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immediately. In this way the policy issues will come to a point rather quickly and will need to be solved in a pragmatic way. If there is any lesson to be learned from the European experience it is that nothing will be gained from endless discussion of possible options. The only effective way to get progress is to start some actions and discuss the policy issues as they arise.

Finally, I would say that today Europe is benefitting from a set of actions started almost 20 years ago. If the Arab States want to have an effective system of information transfer they must appreciate the time it will take and the need to get started.

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Thirdly I predict IT will finally concentrate on solving some of the problems of the information sector. The next generation of hypertext will include predictive logic facilities to indicate worthwhile indexing strategy rather than simply counting frequencies of words. Documents or their equivalent will be multi-media productions with the most appropriate reading devices delivered with the document.

Fourthly and finally I predict that the information sector will become even more complex. New developments in technology will bring in more participants from different backgrounds. For example CD-I (Compact Disk Interactive) needs the visual skills of the film making world and, perhaps, the graphic artists of the pop video , to create the information impact. The world of the respectable librarian will change out of all recognition, if it has not already done so.

So what will all this mean for policy? As I said earlier the situation is becoming even more complex, a situation where policy makers feel uncomfortable. The resultant will probably be, at a Euroepan level, a less centralised methodology for policy development. More than ever before, policy will be developed "on the fly" because of the need to react to rapidly changing circumstances and, since there is no evidence at either a national or European level of an overall examination of potential policy issues, no single body will be in a position to provide reasoned input to the policy decisions. This situation is not of itself a serious problem. Europe has reached it's present level of development without much in the way of reasoned argument. The only problem which could be serious in the future is that an essentially anarchic policy framework normally means the survival of the fittest. It is to be hoped that the economic circumstances will permit the minority (information) interests to be protected.

The relevance to the Arab States

The information given above is in one sense a history of the development of policy in a number of different countries under the prompting of the EEC. In the Arab States the Arab League though has been trying to achieve a similar consensus. In reading the history of European development I feel that you will see many parallels with the Arab situation. My experience of the actual state of activities in many countries of the League is that there is a similar mix of policy, rivalry and lack of cohesion that Europe suffered from until relatively recently. I do not profess that Europe has solved all of it's problems in the area of information policy but the attempt to provide a coherent development framework has required a serious examination of the issues.

I would say, on the basis of my experience both in Europe and in the Arab States, that the ALLS proposals to create a network of interconnected information services between the members of the Arab League should be implemented

policy level the media is very will understood, at least at the level of the politicians, and is treated accordingly. Equally at a strategic level telecommunications as a part of national "communications" policy is well understood by policy makers and also by, for example, defence analysts.

Thus changes in these areas should cahnge the policy for information. The problem is that the divisions between the different areas are now so blurred that noboday and least of all policy makers in the public sector wants to try to correlate all the associated policy issues. Thus deregulation of telecommunication becomes primarily an economic issue - a matter of econmies of scale, of surviving in a global market. Media policy becomes an issue of sorting out actors rights in the era of cross frontier television and ensuring that pornography is controlled. Copyright becomes a matter of whether or not to impose a tax on blank recording tapes. Even the technologies themselves gets involved, the whole question of whether or not DAT (Digital Audio Tape) which has a big potential as an information transfer medium, would be launched or not depended on the attitude of the music recording industry- at least until one of the DAT developers bought one of the big record producers.

The public - private issue will have an influence. At present in Europe there is a patchwork of policy. Some countries have like the UK, a clear policy. Others have a policy of saying that the state agencies active in information are already private such as the French INSEE, the statistics agency. Similarly legislation to prevent misuse of private data is not consistent. Will it take more pressure from, for example, the consumer protection agencies the information industry can have a clear policy on name and address data and what you can or can not do with it ?

The extent of private investment in the information industry is also likely to be a significant factor. The issue here becomes one of preventing monopoly whilst at the same time creating economies of scale and ensuring that all sectors are catered for. The present situation concerning Chemical Abstracts, mentioned above, is a typical case. It is not so much because strategic decisions have been taken by some to protect their future chemical information needs but the monopoly threatend the enormous cost of creating a second force . Equally any attempt by the big publishing interests to consolidate their positions in certain subject areas has to be examined carefully.

Secondly I predict that the means of production in the information sector will become concentrated in fewer hands. This movement is already under way in the media sector, it will continue into conventional publishing and, driven by the need to consolidate investment in high technology delivery devices such as satellites, will ultimately lead to the creation of the "communications conglomerate". This entity will originate, edit, create an electronic image, print and distribute electronically information for a wide range of end users.

national level, on the information market issue. In practise, as was stated earlier, the EEC would be better served if the IT sector had taken as much interest in the "I" as it did in the "T". It is clear from the second round of ESPIRT that information handling is not now considered as just a matter of applying technology. Many of the project propsals received under ESPRIT 2 would have been considered not so long ago as information related not technology related. Politically the information sector would have been more effective if it had participated more in the IT policy issues rather than treat it as a "technician's" issue.

In fact many of the "new" IT programmes of the EEC have a considerable information content but these are administratively kept separated despite the fact that they are all covered by the same Directorate General. This situation could be blamed on lack of coordination internally in the Commission but is probably as much due to a lack of coordination at the national level concerning information policy. Thus, if there was proper national coordination, the Commission would be required to integrate as far as possible the information functions of the different programmes under a common policy.

Despite these administrative inconsistencies, the new information market policy programme attempts to bring together the many disparate issues which have yet to be resolved. It covers a range of topics from the necessity to find a common means of measuring the activities in the market place through the legal issues, the fiscal issues (VAT treatment of information for example) to the overall relationship of the public and private sectors in the information industry. Thus, all the issues that could be considered as policy considerations for the information sector are now supposed to be covered under one programme. Howevere, the preliminary indications are that they are issues which will not be considered. One of these is the relationship between EEC policy, especially after 1992, and that of the non - member countries. Another is the relationship with telecommunications policy.

It is much too early to consider whether the new programme will resolve the as yet ill understood policy issues relative to a true market development in information. There are and will continue to be new influences in this area which will require new policy examination. The agreement on the programme is to be welcomed as a realisation that there are serious policy matters to examine.

The future policies and the factors that will influence them

One thing is abundantly clear when examining policy in this area and that is that information is very difficult to define. Readers will perhaps have noted that I did not attempt a definition at the begining and I will not attempt to do so now. One of the problems with this difficulty in definition is that many new influences can come to bear. As was stated above "the media" is concerned with information but at a

The age of the Information Market

It is a curious commentary on the way things have developed in the European information field that a lot of what might reasonably be considered as the policy development has been led by the EEC, which is, ostensibly, an economic association but that a specifically market based policy document was only produced as late as 1986 (CEC 1986ii). This lacuna may have many jexplanation mostly due to the relatively gradual perception brought about by the information technology revolution that information was an importanat commodity, but also due to the role of information in (governemtn) policy makers minds.

This latter issue was clearly perceived when the preliminary discussions took place on the proposed information policy programme. The Commission was determined to widen the audience in the member states to which it addressed it's concerns in the information area. To this end a series of visits were made to the countries to discuss the issue. One of the objectives was to identitfy the seat of responsibility for information market policy in government. Thus the "old CIDST representation was to be questioned.

These meetings were held with a very wide cross section of opinion in the countries but it was always with the governemtn that the real negotiations took place. The Commission's wish to widen the scope cause considerable difficulty for the authorities.

One difficulty was that there appeared to be an overlap or a potential overlap with "the media" in general in the Commission's preliminary considerations. This was treated with considerable suspicion and required clarification. Another was that most countries were still trying to come to grips with the implication of information technology generally and were inclined to place information and information technology under the same administrative umbrella, without a serious examination of the relationship between the information and the technology.

No satisfactory solution has yet been found for this problem, as is evident from the representation on the "new" committee that the EEC invited to provide it with consultancy on the market policy. This assembly, known as SOAG meaning Senior Officials Advisory Group, follows a new formula developed by the Commission in the telecommunications policy area which has the effect of bringing together responsible officials from the member states but does not restrict the Commission to talking exclusively to government servants.

The initial meetings of SOAG brought some new faces to the table but progressively the representation has reverted to being the same individuals who are members of the CIDST. Only in some cases have representatives received new mandates.

Whilst in no sense denigrating the ability of the individuals concerned, this clearly shows how little progress has been made in raising the consciousness, at the

Throughout all of this the "traditional" library world had been every little involved in the policy area. True there had been changes in structures in some countries affecting some libraries but generally speaking there was no major change in policy. In fact until there was a move in the European Parliament in 1983 to create a European Library there had been very few activities of a policy nature affecting libraries in Europe generally. The proceedings of an advanced research workshop held in Luxembourg and sponsored by NATO, the Commission, The Council of Europe and the European Cultural Foundation provide a good overview of policy issues in this area (Liebars 1985). Partially as a result of this workshop and also as a result of a Council decision on libraries which in turn had come about through the Parliament's interest, the EEC Commission has instituted a small programme of actions specifically for the library community, thus perpetuating in some way the artificial separation between "information" and "libraries".

Thus the age of realism in information policy is well established. The result is a weakening of the central influence of government and consequently the EEC in developments in the market. This is probably, overall, a good thing. Government servants are not generally very perceptive of market issues. In fact the German developments mentioned above illustrate this well. Fortunately the changes in France and in UK have not resulted in serious problems for European information suppliers vis a vis the Americans. However, it is clear that certain proposals of Chemical Abstracts in recent times have or will cause difficulties. Presumably the German partners of Chemical Abstracts will be immune and in that sense the German interpretation of interdependence will have been vindicated. It remains to be seen whether other countries will feel it necessary or will find it possible to make similar moves. No doubt the private sector will attempt to buy strategic alliances to cover market opportunities and thus protect their interest. Sectors which are not so attractive may not do so well. One of the subject areas in which the latest EEC programme has been particularly successful is materials technology. This field which is vast in its application has the disadvantage that the data collection and verification costs are very hight. This means that the database owners have had difficulty in getting users to pay the real costs for the information. Under the realism policy this area would not be subsidised but unless there is a European policy for interdependence there will be very little European development. Fortunately the programme has, at the moment, good political supprt and a European soultion looks possible. However, as mentioned above, the less developed regions have possibly suffered a setback to their hopes under the realism policy.

One of the results of all of these changes was a realisation by the Commission that there was a need to look closely at policy as it affects the development of what is now perceived as an important economic sector. this has resulted in the Information Market Policy programme.

An interesting ancillary of the STN development was the position of the Bundespst or German PTT. The Bundespost was renowned not to say reviled for it's insistence on the rules agreed between PTTs being applied in every case. In fact it had caused a considerable "flutter" some years earlier by appearing to outlaw the use of private circuits for data transmission. In the STN case the Bundespost did not insist, at the beginning, on the data transferred between for example the Karlsruhe centre and Chemical Abstracts in Ohio, being tariffed on the basis of volume, which was a requirement they placed on similar inter European traffic. The development was considered as "experimental" and therefore not covered by the normal rules. This enabled the new service to be offered at a particularly attractive fixed price.

It is Known that at the same time as the negotiations were in progress with Chemical Abstracts discussions were taking place with Frence interests concerning a possible link between INKA and Telesystemes, the "official" French on - line service. These discussions were abruptly broken off after the STN arrangements were announced.

This move in the German polciy almost coinicded in time with the agreement on a new EEC programme. significantly, a five year programme rather than three years which had been the norm up to then. This programme continued the work on Docdel and other areas such as optical storage which were already under way but also concentrated on a number of subject priorities. These latter were arrived at, as usual, through a compromise between differeing points of view. The selection reflects this because it ranges from such specific topics as Biotechnology to such general topics as "information for industry and research" and includes as mentioned above a special section on less developed regions.

In the same time frame there was a change of government in France and a proposal in the UK to create the so - called "tradeable information" sector. The former led to the closing of the MIDIST (Mission Interministeriel de Documentation et Information en Science et Technologie) which had been the policy making arm of the French government in information and in the latter case led, ultimately, to the declaration of a government policy on tradeable information and the nomination of the Department of Trade and Industry as the responible agency. In addition the UK government specified guidelines on the release to the private sector of government held data.

All of these developments point towards a certain maturity in the information scene in Europe. They have led to action in countries where there was very little movement in the policy area in the past. For example, in Holland, where there had been two agencies active - COBIDOC and NOBIN, the former has privatised and the latter given new responsibilities. In other countries have also been changes - not so significant perhaps as those in Germany or the UK but indicative of a process of discussion on the information issue.

received approval from the Council to institute certain actions. This will be considered later.

To return to the effect of these issues on national policy it should be pointed out that the changes have taken place over a number of years and, in the case of the PTT deregulation factor, is still very unclear in a European sense.

However, as stated, they can all be considered to have influenced the change of policy in Germany, and the German "model" can be used to illustrate the principles.

First there is the accountbility factor. The Federal audit office instituted a study of the information programme and their comments were quite critical. The Ministry concerned felt it necessary to show that change was underway and negotiated an arrangement with Chemical Abstracts Service of the US to set up a joint activity, now known as STN, to market Chemical Abstracts and other databases using a common software and a distributed network. Technically this is a very elegant solution - it provide the user with a seamless interlocking between databases located on different computer systems in different parts of the world, something which the EEC had tried in vain to achieve through Euronet. It also rationalises requirement of the original German programme to provide an information service for the chemical sector. Ironically it was the chemical sector, who had declared a preference for the existing services of Chemical Abstracts, which had ensured that that part of the original plan concerning chemistry had hardly been developed at all.

The nett result was the effective closure of the Inka (information service Karlsruhe) centre, the apparent opening up of the German market to competition from abroad and an illustriation to the Federal audit office that the programme was being made more accountable.

To it's partners in the EEC these moves were seen, depending on the prevailing national attitude, as a betrayal, as a realistic move or with total scepticism. This probably accounts for Czermak's feeling of misunderstanding. Of coruse from a purely national point of view the move was rational and led to the publication, in 1985, of a completely new programme which was (apparently) delayed significantly in it's publication by internal discussions between the research and development ministry and the commerce ministtry. The new concept was based on the idea of "interdependence" with the rest of the world, including the EEC. This concept of interdependence was exactly what the CIDST had discussed many years before in its attempt to reach a consensus on service development follwoing the launch of Euronet. Nobody then or since expected the EEC to develop it's own Chemical Abstracts but it was clear that Europe needed some strengths in negotiating with large US interests. It remains to be seen whether the first implementation of the new German policy results in a strengtheaing or a weadening of bargaining power.

The age of realism

A paper by Czermak (1986) reviews well the basic issues which have led, in the German case, to a change of policy. It is interesting that he finds it necessary to state that the policy changes have been misunderstood by "the rest of Euriope". Any misunderstanding that may have arisen from the turn around of the German policy jprobably comes from a feeling of almost betrayal especially from some countries who were in direct discussions on collaboration at the moment of the change in policy.

The German case illustrates well certain common factors in the policy development field in recent years. These will be examined first before returning to some of the specific developments.

The first such influence in the overall movement in government policies generally towards more accountability and the use of the private sector to carry out tasks formerly done by government. In the information field the very obvious success of the information suppliers in the financial area has led many policy makers to toe opinion that a lot of other information can be supplied in this fashion.

The second is the issue of the deregulation of PTTs. This has led to a certain amount of competition in the supply of information related services and in some cases the PTT itself has become a service operator. Also, videotex has brought the PTT into the information business.

Another issue has been the greater realisation by the publishing sector of the potential of electronic information or rather a realisation that the time had come to move closer to the developments in this direction. This has led to a considerable amount of strategic investment in new activities or the purchase of shares or controlling interests in existing activities. This in turn has led to pressure on governments for example to develop a policy concerning information "owned" by the government itself.

In addition there has been a move away from the concept that the EEC was the vehicle for coordination in the information field. This was partly brought about by increased national activity, partly through the sorts of confronation referred to above in the Appollo proposal and the consequent lack of a focus for development and partly through the inappropriate nature of the EEC structure in the context of the general level of development in the information industry. One example of the latter is the fact that the CIDST did not consider itself the appropriate body to discuss the copyright issues raised by the new information technologies. Also, internal developments in the Commission have resulted in information issues being included in the overall information technology area, with a consequent change of committee structures.

Ironically the EEC produced in 1986 a programme on the policy issues and has

document images throughout the Community. There were and still are suspicions that a certain amount of the opposition was due to interdepartmental rivalries at the national level but the difficulties manifested themselves in a long drawn out battle over budget allocation to the project. In the event the project never went ahead, it was overtaken by developments in both the technology andthe willingness of the PTTs to actually consider the market potential seriously.

The irony of this confrontation is that the project itself was probably only of marginal value - it is clear that if you have the volume of documents to transmit you could actually justify a satelliet link in economic terms if the perceived value of the documents is high. This latter criterion could hardly be applied to most of the documents referred to in a typical on - line database. The real irony was because the project had all the elements necessary to raise a certain number of broad policy issues, both inside and outside the EEC and even between the Commission and the member states. It brought together, for example, the following policy concerns.

The relationship between the PTTs and the information community - post Euronet.

The relationship, between the EEC and ESA (who are also a major on - line information service supplier).

The role that the "information services professionals" (DG 13) inside the Commission should play in the development of the technologies for the regular communications between the Commission and the meber states (The INSIS (Interinstitutional System of Information Services programme).

The general policy to be adpoted vis a vis "high tech" applications in the information field.

The list could be longer but the topics selected are indicative.

The unwillingness or inability to really see the issues behind such a project probably did serious long term damage to the development of policy in Europe.

After Euronet the Community was looking for another flag bearer type project. Appollo, as the satellite projects was called, had all the elements of such a project but failed on the basis of an argument over budgets in which the broader issues were never seriously considered.

The Appollo case represents another watershed in development of policy and marked clearly the beginning of what might be referred to as the age of realsim.

showed that these were agreed through compromise rather than through an examiniation and or an understanding of the market developments.

It has been argued that the mechanism gave the smaller countries an opportunity to join with more experienced partners and thus redress the imbalance brought about in the earlier programmes. There is little or no evidence that this happened and the problem has become more acute with the entry of Greece and Portugal into the Community. Spain did not suffer from the same problem, although it might have been expected, due, almost certainly, to the policy mentioned earlier of allocating actions to non- profit foundations who were quite aggressive in developing the services. The later programmes of the EEC contain a specific sub area dedicated to the unforturately named "less favoured regions" but this has not proved very successfully at least if measured in terms of expenditure.

A clearer set of objectives for the mechanism might have resulted in the finance being re-Callocated in such a way as to provide a proportion for basic development activities, typically in the smaller countries, a proportion for improvement of existing services, following realistic market based criteria and a sum put aside for truly far sighted ideas which may or may not bear fruit.

However, it has become the accepted norm for EEC funding and it remains to be seen whether the latest round proves more successful than the others. At least it is being developed from a different policy making group, a point which will be referred to again later.

As to the other parts of the Programmes of the EEC since 1982 the most visible has probably been the Docdel programme. This was based on the perceived problem of the need to ensure that the user who, through the Euronet Diane network, could now (at leat in theory) identify interesting documents, was in a position to get the actural document.

This program actually had a well designed package of measures to look at all aspects of the problem and to try to predict where the most urgent needs would be. A series of experiments were funded which looked at various technical options for improving document delivery in the future and a series of studies were done on issues such as standards, automation of document identities and new storage techniques.

At face value the Docdel Programme had all the hallmarks of a well constructed set of actions in which the policy was clear, namely to look at all the means and techniques which would help to resolve the problem. Of all the actions of the Commission the Docdel Programme probably cause the biggest differences of opinion between them and the member states. This was partly due to some personality clashes which are an inevitable hazard in such matters but was more accentuated by a large gulf which developed over a proposal to partly fund, with ESA, an experiment in the use of satellites as amedium for transmission of

the development in any way. The resulting mechanism did not reveal any particular policy line concerned with market development. What it did show was the amount of compromise that had to be achieved because it was in the end all things to all men. There was a possibility that all member states would get some money and everybody's favoured subject field could be included.

Nonetheless the Call for Proposals as it was called was a considerable success when measured in terms of response and in the effective distribution of "seed money". Whether it could be measured as a success in terms of market development is much harder to gauge. Certainly some of todays more successful services (for example. Finsbury Data recently purchased by Reuters) received support under the programme and turned it into product improvement. Equally some ideas which were supported did not survive the market exposure and were terminated. But if there was a failing in the policy of supprt it was that the (extremely long drawn out) examination process did not require the proposers to look seriously at the market before making a proposal and the evaluation did not or was not allowed to evaluate the capability of the proposers to actually carry out the work.

This problem is one that is common to a number of EEC programmes. The Call for Proposals had the distinction of being the first in a long lineage which has included Esprit. Race, Drive, Delta, etc and all have suffered to a greater or lesser extent from what might politely be called interference. It is inevitable that this will occur in an essentially political community but certain safeguards have to be anticipated. There is no implication that the procedure resulted in any fraudulent allocations but some of the decisions to support projects were undoubtedly political in nature.

Despite these difficulties the programme has continued and has even been extended in the latest "round" to include pilot and demonstration projects which implies a certain amount of risk taking might be envisaged.

As stated above the mechanism was not the result of a deliberate policy decision as such but more the result of a discussion on the next stages accompanied by a certain amount of pressure to continue to fund developments "centrally". In fact this issue of centralization was probably the only real policy issue discussed in the period of the mid eighties.

To finalise the discussion on the Call mechanism as policy for development it could be stated that it has been shown to have worked over a number of years and has been adopted by other Community programmes. That illustrates that is acceptable to bureaucrats both inside and outside the Commission. It has the "proper" safeguards built in. What it lacks at least as applied to information service development, is a clear understanding of the objectives. The latest round to have completed containted a rather strange mixture of topic areas which again clearly

early eighties, cooperation agreements with the EEC providing access to Euronet and access to the results of EEC sponsored studies. Many private sector initiatives were based on subsidy and throughout all this period not many really new services were launched.

So we reached the beginning of the eighties with a network for information transfer which was to be taken over in due course by the PTTs or other telecommunications suppliers a large number of host services operating. in most cases at below optimum levels of efficiency because of a lack of rationale in their product mix and a number of private organisations beginning to take an interest in this new market. So where were all the «other» actors in the information chain¿ the libraries, except for a very few at that time had no budgets even for on-line cataloguing the publishers, particularly the very big ones, were sitting on the sidelines watching and the users¿ well some were spending som money not enough it seems and they were also spending it in the USA (probably more than in Europe).

The policy makers were by this time embroiled in the discussion on what should happen next.

The beginnings of reality in policy development

Starting again with the EEC, although in this section it is not intended to divide the review into blocs, we find that the early years of Euronet and Diane (the marketing acronym for the information services using Euronet) illustrated to the policy makers that, despite the inability to agree on the development of databases in common, there was a need for new databases.

At least at face value that is what it would appear was the agreed policy of the EEC member states. In fact it was based on a considerable pressure from the Commission to continue to expend mony under the Action Programmes. Even inside the Commission as far as one could ascertain there was a division of opinion

on whether there should be more expenditure on «hardware» meaning network development, advertising and promotion and investigation of new technologies ot on «software» meaning new databases, document delivery systems and user support generally. As might be expected, the outcome was a compromise. The Action plan agreed for the period 1981 - 1984 was divided between continuity actions based on the Euronet Diane model and development of new datanases and also some actions on new technologies and document delivery.

However, the decision to spend money on databases was only agreed after a long debate on the mechanisms. There is little evidence that the discussion took account of the emerging market in on-line information or that it tried to anticipate or direct

how sensitivities concerning know how «leakage» can become impediments to policy development.

Also although there is little doubt that IIASA had the tacit approval of the various PTTs involved and they (the PTTs) were not at all worried about the political issues, the result was welcomed by the PTTs on the grounds that it was better that a non-PTT organisation should not get into the data transfer business.

Further afield and throughout Europe including the EEC, there was the development of Videotex. This low cost service is a classic example of a technologically based development which had no real policy basis except in France.

started in the UK as a research project to find a product to increase the use of the telephone network, it soon spread, with the almost inevitable (in Europe) squabble about standards, (at least Euronet had been based in theory on common standards). It was driven exclusively by the technologists. Almost no consideration was given to the products, it being assumed that with a technology that linked two pieces of equipment already in a large number of households there would be a market anyway. Only in France was the development of a mass market information service based on a policy. That was very simply stated to a) get rid of the telephone directory in it's printed form and b) to provide an IT product from French sources. The latter qbjective was designed to creat a market size of interest to French manufacturers in the new technologies and as such illustrates an interesting use of government policy to provide market pull.

Other countries followed suit- trials took place in almost every country, apocryphal stories were told about rivalries between French and UK technicians and their political masters concerning standards, many thousands of words were spoken and written. The outcome? Today we have in Europe one videotex based information market- France and a number of neophyte markets- the UK, Germany, Italy, Belgium etc. Undoubetedly there have been in a number of countries, besides France, a relatively large number of devices sold or leased, but based on the original predictions of Videotex as a mass market service, this is very small. It is a clear example as of a non-policy or at least an inadequate policy based development.

This period also covers the beginnings of private sector investment in information services. This proudly began with the launching of Datastar in Switzerland, although it was not private at the start. Subsequently it was bought by a large international holding company, then divested and now owned by a large Swiss group. What is interesting about Datastar is that it was formed precisely to take advantage of Euronet (the Swiss PTT had bought it) but also that from the beginning it had a datavase producer-predicasts-involved in the marketing.

The net outcome of the developments outside those sponsored by EEC is a patchwork of actions and policies. Most of the non-EEC countries signed, in the

The French and German representatives were in a similar situation, being suppliers of funding to private or semi private service suppliers. This of itself might not constitute a problem if the competitive situation was real, but, as stated above, there were also the arguments about subsidy. The real loser in all of this was the (potential) user. He or she was faced with a selection of services which duplicated one another - a good thing in a competitive sense- but since the market was so small the services did not have the resources to promote their products and to train enough users in the short term. The result was a stagnation, a non motivated sales force from services and the almost inevitable consequence was that the vacuum was filled by American serican. Not that the American services were in any way inferior on the contrary they were and are highly efficient, but they could not and did not cater for the linguistic and other differences inherent in the European market, at least in the beginning.

Outside the EEC at that time there was not much policy development either. The Scandinavian countries developed Scannet which still exists but it has never been entirely clear to me what was the policy basis for the development.

It appears that it was developed to carry exclusively Scandinavian databases, in line with the Nordinfo poliof providing an economy of scale. Its relationship with the PTTs for example was that of a private network supplier not as a precursor to a public network. Its coverage in database terms was always rather specialised - it did not have a mixture of popular and less popular services that would provide some viability. It has to my understanding continued in this vein and is still providing some limited services using public data networks.

In the other European countries, besides Switzerland which is mentioned below, there was not much specific development. Most countries were aware of the developments inside the EEC and groups of users of EEC services and US services grew up.

One interesting policy issue emerged in the case of Austria. As mentioned earlier, the IIASA organisation acted as a pivot point for certain types of research collaboration between East and West. In the early eighties the documentation service and the computing service combined to offer the possibility of data transfer between users in Eastern and Western countries. In theory and in practise users in the US could gain access to databases in the Socialist countries and Similarly users in the socialist bloc could use US and other European databases. This situation which was developed in response to general data transfer needs became one of the issues in a confrontation between the Institute and the US State Department which resulted in a period of withdrawal of funds by the US. Finally the link was disconnected at least directly and the US funding resumed.

This incident whilst not a major confrontation in East- West relations does show

This of itself did not cause too much of a policy hiatus because, over a period of over one year, CIDST had tried to develop a basic policy document for the development of information services in Europe using Euronet. This paper was never formally agreed by CIDST and in the course of the discussion on this document a number of confrontations took place not just between the «big» countries but between the big countries and the «others». One such confrontation was concerned with the possibility of sharing the work of database development between countries in order to raise the skills level. Such was the competition between Germany, France and The United Kingdom to ensure they were not «left behind» vis a vis one another in the number of hosts and databases they would have, this issue became a matter of principle. If it could not be agreed by everybody then there would be no question of one or two countries agreeing on bi or multilateral schemes. In many ways this period represents a watershed of policy development. Since it could not be agreed that all would try to share the development it became clear that a period of competition would ensue. This of course could not be faulted under the trems of the Treaty of Rome and such was the concentration on getting Euronet up and running that the matter was never discussed in detail again.

One interesting sidelight on this type of policy discussion is that some time later in the course of a questioning of the allocation of subsidies to on-line hosts, and the policy that should be adopted, the German delegation openly suggested that an application sould be made to have information services absolved from the requirements of the Treaty concerning competition. This would mean that the anti-monopoly and market distortion provisions of Articles 85 and 86 of the Treaty would be suspended for information services. This suggestion was not pursued.

As stated above these decisions or rather the lack of clear direction represents a turning point in policy terms. It would be interesting to speculate on what might have happened if a policy to develop information services for the European market in a cooperative fashion had been agreed. But there was no such agreement and a number of commentators have stated that whereas Euronet was the right type of development at the time it was insufficient without a policy to develop the products for the market. Collier (1985) probably provides the most succinct overview of the issues here.

Consequently in the early eighties after Euronet had been launched there were a number of new host services put on the market with direct Government support. It must be stated also that in some countries, the UK in particular, some private sector companies also entered the market using Euronet as the delivery medium. The problem from a policy point of view with this development was that although the basic policy makers were more than one hat. Thus for example one had the spectacle of the UK delegation arguing for a competitin policy whilst they were sitting on the boards of management of not one but two on-line service suppliers.

European level. The national associations were involved in various local discussions, but, in the UK they did not have regular meetings at this time with the CIDST delegates. In fact there was no formal representation of the information sector until an ad hoc committee was formed in the early eighties to act as an interface to the government. In France the delegates did have briefing sessions which included officers of the professional bodies, but it was never clear whether this was a dedliberate action of coincidental. In Germany th DGD's relationship with the BMFT was that of a representative body, but in turn the DGD's role as a representative of the information sector was hard to define.

The more traditional bodies, the library association for example, were not much in evidence at this time. It could certainly be said that the influence of the «older» sectors of the information domain was in the seventies, more felt in relatively strident attempts to downgrade the action of the «progressives» and in critcizing the exenditures on, for example, database development

The early developments: the building of Euronet

Looking back now it does not appear that the decision to build Euronet was treated as a major policy breakthrogh. Rather it was treated as an inevitability, a highway which had to be provided if Europe was to have a valid set of information services in the eighties. In truth many of the representatives of the member states in CIDST were not sufficiently technical in background to appreciate the finer points of the technology nor sufficiently aware of telecommunication politics to appreciate the uniqueness of the project. This, of course, is as it should be Euronet was always only a vehicle to carry information, the real issue was the development of the information services. The real policy confrontations took place over just that issue, the development of the information services.

Although it was never stated as such it is clear that what the Commission would have liked was the rational development of a series of information services to use Euronet. It was certainly clear in the arguments put forward at the time of the decision to fund Euronet. The network was to be seen as the means by which Europe could avoid an over- dependence on non European sources of information.

However, Germany had by then (1975) developed and published a major plan to implement a large number of centres to provide information services to each technical sector. Therefore Germany already had its plans in place and would find it difficult to change them, as much because of the rigidity of the planning process as because one of the tenets of the Plan was to create a greater independence for Germany. It was clearly stated by German representatives in CIDST that for them Euronet was an export channel, not an import channel.

the sense that it is here that the substantial discussions on policy should take place. The problem was that the CIDST itself did not occupy much of it's time with policy discussion.

In the countries which were, in the middle and late seventies, outside the EEC and are still in the same status today. namely the Nordic trio, Switzerland. Austria and the Eastern countries, it can be said that information policy was mostly concerned to ensure an unhindered access to the information stores of other nations and also to provide some economies of scale for the preservation of information products in «minority» languages (especially for the Nordic countries). In fact the activities in the Socialist countries were at a very low level partly due to the fact that information services had a low priority in the national plans, partly because in many of the countries the preservation of historical materials had unacceptable political overtonse and party because information activities were treated with a certain suspicion by the authorities.

There was also in the particular case of the German Decocratic Republic, the problem from the point of view of the Federal Republic, of the status of West Berlin, the formet capital and repository of much information material relating to pre 1939 scientific and technical activities. Nonetheless cooperation existed between certain countries both within the socialist bloc and between them and the «Western» countries, based on historical associations between libraries and, as in the case of Finland and the USSR, between information centres.

Spain as the largest country in Europe not a member of the EEC at this time had had an OECD hearing in the mid seventies and from that flowed a certain number of policy initiatives. The interesting element if these initiaves was the role foreseen and taken up by non-governmental agencies of at least by non-profit foundations-Fundesco and its associated agency at the time, Fuinca are examples. Fuinca has subsequently gone on to become proudly the leading agent in Spain in the development of new information consciousness and in encouraging new service development. Most of this development has taken place without direct Government involvement and important initiatives vis a via South America for example, hav been taken.

Unlilke the United states there were not, in Europe generally, non governmental bodies with much influence or action on policy matters. True there existed the professional societies for the participants in information functions, bodies such as the IIS (Institute of Information Scientists (mostly UK) the ADBS (Association des Decumentalistes et Biblothecaires Fracais (France) the DGD (Deutsche Gesell-schaft fur Dokumentation (Germany) and the international «clubs» such as Eusidic (European Association of Information Services), but at this time their interest in policy was not very high. Only Eusidic through for example the formation of Eurolug, the European Association of On-Line User Groups, was involved at a

the proponents of progress in information service development and the conservationists, in most cases the library community. The latter in many cases

saw the OECD activities as a disturbance of the status quo in which libraries dealt with their own management who in turn dealt with the education ministry or the culture ministry and, more or less, the financing of library activities was a given. It was clear, so the argument went, that education and research needed documentation, that this was stored and processed in libraries and if it wasn't needed for education or research then it was of cultural significance and was also dealt with in libraries, sometimes those associated with museums or art galleries.

Government policy makers, faced, as they often were, by a confrontation created through the OECD consultant's report, took the line of least resistance and acknowledged that economic progress had created a new kind of information activity which was different from the traditional scene and that something needed to be done. It is also very significant that some of the larger countries of Europe never had an OECD hearing probably because even at that stage it was impossible to get agreement on a participation and b) the topics to be covered. Also, it was probably not encouraged in certain countries in order to avoid questioning the competence of OECD in this matter and ipso facto the role of that country's representative on OECD committees.

In fact the EEC Commission's interest in information had broadly come about because of it's involvement in atomic energy developments in the fifties and sixties. Euratom (European Atomic Energy Agency, subsequently consolidated, with the European Coal and Steel Community , CECA, into the EEC) sponsored research had created a store of documentation which, following the Commission, As part of its examination on how the information contained in this store could be used the EEC came to the realization that information was an economic «good» in the asme sense as coal or steel had been. It therefore needed, in the view and in line with the thinking of the Commission in the late sixties, to be organised like coal and steel. To this end the Council of Minisers was asked to approve a decision to «create a network for the better dissemination of scientific and technical information» This the Council duly did in 1971. There is no evidence that this decision of the Council was accompanied by a de tailed discussion at Ministerial level on information policy. In fact as has been the case in all the Ministerial decisions concerning information since 1971, there was no discussion at the Council meeting. The topic was treated as an «A» item that is, already agreed at the level of the officials from the Commission and the member states and only needing formal approval. The question that might be asked is what level of discussion took place between the officials and the answer would be that, at the level just below the Council, this siscussion was mostly concerned with reaching a compromise on the wording of the Council resolution and any budgetary implications, not on the detailed programme. Thus the role of the Committee created by the Council assumes an importance in

has to note that a larger, European country is of the same scale as an average US state.

3) The different European PTTs (postal and Telecommunications Organisations) are governmental bodies with a unique position within each. The costs of data communication are raised significantly in the case of transborder communication.

4) The language problem; the multilingual European circumstances are not beneficial for efficient cooperation through (library) networking. Each (national) network needs the use of a separate language or in the case of Switzerland or Belgium multiple languages.

Most of these limitations except that of language could be applied to the Arab States.

The keyword for policy development in the last twenty years or so has been some variation on «dependence». It has been the basis of networking which has, above all, been the recurring theme in actual actions undertaken to organise information activities. It was early realised by policymakers that the different parts of the information chain were interdependent and, so the theory went, networking was a means of achieving efficiency between the different actors.

However, it was the proposal, included in a 1971 resolution of the Council of Ministers of the EEC (Council 1971), to create a committee to advise the EEC in the matter of developing information and documentation services in Science and Documentation Service and Technology, that created Europe's first «official» body to discuss information policy.

The Council resolution had been prepared by the European Commission with assistance and advice from a number of individuals who constituted an ad hoc EEC commitee on networking, and many of these individuals had served or were serving as their countries representative on an OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) committee concerned with information policy which had been in existence for many years. In fact this latter committee had been instrumental in instigating policy in a number of European countries through the OECD technique known as confrontation meetings which were hearings on information policy issues held in the different countries. These hearings were preceded by a study of the situation in the country concerned by a consultant and the report of the consultant (suitably neutralised in a number of cases). was used as the basis for the hearing. The hearing confronted senior officials of the government concerned with a series of policy questions and attempted to set the guidelines for the future information policy.

As such these OECD events had a salutary in the countries, they served in many cases to educate policy makers at quite high levels to the idea that there was information activity outside the traditional areas of the university and public libraries. They also served to create an atmosphere of mutual suspicion between

Information Policies in the Member States of the European Economic Community (EEC) By Barry Mahon; Onfotap SA, Luxembourg.

Introduction

Since the early 1970's the EEC member states have been involved in a series of cooperative programmes designed to improve the flow of information in the Community. These programmes have been elaborated under the general economic development policy of the EEC and have been very successful. They have necessitated the implementation of policy not only at the EEC level but at the national level. This paper attempts to chart the progress of these policies in number of the countries. In so doing in tends in places to be rather critical of both the EEC and the member states but this is in the context of events at the time and does not imply that the policies were wrong. The paper is presented as a guideline for the development of policy in this complex area. For the purposes of comparison some details of policy development in European countries outside the EEC is included.

Some preliminary considerations

Policy is difficult to define, it is one of those terms which everybody recognises but not many could define with any accuracy. The working definition I will use is the following: policy is the result of an examination of objectives and the means available to achieve them. This definition of itself requires some explanation. It is based on the premise that a policy is not worthy of the name if it has not resulted form an examination of abjectives. The definition does not assume that all policy is arrived at by a complete examination of objectives and means but it does assume that some such examination has taken place. Neither does the definion assume that policy is the result of consensus, on the contrary it allows for a number of policies to be operative simultaneously.

Europe has some fundemental obstacles to overcome in estblishing policy.

The following list is extracted from an excellent overview of policy issues as they apply to libraries delivered in Luxembourg by Costers and Bossers (1984).

1) In Europe there are a lot of different and independent nations with their own government and government policies and with their own national industries and other national interests to be supported.
2) There is a difference of geographical size between the nations. There are very small and relatively large countries. In comparison with the USA however, one