



# a newssheet for journalists

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## S U M M A R Y

P. 2 AUDIOVISUAL: "Television without frontiers" hits viewers

The Twelve adopt European ground rules for cross-border television.

P. 3 SMEs: A Welsh rendezvous for 1990

A new stage in the "Europartenariat" operation.

P. 4 TAXES: Which VAT for 1993?

The Twelve want taxes on goods levied in the country of destination.

YOUNG PEOPLE: Possibly a European youth card ...  
... but education will remain a national matter beyond 1992.

P. 5 UNEMPLOYMENT: Unchanged in August

9.2% jobless in the 12-nation EC.

INFLATION: Moderate price rises in July and August.  
But inflation remains above 5% on a 12-month basis.

P. 6 HEALTH: A European card for quick medical treatment?  
The first phase could be the mutual recognition by the Twelve of their national insurance cards.

P. 7 AIR TRANSPORT: Towards the mutual recognition of professional qualifications in civil aviation

A move in line with the creation of a single EC market in air transport.

P. 8 SOCIETY: The fight against exclusion

An important element of the social dimension of the single market.

P. 9 PENSIONS: What is the level of retirement pensions in the EC?

Comparisons between net monthly pensions and wages received in the past work period are difficult to make.

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**AUDIOVISUAL: "Television without frontiers" hits viewers**

The Twelve adopt European ground rules for cross-border television.

Television will take on a more European colouring from the autumn of 1991, when the 12 EC governments will no longer be able to ban programmes aimed at their viewers from other Community countries. However, broadcasters will have to respect the ground rules contained in a piece of European legislation called "Television without frontiers", whose adoption by the EC Council of Ministers was finally completed on October 3, after numerous twists and turns.

The "Television without frontiers" directive provides for very strict rules to protect children from violence and pornography; national authorities in fact will be able to stop broadcasts by companies which fail to abide by these rules. The new European legislation is less strict, however, as regards other areas of broadcasting.

The text bans tobacco advertising and imposes severe restrictions on commercials which sing the praises of alcoholic beverages. It limits advertising breaks in films to one every 45 minutes and limits the total air time devoted to advertising to 15% per day.

Individuals, groups and associations which have been slandered in a programme would be entitled to the right of reply throughout the Community.

The directive also calls on the Twelve to ensure that their respective television companies reserve more than half the air time devoted to films, serials and other entertainment programmes for European productions. This requirement has been criticized by both the U.S. government and the country's film industry, which fears a decline in the number of European outlets for American productions.

Some Europeans have also criticized it, claiming that European productions will be unable, in any case, to fill their quota of programmes. But the authors of the EC directive have been careful to stipulate that this requirement must be met whenever attainable, and that the required level may be reached progressively.

In any case, the European "quota" can include programmes made in the other West European countries that belong to the Council of Europe, as well as programmes from Eastern Europe, provided the European Community has entered into special arrangements with these countries.

This method of encouraging European productions seeks to ensure that the elimination of the Community's internal frontiers does not lead to a flood of films from the rest of the world.

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The EC Council of Ministers adopted the "Television without frontiers" directive at the eleventh hour. If the Council had failed to do so before October 6, months of negotiations would have gone down the drain. The Council in fact reached a common position on April 13. Its text was then examined by the European Parliament, after which it returned to the Council for final adoption. The Council was unable, however, to muster the necessary majority at its meetings in June and July. But under the Community's rules for the adoption of the "1992" legislation, the Council had until October 6 to make up its mind.

It only remains for the Europeans to ready their scripts and their cameras.

#### SMEs: A Welsh rendezvous for 1990

A new stage in the "Europartenariat" operation.

Several hundred Welsh small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will be able to find partners in other regions of the European Community next year, thanks to the "Europartenariat" operation organized by the European Commission and launched in Cardiff by Sir Leon Brittan, Commission Vice-President, at the end of September.

The Welsh Development Agency has already begun to organize information meetings, to which it is inviting Welsh SMEs, looking for partners in other regions, to submit their projects in areas such as distribution, technology and financial cooperation. The most interesting of these projects will be mentioned in a catalogue, to be distributed throughout the 12-nation Community by business consultancies. Representatives of both Welsh and other SMEs will meet in Cardiff on 14 and 15 June 1990.

The formula has already been successfully tested during the "Europartenariat Ireland" operation in 1988 and "Europartenariat Andalusia" this year. It enables SMEs from a region facing difficulties to find opportunities for cooperation which they might not have discovered on their own.

**TAXES: Which VAT for 1993?**

The Twelve want taxes on goods levied in the country of destination.

Where will the value added tax (VAT) be paid in the 1992 single market and at what rates will it be levied? The European Community must answer these questions if it wants checks at its internal borders to go. The Community's Finance and Economics Ministers stated in Luxembourg on October 9 their preference for VAT to be paid in the country to which the goods are shipped - and at the rates in force there. The Ministers held that this system should apply to cars as well as to other products.

The Twelve want, by this means, to maintain the current system for the collection of VAT, but without border checks - in principle at least. In adopting this position they have turned down the Commission's proposal, under which VAT would be paid in the country in which the goods originated. The latter believes that the Twelve are only leaving the question of fraud wide open, for how can it be prevented, under these conditions, without checks carried out by the companies. But such checks would add to their costs. The Member States' experts and the Commission must find the answers for November 13.

**YOUNG PEOPLE: Possibly a European youth card ...**

... but education will remain a national matter beyond 1992.

In the not-too-distant future young people throughout the 12-nation European Community may be able to buy not just cinema but also railway tickets at reduced prices, thanks to a European "Youth Card". The Community's Education Ministers decided on October 6 to coordinate their experiences with "youth cards" at the national level. The holders of these cards enjoy concessions when it comes to travel, entertainment, sport and housing, depending on the country in which the cards are issued. The Ministers envisage the possibility of creating later on a "youth card" at the Community level.

The Twelve also agreed to the principle of cooperation between themselves in education, in the light of 1992. They held that the activities undertaken by the Community should be confined to those areas in which the national authorities cannot be effective. What is more, these activities must respect the Community's "cultural and linguistic diversity" and "the fundamental competence of the Member States as regards general educational policy". The Treaty of Rome, the "European Constitution", effectively gives the Community powers only in the field of vocational training, not that of general education. In addition, the Ministers want to develop the European dimension in education, encourage the free movement of young people and graduates, provide training for all, as this would help reduce regional disparities, and improve the quality of teaching, especially technical and university.

**UNEMPLOYMENT: Unchanged in August**

9.2% jobless in the 12-nation Community.

The level of unemployment remained unchanged at 9.2% of the workforce in August in the 12-nation European Community, according to Eurostat, the Community's statistical office. This seasonally adjusted rate, which also compensates for differences in national recording methods, was the same as in July. While unemployment has remained largely stationary since the beginning of the year, it has nevertheless dropped considerably on a 12-month basis: the Community unemployment rate stood at 10.1% in August 1988. The fall was even sharper as regards the under-25s: their unemployment rate fell to 17.8% this August, from 20.2% the previous August.

As always, the situation varies a good deal from one EC country to another. Luxembourg had an unemployment rate of 2%, while in Ireland it was a record 17.1%.

**INFLATION: Moderate price rises in July and August**

But inflation remains above 5% on a 12-month basis.

Prices rose only slightly during the summer months for the 12-nation European Community as a whole, as happens virtually each year. Prices rose by 0.3% in July and 0.2% in August, according to Eurostat, the European Community's statistical office in Luxembourg.

While prices fell slightly in Germany and Greece, they rose sharply in Spain - by 1.6% in July - and in Portugal - by 1% in July and 1.8% in August.

But the rate of inflation remained relatively high on a 12-month basis. Prices rose 5.1% between August 1988 and this August for the EC as a whole, as compared to a rise of 3.8% during the previous 12 months. Both the United States and Japan did better, with increases of 4.7% and 2.4% respectively.

Inflation rates varied greatly within the Community in August, ranging from the 1.1% recorded in the Netherlands to the plus 13% recorded in Portugal and Greece.

**HEALTH: A European card for quick medical treatment?**

The first phase could be the mutual recognition by the Twelve of their national insurance cards.

Falling ill when abroad is unpleasant in itself. But the unpleasantness can be greatly compounded when you try to recover your medical expenses by means of Form E111, especially if you have not followed the correct procedure.

The Twelve have therefore asked the European Commission to study the modalities of a system of recognition by each Member State of the national insurance cards issued by its Community partners. This recognition, which the Community's Health Ministers already view favourably, would allow people visiting another EC country to get the medical treatment they urgently require. This would be the first phase of a process which, hopefully, would end with the creation of a European insurance card, which would replace both Form E111 and the national insurance cards.

The European card would make life easier for people who travel within the Community; it would also have an undoubted symbolic value and contribute towards the creation of a feeling of belonging to a social Europe, by giving it tangible reality. Finally, it would encourage the free movement of persons by making it easier for them to take advantage of Community measures in the field of social security.

**AIR TRANSPORT: Towards the mutual recognition of professional qualifications in civil aviation**

A move in line with the creation of a single EC market in air transport.

The European Commission has just proposed to the Twelve a system for the mutual recognition of the licences and other professional qualifications of pilots, traffic controllers, maintenance staff and other civil aviation personnel. Access to these professions and their exercise is covered by national as well as international regulations. After consultation with all those concerned, especially the airlines and organizations representing pilots, the Commission has taken as the basis for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications the criteria defined by the eighth Chicago Convention, which will come into effect on 16 November 1989. Their incorporation into a Community directive will give them legal validity.

The Convention stipulates medical requirements and experience, expressed in numbers of flying hours, as well as aptitude tests which the various categories of professional pilots must pass. It sets high qualification levels, on the whole, and should therefore lead to a genuine improvement in the situation in Europe.

This is the European Commission's main concern, as its Transport Commissioner, Karel Van Miert, has underlined. Its proposal for a directive reconciles in particular the freedom and flexibility which the aviation industry needs in order to develop, with the requirements of air transport for maximum safety.

The directive should come into force from 1 July 1990. It would represent the first stage towards a European system of certificates which the Commission will draw up before 31 December 1992. It will provide for the harmonization of the training of personnel and the granting of these certificates, on the basis of the most stringent standards of safety and technical reliability.

It is essential to reinforce the checks on the professional qualifications of flying and maintenance personnel. Recent air accidents have thrown into relief the human factor, making it all the more necessary to pay special attention to training, both practical and technical.

**SOCIETY: The fight against exclusion**

An important element of the social dimension of the single market.

The process of social exclusion is gathering pace in various fields, as a result of all sorts of situations which affect both individuals and groups, those living in cities as well as those living in rural areas. The cause of this process is to be found in the changes taking place in our societies, especially those which make it difficult to find a job. Being jobless is a decisive element in the phenomenon known as marginalization.

It is a serious problem and one to which the Ministers responsible for social services in the Member States devoted much of their time during their recent meeting in Brussels. They noted that the Member States are already actively engaged in the fight against poverty and for the economic and social integration of those who are economically and socially disadvantaged, thus stressing just how much the fight against social exclusion can be regarded as an important part of the social dimension of the single market.

It is necessary, therefore, that economic development policies be complemented by specific, systematic and coherent integration policies. Peoples and groups are excluded not simply because they are poor; the fight against exclusion implies that individuals and families must be helped attain decent living standards through measures aimed at integrating them into social and professional life. It is from this standpoint that the EC Council of Ministers has invited the Member States to introduce or promote actions aimed at allowing each person access not only to education but also vocational training, employment, housing, collective services and health care.

The ball is now in the European Commission's court. It has been asked by the Social Affairs Ministers to conduct, in relationship with the Member States, an analysis of the measures they are implementing in the fight against social exclusion. The Commission must report within three years on not only these measures but also those which it has adopted itself.



**PENSIONS: What is the level of retirement pensions in the EC?**

Comparisons between net monthly pensions and wages received in the past work period are difficult to make.

The net retirement pension for a single person comes to more than 83% of the net wage received during the past work period in Britain, Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Pensioners in these countries are best off in this connection, according to figures published recently by the European Commission in reply to a question from a British Euro-MP, Edward Newman. In the other Member States of the 12-nation European Community the percentage varies from 55 to 65.

These figures are partly distorted, because the pensions on which they are based are not strictly comparable between one EC country and another. Comparison is made even more difficult because of other factors. Thus official statistics are rare and one must take into account forms of "income" such as payment in kind, travel expenses, benefits incidental to work, etc. These are not easy to assess, of course. The Commission nevertheless has carried out a study, from which it is possible to have a rough idea:

	C O U N T R Y											
	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	P	UK
Monthly wage in ECU	991	1684	1467	658	775	913	944	923	1248	1258	325	1185
Net monthly pension in ECU	459	559	732	-	-	581	387	568	746	787	-	372
Net replace- ment ratio (%)	69	61	82	78	188	79	49	81	84	93	88	46