

Editorial

The continent of Europe's influence on world affairs has outstripped what might have been expected if size was a determining factor in these matters. The second smallest continent's impact in the twentieth century alone is far in excess of what size would have suggested. Not only, though, is Europe one of the smallest continents; it also has one of the highest densities of population and a much more varied linguistic and cultural mix than the other continents. Europe comprises well over 25 nation states (the number continues to grow!) and the differences and rivalries, both within and without states, helped create the major crises which, in this century at least, had impact far beyond European frontiers.

The lessons of the causes of the 2nd World War were not lost on European statesmen and the period since 1945 has seen the evolution of a number of institutions with the remit to facilitate co-operation between European nations. The early Iron and Steel Agreement was the forerunner of the European Economic Community which began with 6 nations and now comprises 12. Other countries such as Austria and Sweden are keen to join the Community and many members of COMECON (an economic grouping of Eastern European countries) are reputed to be eager to be accepted. The EEC now intends to dismantle trade barriers between members at the end of 1992 and monetary and political union are committed aims. It would be wrong to suggest, though, that the EEC has eliminated inter-nation controversy. Indeed, some of the decisions reached, for example on farming practice, have helped to create problems between nations. Nations, though, are talking to each other in an established forum and the understanding of each other is surely at a level unknown in earlier times.

Understanding of other nations means understanding all aspects of individual countries and not least of these is education. Even the United Kingdom, which is, at least publicly, the least committed member of the EEC to European ideals, shows some evidence of being prepared to look at other educational systems with a view to improving aspects of its own system. For example, a rather lower proportion of 16–18-year-old children in the UK stay in education than practically every other country in the EEC and how other countries achieve this, is currently the focus of investigation.

It is pleasing to report that European library/information educators, too, recognise the importance of co-operating in a European context. Agreement to establish EUCLID: the European Association for Library and Information Education and

Research, was reached in Stuttgart last October and membership will be open to institutions in Council of Europe countries (a much broader membership than the EEC)¹. A Board has been established and the first general conference is planned for 1993. Initially, EUCLID is going to concern itself with data gathering, information exchange, collaboration in projects and establishing links. These are essentially relatively modest aims but realistic and achievable as well as being worthwhile. *Education for information* will monitor the progress of EUCLID and wishes the Association well.

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