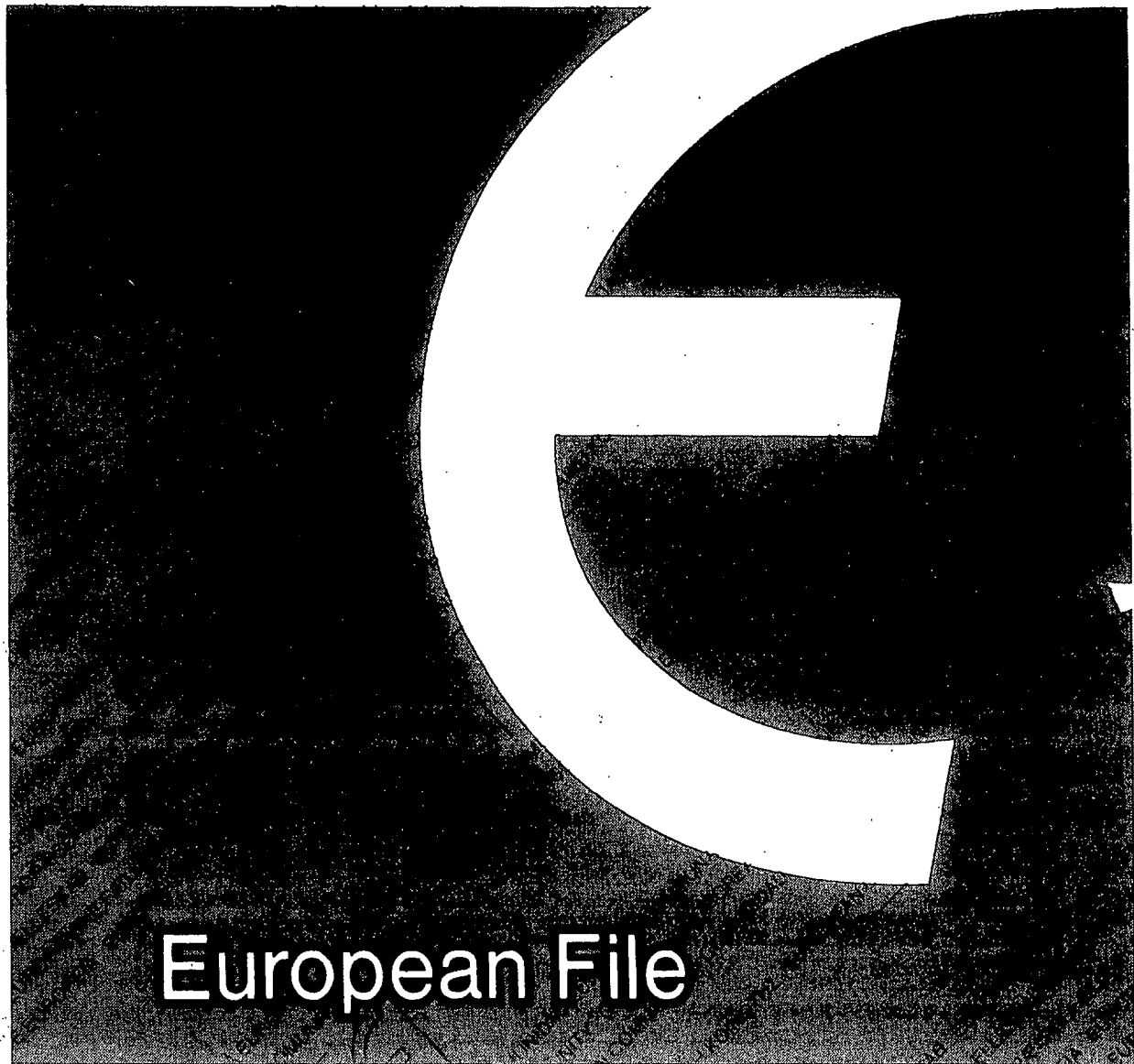


The European Community and tourism



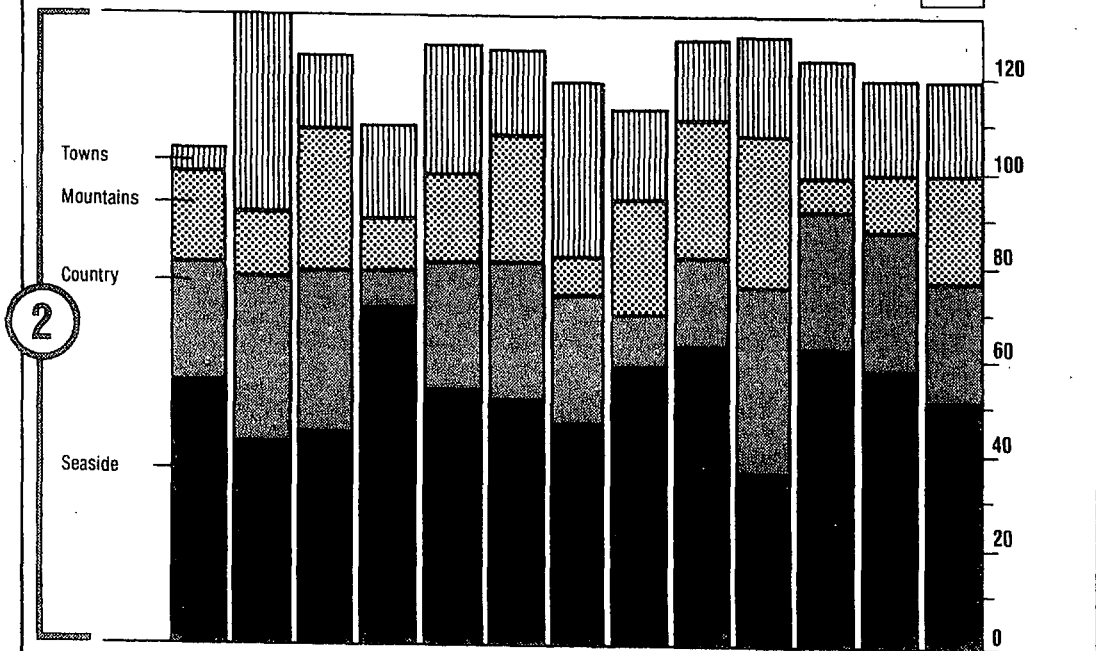
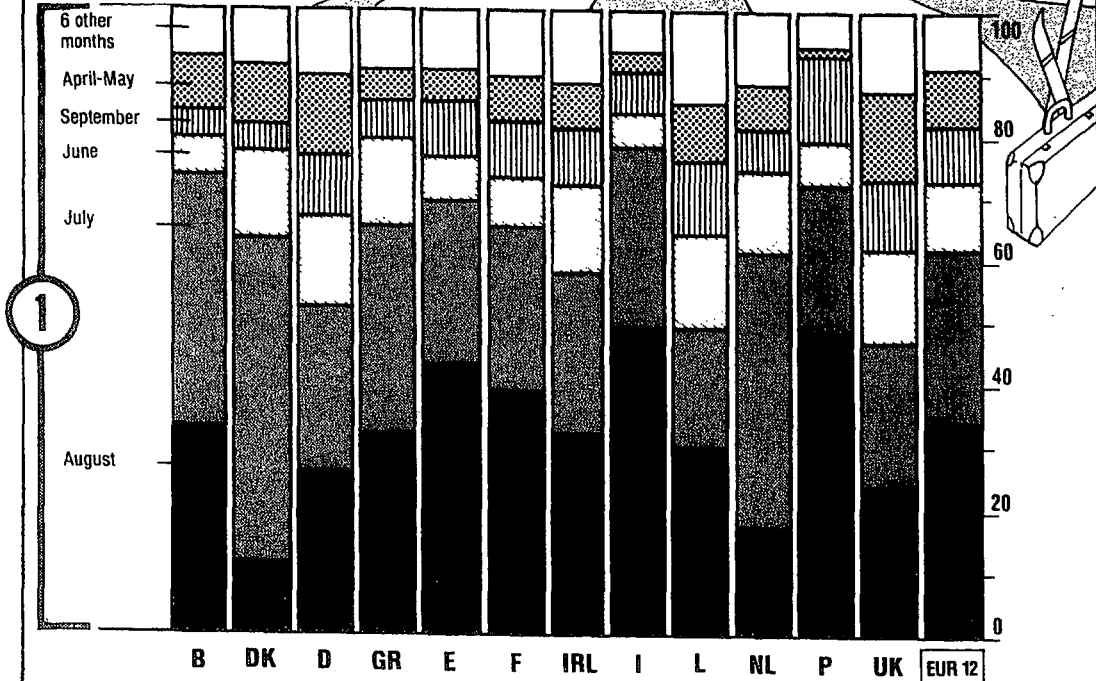
European File

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Directorate-General Information,
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Rue de la Loi 200 — B-1049 Bruxelles

9/87
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Choice of holiday (1985, per 100 departing)

- ① By season *
- ② By location **



* Principal holidays.

** National totals are greater than 100, as some holidaymakers stayed in more than one type of location.

Source: Sample survey carried out by European Omnibus Survey for the European Commission, June 1986 (11 840 Europeans questioned about holidays taken in the previous year).

According to a survey organized last year by the European Commission, about 56% of Community citizens went away on holiday at least once in 1985. 20% of those went to another Community country and 13% elsewhere in Europe or the world. In 52% of cases the place chosen was by the sea, followed in order of popularity by the countryside (25%), mountains (23%) and towns (19%) (see diagram). The means of transport used was the car (68%), train (14%), aeroplane (13%) and boat (5%). For accommodation 32% used hotels, 21% stayed with relatives or friends, 17% chose to rent, 16% went camping or caravanning, 7% went to their holiday homes and 5% lodged in private houses. The apparent result was very good holidays, as the holiday-makers' satisfaction indicator, measured on a 10-point scale, was 8.17.¹

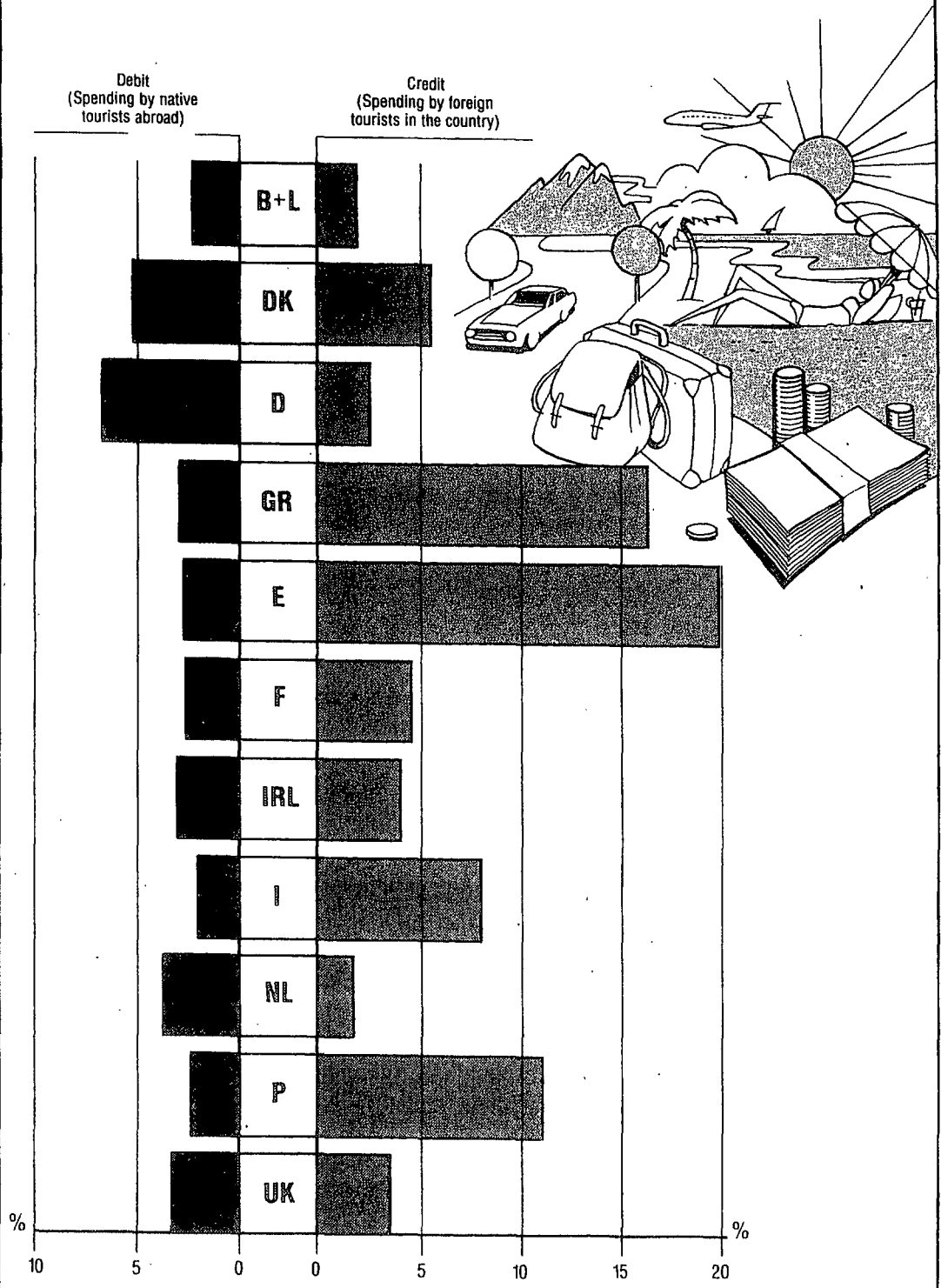
For some years now the Community institutions have become increasingly interested in the problems of tourism.

- In a multinational and multicultural Community, tourism is a particularly good way for all its citizens to get to know and understand each other better. That is why the European Parliament, as well as the Heads of State or Government meeting in the European Council, have frequently underlined the importance of tourism in the context of a People's Europe.
- Tourism is a prime economic sector. It represents about 5.5% of the gross domestic product of the Community of Twelve and 8% of private consumption. It plays a perceptible role in the balance of payments of Member States, accounting on average for nearly 4% of currency outflow and 5% of inflow, with 'peaks' on the credit side of almost 20% in Spain and well over 15% in Greece (see diagram). Tourism is therefore an essential factor in the achievement of the European internal market — which is one of the Community's major objectives — as well as in the current international negotiations on liberalizing trade in goods and services.
- The importance of tourism for employment is equally obvious. In the Community as a whole the sector provides, directly, the equivalent of 5.5 million full-time jobs. It also creates employment indirectly for numerous other workers. Tourism is labour-intensive and can make an important contribution to the fight against unemployment and to the development of less-favoured regions.

Tourism is a social phenomenon that is developing rapidly: new forms of it are coming into being all the time; expenditure on international tourism and receipts from it have increased more than six-fold in 14 years. The Community, in cooperation with Member States and with those who work in tourism, is evidently in a position to analyse tourism problems in more depth than has been done before. It can also, as the ministers of the Member States recognized in April 1984, play a central role in the coordination of certain activities. To deal with the saturation of the coastal areas of a particular country, it is not

¹ This file replaces our No 11/85.

Share of tourism in the current balance of payments of Community member countries (1985, as %)



Source: Eurostat.

just efforts by that country that are required: holidays must be better staggered in the country from which the tourists are coming, so some coordination is needed at European level. Also, with competition from other parts of the world to be faced, the time seems to be ripe for joint promotional activity on certain markets outside the Community. On the initiative of Mr Ripa di Meana, the Member of the Commission with particular responsibility for tourism, a first experiment in this direction has been launched in the United States.

The Commission's policy on tourism is based on a communication submitted to the Council of Ministers of the Community in January 1986. The main themes of Community action are:

- Assisting tourism in the Community.
- Improving the seasonal and geographical distribution of tourism.
- Better use of financial aid.
- Better information and protection for tourists.
- Improving working conditions in the tourist industry.
- Increasing awareness of the sector, furthering consultation and cooperation.

Facilitating tourism in the Community

Various measures to make life easier for tourists in the Community have either been implemented or are in preparation.

- Border checks.* The Community intends between now and 1992 to eliminate police and tax checks at borders between Member States. Visa and residence-permit systems should also be integrated to some degree on a Community basis. Progress to date includes the creation of a Community driving licence and passport. Duty-free allowances for travellers have also been raised: the general level is now 350 ECU (see our table for the equivalents in national currencies). The European Commission is also asking Member States to extend to all land frontiers between them the use of the 'green disc', which already allows people from the Benelux countries, Germany and France to cross the borders between those countries quickly when they have nothing to declare. In 1988 the Member States will replace signs saying 'customs' with ones showing the European flag and bearing the name of the country being entered. They should also gradually merge their land frontier posts and provide channels reserved for Community citizens at all major ports and airports.

Duty-free allowances at European borders

Miscellaneous items (a)

Country to which imported	Merchandise Imported from a Community Member State		Merchandise imported from third countries	
Belgium	15 800 BFR	<i>(4 000)</i>	2 000 BFR	<i>(1 000)</i>
Denmark	2 800 DKR	(c)	375 DKR	
Germany	780 DM		115 DM	
Greece (b)	48 910 DR	(c) <i>(12 580)</i>	6 290 DR	<i>(3 210)</i>
Spain (b)	48 200 PTA		6 200 PTA	
France	2 400 FF	<i>(620)</i>	300 FF	<i>(150)</i>
Ireland	266 £Ir	(c) <i>(68)</i>	34 £Ir	<i>(17)</i>
Italy	523 480 LIT	<i>(134 610)</i>	67 305 LIT	<i>(34 400)</i>
Luxembourg	15 800 LFR	<i>(4 000)</i>	2 000 LFR	<i>(1 000)</i>
Netherlands	890 HFL		125 HFL	
Portugal	53 000 ESC	<i>(13 500)</i>	7 000 ESC	<i>(3 500)</i>
United Kingdom	250 £		32 £	

(a) In Italics and parentheses are given the limits applicable in some countries to travellers aged under 15.

(b) Estimated.

(c) Maximum value per object of DKR 2 300 (Denmark), DR 39 130 (Greece), £Ir 58 (Ireland).

Specific items (a)

	Imported from a Member State	Imported from a third country
Cigarettes or	300	200
Cigarillos or	150	100
Cigars or	75	50
Smoker's tobacco (grams)	400	250
Still wine (litres)	5	2
	(Denmark: 4)	
Sparkling wine, liqueurs, aperitifs and spirits of 22° max (litres) or	3	2
Spirits of more than 22° (litres)	1.5	1
Coffee (grams) or	1 000	500
Coffee extracts and essences (grams)	400	200
Tea (grams) or	200	100
Tea extracts and essences (grams)	80	40
Perfume (grams)	75	50
Toilet water (litres)	3/8	1/4

(a) Young people under 17 do not benefit from the 'tobacco' and 'wines and spirits' allowances. Under 15's do not get the coffee allowances. There are stricter limits for Danes returning after less than 48 hours abroad.

Note: Duty-free allowances may not be used for commercial purposes. They may be reduced for inhabitants of border areas, truck drivers and members of the armed forces stationed abroad.

Source: 'Travelling in Europe'.

- *Health problems.* Citizens of one Member State can avail themselves, if they need to, of benefits in kind under the medical insurance of another Member State if they have an E111 form, supplied by their own insuring authority. The Commission wants to keep users better informed in this regard and to simplify the administrative formalities involved. Also, the Council of Ministers has drawn up a model for a European emergency health card, containing, in all languages, medical information (blood group, etc.) necessary for the safety of travellers such as diabetics or people with heart conditions.
- *Financial problems.* The European Court of Justice ruled in 1984 that exchange controls must not impede tourism. Also, the Commission encourages the use of the ECU, which because of its stability can be of interest to purchasers of package holidays and to users of travellers' cheques.
- *Legal problems.* The Commission has asked the Council of Ministers to invite all Member States to ratify the Hague Convention as soon as possible. This convention gives residents of a contracting State the same access to legal aid as is available to nationals of the country they are visiting, should they become involved with the law, following a road accident for example.
- *Transport.* As part of its transport policy,¹ the Commission does its best to promote improvement of infrastructure, particularly in border areas, as well as greater flexibility in air transport, closer cooperation among railway companies and more rational fixing of fares. The Commission is also studying the possibility of extending to citizens of all Member States the benefits afforded in each of them to certain categories of transport users (young people, the elderly, the handicapped, etc.).

Improving the geographical and seasonal distribution of tourism

62% of Community holidaymakers go away in July or August (see diagram). The geographical and seasonal concentration of tourism leads to greater congestion and even to greater risk of accident. It causes alternating overwork and unemployment, overloading and under-use, for tourism workers and facilities, inflates the prices of the services available and threatens the quality of the environment, natural and man-made. To limit these disadvantages, seasonality must be countered by promoting three forms of tourism that give a better distribution of impact in time and space: social, rural and cultural tourism.

- *Reducing seasonal and local concentration.* There is already a Community directive making major projects, particularly tourism-related ones, subject to prior study to evaluate their effect on the environment. In addition there has just been a resolution of the Council of Ministers, which decided to use all possible means to arrive at a better geographical and seasonal distribu-

¹ See *European File*, No 10/85: 'The Community and transport policy'.

tion of tourism; the Member States were invited to promote the staggering of holidays, to ensure fuller use of under-exploited locations, to improve road traffic information and generally to coordinate their efforts towards a better spread of tourist activity. With that in mind, the Commission is engaged at the moment in analysing inter-regional passenger flows by the various forms of transport and will carry out a study on the possible development of boating.

- *Social tourism.* The Commission has decided to cooperate with those professionally involved in order to establish a basis for a guide to social tourism, which would help less well-off people to take maximum advantage of the possibilities available in the various Member States. Community funds could also finance some training or accommodation projects that would help in this regard.
- *Rural tourism.* Here too, the compiling of a guide is envisaged. The Commission is studying other ways of promoting holidaymaking on farms or in rural areas: support for the training of operators, aid for improving the rural habitat and for signposting, etc.
- *Cultural tourism* is relatively independent of weather conditions and therefore capable of being 'deseasonalized'. It brings in tourists from outside the Community as well as making Europeans more aware of the richness of their common heritage. The Commission is involved in studying pilot projects for European cultural itineraries. It would also like to see an increase in resources for restoring our patrimony. Some aid has already been given for this purpose from the Community budget and there have been loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB); among the sites in all Member States to benefit have been the Doge's Palace in Venice and the Parthenon in Athens.

Better use of Community financial aid

The Community's financial instruments make a useful contribution to expanding tourism in the member countries. The European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund supports the promotion of many tourist activities that supplement farmers' incomes. Between 1980 and 1986 the European Investment Bank gave low-interest loans totalling about 350 million ECU¹ for more than 1 000 tourist projects: holiday villages, pleasure harbours, ski lifts, hotels and numerous small and medium-sized tourist enterprises. During the same period the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) devoted 326 million ECU to aid for 660 tourist projects: hotels, sport and conference centres, fitting out bathing resorts, museums and archaeological sites, restoring a theatre, etc. The EIB and ERDF have also financed under other headings a lot of in-

¹ 1 ECU (European currency unit) = about £0.70, £Ir 0.80 or US \$ 1.1 (at exchange rates current on 3 April 1987).

frastructure that contributes to the development of tourism: ports, airports, roads and motorways, railways, etc. We might add that there are specific regional programmes financed by the Community that promote tourism and other activities in the South of France, the Italian Mezzogiorno, Greece and some parts of Ireland. The European Commission intends to improve the use of all this money.

- Better information.* Operators and Member States must be better informed about the possibilities for Community co-financing. A brochure will be prepared for the purpose.
- Greater coherence in financial aid.* The Commission wants to increase the contribution that Community aid can make to improving the geographical and seasonal distribution of tourism and to regional development. Efforts are also needed to encourage the use of new technology and the training of people to take charge of protecting and using the common heritage.

Better information and protection for tourists

The tourist is entitled to information and to security; his rights must be recognized and respected. The Commission's main priorities are:

- A practical travel guide.* In 1987 as in 1986, the Commission's information services will distribute on a wide scale, with the help of private bodies, a brochure entitled *Travelling in Europe*. This contains useful information on crossing borders, duty-free allowances, health care, etc. The Commission wants to draw up a more complete guide, giving more practical information on all Member States (opening times of museums and services, main holidays, etc.).
- Standardizing hotel information.* A complete classification of hotels covering all Member States would appear to be difficult to achieve. The Council of Ministers of the Community has, however, approved a recommendation drawn up by the Commission in consultation with the hotel and restaurant industry, for standardizing the main information about hotels. Prices could also be expressed in ECU and common symbols adopted for the various facilities offered. The Commission plans to establish similar systems for campsites and for social and rural tourism. The information expressed in this way would be given in the official national guides.
- Hotel security.* The Commission urges Member States to act on a recent recommendation of the Council of Ministers to reduce the risk of fire in hotels.
- Package travel.* Tourists availing themselves of this form of holiday often complain of being given inaccurate information or of failure to respect the terms of the contract. The possibility of recourse to the law will be limited

as long as specific, rapid and simple procedures do not exist in all Member States. This problem is the object of a proposal for a Community directive which the Commission will soon submit to the Council of Ministers.

Improving working conditions in the tourist industry

Without a doubt the best thing the Community could do for those who work in its tourist industry would be to bring about a better geographical and seasonal distribution of tourism. However, other improvements are also possible:

- A better knowledge of the employment situation.* As the seasonal nature of many jobs makes monitoring difficult, an initial study financed by the Commission will examine the employment situation in hotels, restaurants and cafés.
- Use of information technology.* New technology will help improve reservation systems. A study financed by the Commission will facilitate the standardization of computer vocabularies and access to the data banks of all Member States.
- Improved vocational training.* The European Social Fund can finance some action in this area. In addition the Commission wants to encourage cooperation among teaching institutions, as well as periods of training abroad. The latter can be important, particularly for language practice.
- Freedom to provide services.* A Community directive ensures that occupations in restaurants, public houses, furnished hotels and campsites may be practised by Community citizens in the Member State of their choice: they must simply have done that job in their own country for a certain period. Another directive contains a similar provision for tourist couriers and interpreters. The Commission is applying itself to solving the problems still encountered by tourist guides in certain member countries.

Increasing knowledge of the sector and organizing cooperation

The way to develop Community action is to improve the state of knowledge of the tourist sector and to increase cooperation among member countries. The chief means of doing that are:

- Statistics and surveys.* The Statistical Office of the Community has initiated studies with the aim of creating a European system of tourism statistics. This, of course, presupposes a harmonization of national statistics, the criteria for which are too diverse at the moment. In 1986 the Commission carried out a first sample survey on the holidays of Europeans: some of the results have been given in this file.

- *Creating a procedure for consultation and coordination.* The Commission intends to develop its contacts with the industry. In parallel with that, a flexible procedure has just been instituted to enable Member States of the Community to consult with each other and to coordinate their activity in the field of tourism. The Member States will inform the Commission of the measures they have taken or intend to take in this sector; questions of possible common interest will be jointly examined in a Tourism Committee. In this way it will be possible to organize exchanges of information and experience and, when it is needed, cooperation in pursuit of common objectives ■

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¹ Offices also exist in other countries including all Member States.