



**European
community**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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BACKGROUND NOTE

EC MOVES TOWARD COMMON EDUCATIONAL MARKET

Academics, like politicians, make a living out of disagreement. But in 1973, after more than 15 years of argumentative delay, the first European -- not German or French, but European -- university-level institute for postgraduates will begin operations in Florence, Italy.

The concept of a European-level university dates back to the Middle Ages, when European unity was not just a dream and when the word "university" was not far removed from its etymological root. By the nineteenth century, the Age of Nationalism, universities had become stalwart embodiments of their respective national cultures and societies.

The architects of the European Communities envisioned a return to a medieval unity not only in economic but in educational matters as well. The idea of a European-level postgraduate institution was first mentioned in the 1957 European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) Treaty. Agreement in principle did not, however, mean agreement in fact; until this year, the six member countries and their respective academic authorities could not get beyond the discussion stage of the ambitious project.

Finally, on April 19, 1972, representatives of the Six signed a Convention creating the European University Institute at Florence. The Convention, remarked Commission Vice President Carlo Scarascia-Mugnozza at the time, "will doubtless be remembered as an essential point of departure for the future of our great homeland: Europe....Indeed, how could one define the role of a politically and economically unified Europe in the absence of those spiritual foundations which cannot exist without valid cultural links?"

The aim of the Institute, as set forth in the Convention, is "to contribute in the field of higher education and research to Europe's cultural and scientific heritage, including Europe's diversity as well as its unity."

Enrollment and Organization Reflect University's Universality

Initially, 250 students (after three years, 650 students) will attend the Institute, balanced among the 10 nationalities of the enlarged Community. Four areas of study in five languages will be offered: history and civilization, economics, jurisprudence, and political and social science in German, French, Italian, Dutch, and English. Doctorates will be awarded and programs coordinated with the College of Europe at Bruges.

The Institute's financing will be prorated among the member countries. After 1978, the Institute may be financed directly from Community funds.

The administration of the Institute will be on an inter-governmental basis. Governments will have two representatives each

on the Institute's High Council, which will also include a representative of the European Commission. Most decisions will be reached through qualified majorities, but certain fundamental questions will have to be resolved by a unanimous vote. In fact, the decision-making structure of the High Council is very similar to the Community's own.

While praising the establishment of the Institute, Mr. Scarascia-Mugnozza warned: "How will it be possible to integrate our peoples unless we succeed in concerting the guidelines of the education given to young people, and unless we agree to give mutual recognition to the validity of the diplomas awarded in our respective educational establishments?"

Thus, although an important step toward an educationally unified Europe, the Institute is recognized as being just that -- a first step.

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