



a newssheet for journalists

Weekly n° 38/88

21-28 November 1988

S U M M A R Y

- P. 2 CULTURE: A modern Charter from Delphi
A plea for a European audiovisual industry.
- P. 4 TOURISM: Visit Europe!
Promoting Europe as a tourist destination.
- P. 5 INTERNAL MARKET: Half way to 1992
Some gains - but it's not yet in the bag.
- P. 6 ENERGY: Private electricity production can mean savings
The EC favours cooperation between public and private producers.
- ENERGY: The target for 1995 is in danger
The EC wants to promote coal and save on transport.
- P. 7 COAL: Further declines in employment and production
Statistics for the first semester of 1988.
- AIRCRAFT: The European industry under threat ...
... according to a report drawn up by European manufacturers.
- P. 8 DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: 25 million blind people
The European Parliament wants the EC to give special help.
- P. 9 UNEMPLOYMENT: Down in September
10.2% of the Community workforce jobless in September, as against 10.4% in August.
- LABOUR: ECU 2mn. to improve working conditions in the mines
The European Commission supports 13 research projects with cash.

Mailed from: Brussels X

es
for
EU

CULTURE: A modern charter from Delphi

A plea for a European audiovisual industry.

A galaxy of stars and screenwriters joined the European Commissioner for cultural policy, Carlo Ripa di Meana, in the press room of the European Commission to present the European Audiovisual Charter adopted on September 27 at Delphi by actors, film directors and other representatives of the creative arts. The European Commissioner claimed that the Charter will hereafter serve the Community's institutions as an obligatory point of reference.

"The European Commission", he went on, "is coming to the end of its reflections on audiovisual policy. The Community's cultural ministers will discuss it during their meeting at Rhodes on November 29, as will the Heads of State or Government a few days later, again at Rhodes. The call from the Hanover summit must be answered and the foundations laid for structured activity in the audiovisual field at the Community level."

The European audiovisual market, according to Carlo Ripa di Meana, "is characterized by the appearance of large new commercial groups and by very rapid technological development. It requires regulation at the Community level, especially to meet the dangers which threaten its realization, mainly because of the invasion of advertising."

The issue was taken up at once by the first of the film directors present, the Italian director and President of the European Federation of Audiovisual Filmmakers (FERA), Ettore Scola. He denounced the cuts imposed on works of art; the interference of television companies, both public and private; the "violence inflicted on authors and, consequently, spectators by breaks for advertising."

Films are thus reduced to the status of "containers" for advertising, writers are humiliated and dispossessed of their works. Hence the

(Contd.)

(Contd.)

demand, contained in the Charter, that the texts be broadcast in their entirety, without inopportune breaks. The audiovisual industry's creators and artists are not asking for subsidies, according to FERA's Secretary-General, João Correa, but want help in defending their creations, something the Americans, for example, have always done.

The German director, Peter Fleischmann, underlined the economic aspects of the problem. He pointed out that it was a matter of billions in any currency and that the Single Market of 1993 could not overlook a stake as large as the audiovisual.

The Spaniard, Antonio Bardem, pleaded that the cultural and artistic, and not simply commercial, character of an audiovisual work be remembered.

There was a defense, in fact, of the European cultural identity, against the danger of colonization by groups foreign to it. Among the actors, Marcello Mastroianni broke a lance in favour of the use by actors of their mother tongue. "If I am known", he said, "it is thanks to the films which I have made in Italian. The others didn't turn out too well; even my gestures were foreign and the results have been monstrous hybrids."

The European Commission's press room was witness to a remarkable display of unanimity and solidarity. But the producers who belong to FERA will have to convince certain of their French colleagues, who reacted in surprising fashion to a proposal seeking to ban advertising breaks. This breach in the ranks of the creators could threaten to destroy all their efforts.

TOURISM: Visit Europe!

Promoting Europe as a tourist destination.

When the European Community's ministers of tourism gather on December 14 for their first-ever formal meeting as the Council of Ministers, they will have before them a list of activities, prepared by the European Commission and aimed at (1) promoting the Community as a tourist destination; (2) preparing small and medium-sized businesses in this sector for the Single Market and (3) tackling the crucial problem of the seasonal and geographical concentration of tourists.

The activities the Commission favours include: promoting the Community as a tourist destination for not only its own citizens but also those of third countries; a coordinated advertising campaign aimed at encouraging Europeans to take out-of-season holidays; co-financing pilot projects which promote such holidays or facilitate travel by the young, the elderly and the handicapped; support for devising trans-national itineraries of historical or cultural interest and exchanges of students and trainees in the hotel and tourist trades.

The Council, which should also adopt a Commission proposal to declare 1990 as European Tourism Year, clearly will have its work cut out. In addition to the activities listed above, which basically call for closer cooperation between the Community and its Member States, the Council will have to look at another series of measures, requiring it to take a decision on the basis of a Commission proposal.

These measures include the establishment of model contracts regulating relations between tour operators and their clients; the extension of the present standardized information on hotels to camp sites, youth hostels, yachts, etc.; the adoption of a regulation to prevent over-booking of both transport and accommodation and the protection of unaccompanied minors on holiday.

The Commission clearly wants the Community's tourism ministers to launch a veritable policy of tourism on December 14. Such a policy is all the more necessary given that tourism is not only a major Community industry but also a powerful instrument for European integration.

INTERNAL MARKET: Half way to 1992

Some gains - but it's not yet in the bag.

By 31 December 1988 the present Delors Commission will have done its job and the Council of Ministers will have completed much of its share of the work. As result, the European Community should be able to keep the rendezvous it has set itself for 1992. Even so, it cannot afford to rest on its laurels; on the contrary, it will have to quicken its pace.

These are the main conclusions of the mid-term report on the Single Market presented by its chief architect, Lord Cockfield, Vice-President of the European Commission and author of the White Paper published in 1985 and listing the "300 measures" needed to eliminate the economic frontiers between the Member States.

During his four years in Brussels, Lord Cockfield has achieved the two goals he set himself in 1985. The "1992 programme" now appears irreversible, to Europeans as well as the outside world. By the end of the year the Commission will have submitted to the Twelve 90% of the 300 proposals (which now number 279).

The EC Council of Ministers should have adopted half the programme by the end of this year. It has formally adopted one-third of it so far. If the proposals which the Council has sent to the European Parliament for examination, pending their formal adoption, are taken into account, the figure rises to 40% of the total. The European Commission expects the Council to have reached agreement on 45% of the measures by 31 December.

Lord Cockfield, presenting the report, concluded there was no time to be lost, because the Council must adopt the rest of the programme in two years. The fact is that nearly all the measures adopted by the Community must be incorporated into the national legislation of each of the 12 Member States. This task, which falls to the national Parliaments, takes a good deal of time, although it should be completed for 31 December 1992.

The picture is not without shadows. Some 70% of the measures adopted by the Council deal with technical barriers to trade: technical standards, insurance, transport, capital movements and public procurement. In two areas of great importance to John Citizen the Council has simply been marking time: (1) the free movement of persons and (2) VAT and other indirect taxes.

Under these conditions the European Commission feels the Community's Heads of State or Government must give their ministers fresh instructions in order that the Single Market may benefit people as well as goods.

ENERGY: Private electricity production can mean savings

The EC favours cooperation between public and private producers.

Industrial firms and cooperatives that produce their own electricity from renewable sources should cooperate with public utilities, such as Britain's Central Electricity Generating Board and the Irish Electricity Supply Board. To encourage them to cooperate, the Community's energy ministers adopted a recommendation to this effect in early November.

Factories can generate electricity using the heat from their industrial activities, while cooperative ventures can obtain both heat and electricity from all kinds of waste, with obvious savings in both cases. However, the electricity thus produced does not always correspond to the needs of the producers, who should be in a position to sell it and buy from public utilities what they need.

It is this form of cooperation the Twelve would like to encourage. Their recommendation calls on the national authorities to provide common rules governing relations between private producers and public utilities. The authorities are asked not to discourage private producers; on the contrary, they must oblige public utilities to offer to buy surplus private production, at prices which guarantee adequate returns to private producers.

ENERGY: The target for 1995 is in danger

The EC wants to promote coal and save on transport.

The energy target for 1995, adopted by the Twelve at the end of 1986, implies a fall in oil consumption relative to other forms of energy, in favour of coal and renewable sources, such as hydroelectric, and the "new" forms of energy.

With the sharp fall in oil prices since 1986, EC energy ministers fear these targets may not be reached. They believe the Community must redouble its efforts to save energy, especially in the transport sector, a major consumer of oil. The ministers also want to promote coal, which is both relatively expensive and in bad odour with environmentalists.

COAL: Further declines in employment and production

Statistics for the first semester of 1988.

Some 14,700 jobs were lost in the European Community's coal mines during the first semester of 1988. This was equal to 6% of all jobs in this sector. Production fell by 4.5% during the same period, while imports from third countries rose by 3.3%, according to Eurostat, the EC's statistical office.

These losses reflect the attempts at restructuring the coal industry, which have been going on for several years now. Most of the job losses in the first semester were in Britain, where some 11,000 persons, representing nearly 13% of the workforce, were made redundant. The 1,400 jobs lost in Belgium represented more than 18% of the workforce. Some 1,300 miners were made redundant in France and 1,000 in Germany.

Production fell sharply in Belgium, where it was down 41%, and France (13%). But it rose in Spain, a producer of "black" lignite, and Portugal. There was a sharp rise in imports from third countries in Britain, Ireland, Portugal and Belgium. Such imports fell by some 15% in Spain, France and Italy.

AIRCRAFT: The European industry under threat ...

... according to a report drawn up by European manufacturers.

The European aircraft industry, often held up as an example because of Airbus, is threatened by the growing competition from not only the U.S. but also Japan and even Brazil, Indonesia and China. This gloomy prognostication is to be found in a report prepared for the European Commission by European manufacturers of civil and military aircraft and published in early November.

The Community's aircraft industry employs some 200,000 people and has an annual turnover of ECU 16 billion*. The report notes that it could take advantage of the present rapidly expanding market - passenger traffic is expected to double in 10 years - provided it embarks on an ambitious research programme. The industry needs new technologies to meet its goals: improved safety, fuel economy, less pollution, etc.

The European Commission takes the view that Community manufacturers must cooperate not only in the design and construction of aircraft, as in the case of Airbus, but also in research and development. It has already launched the idea of a Community programme along these lines.

* 1 ECU = UK£0.66 or IR£0.77

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: 25 million blind people

The European Parliament wants the EC to give special help.

European Community aid to developing countries has so far more or less overlooked the blind, of whom there are some 25 million in the Third World. This fact stands out in a report prepared by the Euro-MP Willem Vergeer and adopted by the European Parliament at the end of October, together with a resolution calling for vigorous action by the Community to combat blindness in the world's poorest countries.

Roughly 80% of the blind people in the world live in the developing countries, according to the report. It points out that the conditions in these countries favour blindness: not only the hunger and absence of hygiene and health care but also the heat, which is a marked feature of so many of them. Diseases which children in developed countries shrug off easily, such as measles, can blind children in the developing countries. The report points out that each day some 2,000 persons go blind all over the world; in some West African villages one person in two is blind.

Between 75 and 80% of the cases of blindness could be prevented, or cured, relatively easily, according to Mr. Vergeer. The resolution voted by the European Parliament calls for preventive action to deal with the problem by attacking its causes: a better diet, vaccination and more research into tropical diseases.

To help the blind in developing countries recover their sight the resolution advocates training programmes for oculists and opticians in the countries themselves, as well as the supply of the necessary medicines and, whenever possible, their local production.

Euro-MPs feel that besides its regular development aid the Community could contribute more to the fight against blindness, by orienting its food aid and scientific research programme for developing countries in consequence.

The report stresses the point that a fall in the number of blind people in the developing countries would have an impact in both human and economic terms. The fact is that large-scale blindness is leading to the depopulation of fertile regions, particularly those near rivers. Reversing the trend would facilitate the fight against hunger, by stimulating food production.

UNEMPLOYMENT: Down in September

10.2% of the Community workforce jobless in September, as against 10.4% in August.

The unemployment rate for the 12-nation European Community declined appreciably in September to 10.2%, as compared to 10.4% the previous month, according to Eurostat, the EC's Statistical Office. This was the largest decrease in a month since January 1983.

Eurostat compensates for differences in national recording methods and takes seasonal factors into account in calculating unemployment rates.

Female unemployment in the Community stood at 13.6% at the end of September, as against a rate of 8% for men. The unemployment rate among the under-25s was 19.6%, or nearly twice that for the working population as a whole.

The decrease recorded in September at the Community level occurred in all Member States with the exception of Denmark and Luxembourg, where unemployment rose slightly. It was unchanged in the Netherlands.

The number of registered unemployed in the EC stood at 15.6mn. at the end of September. This was a rise of 0.1% as compared to August but a decline of 1.3% as compared to September 1987.

LABOUR: ECU 2mn.* to improve working conditions in the mines

The European Commission supports 13 research projects with cash.

The European Commission made some ECU 2.15mn. available at the end of October to improve working conditions in the European Community's coal mines. It will cover parts of the costs of 13 research projects in five EC countries: Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The funds are being provided under the European Coal and Steel Community's fifth programme of research into industrial hygiene in mines.

Most of the projects, to be completed in one to three years, relate to the study of coal dust and ways of neutralizing it. Other projects deal with noise reduction and conditions of hygiene in mines using new technologies.

* 1 ECU = UK£0.66 or IR£0.77.