



A NEWSHEET FOR JOURNALISTS • REPRODUCTION AUTHORIZED

WEEKLY No. 18/88

BRUSSELS, 23 - 30 May 1988

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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

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INTERNAL MARKET: A frontier-free Europe needs a social dimension

The findings of a European Commission report.

The single internal market, set for 1992, will not succeed unless its social dimension is kept in view. This is the clear, unequivocal message contained in a report drafted by the European Commission's own experts and addressed to the member states. The report in fact completes the Cecchini report on the cost of "non-Europe" and that by Mr Padoa-Schioppa on an eventual increase in regional disparities in the absence of a policy of redistributing wealth.

The report claims that the success of the single market implies a genuine frontier-free Europe for workers moving from one European Community country to another, to begin with. It also requires measures aimed at helping individuals and regions at risk from the changes which are envisaged, together with a certain "Europeanization" of relations between employers and trade unions.

The experts assume that a growing number of Europeans will move from one country to another, not merely in search of a job but in the wake of the reorganization of numerous economic activities on Community lines. This tendency should become more pronounced between now and 1992.

But the report makes clear that this will require complete equality of treatment for all European workers. Hence the need for all competent authorities, at both the national and regional level, to enforce existing European regulations fully, and for all twelve governments to take fresh measures, aimed at putting an end to the present compartmentalization of national labour markets, for example.

The completion of the European common market carries with it the risk that some regions will become richer at the expense of others. In these regions sectoral unemployment could develop. To prevent such situations from arising, the report favours improved vocational training, Community assistance and readjustments in the organization of work.

The experts take the view that the success of the single market implies an agreement between employers and trade unions, on the one hand, and the development of European social regulations on the other. According to the report, employers and workers should increasingly negotiate at the Community level, and by economic sectors, the issues which relate directly to the creation of the single market.

INTERNAL MARKET: A frontier-free Europe for safer toys from 1990

EC ministers give final approval to a Community directive.

Toys sold in the 12-nation European Community will be safer and of better quality from 1 January 1990. Thanks to a decision of the EC Council of Ministers of May 3, all toys sold in the Community as from that date will have to meet certain safety standards contained in a Community directive.

Obstacles to the free movement of toys within the EC will disappear as a result. This should mean a wider choice for children and lower prices for their parents, given the increased competition which should follow the creation of a frontier-free Community market for toys.

The new directive will protect toymakers who have quality products from the unfair competition of firms making toys which are cheaper but not as safe. To ensure that toys meet the safety standards laid down in the directive, spot checks will be carried out in factories and importers' warehouses.

ENVIRONMENT: The lessons of Seveso and Basle are being learnt

The Twelve are beginning to respect Community legislation on industrial safety.

Nearly 10 years after the Seveso disaster in Italy, and 18 months after the large-scale pollution of the Rhine following the fire at the Sandoz factory near Basle, in Switzerland, governments of the 12 European Community countries are beginning to conform to the 1982 Community directive on the major accident hazards of certain industrial activities.

The directive, better known as the Seveso directive, should have come into force in 1984. The European Commission was obliged, however, to take most of the member states to court to ensure they complied with the directive. Half of them do so now, according to a recent Commission report. They include Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Ireland and Luxembourg.

Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain are adapting their legislation to meet the requirements of the Community directive. The court proceedings against Greece and Italy are still in progress.

The Seveso directive applies to 1,861 industrial installations. The European Commission has been notified of 26 accidents under it since 1984.

EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE: A Court of First Instance to be set up

The new tribunal will help reduce the European Court's growing workload.

The European Court of Justice in Luxembourg has an overwhelming workload. The number of cases referred to it in 1987 rose to 395, up from 135 in 1975. As many as 527 cases are pending before the Court, while the time taken to get a judgment can run to 22 months.

This is an unacceptable situation, especially in the perspective of 1992. But it is also one for which the Single European Act offers a remedy: the Act provides for the creation of a Court of First Instance, with jurisdiction over certain classes of action or proceedings, brought by natural or legal persons, including complex factual disputes which, by their very nature, take up a good deal of the Court's time.

In the light of this the European Commission has embarked on the process of setting up a new Community tribunal. To this end it has sent the European Parliament an initial set of guidelines. Parliament should give its opinion in June, so as to allow the EC Council of Ministers to take a decision setting up the new tribunal that same month.

The Commission would like the new tribunal to be made up of at least 12 senior judges. While they would be nominated by the member states, the Commission would like the Court to be consulted, in order to ensure the prestige and authority of the new tribunal.

Its rulings would be subject to right of appeal to the Court of Justice but on points of law only.

INTERNAL MARKET: Another four steps down the road to 1992

The Twelve adopted new measures in early May.

The frontier-free Europe, set for 1992, is drawing nearer. At the beginning of May the European Community Council of Ministers adopted another four of the famous "300 measures" which will transform the present Community into a genuine common market.

Thus 77 of the "300" - 286 in reality - measures have already been approved. The new regulations cover toy safety (see page 3), type-approval of tractors and health checks on fresh meat.

INTERNAL MARKET: Plans for the mutual recognition of diplomas make slow progress

The EC Council of Ministers sends the draft back to the experts.

Every higher-education diploma obtained in a member state, after at least three years of studies, must be treated as equivalent to the diplomas granted in the other member states. This is the principle the European Community must implement between now and 1992, in the run-up to the single internal market.

It is a principle which directly concerns the professions, entry to which depends on the approval of professional bodies or the authorities. But it is also of interest to every job seeker whose application could be set aside by a prospective employer because the diploma he or she holds was awarded by a higher education institution of another member state.

The stakes are too high, and the differences between the educational programmes of the various EC countries too great, for the problem to be settled right away. Differences in the quality of the teaching, the selectivity criteria in use and the varying degrees of severity shown by examining bodies only add to the difficulties.

In France, for example, barristers holding diplomas obtained outside the country must pass an examination since 1985. Some two-thirds of those sitting for it succeed. Nearly all the member states seem to prefer some such method to that proposed by the European Commission - a 3-year probationary period during which the applicant would fill in the gaps in his training.

A likely solution will be to admit both methods whenever the applicant's diploma is considered inadequate. Even so, a decision will have to be taken as to who will decide which of the two will apply in any given case - the applicant or the authorities.

No less complicated is the problem of the mutual recognition of diplomas which, although awarded by institutions other than universities, nevertheless lead to a professional qualification identical to that which can be obtained at a university. The status of studies which last less than two years also poses problems.

The ministers, not surprisingly, decided to refer these and other questions back to their deputies, who meet regularly in Brussels as the Committee of Permanent Representatives, or COREPER in Community jargon. The Council of Ministers hopes to be able to take a decision when it meets in June.

OIL: Both production and imports declined last year

A bird's-eye view of the situation in the EC and its member states.

There was a slight fall in both the production and imports of crude oil in the 12-nation European Community last year. However, consumption of petroleum products rose, if very slightly. The main difference between last year and 1986 was in the source of the Community's imports of crude oil, as the Soviet Union replaced Saudi Arabia as the Community's main external supplier.

Community oil production, which came to around 141 mn. tons last year, declined by 1.7% compared with 1986. This was because of a considerable fall in output in the U.K. Even so, with more than 118mn. tons output Britain remains the only large Community producer of crude. Production rose sharply in both Denmark and Italy in 1987 but the quantities remained small - below 5 mn. tons.

In 1987, Community imports of crude oil fell by 2.3% to less than 405 mn. tons. Net imports (imports minus exports) of crude oil and petroleum products declined by 0.3%. German and French imports fell considerably, Italian imports by not as much. Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands all recorded a sharp rise in net imports.

Community imports of Soviet crude rose by more than 23%, putting the Soviet Union at the top of the list of the EC's external suppliers. Imports from Saudi Arabia, previously the Community's No. 1 supplier, fell by nearly 45% last year, while imports from other Gulf states, especially the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Irak, rose sharply.

Community consumption of petroleum products remained unchanged last year. Deliveries of aircraft fuel rose by 5%, because of the growth in air transport, and of petrol to motorists by 2.3%.

Consumption of light fuel oils fell by 1.2% and of heavy fuel oil by 3.6%. Italy was an exception because of the halt in the production of electricity from nuclear energy.

TOURISM: Devising a European strategy

A business with 180 mn. customers.

The large-scale population migrations of ancient times were no more than family outings compared to the crowds which swarm across Europe during the holiday season. The fact is that each year some 140 mn. people resident within the European Community's frontiers are on the move, generally over a very short timespan. They are joined by some 40 mn. tourists from abroad, seduced by the varied charms of the Community's 12 member states.

It goes without saying that the most favoured destinations are Italy, Spain, France and Greece. But thanks to the efforts of tour operators, and the public's changing tastes, the other EC countries are fast catching up.

The tourist industry currently employs some 7.5 mn. people on a fulltime basis. This is equal to 6% of the total workforce. If jobs created indirectly by tourism are taken into account, the figure rises to 10 mn., or 8% of the workforce. Finally, tourism accounts for 5.5% of the Community's Gross Domestic Product and 8% of final private consumption. It enables the Community, which accounts for 70% of the world tourist market, to earn nearly ECU 60 bn. a year\*.

These figures were highlighted at the Conference on tourism, Horizon 1992, held in Brussels last November at the initiative of the European Commission. They were also at the basis of the talks which the Community's ministers of tourism held recently in the German town of Glücksburg, when they examined the document prepared by the European Commission, in accord with the German presidency and with the participation of the European Commissioner for tourism, Carlo Ripa di Meana.

The aim of the discussions was to finalize a joint strategy aimed at facilitating the expansion of a sector vital to the European economy in the run-up to 1992. The ministers concluded that a pre-condition for the development of tourism is a series of measures aimed at the elimination of the Community's internal frontiers; the liberalization of transport, especially air transport; the harmonization of regulations which apply to nationals of non-Community countries; the staggering of holidays in not only time but also space, by means of a better breakdown of school holidays and vacation periods and extending the number of holiday sites.

It is this aspect in particular which the European Tourism Year, proposed by the Commission for 1990, will seek to highlight, through projects and competitions which aim at a better seasonal and geographical breakdown of tourism.

The development of tourism is positive in itself, but steps will have to be taken to prevent holiday makers from looking like swarms of locusts.

\* 1 ECU = UK£ 0.66 or IR£ 0.78.

To our colleagues of the European press

It is clear from your letters and frequent demands for additional information that EUROFOCUS is meeting a genuine need. In order to improve our service we would welcome your suggestions and criticisms. To this end we are enclosing a questionnaire for you to fill in.

It would help us if you would send us press cuttings of the EUROFOCUS articles which you have used, giving details of the issue and number of pages. This will give us an idea of what you expect from us and help us improve the contents of EUROFOCUS.

Thank you for your help.

Alberto Ca'Zorzi  
Editor



QUESTIONNAIRE

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