

Week of October 5 to 10

### S U M M A R Y

- p. 2 TRANSPORT : Thinking about European's interest  
According to the European Commission, the Community should contribute to the financing of infrastructure and transport projects of common European interest when one Member State is unwilling to assume sole responsibility.
- p. 3 ENERGY : A new life for old-fashioned trolleybuses  
Is there a general move back to trolleybuses which disappeared from our streets several years ago ? Several Member States, prompted by a desire to save energy, are considering the option.
- p. 3 PARLIAMENT : Towards increased control over multinational activities  
The European Parliament's economic and monetary affairs committee has called for the setting up of a watchdog body responsible for controlling the activities of multinational companies.
- p. 4 DEVELOPMENT : A new EEC programme to combat hunger in the Third World  
Just a few weeks after the Paris conference on the least developed countries, the Commission has announced a wide-ranging programme designed to help developing countries feed their rapidly growing populations.
- p. 5 TECHNOLOGY : Is small really beautiful ?  
The Ten's association of local authorities met recently in Brussels with a view to coordinating their actions.
- p. 6 FISHERIES : A prize catch in sight  
European Ministers responsible for fisheries have succeeded in agreeing on several key issues of vital interest to the EEC's 140,000 fishermen.
- p. 7 IN BRIEF : - CONSUMPTION : The end to the Italian tobacco monopoly ?  
- AGRICULTURE : Natural gas at uniform prices for all  
- UNEMPLOYMENT : Looking for nine million jobs.

This newsheet is published in six languages (English, French, German, Dutch, Italian and Danish) by the Directorate-General for Information of the

Commission of the European Communities,  
Rue de la Loi 200 - 1049 Brussels um.  
Tel 736 60 00 - Telex 21877 COMEU B.

Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Community institutions.

Editor : Will. J. Reckman



TRANSPORT : Thinking about Europeans' interest

It's only natural that each European country develops its own transportation policy and its road, rail and water network. But all too often national authorities concern themselves only with the national interest when setting their priorities for transport infrastructure. Nevertheless, the international traffic between European Community Member States has increased tremendously in the last 20 years - even much more rapidly than internal national traffic.

This is a result on the one hand of the growth in trade within the European Common Market, and on the other of the spectacular growth of tourism during the same period. There has therefore been a need for a coordinated, European-scale transport system to respond to the needs of this intracommunity traffic. The problem, however, is that national and international interests don't always coincide. For example, a road project which isn't obviously necessary for national needs might provide a useful means of avoiding traffic congestion in nearby states. And even if it is aware of this aspect of a project, a national government is not always ready to invest the sometimes considerable amounts needed for a project for which it will not be the main beneficiary. During these periods of budgetary restrictions, this is understandable, but doesn't mean that problems will be resolved as a result.

The European Commission in Brussels has just conveyed some of its thoughts on the subject to the Community Council of Ministers. It proposes that the Community participate financially in a limited number of projects with a special Community interest. The amount of Community aid should be sufficient to assure the realisation of projects which national authorities could not undertake by themselves.

The question that arises immediately is how to identify the character or scope of the Community interest in this or that project. To gauge the degree of this interest, the Commission proposes that not only traffic considerations be taken into consideration, but that a project's contribution to general Community objectives, such as economic coordination, regional policy, energy plans or others, be weighed as well. With this in mind, the Commission has already launched a study on the effects for the rest of the Community of the construction of a tunnel under the Channel. It concludes that, although the United Kingdom and France will be the main beneficiaries, other Member States would also secure significant advantages.

Other major projects will also be the subject of similar studies soon.

ENERGY : A new life for old-fashioned trolleybuses

In many areas, the old way of doing things may be the best way. As a result of the current economic and energy crises, a number of traditional technologies and products are being dusted off after years of neglect to find a new lease on life and to offer new and economical ways of tackling a problem.

One such example is the picturesque but recently outmoded trolleybus which used to be a familiar sight in many city streets. These relics were banished from many town centres as an unsightly nuisance because the overhead electrical wiring which they required marred the view of many historical settings. So, in an era when oil was cheap, these vehicles yielded priority to regular buses or underground transit systems. Now, however, the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark and Finland have signed an agreement to cooperate on research into these same trolleybus systems. Four other countries - Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland - are also expected to sign soon to take part in the three-year project. This effort is being conducted under the European Committee on Science and Technology, which involves European Community and non-member countries.

The aim is to examine the different types of trolleybus systems in use in Europe to evaluate their benefits and disadvantages from the economic and energy point of view. They present at first glance the advantages of being silent, non-polluting and also of being linked to electricity, which is not directly connected to the use of oil. However, in the past their dependence on overhead wiring limited their use to fixed routes and represented something of an eyesore in urban centres, especially historical areas.

But the use of bi-modal trolleybuses capable of being used independently of the overhead electrical system on part of their voyage is being looked upon as an attractive possibility now. A number of cities currently use such vehicles and the project is to perfect this technology on a short-term basis.

PARLIAMENT : Towards increased control over multinational activities

The activities of large multinational companies are a source of concern for public authorities, who find it difficult to control them and fear that they could, in the long term, ruin the prospects of smaller enterprises. At its forthcoming session, the European Parliament is expected to examine a report by its economic and monetary committee, which calls for a parliamentary watchdog body responsible for undertaking a regular analysis of the application of Community rules on multinationals, and coordinating European and international initiatives in the sector.

DEVELOPMENT : A new EEC programme to combat hunger in the Third World

A wide-ranging new programme designed to help developing countries in their struggle to feed their rapidly growing populations was launched by the European Commission in Brussels recently. Spearheaded by the new European Commissioner for development policy, Edgard Pisani, the drive to combat hunger in the Third World is a natural follow-up to the conference on the problems of the least developed states held recently in Paris. The programme is also in keeping with the recently-announced Italian government proposals calling on the European Community to help developing countries in their struggle for survival.

The European Commission action plan focusses on four main areas of action. Special emergency aid worth £ 22,4 million has been made available by the Commission for the purchase of cereal and wheat stocks by the Third World nations. The developing countries are expected to use the money for the purchase of some 250,000 tonnes of cereals.

The second part of the programme urges EEC member states and other international aid donors to implement coherent food strategies in the developing countries. Mr. Pisani has indicated that a number of Third World nations have shown an interest in the introduction of such strategies but need Community help. Within this context, Mr. Pisani has recommended the setting up of a Community-wide task force, including different member states and the developing countries interested in the implementation of global food strategies.

Such a global approach to food problems in the Third World will also include a third element : regional actions designed to fight the erosion and desertification of potential farm lands, the more rational utilisation of wood as a source of energy, and the promotion of tropical and subsistence farming.

Finally, the Commission has also called for greater Community participation in international efforts to step up aid to the world's poorest. The plan is expected to be adopted by the EEC Council of Ministers on October 26, just days after the North-South meeting in Cancun in Mexico.

TECHNOLOGY : Is small really beautiful ?

When it comes to some aspects of economics, the concept that "small is beautiful", which has been a popular slogan in favour of more humanscale activities, is not always applicable. A more appropriate motto in some cases might be "in unity there is strength".

That was one of the conclusions of a conference recently held by local authorities from the European Community countries in Brussels. The discussions centered on these local administrations' use of technology and their influence in technological innovation. What became obvious is that, alone, a school district, hospital or transport administration hardly carries the economic weight that it could if it teamed up with other organs having the same equipment needs.

As an impressive example of the economic power that local authorities have, it has been estimated that together they account for some £ 29 billion worth of orders from European industry. That represents a lot of orders for desks, paper, automobiles and services - and a lot of jobs. It is estimated that public purchasing contracts by all types of local and national authorities represent 17 percent of the total output of goods and services in the European Community countries.

Part of the conference was aimed at establishing a system of coordination and cooperation between all these various local, regional and other agencies so that they might benefit from the economies of scale resulting from joint negotiating and purchasing with contractors. Such joint action might also represent a boost for technological innovation. Another aspect of the recent conference was to examine the possibility of greater exchanges of information between the local authorities in different countries.

The conference was the third annual gathering of the Standing Technological Conference of Local Authorities, a group created in 1978 through the initiative and financial aid of the European Commission in Brussels. The aim was not only to strengthen the contacts between Community countries at the grass roots level, but also to stimulate the concept of Community unity in both theory and practice. Addressing the recent meeting, Piet Dankert, Vice President of the European Parliament, stressed the importance of the role of local cooperation in spreading the European ideal throughout the Community.

FISHERIES : A prize catch in sight

After years of controversy and debate over the establishment of a European fishing policy, agreements have been reached which could lead to important results for fishing communities in several countries.

Innumerable meetings of Ministers, experts and angry fishermen have punctuated the heated debates on the subject in recent years. These have aimed at working out the difficult details of a joint fishing system that would provide fishermen throughout the European Community with a standard set of rules in the aftermath of the introduction of the 200-mile exclusive economic zones all over the world.

This proposed package of rules and regulations covering fish catch quotas, access to fishing waters, ship safety, financial aid and vocational training to fishermen have been under consideration since about 1977, but different viewpoints have bottled up an agreement since then. In the meantime, the 140,000 sea fishermen in the Community and the families and industries dependent upon them have been waiting and agitating for some sort of settlement. Although the fishing population has declined from about 154,000 in 1970, it still represents an active industry for many regions and employs four or five jobs in related processing, sales or shipbuilding industries for every actual fishing job. It keeps such coastal populations at home instead of swelling the ranks of those migrating to the urban and industrial centres.

While the recent meeting of fishing Ministers of the Community did not complete the details that need to be confirmed for such an over-all plan, it did make a breakthrough which will directly affect the livelihood of numerous fishing regions and improved the prospects for a final settlement. First of all, the Ministers agreed to the outlines of treatment of fish imports which was a major concern, particularly for fishermen in the United Kingdom facing competition from lower-priced imports into their market. In addition, this accord helped pave the way for conclusion of agreements between the European Community and third countries such as Canada concerning the right of European fishermen to fish in their waters. This was crucial to the German fishing fleet which traditionally works in Canadian waters for some 14,000 tonnes of cod which will be fished in the coming months.

A third element in this package was inclusion in the European Community budget of funds for the construction and modernisation of fishing boats and for fish farming, which are expected to benefit mostly British, Irish and Italian interests.

It is hoped that this accord will help future meetings reach agreement on more elements of a common fishing policy.

IN BRIEF ... IN BRIEF ... IN BRIEF ... IN BRIEF ... IN BRIEF ...  
CONSUMPTION : The end of the Italian tobacco monopoly

For several years now, the Italian marketing system for processed tobacco has functioned on the basis of a monopoly. This is incompatible with the Treaty of Rome which provides for the phasing out of national commercial controls, with a view to preventing all discrimination between European companies and ensuring that all action is compatible with the rules of free competition.

This was the reason behind the recent European Commission decision to open infringement procedures against Italy in 1980, threatening to take the question up with the European Court of Justice. But the Italian Government indicated that it was ready to introduce certain changes in its system and undertook discussions on the issue with the European Commission. Foreign brand names account for about 40% of total Italian consumption of processed tobacco, of which 30% is directly imported from other EEC countries.

AGRICULTURE : Natural gas at uniform prices for all

Dutch horticulturalists, and specially producers of hot-house tomatoes traditionally buy natural gas at preferential prices. They have a subsequent commercial advantage over producers in other Member States, who have just indicated that they will protest strongly unless measures to end such discrimination are taken by the EEC authorities. The European Commission is currently attempting to negotiate a solution which could be accepted by all concerned.

UNEMPLOYMENT : Looking for nine million jobs

Unemployment figures in the Community of Nine (that is without Greece) hit the 9 million mark at the end of August, 1981. Unemployment rates compared with the working population are put at an average of 8.3% in the Community as a whole, although the highest figures are attained in Belgium (12.6%) and the United Kingdom (11.3%). Unemployment figures seem to be particularly bad for women in Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and especially Belgium where 19.1% of the working women are out of jobs compared with 8.7% of the male population.

However, unemployment rates are higher for men in Denmark, Ireland and, increasingly so, in the United Kingdom. Unemployment rates are still quite low in Greece where only 0.7% of the total population is out of work.