

Quality of Life

Measures enacted include common rules on:

- subsidies to promote coke and coal deliveries to Community steel-mills;
- minimum oil stocks of 90 days;
- reports to the Commission on investment plans for oil, natural gas and electricity and on oil and natural-gas import programs;
- Community aid to development of new techniques of oil and natural-gas exploration;

- petroleum rationing, price controls and management and distribution of emergency oil stocks.

The "energy crisis", however, impelled member states in 1974 to adopt a new strategy to cut the growth-rate of domestic consumption of oil, to encourage the development of local energy supplies, to consider protection of the environment as part of a common energy policy, and to act as a unit in international meetings on energy questions. The Community's energy goals for 1985 include:

- reducing EC dependence on imported energy sources to between 40 and 50 per cent;
- developing a 160-200 gigawatt annual nuclear-energy capacity;
- producing 180 million tons of oil annually and importing 420 to 540 million tons;
- reducing imported oil's share of total EC energy needs to between 28 to 38 per cent;
- stepping up natural-gas production to 175 to 225 million tons annually, importing 95 to 115 million tons.

A power dam in Belgium. The Community is implementing a common energy policy and has set energy production and consumption targets for 1985.

In addition to lifting living standards through economic growth, the Community is committed to improving the quality of life of its peoples by programs to improve living and working conditions, promote education, protect consumers, and cleanse and preserve the environment.

SOCIAL AND LABOUR POLICY

The ECSC Treaty set the precedent for social action later expanded in the EEC Treaty. Both treaties protect the right of workers to move to partner countries for new jobs without losing social-security benefits. Both treaties recognize that workers have to be shielded from abrupt economic changes and helped to adjust to new jobs.

Since 1952, the ECSC has spent over u.a. 357 million to retrain and re-employ nearly half a million coal and steel workers. Redevelopment loans to bring about 110,000 new jobs to coal and steel centres have passed u.a. 230 million. Over u.a. 350 million has been granted or otherwise mobilized to help build 132,000 houses for coal and steel workers.

The EEC Treaty provided for a European Social Fund to help retrain workers in industries other than coal and steel. The Fund repays up to half member-state expenditures on Commission-approved projects to retrain and resettle workers hurt or likely to be hurt by economic change. Since 1974, it has also helped migrant and handicapped workers. By the end of 1974, the Fund had allocated u.a. 968 million to help almost three million workers.

A Standing Committee on Employment,

created in 1970, helps co-ordinate national employment policies and gives labour unions a voice in Community employment policy.

In other social action the Community is:

- developing a common vocational-training policy, including minimum-qualification standards for machine-tool operators, lathe operators, and other tradesmen;
- securing equal pay for women;
- compiling comparable data on social security, working hours, on-job accidents and labour disputes.

Responding to social and labour discontent concerning the consumer society and "mindless" work in the early Seventies, the Community unveiled a social action program during 1974. The program stresses job-enrichment, involvement of workers in corporate and Community decisions that affect them, and the promotion of centres to deal with the special employment problems of migrants, women, school drop-outs and elderly and handicapped workers. It also prescribes increased intra-Community exchanges of young workers. A 40-hour work week and four weeks' paid vacation for all are targets for 1978. Long-range goals include improvements in the distribution of income and wealth, on-job safety and public housing, especially for migrant workers. The Nine have so far agreed to set up a joint vocational-training centre in Berlin and a foundation in Dublin to improve working and living conditions. They have also adopted joint rules to protect workers involved in collective dismissals.