



## A NEWSHEET FOR JOURNALISTS • REPRODUCTION AUTHORIZED

WEEKLY No. 35/87

BRUSSELS, 19 - 26 October 1987

### S U M M A R Y

- P. 2 ENERGY: Riches waiting to be exploited  
Renewable energy sources need a helping hand.
- P. 3 UNEMPLOYMENT: Unchanged in 12 months  
15.7m. unemployed this August - as in August 1986.
- TRADE: A fall in EC/East European trade  
The sharp fall in trade between the European Community and the East European members of the COMECON recorded over the last two years, continued into 1987.
- P. 4 AGRICULTURE: Towards a permanent system of free food for the poorest?  
The European Commission asks the Twelve to renew the operation mounted last winter.
- P. 5 TRADE: Green light for Community-wide electronic mail  
The Twelve adopt TEDIS.
- P. 6 HEALTH: Above all, find out  
The first meeting of the permanent conference on health and safety in a nuclear age.
- P. 7 HEALTH: Cancer? What cancer?  
Results of a survey conducted in the EC.
- P. 8 CONSUMERS: Beware of imitations ...  
... whose import and sale member states need not ban.
- P. 9 ECONOMY: A fall in unemployment can be ruled out for 1988  
The European Commission's latest economic forecasts.

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

Commission of the European Communities,  
Rue de la Loi 200 - 1049 Brussels - Belgium  
Tel 23511111 - Telex 21877 COMEU B

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



### ENERGY: Riches waiting to be exploited

Renewable energy sources need a helping hand.

In the year 2000 renewable energy sources, such as wind, sun, water and waste, could meet 5 to 6% of the European Community's total energy requirements. But this is unlikely to happen, according to the European Commission, if the governments of the Twelve do not lend a helping hand - which is why it has recently indicated to them some of the measures that need to be taken.

Renewable energy sources have a two-fold advantage: (1) they are inexhaustible, unlike coal, oil and natural gas and (2) are readily available in the Community. But their exploitation requires expensive research and massive investments from the start.

According to the European Commission, biomass and waste are the most promising sources of renewable energy. The Community could one day meet over 8% of its requirements from vegetation and forest waste, the wood-based industries, agriculture and the agrofood industry - and household waste. As from now biomass and waste could profitably meet 3% of energy requirements, in the Commission's view.

Solar energy could meet 0.5 to 1% of European needs in the year 2000. It is already producing hot water for domestic use economically in the Community's southern regions. But architects, government departments and banks are not yet well-informed about the possibilities of solar energy, according to the Commission.

Geothermal energy, which makes use of underground heat, could supply 0.4% of the energy consumed in the EC. Experts have already listed 40 exploitable sites in the four corners of the Community. But holes must be drilled, at an estimated cost of up to ECU 1,000\* per metre. Another 1% of the Community's energy needs could be met by windmills by the end of the century.

The European Commission is asking the Twelve to modify national regulations which hamper the development of renewable forms of energy, draw up a complete inventory of existing resources and support research in this sector. According to the Commission, the national authorities should also avoid setting standards which are incompatible with each other.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.70 or IR£ 0.77

UNEMPLOYMENT: Unchanged in 12 months

15.7 million unemployed this August - as in August 1986.

The total number of jobless in the 12-nation European Community has remained virtually unchanged at 15.7m. in the 12 months to this August. The information comes from Eurostat, the EC's statistical office, which points out that the situation nevertheless varies considerably from one country to another.

While the number of registered unemployed fell in both the U.K. and Portugal by some 500,000, it rose by as much in Italy, France and Spain. Unemployment declined by 12% in the U.K. and by 21% in Portugal over a 12-month period but rose by over 6% in Spain and Italy and nearly 4% in France.

Between August 1986 and 1987 male unemployment fell by 2.4%, as compared to a rise of 3.1% in unemployment among women. However, in the U.K., Portugal and Belgium unemployment declined among both men and women. Female unemployment recorded the largest rise in Spain - a substantial 18%.

TRADE: A fall in EC/East European trade<sup>+</sup>

The sharp fall in trade between the European Community and the East European members of COMECON\*, recorded over the last two years, continued into 1987.

According to the EC's statistical office, their share of the Community's imports fell from 9.2% in 1984 to 8.3% in 1985 and to 7.6% last year. Similarly, their share in the Community's exports fell from 6.3% in 1984 to 6.2% in 1985 and 5.9% in 1986. This decline has affected the Community's trade with nearly all East European countries; only exports to the German Democratic Republic recorded a rise last year.

During the first quarter of this year trade with COMECON's East European members fell by some 17% as compared to the first quarter of 1986.

<sup>+</sup> Trade between the two German states is excluded from these statistics.

\* COMECON includes Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam.

AGRICULTURE: Towards a permanent system of free food for the poorest?

The European Commission asks the Twelve to renew the operation mounted last winter.

The poorest in the 12-nation European Community will be able to share in the Community's surplus food stocks if the Council of Ministers adopts a proposal by the European Commission for a permanent system of free distribution. An operation along the lines now proposed was launched, on a temporary basis, in January of this year because of the exceptionally cold weather.

The permanent distribution scheme would be financed through the Community's budget. The Commission is seeking ECU 100m.\* in special credits for this purpose for 1988. Charities in each member state would estimate the needs of the poorest sections of the population for each item of food, thus enabling the Commission to decide the cost to the Community budget.

In each country one or more national charities would receive, free of cost, food purchased by the Community under its scheme to support farm incomes and held in its warehouses.

The national charities would handle all stages of the operation. Distribution centres that must obtain the necessary foodstuffs from warehouses outside their region would be reimbursed transportation costs by the Community. To cover their other expenses the charities could ask those who are in receipt of financial aid from the national, regional or local authorities to share in their costs.

The Commission has based its proposal on the results of the temporary operation mounted last winter. It has taken into account the criticisms and suggestions of interested charities.

The results of the 1987 operation varied greatly from country to country. In some, distribution was carried out very quickly, while in others it was held up by administrative formalities. There are no exact figures as to the numbers that benefitted. In some countries it was only a tiny proportion of the population, in others it was around 10% of it.

The operation cost the Community over ECU 160m., of which ECU 72m. were spent in Britain, ECU 27m. in Germany, ECU 24m. in France and ECU 15m. in Spain. Only ECU 900,000 were spent in Belgium. In the Community as a whole, dairy products accounted for three-quarters of the expenditure, although grains, beef and olive oil were also given away to the needy.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.70 or IR£ 0.77

TRADE: Green light for Community-wide electronic mail

The Twelve adopt TEDIS.

Computers will make it possible for manufacturers and traders throughout the European Community to communicate quickly, in principle, with each other and with government departments and European agencies in a few years' time. However, all kinds of technical, legal, linguistic and other obstacles will have to be swept away first. Which is where the Community's action programme on Trade Electronic Data Interchange Systems (TEDIS), recently adopted by the Twelve, comes in.

In an age of new technologies the large, single market envisaged for 1992 cannot be simply a matter of motorists and lorry drivers being able to drive within the Community as freely as within a member state. Firms of all kinds and sizes will need to be able to place orders or bill customers electronically inside the 12-nation Community.

TEDIS will be launched on 1 January 1988. There will be a 2-year preparatory phase, which should make it possible to identify problems and define the elements of a solution. The EC Council of Ministers recently released a total of ECU 5.3m.\* for this initial phase, although this is somewhat less than the ECU 6m. sought by the European Commission.

TEDIS will allow the coordination, at the Community level, of the work being carried on in the individual member states to perfect electronic systems for the transmission of commercial information. The programme will have to guarantee that the transmission of such information will not be overlooked in the preparation of European telecommunications standards.

TEDIS also comprises action aimed at drawing the attention of potential users and European manufacturers of computer hardware and software to the new possibilities which electronic data transmission at the Community level offers them. The action programme should also allow small and medium-sized businesses to take full advantage of the new system.

TEDIS will also tackle the problem of incompatibility between national regulations as well as language difficulties: users could turn to machine translation, for example. The TEDIS programme will try to find ways of guaranteeing the confidentiality of information sent over the new European system.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.70 or IR£ 0.77.

HEALTH: Above all, find out

The first meeting of the permanent conference on health and safety in a nuclear age.

Give the general public as much unbiased information as possible on the potential dangers of nuclear activities. This was the aim of the first meeting of the permanent conference on nuclear protection and safety, held in Luxembourg from October 5 to 7.

We are now in the 30th year of the nuclear age. More than 300 nuclear power stations are in operation around the world and another 300 are expected to come up in the relatively near future. In his speech to the Conference the European Environment Commissioner, Stanley Clinton Davis, stressed the public's right to as detailed information as possible. He undertook, in the name of the Commission, to work for the realization of this objective as well as for more aid and mutual help between the Community countries.

Unhappily the Commission's efforts to modify the EURATOM Treaty are not always welcome, whereas the public has the right to know in order to be able to deal with the possible consequences of an accident. Three Mile Island and Chernobyl have shown the need to ensure that the general public is not compelled to depend exclusively and entirely on the advice of experts, who may be strongly influenced by national interests. Complete open-mindedness and genuinely impartial information can only be provided by a core of Community inspectors who are free of constraints of this kind.

European consumers who attended the conference were in agreement with this viewpoint, criticizing the absence of a permanent information unit and help as regards protection against nuclear radiation. They expressed surprise at the multiplicity of figures which have been given in connection with acceptable radiation limits in foodstuffs.

It must be added that this effort at providing information should concern everyone in the European Community. Five of the 12 EC countries do not have nuclear power stations, but the accident at Chernobyl gave proof, if it were still needed, that even the most outlying regions cannot consider themselves as well out of harm's way. As was underlined by the President of the Economic and Social Committee, information on nuclear protection must be included in a European programme of public health, as people's interest in nuclear matters may prove short-lived, expressing itself only when an accident occurs.

The media, which was well represented in Luxembourg, remains the chief means of alerting public opinion. It is incumbent upon it to inform the public in close collaboration with the national authorities and scientists, in order to update the information at its disposal and elaborate an effective information policy.

HEALTH: Cancer? What cancer?

Results of a survey conducted in the EC.

Cancer can be avoided in three-quarters of the cases, in theory, and in one-third of them in practice. But 6 Europeans out of 10 are unaware of this. Because of fear and ignorance the possibilities of cancer prevention cannot be properly exploited, with the result that the number of cases is rising and of cures falling.

Nearly 3 Europeans out of 4 rightly point to tobacco as the most frequent cause of cancer; but over half put radioactivity second, although it accounts for a very tiny proportion, compared to other cancer-forming agents. Other causes whose importance is greatly exaggerated include pollution, certain occupations, stress and excessive exposure to the sun. Nutritional factors, which are responsible for the largest number of cancers after tobacco, are virtually forgotten.

These are among the findings of a survey conducted in March and April of this year in all 12 European Community countries in the framework of the "Europe Against Cancer" programme. The aim was to find out the degree of awareness of Europeans in this area, and how far they apply the main individual rules of cancer prevention, especially attitudes towards measures against smoking. The nature and extent of the awareness is the result, obviously, of the sources of information as well as differences in habits from one country to another. Thus 63% of the French incriminated alcohol, as against a Community average of 30%. But it must be remembered that alcohol in fact is responsible for 10% of deaths from cancer in France - a much higher rate than in other countries.

Errors in estimation can occasionally be put down to vague information, but the awareness of the dangers which tobacco represents is a testimony to the effectiveness of national and Community campaigns. It also emerges from the survey that Europeans are very preoccupied by the state of their health and take a great interest in everything concerning it. Thus 8 Europeans out of 10 are "often" or "sometimes" interested in information on health, which augurs well for the success of European information and awareness-raising campaigns for the prevention of cancer.

As for applying the recommendations of doctors, this is not always easy, even when one is sufficiently aware both of the dangers and the precautions that must be taken. But, helped by better information, the "ten commandments" against the disease of the century are being increasingly respected.

In the United States, for example, smoking has declined from 41 to 30% among men and from 36 to 28% among women in 40 years. Why shouldn't the Europeans achieve as much? The surveys envisaged for 1988 and 1989 will allow us to judge the effectiveness of the various actions and campaigns that are being launched.

CONSUMERS: Beware of imitations ...

... whose import and sale member states need not ban.

Mrs Raymonde Dury, a Belgian member of the European Parliament, has repeatedly expressed her concern to the European Commission over the export to Germany of a ham masquerading as the well-known "Ardennes ham" produced in the Belgian Ardennes.

The Agricultural Commissioner, Mr Frans Andriessen, has reminded Mrs Dury that the Treaty of Rome allows member states to restrict the import and sale of products only on grounds of public health, to protect industrial or commercial property and in defense of consumers. And even in such cases they are not under an obligation to restrict trade.

Mrs Dury's repeated questions on this and other related subjects suggest that she is unlikely to be satisfied. But for the present it is up to consumers to keep their eyes peeled and let their taste buds decide which ham is the imitation.



ECONOMY: A fall in unemployment can be ruled out for 1988

The European Commission's latest economic forecasts.

The sharp fall in unemployment which many Europeans are waiting for will not come about this year or even the next. According to the European Commission's latest forecasts, unemployment will be running at 11.8% in 1987 and at 11.7% in 1988 - that is to say, only fractionally below the 11.9% recorded in 1986. This is a situation the Commission finds "unacceptable".

This continuing unemployment in the 12-nation European Community is all the harder to bear in view of the situation in the United States, where unemployment is expected to amount to 6.3% of the workforce this year and to 6% the next, as against nearly 10% in 1983. The Japanese unemployment rate will be 3% this year and 2.9% in 1988 - that is, up slightly from 1986, when it stood at 2.8%.

In the European Community employment is expected to increase by only 0.8% this year and by 0.6% the next, a rise which will do no more than off-set the increase in the size of the civilian labour force. During this time the number of jobs is expected to rise in the United States by 2.5% this year and by 1.9% in 1988. In Japan, employment should remain at its present level.

The European Commission had expected at the end of last year that the Community economy would grow somewhat faster this year because of a number of favourable factors, notably a fall in the price of oil and certain raw materials. This higher growth rate has failed to materialize: instead of the 2.6% increase recorded last year, growth this year will not exceed 2.2% and 2.3% in 1988. The United States, and more especially Japan, should do better.

In revising the growth rate downwards the Commission was particularly influenced by the trends in Community exports and capital investments. Exports are not expected to rise by more than 2% in 1987, as in 1986, and by 3.3% next year. As for capital investment, it should rise by 5.3% this year and 4% the next, as against 4.2% in 1986. A slowdown is also likely in the construction industry.

The Commission foresees a price increase of 3.2% this year, as against 3.7% in 1986. But prices are expected to rise by 3.4% in 1988. Even in the absence of a fresh crisis, the Commission fears a further rise in oil prices.