmark, on the other hand, the ratio was a more encouraging 1 in 4.

Changes in the numbers of registered unemployed varied from country to country. Increases were recorded by Italy (8.9%), Ireland (7.7%), France (3.7%), the U.K. (3.5%) and Germany (1.8%). Elsewhere unemployment fell - by as much as 11% in Denmark and 7.5% in the Netherlands. In Belgium it fell by 6.3% and in Luxembourg by 4%. Largely because of administrative changes, the number of registered unemployed rose by nearly 20% in Greece, according to the unemployment statistics published by the Community's statistical services.

### CHANNEL TUNNEL: European Commission welcomes Anglo-French decision

The dozen years since Britain joined the European Community have seen a considerable change in the country's trading pattern. The process may accelerate once the tunnel beneath the Channel has been completed. For Stanley Clinton Davis, the European Commissioner responsible for transport policy, the effects of the new fixed link will be profound.

"The project will change the economic geography of Europe" he declared on behalf of the Commission the day the decision to build the tunnel was announced by Britain's Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, and the French President, François Mitterrand. The new link would present "new opportunities" as well as "new challenges", to be faced by the Community as a whole.

The EC Commissioner pointed out that the Commission has always favoured tying the U.K. firmly to the Continent. It was involved in the 1979 study on the implications of a fixed link for the Community and it supported the banking group study of 1984 on financing such a link. The Commission would now discuss with the member states the implications of the projected tunnel for the Community's transport network.

The Commissioner noted that in the Commission's view the tunnel will encourage trade within the Community and benefit the internal market. It will also strengthen the Community's technological capacity. As for the project's effect on jobs, Mr Clinton Davis claimed it would stimulate employment, although difficulties may arise "for certain sectors of employment and for some regions". Ways clearly would have to be found for "easing the social and economic transition when difficulties do appear", he said.

The Transport Commissioner also stressed the need to take into account the tunnel's impact on the environment from the start. "There must be no secrecy about any adverse effect, particularly environmental", he declared.

### "GRAY" LITERATURE: Not the stuff best-sellers are made of, but in demand

You wouldn't think there would be much of a demand for "gray" literature - a term which covers unpublished scientific and technical reports, minutes, regulations, working documents and notices issued by local authorities.

But "gray" literature is in demand and the European Commission has been helping a group of European documentation centres identify and supply it since 1981. Some 80,000 documents are already stored in a data bank known as SIGLE (System of Information on Gray Literature in Europe) and another 30,000 are being added to it each year. The SIGLE data bank is available for on-line documentary research through Euronet DIANE.

INFLATION: The European farmer, the housewives' friend?

The prices paid to European farmers in 1985 have contributed once more to reducing inflation. This good news is contained in the European Commission's latest annual report on the agricultural situation in the European Community. The fact is that farmgate prices rose last year by only 2.7%, as against an increase in the consumer price index of 5.2% (see page 5).

However, in recent years retail prices for foodstuffs have risen more than prices for consumer goods as a whole, even though this increase has been limited. From 1980 to 1984 the food price index rose from 100 to 142.1, while the rise in consumer prices as a whole was from 100 to 140.7.

During this same period, agricultural producer prices, most of which are fixed at the Community level, went from 100 to only 107.2. The 1984 price index was even lower than in 1983 (108.6) and in 1982 (109.5).

In March 1984, the EC's Council of Ministers decided to moderate the increase in producer prices and to freeze, or reduce, these prices for products in surplus. The prices for the 1985/86 farm year were set in this spirit, and the European Commission expects only a moderate rise in food prices, which should benefit consumers

RESEARCH: Greater freedom for state aid for R & D

Hereafter each of the Twelve can subsidize national Research and Development programs more easily and without running the risk of seeing such aid condemned and forbidden at the level of the European Community. The European Commission has just decided, in fact, to apply more flexibly the very strict competition rules of the Treaty of Rome, the Community's "constitution", so as to give European industry a cutting edge.

Within the Community, state aid for R & D accounts for roughly half the total expenditure. In some of the "major" member states, some 20% of state aid to industry is earmarked for R & D. The Rome Treaty in principle forbids state aids likely to distort competition within the common market, but it allows the European Commission considerable latitude in this respect. And the Commission, which considers the promotion of industrial competitiveness as of primordial importance, has already taken steps to encourage inter-firm agreements aimed at fostering research.

RACISM: European Parliament calls for concerted fight against racism

The twin spectres of fascism and racism continue to haunt Europe. The groups and organizations that openly espouse racist and anti-democratic ideologies are extremely small on the whole. And even when they manage to win elections to local or parliamentary bodies, their public following remains very limited. A much greater cause for concern is the rise of more or less diffuse feelings of xenophobia and the increased tensions between different communities.

These are among the conclusions of a long and detailed report prepared on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry into the Rise of Fascism and Racism in Europe, set up by the European Parliament in 1984. When the Report's conclusions and recommendations were discussed by Parliament in mid-January, a French Euro-MP, Mrs Yvette FUILLET, noted that where previously one said, "I'm not racist, but ...", today one heard, "I'm racist and ...".

The resolution adopted by Parliament, by 286 votes to 1, welcomed the broad consensus within the Committee of Inquiry and its emphasis on a democratic and pluralist European society. It called on all European Community institutions to put the Report's recommendations into practice.

The European Commissioner for social affairs and employment, Manuel MARIN, told Parliament that the European Commission was studying the Committee's conclusions, with a view to putting them into practice in those areas in which it had competence. It already thought it necessary to launch a large-scale information campaign, in order both to explain the phenomena of racism and fascism and to fight them. However, it planned to examine legislation in the various member states before drawing up its own directives.

The Committee's recommendations inevitably deal with information also. It wants all member states to set up bodies to provide information on the legal protection available against discrimination, racism and incitement to racial hatred and violence. The Committee also wants the media made more generally aware of the part they can play in eliminating racial prejudice.

Several of the recommendations are addressed to the educational authorities, who are asked to promote the aim of non-discrimination in all educational structures and policies. They are also asked to encourage instruction in minority cultures and languages. These recommendations reflect the Committee's view that, because of the generation effect and the attraction of protest movements in general, the youngest age groups account for a large proportion of extremist right-wing militants.

### ENERGY: Safeguarding the future

Oil prices are weak at present - which is good news for the consumer. But this should not result in euphoria among Europeans. Nor must they give way to pessimism, by taking as gospel truth certain forecasts which predict a tripling of oil prices over the next 5 to 10 years.

This, in substance, is what the European Community's Energy Commissioner, Nicolas Mosar, told a press conference recently. The European Commission wants Europeans to remain level-headed and their governments to coordinate better their attempts to develop new energy sources, including sun, wind and waste matter.

The Community has made substantial progress since the first oil shock in reducing its dependence on imports. Oil imports, which met 62% of Community energy requirements in 1973, account for no more than 30% of them today. Moreover, the Community's energy consumption in 1986 is no more than what it was in 1973, although the level of economic activity has risen 25% meanwhile. To what do we owe these encouraging results? In part to oil and gas from the North Sea; but also, and in considerable measure, to energy conservation, a more intelligent use of existing resources and a recourse to "new" forms of energy.

In the Community's southern regions solar energy is providing hot water for several thousand homes, to their satisfaction. But solar energy can also be used in the northern regions: in Fribourg, Germany, a Community-aided project has made possible 18 "solar" homes. Here savings of 70% have been achieved in energy consumption and of 30% in building costs.

The use of windmills to generate electricity is also on the rise. There are some 150 of them in the Netherlands and 1,400 in Denmark - a country which has exported over 2,000 of them to the United States. Waste matter is another important source of energy: in Liège, Belgium, a factory manufacturing plastic items from plastic waste has cut its energy consumption by 90%.

The European Commission wants the Community to continue down this road, even if the fall in oil prices should tempt Europeans to resume the yoke of imported oil. It feels, that the "new" energy sources should meet at least 5% of the Community's needs by the end of the century.