

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

PRESS RELEASES

PRESIDENCY: LUXEMBROUG

JANUARY-JUNE 1991

Meetings and press releases January-March 1991

Meeting number	Subject	Date
1469 th	Agriculture	21-22 January 1991
1470 th	Economics/Finance	28 January 1991
1471 st	General Affairs	4 February 1991
1472 nd	Agriculture	4-5 February 1991
1473 rd	Economics/Finance	25 February 1991
1474 th	General Affairs	4-5 March 1991
1475 th	Agriculture	4 March 1991
1476 th	Economics/Finance	18 March 1991
1477 th	Environment	18-19 March 1991
1478 th	Internal Market	21 March 1991
1479 th	Agriculture	25-26 March 1991
1480 th	Transport	27 March 1991

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COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

4118/91 (Presse 4)

1469th meeting of the Council
- Agriculture -
Brussels, 21 and 22 January 1991

President:

Mr René STEICHEN

Minister for Agriculture
of the Grand Duchy of
Luxembourg

Italy:

Mr Francesco CIMINO

State Secretary for Agriculture and
Forestry

Luxembourg:

Mr René STEICHEN

Minister for Agriculture and
Viticulture

Netherlands:

Mr Piet BUKMAN

Minister for Agriculture,
Nature Protection and
Fisheries

Portugal:

Mr Arlindo CUNHA

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

United Kingdom:

Mr John Selwyn GUMMER

Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

Mr David CURRY

Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture

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Commission:

Mr R. MAC SHARRY

Member

SUGAR SECTOR

Having received the European Parliament's Opinion, the Council examined the Commission proposal on the future Community sugar arrangements to be applied from 1 July 1991.

In view of the guidelines which emerged from the discussions, the Council agreed to extend the existing sugar arrangements for a further two years. The national aid Italy is authorized to grant is set at 70% of the amount fixed in 1988/1989 and granted to farmers as well as to undertakings. The amount of national aid the United Kingdom is authorized to grant to the refining industry is set at 90% of its present level.

It should also be noted that:

- in 1992 the Commission is to examine the question of the supply of refineries situated in Portugal in accordance with the Act of Accession, and will in the meantime keep a close eye on the situation
- extension of the derogation authorizing the processing in Spain of beet harvested in Portugal is accepted
- the question of the production of non-quota isoglucose at the end of the marketing year will be resolved within the framework of the technical procedures for which the Commission is responsible
- the Commission will examine the question of making C sugar yeast available to the Community industry within the context of the study proposed on the use of Community sugar by the chemical industry.

DETERMINATION OF THE COMMUNITY STANDARD QUALITY OF SHEEP CARCASSES

The Council held a detailed discussion on the Commission proposal for determining the Community standard quality of fresh or chilled sheep carcasses to apply from the 1991 marketing year for purposes of determining prices.

Since agreement proved impossible at this stage in the discussions, the Council will continue its examination of the question at its next meeting.

INWARD PROCESSING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE MILK SECTOR (IPA)

The Council examined the Commission proposal aimed at temporarily suspending inward processing arrangements in the milk sector until the end of the 1991/1992 milk year.

Following its discussions, the Council adopted a Regulation excluding milk products from inward processing arrangements although derogations from this suspension are provided for

- products not available on the Community market

- Cheddar, Edam, Gouda, Gruyère and Emmenthal cheese processed into processed cheese or powdered cheese lactoserum.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

The Council heard an oral report from Mr MAC SHARRY on the Commission's thoughts on the development of the common agricultural policy, which had the following aims:

- guaranteeing the competitiveness of Community agriculture
- reorienting support for farmers by taking account of the diversity of the structures of holdings and production in such a way as to control production and guarantee income aid
- strengthening structural aid.

The Council agreed to examine this question further and in greater detail at its next meeting on the basis of a written communication which the Commission would submit.

URUGUAY ROUND - AGRICULTURAL ASPECT

The Council heard a report from the Commission taking stock of the situation regarding the multilateral trade negotiations (Uruguay Round) on the agricultural aspect following the suspension of proceedings after the Heysel Conference in December of last year.

During the exchange of views which followed the Commission's statement, the Council stressed the importance it attached to the negotiations being continued in a spirit of constructive co-operation and confirmed the Community's wish to negotiate globally balanced results.

The Council agreed to keep this item on the agenda for its next meetings so as to keep a close eye on how the negotiations developed.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Research

Further to the political agreements reached at the Research Council meeting on 21 December 1990, the Council adopted common positions with a view to adopting Decisions on

- a specific research and technological development programme in the field of the environment (1990-1994)
- a specific research and technological development programme in the field of life sciences and technologies for developing countries (1990-1994)

(see press release 11028/90 of the Research Council on 21 December 1990).

Relations with developing countries

The Council adopted a Regulation amending the list of least developed countries in Annex II to Regulation (EEC) No 429/87. This amendment concerns the removal of Haiti from the list of countries eligible for the COMPEX system. Following its signing of the fourth ACP-EEC Convention, Haiti will be eligible, as from the 1990 year of application, for the STABEX system set up by that Convention.

Trade policy

The Council adopted Regulations

- amending Annex I to Regulation (EEC) No 288/82 on common rules for imports, in respect of products which are subject to national quantitative restrictions
- modifying Annex II to Council Regulation (EEC) No 288/82 on common rules for imports with regard to products subject to surveillance.

Appointments

The Council replaced (for the remainder of the respective terms of office)

- a member of the Advisory Committee on Freedom of Movement for Workers
- a member of the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work
- a member of the Management Board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

PRESS RELEASE

4361/91 (Presse 6)

1470th meeting of the Council

- Economic and Financial Affairs -

Brussels, 28 January 1991

President: Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER

Minister for Finance
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

28. I. 91

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The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Philippe MAYSTADT Minister for Finance

Denmark:

Mr Anders FOGH RASMUSSEN Minister for Economic Affairs

Mr Jens THOMSEN State Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Germany:

Mr Theo WAIGEL Federal Minister for Finance

Mr Horst KÖHLER State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs

Mr Otto SCHLECHT State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs

Greece:

Mr Eythymios CHRISTODOULOU Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs

Spain:

Mr Carlos SOLCHAGA CATALAN Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance

Mr Pedro PEREZ State Secretary for Economic Affairs

France:

Mr Pierre BEREGOVY Ministre d'Etat, Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs and the Budget

Ireland:

Mrs Maire GEOGHEGAN-QUINN Minister of State, European Affairs

28.I.91

dey/PT/cg

Italy:

Mr Guido CARLI

Minister for the Treasury

Mr Rino FORMICA

Minister for Finance

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER

Minister for Finance

Mr Robert GOEBBELS

Minister for Economic Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Marius van AMELSVOORT

State Secretary for Finance

Portugal:

Mr Miguel BELEZA

Minister for Finance

Mr Carlos TAVARES

State Secretary for the Treasury

Mr José de OLIVEIRA COSTA

State Secretary for Fiscal Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Norman LAMONT

Chancellor of the Exchequer

Commission:

Mr Jacques DELORS

President

Mr Henning CHRISTOPHERSEN

Vice-President

Ms Christiane SCRIVENER

Member

Also taking part in the meeting:

Mr Mario SARCINELLI

Chairman of the Monetary Committee

Mr Karl Otto PÖHL

Chairman of the Committee of Governors
of Central Banks

Mr Robert MALDAGUE

Chairman of the Economic Policy
Committee

MULTILATERAL SURVEILLANCE

In accordance with Article 2 of the March 1990 Decision on convergence, the Council surveyed economic policy and performance in the Community Member States on the basis of a communication from the Commission and reports by the Chairmen of the Monetary Committee and the Committee of Governors of Central Banks.

ABOLITION OF FISCAL FRONTIERS

The Council approved the work programme for the abolition of fiscal frontiers submitted by the Presidency by agreement with the Commission.

The programme sets the timetable for Council discussions on the subject up to the end of June; it includes:

- putting the Council's conclusions of 3 and 17 December 1990 on transitional VAT arrangements and the new arrangements for excise duties into legal form
- the definition of special VAT arrangements
- seeking agreement on the alignment of VAT rates and excise duties
- a comprehensive decision on tax-free allowances for travellers (in accordance with the ECOFIN Council's conclusions of 17 December 1990)
- a solution to the problem of road transport taxation
- excise duties on diesel, motor vehicle taxes and tolls - in accordance with the conclusions of the European Council on 14 and 15 December 1990.

MEASURES FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Working to implement the conclusions of the Rome European Council of 14 and 15 December 1990, the Council examined a series of questions relating to measures to assist the various countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

With regard to supplementary assistance to Hungary (going beyond the Community's medium-term assistance to Hungary, agreed by the Council in 1990) Ministers agreed to mandate the Commission to pledge in the Group of 24 a 50% participation by the Community going up to a total amount of US \$ 250 million for the Community contribution.

On the basis of a report from the Commission on the result of its mission to assure contributions from both G-24 and non G-24 countries, Ministers confirmed the pledge of a US \$ 500 million contribution from the Community to the financial assistance package for Czechoslovakia. Ministers agreed to adopt the necessary legal texts as soon as possible.

Lastly, with regard to budgetary guarantees for loans that the Community had already entered into, or would enter into in future as part of its assistance to third countries, Ministers agreed with the Commission that the question of the growing risks for the Community budget linked to the problem of guarantees in general should be examined in the context of the renewal of the interinstitutional agreement on financial and budgetary matters in 1992. The Council would examine concrete Commission proposals to that end when the time came.

MEDIUM TERM ASSISTANCE TO GREECE - COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

Ministers agreed in principle that medium-term financial assistance to the balance of payments, of the order of ECU 2,2 billion will be made available to Greece. The formal decision will be taken at the next meeting of the Council on 25 February 1991, setting out the precise conditions for granting the loan. The Commission will, after consultation with the Monetary Committee, submit to the Council its proposal for these conditions on the basis of the formal programme to be submitted by the Greek government. A first tranche of the order of 1 billion ECU will be disbursed immediately while further tranches will be disbursed, in consultation with the Council, in the light of the implementation of the Greek government's programme as monitored according to Community regulations.

COURT OF AUDITORS' REPORT ON EXPORT REFUNDS UNDER THE EAGGF - COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

"The Council has considered carefully special report No 2/90 of the Court of Auditors on export refunds and its recommendations for improvements in the management and control of the Community's policy in this area;

it notes that a number of Council and Commission Regulations have already been adopted with the aim of improving management and control measures;

it considers that the action taken in certain areas needs to be continued and notes that the necessary work has begun in the appropriate Commission working parties;

it calls upon the Permanent Representatives Committee to ensure that when the Council bodies examine the Court of Auditors' report on the financial year 1990 special attention is given to the points on the management of agricultural exports and control of refunds, and in particular to the results of the abovementioned discussions undertaken in this area;

it invites the Commission to provide such information as is required for that discussion."

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Environment

The Council adopted the Resolution on the Green Paper on the urban environment (see Environment Council press release of 20/21 December 1990 - 11030/90).

In addition, the Council authorized the Commission to negotiate in the OECD - alongside the Member States - as regards matters within the Community's sphere of competence:

- a Decision-Recommendation on reduction of transfrontier movements of wastes;
- a Decision-Recommendation on the co-operative investigation and risk reduction of existing chemicals.

Agriculture

- Health provisions governing intra-Community trade in ovine and caprine animals

The Council unanimously adopted a Directive on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in ovine and caprine animals. The aim of this Directive is, with a view to completing the internal market, to lay down the animal health rules which ovine and caprine animals must satisfy for the purposes of trade, on the lines of the scheme laid down in Directive 64/432/EEC for trade in bovine animals and swine.

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During the Italian Presidency a compromise was reached on this text, which lays down the requirements for animals at the holding of origin with regard to the main diseases to which ovine and caprine animals are susceptible, with a proviso that specific guarantees may be required if the Member State of destination or a region of that Member State is free of certain diseases or has implemented a programme to combat those diseases.

The provisions adopted by the Council in June 1990 on the abolition of checks at borders between Member States (Directive 90/425/EEC) and on Community financing of certain veterinary schemes (Decision 90/424/EEC) were extended to the text adopted at this meeting, as were the Community inspection procedures and safeguard measures.

To take account of that decision, the Council included ovine and caprine animals under the scope of Directive 72/462/EEC which governs imports of bovine animals and swine from third countries, thus empowering the Commission to draw up the list of third countries authorized to export ovine and caprine animals to the whole of the Community territory, and also to fix the health guarantees to be complied with by such animals on import in the light of the health conditions obtaining in the third countries concerned.

Member States must comply with these two Directives by 31 December 1992.

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- Provisions regarding the placing on the market of aquaculture animals and products

The Council adopted, with two abstentions, a Directive concerning the animal health conditions governing the placing on the market of aquaculture animals and products.

This text, which was the subject of a compromise during the Italian Presidency, lays down the animal health conditions which fish, crustaceans and live molluscs must satisfy before being placed on the Community market, its purpose being -in respect of diseases which may be transmitted to the aquaculture products identified under the Standing Veterinary Committee procedure - to determine which areas are free of such diseases and may be approved as being so.

By fixing these rules governing movements of goods to areas with confirmed approved status from other areas or under certain conditions from approved holdings, the Council is adhering to the objective of harmonization of health rules at the highest possible level.

The provisions already referred to above regarding the abolition of veterinary checks at borders and the safeguard measures to be adopted in the event of disease occurring and also regarding the financing of projects and the fight against such diseases are extended to aquaculture products in the text.

The text makes imports from third countries subject to the rules laid down for the placing on the market of products of Community origin, utilizing the principles currently applied in the case of bovine animals and swine (see Directive 72/462/EEC), i.e. drawing up a list of third countries authorized to

send exports to the Community and identifying under the Standing Veterinary Committee procedure the animal health rules which such imports must comply with.

Member States should comply with this Directive by 1 January 1993.

GATT

The Council adopted the Decision on the conclusion of the Protocol of Accession of Venezuela to the General Agreement on Customs Tariffs and Trade.

PRESS RELEASE

4467/91 (Presse 11)

1471st Council meeting
- General Affairs -
Brussels, 4 February 1991

Presidents: Mr Jacques F. POOS,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Mr Georges WOHLFART,
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

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The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Mark EYSKENS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Robert URBAIN	Minister for Foreign Trade
Mr Paul DE KEERSMAEKER	State Secretary for European Affairs
Mrs A.M. LIZIN	State Secretary for Europe 1992, attached to the Minister for Foreign Trade

Denmark:

Mr Uffe ELLEMAN-JENSEN	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Jørgen ØRSTRØM MØLLER	State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Hans-Dietrich GENSCHER	Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Jürgen W. MÖLLEMANN	Federal Minister for Economic Affairs
Mrs Ursula SEILER-ALBRING	Minister of State, Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Mr Antonis SAMARAS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Sotirios HATZIGAKIS	Deputy Minister for Trade
Mr Georges PAPASTAMKOS	State Secretary for Economic Affairs

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Spain:

Mr Francisco FERNANDES ORDOÑEZ	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Pedro SOLBES MIRA	State Secretary for Relations with the European Communities
Mr Ruiz LIGERO	State Secretary for Trade

France:

Mr Roland DUMAS	Ministre d'Etat, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mrs Elisabeth GUIGOU	Minister for European Affairs
Mr Jean-Marie RAUSCH	Minister for Foreign Trade

Ireland:

Mr Gerard COLLINS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Desmond O'MALLEY	Minister for Industry and Commerce

Italy:

Mr Gianni DE MICHELIS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Renato RUGGIERO	Minister for Foreign Trade

Luxembourg:

Mr Jacques F. POOS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Georges WOHLFART	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

4.II.1991

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Netherlands:

Mr H. VAN DEN BROEK	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mrs Yvonne VAN ROOY	Minister for Foreign Trade
Mr Piet DANKERT	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr João de DEUS PINHEIRO	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Vitor MARTINS	State Secretary for European Integration

United Kingdom:

Mr Douglas HURD	Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Mr Peter LILLEY	Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
Mr Tristan GAREL-JONES	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Commission:

Mr Jacques DELORS	President
Mr F.H.J.J. ANDRIESSEN	Vice-President
Mr Abel MATUTES	Member

4. II. 1991

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RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE USSR

Pending the Opinion of the European Parliament, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examining the dossiers which had been referred to it, namely:

- the supply of agricultural products and medicines to Romania and Bulgaria
- the supply of agricultural products to the USSR
- introduction of a guarantee for exports of agricultural products to the USSR
- extension to the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Bulgaria and Romania of loans from the European Investment Bank

URUGUAY ROUND

The Council heard Mr ANDRIESEN's report on his talks at political level in Latin America, the United States and Canada. It also heard a report from the Commission on the talks which took place in Geneva, organized by Mr DUNKEL, the Director-General of GATT, at the end of the previous week.

The Council considers it essential, after the pause which followed the Brussels Conference, to resume the normal pace of negotiation with vigour; the Council, for its part, is ready to provide the necessary political impetus. It considers that every effort must be made to reach a balanced agreement covering all sectors as soon as possible. It calls on the Commission to pursue multilaterally and bilaterally whatever action is necessary to achieve this result.

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MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Relations with Syria

The Council decided to proceed with the signing of the Third Protocol on financial and technical co-operation between the European Economic Community and the Syrian Arab Republic and to ask the European Parliament for its assent. Signing is scheduled to take place at ambassadorial level on 7 February 1991 in Brussels.

Civil aircraft

The Council adopted the Decision authorizing the Commission to open negotiations with the Government of the United States of America and with other Parties to the GATT Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft, with a view to concluding new arrangements on international trade in civil aircraft.

Relations with the ACP States and the OCTs

The Council adopted the Regulation amending Regulation No 715/90 on the arrangements applicable to agricultural products and certain goods resulting from the processing of agricultural products originating in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States or in the overseas countries and territories (OCTs) to take account of the accession of Namibia to the Fourth ACP-EEC Convention.

GATT

The Council adopted the Regulation suspending tariff concessions and increasing the duties applicable under the Common Customs Tariff to certain products falling within CN Code 5607 (processed sisal products).

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Non-standard work

Following the agreement of substance reached on 18 December 1990, the Council agreed on its common position with a view to the adoption of a Directive based on Article 118a of the Treaty, supplementing the measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of workers with a fixed-duration employment relationship or a temporary employment relationship.

The purpose of the Directive is to ensure that workers with a fixed-duration employment contract and temporary workers are afforded, as regards safety and health at work, the same level of protection as that of other workers in the user undertaking (see Press Release 10875/90 Presse 236 of 18 December 1990).

Control of acquisition and possession of weapons

Following the political agreement of 13 December 1990 the Council agreed on its common position with a view to the adoption of the Directive on the control of acquisition and possession of weapons.

The purpose of the proposal for a Directive is to set control standards within the Member States with a view to eliminating police checks on the possession of weapons when Community borders are crossed. For that purpose common rules are envisaged at Community level, on the understanding that Member States will be authorized to adopt more stringent legislation (see Press Release 10685/90 Presse 226 of 13 December 1990).

Transport

Following the agreements of substance reached at its meeting on 17 and 18 December 1990, the Council adopted the following:

- the Regulation on the liberalization of air cargo services.

This Regulation concerns both scheduled and non-scheduled air cargo services. Its purpose is to liberalize market access and tariffs and increase the operating flexibility of these services. It should make it possible to improve the services offered to users.

- the Regulation on common rules for a denied-boarding compensation system in scheduled air transport.

The purpose of the Regulation is to resolve the problems stemming from the practice of overbooking scheduled flights by, inter alia, the establishment of minimum standards for the compensation of passengers.

- an amendment to Directive 85/3/EEC, which is in force at present, to increase the maximum authorized length of a road train from 18m to 18,35m while guaranteeing sufficient space for the driver's cabin;
- an amendment to Regulation No 4059/89 laying down the conditions under which non-resident carriers may operate national road haulage services within a Member State, in order to enable carriers established in the former German Democratic Republic to gain access to the national markets of the other Member States.

(see Press Release 10872/90 Presse 233 of 17 and 18 December 1990).

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Environment

The Council adopted the Recommendation for a Council Decision authorizing the Commission to participate in the negotiations concerning a Protocol to the Barcelona Convention (1976) relating to the protection of the Mediterranean Sea from pollution resulting from the exploration and exploitation of its continental shelf, its seabed and its substratum.

ECSC

The Council assented, in accordance with Article 54(2) of the ECSC Treaty, to the following:

- a loan to part-finance a new coal-fired heating plant in Grenoble (France);
- the granting of a loan (consumption of Community coal) to Caledonian Paper PLC (United Kingdom).

Appointments

The Council appointed:

- Belgian full and alternate members of the Advisory Committee on the Training of Dental Practitioners;
- Belgian, Greek and Portuguese full and alternate members of the Advisory Committee on the Training of Midwives.

The Council also replaced:

- a full member and two alternate members of the Advisory Committee on Medical Training;

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- a full member of the Advisory Committee on the Training of Dental Practitioners;
 - a full member and an alternate member of the Advisory Committee on Pharmaceutical Training;
 - an alternate member of the Advisory Committee on the Training of Midwives.
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COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

4467/91 (Presse 11)

ADDENDUM 1

1471st COUNCIL MEETING
- GENERAL AFFAIRS -
BRUSSELS, 4 FEBRUARY 1991

COMMUNITY AID FOR ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES - COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

The Council agreed to the principle of aid for Israel and corresponding aid for the Occupied Territories in the context of support for the regions directly affected by the Gulf crisis. The Council asked the Commission to submit the requisite proposals so that it could take a decision as soon as possible.

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

4470/91 (Presse 14)

1472nd meeting of the Council
- Agriculture -
Brussels, 4 and 5 February 1991

President:

Mr René STEICHEN

Minister for Agriculture
of the Grand Duchy of
Luxembourg

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Italy:

Mr Vito SACCOMANDI

Minister for Agriculture

Luxembourg:

Mr René STEICHEN

Minister for Agriculture and
Viticulture

Netherlands:

Mr Piet BUKMAN

Minister for Agriculture,
Nature Protection and
Fisheries

Portugal:

Mr Arlindo CUNHA

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

United Kingdom:

Mr John Selwyn GUMMER

Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

Mr David CURRY

Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture

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Commission:

Mr R. MAC SHARRY

Member

4/5.II.91

kis/HM/jw

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

On the basis of a written Commission communication, the Council held a detailed discussion on the Commission's thoughts on the development and future of the common agricultural policy.

The aims referred to in the communication were as follows:

- to maintain the competitiveness of Community agriculture;
- to control production in the food sector so as to avoid surpluses of supply in relation to demand;
- to keep agricultural expenditure under control;
- to re-distribute support, taking account of existing inequalities between different categories of producers;
- to break the automatic link which has developed between price support and the quantities produced;
- give farmers a decisive role in protecting the land and the environment;
- to encourage better quality agricultural production through the use of less intensive methods.

The discussion was particularly intense and frank; it enabled the Council to analyse the situation in respect of Community agriculture, where there are serious strains on the main markets, and highlighted the need to correct this position.

Delegations also gave their reactions to the ideas for reform put forward by the Commission.

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At the close of the exchange of views, Commissioner Mac SHARRY said that he would report to the Commission on the discussion which had taken place in the Council with a view to the preparation of formal proposals which would shortly be submitted to the Council, in particular with regard to the 1991/1992 prices and related measures package.

URUGUAY ROUND - AGRICULTURAL ASPECTS

The Council took note of a statement by Mr Mac SHARRY on recent developments - since the last Agriculture Council meeting on 21 and 22 January - concerning the multilateral trade negotiations (agricultural aspects).

The Council hoped that it would be possible rapidly to resume the normal rhythm of negotiations and to reach a balanced overall solution covering all the sectors involved.

It was agreed that this item should remain on the agenda for the next Agriculture Council meeting so that developments in the negotiations could be followed.

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DETERMINATION OF THE COMMUNITY STANDARD QUALITY OF SHEEP CARCASSES

The Council adopted by a qualified majority a Regulation determining the Community standard quality of fresh or chilled sheep carcasses to be used in recording prices in the various quotation areas.

Agreement was reached on the basis of a Presidency compromise. This is a transitional solution applying to the 1991 and 1992 marketing years, pending the fixing of a Community grading scale for carcasses.

The main points of the solution are as follows:

- minimum carcass weight: 12 kg; the price of carcasses below this limit will not be taken into account in reporting prices;
- reasonable fat level: the Commission, in accordance with the Management Committee procedure, will, on a quotation area basis, exclude the heaviest carcasses from price reporting;
- Community grading scale for carcasses; the Commission will submit its proposal on the matter to the Council by the end of the 1991 marketing year so that it can be implemented from the start of the 1993 marketing year.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Other Decisions in the area of agriculture

The Council adopted:

- a Regulation amending Regulation No 1785/91 on the common organization of the markets in the sugar sector. This basically extends the present sugar arrangements for two years. (See Press Release No 4118/91 - Agriculture - of 21 and 22 January 1991);
- a Regulation amending Regulation No 857/84 adopting general rules for the application of the levy referred to in Article 5c of Regulation (EEC) No 804/68 in the milk and milk products sector. The purpose of the amendments is to remove a provision deemed over-restrictive in respect of the buying-up of milk quotas, and to specify that milk products other than those explicitly mentioned in the current text are also covered by the supplementary levy system in this sector;
- a Regulation on reinforcing the monitoring of certain expenditure chargeable to the Guarantee Section of the European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund. The purpose of the Regulation is to encourage Member States to strengthen monitoring and detection of fraud and irregularities by making provision for the Community to bear part of the costs;
- a Decision amending Decision 90/218/EEC of 25 April 1990 concerning the administration of bovine somatotrophin (BST). This Decision extends until 31 December 1991 the ban on the marketing in Member States of bovine somatotrophin and its administration on their territory by any means whatsoever to dairy cows.

The Council took note of the Commission communication on organizations and agreements linking different branches within the agricultural sector.

Fisheries

The Council adopted a Regulation on the conclusion of a Protocol between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Senegal concerning fishing off the coast of Senegal for the period from 1 May 1990 to 30 April 1992.

The Protocol defines the following fishing rights:

- Wet trawlers (inshore demersal fishing) landing and selling their entire catch in Senegal:
Fish and cephalopods: 1 000 GRT/year;
- Wet trawlers (inshore demersal fishing) not landing their catch in Senegal:
Fish and cephalopods: 2 200 GRT/year;
- Ocean-going wet fish trawlers (demersal) not landing their catch in Senegal and fishing for a period of 4 months:
5 000 GRT/year in an average year;
- Freezer trawlers (inshore demersal fishing) landing and selling part of their catch in Senegal:
Fish and cephalopods: 2 800 GRT/year;
- Freezer trawlers (inshore demersal fishing) landing part of their catch in Senegal and fishing over a four-month period specified for each vessel in an overall fishing plan to be notified to the Senegalese Government by the Community every six months:
Fish and cephalopods: 1 000 GRT/year in an average year;
- Ocean-going shrimp freezer trawlers (demersal) not landing their catch in Senegal:
18 600 GRT/year;
- Tuna vessels landing all their catch in Senegal: 20 vessels;

kis/HM/bt

- Freezer tuna seiners landing part of their catch in Senegal: 48 vessels;
- Surface longliners: 35 vessels.

The total financial compensation amounts to ECU 30 million.

Dangerous substances

The Council formally adopted two common positions on the tenth and eleventh amendments of Directive 76/769/EEC relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of dangerous substances.

The main purpose of the tenth amendment is to prohibit, by means of negative lists, the use of cadmium in three areas of use, viz.: pigmentation, stabilization and the treatment of certain surfaces.

The aim of the eleventh amendment is to restrict the marketing and use of three substances, the trade names of which are Ugilec 141, Ugilec 121 or 21 and DBBT.

(See Press Release No 10685/90 - Internal Market - of 13 December 1990).

PRESS RELEASE

4835/91 (Presse 20)

1473rd meeting of the Council
- Economic and Financial Affairs -

3rd Ministerial Meeting of the IGC on EMU

Brussels, 25 February 1991

President: Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER

Minister for Finance
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

25.II.91

ert/BS/cmc

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Philippe MAYSTADT Minister for Finance

Denmark:

Mr Anders FOGH RASMUSSEN Minister for Economic Affairs

Mr Jens THOMSEN State Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Germany:

Mr Horst KÖHLER State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs

Mr Otto SCHLECHT State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs

Greece:

Mr Eythymios CHRISTODOULOU Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs

Spain:

Mr Pedro PEREZ State Secretary for Economic Affairs

France:

Mr Pierre BEREGOVOY Ministre d'Etat, Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs and the Budget

Mrs Elisabeth GUIGOU Minister for European Affairs

Ireland:

Mrs Maire GEOGHEGAN-QUINN Minister of State, European Affairs

Italy:

Mr Guido CARLI Minister for the Treasury

Mr Emilio RUBBI State Secretary for the Treasury

25.II.91

ert/BS/cmc

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER

Minister for Finance

Mr Robert GOEBBELS

Minister for Economic Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr W. KOK

Minister for Finance

Mr P. DANKERT

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Miguel BELEZA

Minister for Finance

United Kingdom:

Mr Norman LAMONT

Chancellor of the Exchequer

Mr Francis MAUDE

Financial Secretary to the Treasury

Commission:

Mr Jacques DELORS

President

Mr Henning CHRISTOPHERSEN

Vice-President

Sir Leon BRITTAN

Vice-President

25.II.91

ert/BS/cmc

MEDIUM-TERM ASSISTANCE TO GREECE

The Council approved the Decision concerning a Community loan in favour of the Hellenic Republic.

By this Decision, the Community grants Greece, under Regulation (EEC) No 1969/88, a loan of ECU 2 200 million or the equivalent amount in other currencies.

The loan is being made available to Greece in three instalments. The average duration of each instalment will not exceed six years. The three instalments will be made as follows:

- the first instalment amounting to ECU 1 000 million or the equivalent amount in other currencies as soon as the borrowing operations are completed;
- the second instalment amounting to ECU 600 million or the equivalent amount in other currencies not earlier than 1 February 1992 and in any case the second instalment will not be released until the Commission, in consultation with the Council and in the light of an examination made in collaboration with the Monetary Committee of the results obtained in the execution of the programme, is satisfied that the agreed measures have been fully implemented and that the targets of the programme have been achieved or that the necessary additional measures to achieve the targets have been agreed or fully implemented;
- the third instalment amounting to ECU 600 million or the equivalent amount in other currencies not earlier than 1 February 1993 subject to the same examination, verification and consultation as in the case of the second instalment.

The loan is being granted on the basis of the decision taken by Greece to implement the economic recovery programme which it has presented, the objectives of which are set out in the recitals to the Decision.

The Commission, in collaboration with the Monetary Committee, is to examine at regular intervals the evolution of the economic situation of Greece and the execution of the economic recovery programme. These examinations will continue until the loan is fully repaid.

INVESTMENT SERVICES

The Council heard a statement by Sir Leon BRITTAN, Vice-President, who made an urgent appeal to Council members to make every effort to reach an early decision on the Directive on investment services.

The Council also took note of the Presidency's intention of submitting a number of key questions to a high-level ad hoc Working Party so that the Council would be able to discuss them shortly.

25.II.91
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RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

- Extension to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania of EIB operations

The Council has invited the EIB to grant loans from its own resources for investment projects in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, provided that such projects satisfy the Bank's usual criteria. The loans would be fully guaranteed by the general budget of the European Communities.

This guarantee will be limited to a maximum loan amount of ECU 700 million for the above three countries, to be committed during a two-year period.

It was also stated that the Council is proposing to hold a general debate in the near future on the external role of the EIB and in particular on the possible extension of the Bank's activities to the various third countries and regions which do not yet benefit from them and with which the Community has concluded co-operation agreements.

In the meantime the Council has agreed to ask the Bank to examine on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with Article 18 of its Statute, its possibilities for action in respect of projects of common interest in the abovementioned countries and regions that fulfil the criteria for intervention by the Bank. This position of the Council does not prejudge the conclusions to be drawn from its general debate on the external role of the EIB.

- Medium-term financial assistance to Czechoslovakia

The Council adopted the Decision providing medium-term financial assistance to Czechoslovakia.

Under that Decision, the Community will grant to Czechoslovakia a medium-term loan facility of a maximum amount of ECU 375 million in principal, with a maximum duration of seven years, with a view to ensuring a sustainable balance-of-payments situation, strengthening its reserves and facilitating the introduction of currency convertibility.

To that end the Commission is empowered to borrow the necessary resources on behalf of the Community.

This loan will be managed by the Commission in close consultation with the Monetary Committee and in a manner consistent with any agreement reached between the IMF and Czechoslovakia.

The loan will be made available to Czechoslovakia in two instalments. The first instalment will be released as soon as a "stand-by arrangement" has been concluded between Czechoslovakia and the IMF.

The funds will be paid to the National Bank of Czechoslovakia.

- Financial assistance to other countries

On the basis of information provided by Mr CHRISTOPHERSEN, Vice-President, the Council took stock of the implementation of supplementary financial assistance for Hungary, and of the progress made with preparation of possible measures to assist Bulgaria.

Regarding Hungary, it will be recalled that the Council had asked the Commission at its meeting on 28 January 1991 to pledge in the Group of 24 a 50% participation by the Community going up to a total amount of US \$250 million for the Community contribution.

As for action to assist Bulgaria, the Council agreed to return to this question at a forthcoming meeting on the basis of a Commission proposal.

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THIRD MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON EMU

The third ministerial meeting of the Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on Economic and Monetary Union was held after the Council meeting.

Following a progress report by the Chairman of the Working Party of Personal Representatives; the Ministers' discussions focused on:

- the objectives and principles of EMU
- the main thrust of economic policy and surveillance
- budgetary discipline
 - = criteria for judging whether a budget deficit is excessive
 - = sanctions
- a Community financial assistance mechanism.



MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Economy/finance

The Council adopted Decisions establishing

- a European Advisory Committee on Statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres
- a Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics.

The first committee will be responsible for assisting the Council and the Commission to co-ordinate the Community's statistical information policy aims, taking into account the needs of users and the costs borne by information producers.

The second committee will assist the Commission in drawing up and implementing the multiannual work programme on monetary, financial and balance of payments statistics. One of its main tasks will be to express opinions on the development and co-ordination of the monetary, financial and balance of payments statistics required within the framework of the policies applied by the Council, the Commission and the various committees which assist them.

EEC/EFTA

The Council adopted Decisions concerning the conclusion of

- five co-operation agreements between the EEC and Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland on a European Stimulation Plan for Economic Science (SPES)

- three co-operation agreements between the EEC and Finland, Sweden and Switzerland on an R&D programme in the field of applied metrology and chemical analysis (BCR)

Relations with the ACP States and the OCT

The Council and the Commission adopted the Decision concluding the Fourth ACP-EEC Convention on behalf of the Community.

External relations

The Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, adopted the Decision repealing Decision 86/517/EEC concerning the suspension of new direct investment in the Republic of South Africa.

This Decision follows on from the decision of principle taken by the European Council to lift the ban on new investment in South Africa as a contribution towards combating unemployment and improving the economic and social situation in that country.

Relations with the Mediterranean countries

The Council

- supplemented the negotiating directives for the fourth Financial Protocols with the Mediterranean countries (Mashreq, Maghreb and Israel) adopted on 18 December 1990 by deciding on the breakdown of amounts for the various recipient countries;

25.II.91

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- adopted the Decision concerning the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Tunisia laying down the rules applicable from 1 January 1991 to imports into the Community of untreated olive oil originating in Tunisia.

Relations with Yugoslavia

The Council agreed to the negotiating directives on imports of sweet clear-fleshed cherries preserved in spirit and intended for the manufacture of chocolate products.

Steel

The Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council authorized the Commission to open negotiations with Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia for ECSC products.

Trade policy/Customs union

The Council adopted

- the Decision authorizing extension or tacit renewal of certain trade agreements concluded between Member States and third countries;
- an amendment to Regulation No 802/68 on the common definition of the concept of the origin of goods, extending its application to certain petroleum products excluded hitherto. In view of the impending completion of the large market, it

was necessary to implement rules defining the origin of petroleum products in order to prevent discrepancies arising in the Member States;

- the Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 3725/90 opening and providing for the administration of Community tariff quotas bound in GATT for certain agricultural and industrial products.

Aid to the coal industry

The Council took note of the Commission report on the application of Community rules for State aid to the coal industry in 1988.

Environment

The Council decided that the Community would sign the Convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context, subject to agreement on the final version of the text.

The content of the Convention broadly corresponds to Community Directive 85/337 on impact studies.

Appointments

The Council replaced (for the remainder of their term of office)

- three members and four alternate members of the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work

- five members of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

- two full members and three alternate members of the Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training

- one alternate member of the Advisory Committee on the Training of Dental Practitioners

- one alternate member of the Advisory Committee on the Training of Pharmacists.



COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

4862/91 (Presse 25)

1474th Council meeting
- General Affairs -

Political co-operation meeting

Third IGC ministerial meeting on Political Union

Brussels, 4 and 5 March 1991

Presidents: Mr Jacques F. POOS,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Mr Georges WOHLFART,
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

4/5.III.91

kis/SMS/pm

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Mark EYSKENS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Robert URBAIN	Minister for Foreign Trade
Mr Paul DE KEERSMAEKER	State Secretary for European Affairs
Mrs A.M. LIZIN	State Secretary for Europe 1992, attached to the Minister for Foreign Trade

Denmark:

Mr Uffe ELLEMAN-JENSEN	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Jørgen ØRSTRØM MØLLER	State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Hans-Dietrich GENSCHER	Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mrs Ursula SEILER-ALBRING	Minister of State, Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Mr Antonis SAMARAS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Sotirios HATZIGAKIS	Deputy Minister for Trade
Mr Georges PAPANSTAMKOS	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Pedro SOLBES MIRA	State Secretary for Relations with the European Communities
Mr Apolonio RUIZ LIGERO	State Secretary for Trade

4/5.III.91

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France:

Mr Roland DUMAS

Ministre d'Etat,
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mrs Elisabeth GUIGOU

Minister for European Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Sean CALLEARY

Minister of State at the Department
of Foreign Affairs
with special responsibility for
Overseas Aid

Mr Desmond O'MALLEY

Minister for Industry and Commerce

Italy:

Mr Claudio VITALONE

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Mr Renato RUGGIERO

Minister for Foreign Trade

Luxembourg:

Mr Jacques F. POOS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Georges WOHLFART

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Piet DANKERT

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Mrs Yvonne VAN ROOY

Minister for Foreign Trade

Portugal:

Mr João de DEUS PINHEIRO

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Vitor MARTINS

State Secretary for European
Integration

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United Kingdom:

Mr Douglas HURD

Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs

Mr Tristan GAREL-JONES

Minister of State, Foreign and
Commonwealth Office

Commission:

Mr Jacques DELORS

President

Mr F.H.J.J. ANDRIESEN

Vice-President

Mr Antonio CARDOSO E CUNHA

Member

Mr Abel MATUTES

Member

THIRD IGC MINISTERIAL MEETING ON POLITICAL UNION

The third meeting at ministerial level of the Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union was held on the morning of 4 March and dealt with the whole range of questions concerning democratic legitimacy.

Discussions centred more specifically on the role of the European Parliament in the appointment of the Members of the Commission and of its President and on the legislative power of Parliament, and in particular on the introduction of a joint European Parliament/Council decision-taking procedure.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL AND TO THE PALESTINIANS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

In the context of the consequences of the Gulf crisis the Council agreed on financial assistance to Israel and to the Palestinians in the occupied territories as follows:

- for Israel, ECU 160 million in loans raised on the market together with interest subsidies, for which ECU 27,5 million would be provided for in the 1991 budget to cover, inter alia, the cost of imports;
- for the Palestinians in the occupied territories, ECU 60 million in the form of grants, to be committed in the 1991 budget for the financing, inter alia, of subsidized housing and hospitals.

RELATIONS WITH TURKEY

The Council discussed relations with Turkey and in particular the possibility of step-by-step revival of those relations.

The Presidency concluded that it would continue its efforts to help find solutions to current problems within the framework of the UN Secretary-General's action on Cyprus.

The Ministers adopted the aim of finding the necessary solutions for the revival of relations between the Community and Turkey on the basis of the Commission communication of 14 June 1990.

RELATIONS WITH THE EFTA COUNTRIES - PROGRESS IN THE EEA NEGOTIATIONS

The Council noted with interest the Commission report on progress in the EEA negotiations and their prospects.

The negotiations were continuing intensively and should be expedited with a view to concluding them before the summer of 1991.

A number of difficult points remained and the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to deal with them intensively in order to allow negotiations to advance as rapidly as possible. In particular, it was necessary to submit a general position on institutional questions in the near future. The Council noted that the Commission had just submitted a comprehensive working document on that subject.

Accordingly, the Council agreed that at its meeting in April it would deal with any unresolved problems that required political decisions at Community level.

Finally, the Council noted that the Presidency would consider the advisability, in the light of developments in the negotiations and in contact with the Commission and the Presidency of EFTA, of calling an EC-EFTA ministerial meeting before the summer.

URUGUAY ROUND

The Council noted the statement by Vice-President ANDRIESEN on the latest developments in the Uruguay Round negotiations. It discussed the situation in depth and all delegations stated their views.

It welcomed the resumption of negotiations in Geneva and confirmed the importance it attached to their success. It recalled the need to make every effort to reach a balanced agreement covering all sectors at the earliest opportunity.

Finally, it agreed to take stock of the situation regularly.

RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE USSR

- Conciliation with the European Parliament and adoption of three Regulations concerning Romania, Bulgaria and the USSR

"On 5 March 1991 the General Affairs Council and a European Parliament delegation ⁽¹⁾ met in the framework of the legislative conciliation procedure regarding the Regulations granting food aid to the USSR and food and medical aid to Romania and Bulgaria.

At that meeting, at which the Commission was present, agreement was reached on the financing arrangements. Food grants would total ECU 330 million, with ECU 250 million reserved for the USSR and ECU 80 million for Romania and Bulgaria. The ECU 330 million would be financed by charging ECU 320 million to the EAGGF Guarantee Section and ECU 10 million to food aid appropriations, without affecting the programme of food aid for the developing countries. Accordingly, those appropriations could be reconstituted if existing appropriations proved inadequate to cover the quantities of food aid planned for 1991.

The ECU 20 million aid in medicinal products would be financed through the PHARE programme (operating and administrative appropriations).

(1) The European Parliament delegation was led by its President, Mr BARON CRESPO, and consisted of Mr LAMASSOURE, first Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Committee on Budgets, Mr CORNELISSEN, second Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Budgets, Mr COLOM I NAVAL and Mr BÖGE, members of the Committee on Budgets, Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO-CERRETTI, Chairwoman of the Political Affairs Committee, Mr PENDERS, member of the Political Affairs Committee, and Mr TITLEY and Mrs PEIJS, members of the Committee on External Economic Relations.

This Decision does not call in question the appropriations allocated to this programme in the 1991 budget, in particular for Romanian orphanages.

The Commission will continue examining of the feasibility of extending the credit guarantee to USSR purchases in Central and East European countries and if appropriate submit a proposal for the amendment of the Regulation.

The Council and the European Parliament delegation also discussed the budgetary and financial consequences of the aid recently granted to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to those countries particularly affected by the Gulf crisis.

In that connection it was agreed that before taking decisions of principle on any new external aid the Council would contact the European Parliament, by means of a procedure adapted to the urgency of the decisions, but not affecting the powers that each Institution holds by virtue of the Treaties."

The Council then proceeded to adopt the three Regulations.

Under the first Regulation the Community will implement an emergency measure involving gifts to Romania and Bulgaria of agricultural and medical products amounting to ECU 100 million, including ECU 20 million for medicinal products.

The second Regulation provides for emergency action granting the USSR agricultural products worth ECU 250 million.

In both cases the Commission is responsible for implementing the action; it is also entrusted with checking supply operations on the spot and the application of the criteria adopted for distribution of aid to the public.

The third Regulation sets up a short-term loan guarantee to enable the USSR to import agricultural and food products from the Community.

The total guaranteed credit may not exceed ECU 500 million with a maximum maturity of three years and reimbursement in six equal half-yearly instalments as from expiry of the drawing period. In the event of default the guarantee will cover 98% of the repayment of the principal interest on loans in ecus granted to the USSR by a pool of commercial banks established in the Community for the purchase and importation of agricultural and food products, in accordance with an agreement to be concluded between the Community and the USSR.

- Technical assistance to the USSR

The Council instructed the Commission to resume its official contacts with the Soviet authorities in the context of its preparatory work on technical assistance.

EUROPEAN ENERGY CHARTER

The Council heard a statement from Mr CARDOSO E CUNHA, Member of the Commission, on the essential features of the Commission communication on a European Energy Charter.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to examine that important communication so that the Council could return to it at the earliest opportunity.

RELATIONS WITH THE GULF CO-OPERATION COUNCIL

The Ministers stressed the importance of reviving the negotiations with the GCC on a free-trade agreement. The Commission said it would shortly be submitting the necessary proposals for possible amendment of the negotiating brief.

At the same time, the Ministers set 10 and 11 May 1991 as the dates for the next meeting of the EEC-GCC Joint Council at ministerial level in Luxembourg.

LIFTING OF THE KUWAIT EMBARGO

The Council adopted a Regulation lifting from 2 March 1991 the embargo on Kuwait introduced by Regulations (EEC) Nos 2340/90 of 8 August 1990 and 3155/90 of 29 October 1990.

At the same time the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the ECSC meeting within the Council adopted a Decision lifting the embargo on Kuwait in respect of ECSC products introduced by Decision 90/414/ECSC of 8 August 1990.

RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA

In accordance with the approach that Presidency representatives had made to the central Government and at the same time to the governments of the various republics, the Ministers confirmed the importance the Community attached to Yugoslavia's territorial unity and integrity, in full compliance with human rights.

The Twelve appealed urgently to all political leaders to respect this imperative of the unity of the Yugoslav nation. That appeal also called for the pursuit of the reforms embarked on to give Yugoslavia truly democratic structures at federal level and the continuation of the process begun for setting up market economy structures.

The Council was prepared, once that process was fully started, to consider (as had been the case with other East European countries) negotiations on the conclusion of an association agreement between the Community and Yugoslavia, thus allowing fuller integration of Yugoslavia into the European framework.

The Council invited the Commission to maintain close contact with the Yugoslav authorities in this area.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Medium-term assistance to Greece

The Council adopted the Decision concerning a Community loan in favour of the Hellenic Republic (see Press Release 4835/91 Presse 20 of 25 February 1991).

Anti-dumping

The Council:

- took note of the draft Commission Decision accepting undertakings offered by certain exporters under the anti-dumping proceeding concerning imports of certain types of electronic microcircuits known as EPROMs (Erasable Programmable Read Only Memories) originating in Japan and concluding the investigation of those exporters, and established that there was no majority within it in favour of deciding otherwise;
- adopted the Regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of certain types of erasable programmable read only memories known as EPROMs, originating in Japan.

This instrument imposes a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of certain types of electronic microcircuits known as EPROMs falling within CN codes ex 8542 11 10, ex 8542 11 30, 8542 11 63 or 8542 11 65 or 8542 11 66 and ex 8542 11 76, originating in Japan.

The rate of duty is fixed at 9% of the net free-at-Community-frontier price before duty.

The above products are exempt from duty provided they are manufactured and exported to the Community by the following companies, which have given undertakings that have been accepted by the Commission: Fujitsu Ltd., Hitachi Ltd., Mitsubishi Electric Corp., NEC Corp., Sharp Corp., Texas Instruments (Japan) Ltd. and Toshiba Corp.

This exemption also applies where the products manufactured by the above companies are exported to the Community by subsidiaries of those companies listed in an annex to the Regulation.

In addition, the Council adopted:

- the Regulation extending the provisional anti-dumping duty on imports of audio tapes in cassettes originating in Japan, the Republic of Korea and Hong Kong;
- the Regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of barium chloride originating in the People's Republic of China.

This Regulation imposes a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of barium chloride originating in the People's Republic of China and falling within CN code 2827 38 00.

The rate of duty is 25,8% of the net free-at-Community-frontier price before duty.

The Regulation will enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

The Council also noted the draft Commission Decision terminating the anti-dumping proceeding concerning imports of Atlantic salmon originating in Norway (without the imposition of an anti-dumping duty) and established that there was no qualified majority within the Council in favour of deciding otherwise.

Relations with Romania

The Council adopted the Decision concluding, on behalf of the European Economic Community, the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and Romania, of the other part, on trade and economic and commercial co-operation. That Agreement enters into force on 1 May 1991.

Relations with Chile

The Council adopted the Decision concerning the conclusion of the Framework Co-operation Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Chile.

Relations with the Mediterranean countries

The Council authorized the Commission to negotiate with Algeria, Morocco and Turkey the arrangements to apply in 1991 to imports of olive oil originating in those countries. The arrangements involve maintaining at their present level the additional amounts to be deducted from the levy applicable to imports into the Community of untreated olive oil originating in those countries.

Shipping

The Council adopted the Regulation on the transfer of ships from one register to another within the Community.

This Regulation should in particular help effectively to limit the costs of transferring ships within the Community. To achieve that, the Regulation is based on the principle of the mutual acceptance of Member States' interpretations of the technical specifications contained in certain international Conventions and makes provision for the mutual recognition of certificates of conformity issued by the Member States.

(See also Press Release 10872/90 Presse 233 of 17 and 18 December 1990.)

Environment

The Council adopted the Regulations:

- on action by the Community for the protection of the environment in the Mediterranean region (MEDSPA). This action covers the entire Community and non-Community Mediterranean region.

The objectives pursued by the Community action introduced by this Regulation are in particular to intensify efforts to protect and improve the quality of the environment and to increase the effectiveness of Community environmental policy and action in this region.

The amount considered necessary for the financing of this action for the first two years is ECU 25 million;

- on substances that deplete the ozone layer.

This Regulation, which replaces Regulation No 3322/88, imposes stricter controls, in the light of recent scientific information, on substances that deplete the ozone layer.

(See also Press Release 11030/90 Presse 240 of 20 and 21 December 1990.)



COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

4863/91 (Presse 26)

1475th meeting of the Council
- Agriculture -
Brussels, 4 March 1991

President: Mr René STEICHEN
Minister for Agriculture
of the Grand Duchy of
Luxembourg

4.111.91

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The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Paul de KEERSMAEKER

State Secretary for European Affairs
and Agriculture

Denmark:

Mr Laurits TOERNAES

Minister for Agriculture

Germany:

Mr Ignaz KIECHLE

Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture
and Forestry

Mr Walter KITTEL

State Secretary for Food,
Agriculture and Forestry

Greece:

Mr Michaelis PAPACONSTANTINO

Minister for Agriculture

Spain:

Mr Carlos ROMERO-HERRERA

Minister for Agriculture

France:

Mr Louis MERMAZ

Minister for Agriculture

Ireland:

Mr Michael O'KENNEDY

Minister for Agriculture and Food

4.III.91

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Italy:

Mr Vito SACCOMANDI Minister for Agriculture

Luxembourg:

Mr René STEICHEN Minister for Agriculture and
Viticulture

Netherlands:

Mr Piet BUKMAN Minister for Agriculture,
Nature Protection and
Fisheries

Portugal:

Mr Arlindo CUNHA Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

United Kingdom:

Mr John Selwyn GUMMER Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

Mr David CURRY Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture

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Commission:

Mr Ray MAC SHARRY Member

4.111.91

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URUGUAY ROUND: AGRICULTURAL ASPECTS

The Council heard a statement by Commissioner Mac Sharry on the current state of the negotiations on the agricultural aspects of the Uruguay Round.

At the close of an exchange of views in which delegations were able to re-state their main concerns as regards these negotiations, the Council:

- took note of the explanations supplied by Mr Mac Sharry on the Community's position following the conclusions presented by the Director-General of the GATT in Geneva;
- expressed satisfaction at the fact that the negotiations could be resumed at a normal pace;
- confirmed its support for the Commission in the conduct of further negotiations on the agricultural aspects on the basis of the offer defined by the Community;
- stressed the need to preserve the solidarity and unity of the Community position;
- hoped that, during the technical discussions which had opened in Geneva on 1 March 1991, the Commission would succeed in conveying the real scope of the Community offer more fully.

The Council will discuss this matter again at its meeting on 25 and 26 March 1991.

4.III.91

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FIXING OF PRICES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND RELATED MEASURES 1991/1992

The Council held an initial exchange of views on the Commission proposals on the fixing of prices for agricultural products and certain related measures for the marketing year 1991/1992, which the Commission had submitted with a view to containing agricultural expenditure and managing production pending a new orientation for the common agricultural policy.

This general debate gave the delegations the opportunity to state the initial reactions prompted by these proposals.

The Council instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to study the proposals in detail so as to enable the Council to continue its discussions at its next meeting on 25 and 26 March.

SETTING UP OF A MODEL SCHEME FOR INFORMATION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND AGRICULTURAL MARKETS (MIRIAM)

The Council examined the Commission proposal, notice of which had already been given in its communication entitled "Guidelines for rural development actions linked to the functioning of agricultural markets".

Following a pilot project developed in 1989 and 1990, the Commission is advocating the creation of new information centres throughout the Community in order to provide farmers with sufficient information to ensure that markets in agricultural products function efficiently.

To this end, the Commission is proposing:

- a financial contribution to the organizations hosting such centres, to help them cope with the starting-up costs and the first three years' running costs;
- the establishment of a central unit to supply the necessary information and documentation.

In the course of its discussions, the Council noted that certain differences still remained at the present time, particularly with regard to the financing of this project. It therefore instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to continue its discussions.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISION

Specific R&TD programme in the field of communication technologies (1990-1994)

The Council adopted a common position on the specific research and technological development programme in the field of communication technologies (1990-1994).

The funds estimated as necessary for the execution of the programme amount to ECU 484,11 million, including expenditure on staff and administration amounting to ECU 41 million ⁽¹⁾.

This new programme focuses on eight priority areas (including the provision of verification techniques and facilities) in which European collaboration between two or more telecommunications sector organizations is in the common interest.

The priority areas are:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| - IBC (Integrated Broadband Communications) R&D | ECU 111 million |
| - Intelligence in networks/Flexible communications resource management | ECU 43 million |
| - Mobile and personal communications | ECU 53 million |

(1) An amount of ECU 4,89 million, not included in the ECU 484,11 million, will be earmarked as the contribution from this specific programme to the centralized scheme for the dissemination and exploitation of results.

- Image and data communications	ECU 68,11 million
- Integrated services technologies	ECU 39 million
- Information security technologies	ECU 29 million
- Advanced communications experiments	ECU 121 million
- Test infrastructures and interworking (horizontal R&D area supporting the other priority areas)	<u>ECU 20 million</u>
TOTAL	ECU 484,11 million

Work carried out on each of these areas will be of three types; the work will cover: development of implementation strategies for IBC systems, services and applications; advanced communication technologies; and validation of standards and common functional specifications for IBC. It will involve the use of experimental equipment and services to address generic applications.

The Commission will be responsible for the implementation of the programme on the basis of the objectives and the scientific and technical content which it will draw up; it will be assisted in this task by a Committee composed of representatives of the Member States. The rules for implementing the programme comprise research and technological development projects, accompanying measures and concerted action projects.

The programme provides that the Commission may negotiate with the EFTA countries with a view to associating them with the whole programme and, insofar as framework agreements for scientific and technical co-operation exist with other European countries, bodies or enterprises established in those countries may be allowed to become partners in projects undertaken within the programme.

Other decisions in the area of agriculture

The Council adopted:

- a Directive amending Directive 74/63/EEC on the fixing of maximum permitted levels for undesirable substances and products in feedingstuffs. This amendment is concerned solely with changing the legal basis of the Directive (Article 43 instead of Articles 43 and 100 of the Treaty), following a judgment by the Court of Justice;
- a Decision amending Decision 90/424/EEC on expenditure in the veterinary field. The purpose of this amendment is to add to the list in the Annex to the above Decision. Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia has been added to this list, so that a Community financial contribution can be obtained for the implementation of programmes for the eradication of the disease;
- a Regulation concerning irregularities and the recovery of sums wrongly paid in connection with the financing of the common agricultural policy and the organization of an information system in this field and repealing Regulation No 283/72. The Regulation adopted, which provides among other things for an improvement of the information system between the Member States and the Commission in the area of irregularities, forms part of the measures proposed by the Commission to strengthen action against fraud and irregularities in the area of CAP financing;
- a Regulation amending Regulation No 458/80 on collective projects for the restructuring of vineyards. The purpose of this amendment is to enable the transfer of Community aid granted to collective restructuring projects which

- have been only partially completed to other projects aimed at improving the quality and limiting the yield of the restructured vineyard, thereby ensuring a better response to demand trends.

Finally, the Council adopted:

- an estimate concerning young male bovine animals weighing 300 kilograms or less and intended for fattening for the period 1 January to 31 December 1991 (198 000 head);
- an estimate concerning beef and veal intended for the processing industry for the period 1 January to 31 December 1991 (nil).

Environment

The Council adopted a common position on a new proposal for a Directive on measures to be taken against air pollution by motor vehicles, aimed at consolidating Community rules on emissions of air pollutants from private cars.

To this end:

- the following limit values will be applied:

= "type-approval" values:

CO: 2,72 g/km

HC + NO_x: 0,97 g/km

particles (diesel engine): 0,14 g/km

these value will come into force:

= on 1 July 1992 for new types of car;

= on 31 December 1992 for all new cars

It is also stipulated that the Council will decide before 31 December 1993, taking into account technical progress, on a further reduction in limit values. Those reduced limit values will not apply before 1 January 1996 for type-approvals; however, the reduced values may serve as a basis for tax incentives as from the date of adoption of the new Directive.

(See Environment Council Press Release - 20/21.XII.90 - No 11030/90 Presse 240).



COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

5198/91 (Presse 33)

1476th meeting of the Council
- Economic and Financial Affairs -

4th Ministerial Meeting of the IGC on EMU

Brussels, 18 March 1991

President: Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER

Minister for Finance
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

18.111.91

hip/AH/bzb

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Philippe MAYSTADT Minister for Finance

Denmark:

Mr Anders FOGH RASMUSSEN Minister for Economic Affairs

Mr Jens THOMSEN State Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Germany:

Mr Theo WAIGEL Federal Minister for Finance

Mr Horst KÖHLER State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs

Greece:

Mr Eythymios CHRISTODOULOU Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs

Spain:

Mr Carlos SOLCHAGA CATALAN Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance

France:

Mr Pierre BEREGOVYOV Ministre d'Etat, Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs and the Budget

Mrs Elisabeth GUIGOU Minister for European Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Noel TREACY Minister of State, Department of Justice

Italy:

Mr Guido CARLI Minister for the Treasury

Mr Rino FORMICA Minister for Finance

Mr Emilio RUBBI State Secretary for the Treasury

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Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER

Minister for Finance

Mr Robert GOEBBELS

Minister for Economic Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr W. KOK

Minister for Finance

Mr Marius van AMELSVOORT

State Secretary for Finance

Portugal:

Mr Miguel BELEZA

Minister for Finance

Mr Carlos TAVARES

State Secretary, Treasury

Mr José de OLIVEIRA COSTA

State Secretary for Fiscal Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Francis MAUDE

Financial Secretary to the Treasury

Mrs Gillian Shepherd

Minister of State at the Treasury

Commission:

Mr Jacques DELORS

President

Mr Henning CHRISTOPHERSEN

Vice-President

Mr Peter SCHMIDHUBER

Member

Mrs Christiane SCRIVENER

Member

18.111.91

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4TH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON EMU

After hearing a progress report on EMU monetary policy from the Chairman of the Working Party of Personal Representatives, the Ministers examined questions concerning external monetary policy and the organization of the European Central Bank.

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ABOLITION OF FISCAL FRONTIERS

- Progress report

The Council first heard a report from the Presidency on progress made with fiscal harmonization since December, the text of which is given in the Annex.

- Conclusions of the Council in respect of VAT

Following up its instructions from the European Council in Rome and on the basis of the Commission proposals, the ECOFIN Council proposes to supplement its previous conclusions on a number of priority aspects relating to VAT. The ad hoc Working Party's discussions have led the Council to adopt the following arrangements which will enable progress to be made both in the legal definition of the transitional VAT arrangements and in the search for an overall solution to the problem of approximation of rates and classification of products.

1. Definition of special arrangements

Given the stage reached in the proceedings and the urgent need to back up the general provisions of the transitional VAT arrangements with legal texts governing the special arrangements, the Council proposes to supplement its guidelines of 3 December 1990, thus formalizing the detailed procedures for implementing the principles which the Council adopted in the context of its conclusions of 13 November 1989.

The Council considers that the introduction of the three special arrangements as described below under the transitional VAT arrangements should prevent most distortion of competition without hampering the free

movement of goods or imposing disproportionate burdens on undertakings or tax authorities.

1.1. Distance selling

Intra-Community distance sales to recipients who are either private individuals or else institutional non-taxable persons or exempt taxable persons whose purchases do not exceed the threshold set out at 1.3. will be subject to the tax arrangements of the countries of destination.

Distance selling will be defined according to whether the vendor is responsible for the carriage of goods, i.e. the sale is made on the basis that the goods are delivered to the purchaser residing in a Member State other than that whence the goods came. The goods supplied should not be new vehicles as listed at 1.2.

The distance sale arrangements will apply where the annual amount of distance sales made by the vendor to one particular Member State exceeds a level to be set by the Council as part of its overall decision on the level of rates. If the annual amount of sales to one Member State does not exceed this threshold, the vendor will supply his goods at the rate applicable in the country of origin. He will, however, be able to opt for application of the special arrangements even if the above threshold is not reached.

1.2. New vehicles

Intra-Community supplies of new vehicles will cause tax to be levied in the Member State of consumption if the purchaser is either an individual or an institutional non-taxable person or an exempt taxable person whose purchases do not exceed the threshold set at 1.3. in the year in question.

These arrangements will apply to all sales of boats, aircraft and motorized land vehicles, regardless of the criterion requiring vehicles to be registered in the Member State of arrival. Where vehicles are not required to be registered in the Member State of arrival, the detailed rules will need to be established for the levying of the tax and its control.

A new vehicle will be defined as any vehicle which is part of the vendor's stock and which has not yet been adapted by a final consumer for his own purposes. The condition of adaptation by the final consumer for his own purposes will be deemed to be fulfilled provided all the following criteria are met:

- documentary evidence of the sale will need to be constituted by the invoicing, delivery and, whenever registration is required, registration of the vehicle;
- the duration of actual possession should be longer than three months;
- the vehicle will have to have covered a minimum distance (3 000 km for motorized land vehicles).

The special arrangements will apply only to sales made by taxable persons. However, the Member States will take the necessary measures so that sales made by individuals can be assimilated to sales made by taxable persons in cases where the condition of adaptation for the consumer's own purposes has not been fulfilled. The Member State of origin will also have to take the measures necessary to preclude any double taxation.

1.3. Non-taxable persons and exempt taxable persons

The mechanism for taxing intra-Community transactions between taxable persons in the country of destination will be extended to cover purchases of goods by institutional non-taxable persons and exempt taxable persons where in the year in question such purchases exceeded a threshold to be set by each Member State.

Based on the amounts adopted for the 22nd VAT Directive, this threshold will be fixed at a level to ensure that small undertakings are not obliged to declare intra-Community purchases while being exempt from declaring their sales.

Even when the threshold set by the Member State is not reached, the institutional non-taxable person or the exempt taxable person will nonetheless be able to opt for taxation in the country of destination.

2. Approximation of rates and classification of products

The taxation of intra-Community trade in the country of destination and the establishment of the special arrangements described above should enable most distortion of competition to be avoided. The Council has accordingly decided to specify in more detail below the conclusions of 18 December 1989 as regards the approximation of rates and classification of products.

2.1. Approximation of rates

Member States will have the option of applying, alongside the normal rate, one or two reduced rates which will perforce be set below the lower threshold of the band or below the minimum normal rate to be set at Community level.

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The levels of such optional reduced rates should moreover be no less than the minimum rate applicable at 1 January 1993 to be adopted by the Council within the Commission's proposed limits for the reduced rate. It should furthermore be set in compliance with Article 12(4) of the 6th VAT Directive, namely in such a way that the amount of the VAT resulting from application of this rate would normally allow the input tax to be deducted.

The Council will express a view by 30 June 1991 on the level of both the reduced and the normal rates in the light of the progress made in approximating excise duties, on the understanding that it is still free to choose between a band and a minimum rate.

At the same time the Council will express its view on the possibility for Member States to apply, under the transitional arrangements, VAT rates below the minimum to be set for the reduced rate. In addition, the Council will express its view on the possibility of providing, under the transitional arrangements, for a reduction of the normal rate by a few percentage points for products enjoying a reduced rate in certain Member States and which should be made subject again to the normal rate.

2.2. Scope of the reduced rate

An exhaustive list of goods and services to which Member States may apply a reduced rate will be drawn up at Community level. Broadly speaking, this list will comprise essential products and also goods and services which correspond to social or cultural policy objectives, provided the products concerned are ones for which there is a limited or zero risk of distortion of competition.

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The widest discretionary scope of the reduced rate will be strictly defined on the basis of the following list of products and services, on the understanding that its scope will have to be defined more accurately:

- foodstuffs for human and animal consumption (excluding alcoholic beverages);
- water supplies;
- pharmaceutical products;
- medical equipment for the disabled;
- passenger transport;
- books, newspapers and periodicals;
- admissions to shows, theatres, circuses, fairs, concerts, museums, zoos, cinemas, exhibitions, libraries and access to television;
- the output of writers, composers, performers etc. and copyright;
- social housing;
- farm inputs;
- hotel accommodation;
- hire of camping sites;
- admission to sporting events;
- use of sporting facilities;
- welfare and charitable activities;
- funeral undertakings, cremation;
- medical care in hospitals, spas, etc., dental services;
- street cleaning, refuse collection.

It will be possible to classify energy products for heating and lighting only in the light of the choices made in respect of excise duties.

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- Travellers' allowances

The Council reached agreement on an increase in value limits on intra-Community travellers' allowances

- for travellers aged 15 years and over: ECU 600 as from 1 July 1991, instead of ECU 390. However, for Denmark and Greece within that limit, a unit allowance of ECU 340 has been fixed, and for Ireland ECU 95;
- for travellers aged under 15 years: ECU 150 as from 1 July 1991, with a unit allowance of ECU 95 for Ireland.

The Council also approved two derogations for Denmark and Ireland, which will enter into force as soon as possible after formal adoption of the act.

These derogations, which will last for 1991 only, are mainly for purchases by travellers who have been out of their countries for a very short period, since that is when the most important delocalization risks occur. The limits applicable to duty-free imports will be as follows:

- Denmark:

travellers who have been out of Denmark for less than 36 hours (instead of 48 hours up to 1991)

- cigarettes: 100 pieces (80 up to 1991)
- smoking tobacco: no limit
- alcohol: 0 (same level as applicable up to 1991)
- beer: 12 litres;

- Ireland:

travellers who have been out of Ireland for less than 24 hours

- limit value of ECU 110
- cigarettes: 150 pieces
- smoking tobacco: 200 grammes
- alcohol: 0,75 litres (wine: 2,5 litres and wine products: 1,5 litres)
- beer: 12 litres

Other travellers

- beer: 25 litres.

MEASURES FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The Council agreed in principle to grant Bulgaria medium-term financial assistance up to a maximum amount of ECU 290 000, provided that an equal total amount was provided by the other G24 countries and if possible by other third countries.

The Council decided that this aid would not be released until

- a stand-by agreement was concluded between Bulgaria and the IMF;
- an agreement on the rescheduling of the official debt was concluded between Bulgaria and its Paris Club creditors;
- a moratorium agreement on the servicing of the trade debt was concluded between Bulgaria and creditor commercial banks.

The Council also requested the Commission to submit a formal proposal for a Decision on medium-term financial assistance for Romania.

Finally, the Council made a general appeal to non-Community countries of the G24 and other third countries to contribute to the indispensable efforts to assist the countries of Central and Eastern Europe with their economic and political reforms.

ANNUAL ECONOMIC REPORT

The Council took note of the Commission's intention to submit a revised draft of the annual economic report by May and in particular of Section I, which described the short-term outlook.

The Vice-President, Mr CHRISTOPHERSEN, said that this adjustment of the Commission's draft report had become necessary in order to take account of the way circumstances had changed since it was first drawn up, in particular as a result of the events in the Gulf.

The Council agreed to include adoption of the annual economic report on the agenda for its meeting in July.

BUDGETARY PROBLEMS

- 1989 Report from the Court of Auditors and discharge to be given to the Commission in respect of that financial year

The Council heard an account by Mr Aldo ANGIOI, President of the Court of Auditors, of the main points in the Court's annual report concerning implementation of the general budget of the European Communities for the financial year 1989.

After the exchange of views which followed Mr ANGIOI's statement, the President of the Council thanked the Court of Auditors and its President for their extremely important contribution in monitoring the management of Community public funds.

The Council then went on to adopt the Recommendation to the European Parliament on the discharge to be given to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Communities for the financial year 1989.

- Proposal for an amendment to a financial perspective

The Council adopted a guideline concerning revision of the financial perspective for technical assistance to the USSR and financial assistance for Israel and the Occupied Territories.

The Council instructed its President to submit this Council position to the other branch of the budget authority with a view to reaching agreement on that basis.

- Draft supplementary and amending budget No 1/91

The Council prepared draft supplementary and amending budget No 1/91.

Regarding expenditure, the draft contains the following main points:

- an overall increase in the administrative appropriations in the general budget of the European Communities for 1991, involving ECU 29 million;
- inclusion of guarantees for three new borrowing and lending operations:
 - = extension of the guarantee for EIB loans to loans made to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania;
 - = credit guarantee for exports of Community agricultural products and foodstuffs to the USSR;
 - = guarantee for a borrowing contracted to provide medium-term financial assistance to the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.

On the revenue side, the draft provides inter alia for the updating from ECU 1 370 million to ECU 2 000 million, the estimated balance for 1990 to be entered in the 1991 budget, and for adjusting the 1990 compensation for budget imbalances from ECU 3 344 million to ECU 3 538 million.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Relations with the countries of Latin America

The Council adopted directives to the Commission for the negotiation of framework agreements for co-operation

- between the EEC and Paraguay
- between the EEC and Uruguay.

Commodities

The Council adopted the Decision on the notification of application by the Community of the 1989 International Agreement on Jute and Jute Products.

Relations with the EFTA countries

The Council adopted

- The Regulation applying Decision No 1/90 of the EEC-EFTA Joint Committee on Common Transit amending Appendices I and II (concerning the obligation for the carrier to give a transit advice note at offices of transit and the provisions peculiar to common transit procedures for the carriage of goods by rail) to the Convention of 20 May 1987 on a common transit procedure.
- The Decision on the conclusion of an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the EEC and Austria concerning the marketing, in Austrian territory, of Community table wines and local wines in bottles.

Customs union

The Council adopted the Regulation opening and providing for the administration of Community tariff quotas for certain industrial products (1991). This Regulation suspends at the 0 level the duties applicable to imports of certain cathode-ray tubes (ex 8540 30 10) for an amount of 300 000 pieces, of antimony ingots (ex 8110 00 11) for an amount of 3 750 tonnes and of hard-disk storage units of 3,5 inches (ex 8471 93 50) for an amount of 250 000 pieces.

Energy

The Council adopted the Directive revoking Directive 75/404/EEC on the restriction of the use of natural gas in power stations.

When the original Directive was adopted, gas reserves were considered to be of an insufficient level with regard to the security of supplies of this source of energy. Since then, the situation has changed so that, in view of current developments on the gas market, it is no longer necessary to maintain the prescribed restriction.

Appointments

The Council replaced (for the remainder of their terms of office)

- an alternate member of the Advisory Committee on the Training of Dental Practitioners

- one member and two alternate members of the Administrative Board of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

ANNEX

ABOLITION OF FISCAL FRONTIERS

- Presidency progress report

1. At its meetings on 3 and 17 December 1990 the ECOFIN Council approved conclusions both on transitional VAT arrangements and on the rules for the movement and control of products subject to excise duty.

On the basis of those conclusions the Working Party on Financial Questions has since been endeavouring to transpose the conclusions into legal texts, using a text prepared by the Presidency.

2. The Working Party's discussions on the VAT section of the conclusions began in early January this year. Progress has been made on the definition of "intra-Community acquisition of goods" and on the "transfers" problem (movements of goods not put up for sale).

Other provisions relating to the transitional VAT arrangements still require more detailed examination. The fiscal treatment of intra-Community road haulage services, services ancillary to the transport of goods, exemptions, the chargeability of tax, the taxable amount of the acquisition, the right of deduction and the persons liable for payment of tax in particular will have to be settled in this context. As regards the obligations of persons liable in terms of declarations, the Presidency will shortly be submitting to delegations a preliminary text which will be used as a basis for discussion.

3. The Working Party's discussions on the excise duty aspects of the conclusions were unable to begin until early March owing to the need for lengthy preparatory work and the complex nature of the subject.

4. The Working Party on Financial Questions will continue its discussions on both VAT and excise duty at a sustained pace with a view to finishing its work in time for the ECONFIN Council meeting in June.
5. In parallel with those proceedings the ad hoc Working Party on the Abolition of Fiscal Frontiers, in line with the brief from the Rome European Council, has re-opened discussions on certain more political aspects of the VAT dossier. In particular it has examined in detail the aspect of rates and the definition of the special arrangements laid down under the transitional VAT arrangements. The Council has not yet adopted a position on those points.

In the light of the proceedings of the ad hoc Working Party, the Presidency has prepared draft conclusions (5127/91 FISC 29) which the ECOFIN Council on 18 March should discuss.

6. Lastly, pursuant to the brief from the Rome European Council on road-transport taxation, the ad hoc Working Party has begun discussing the approximation of the levels of excise duty on diesel, while expanding the discussion to other aspects of the problem, namely motor vehicle taxes and tolls. The Presidency recently submitted draft Council conclusions to the ad hoc Working Party (5114/91 FISC 28 TRANS 38). Provided that the ad hoc Working Party's examination of the draft conclusions progresses satisfactorily, it should be possible, under normal circumstances, for this item to be placed on the agenda for the TRANSPORT Council on 27 March and on the agenda for the ECOFIN Council on 8 April, with a view to producing legislative texts for adoption by 31 December 1991.

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

5199/91 (Presse 34)

1477th Council meeting

- Environment -

Brussels, 18 and 19 March 1991

President: Mr Alex BODRY,
Minister for the Environment
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

18/19.III.1991
i11/AH/hmcg

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium

Mrs Miet SMET State Secretary for the Environment

Denmark

Mr Pir Stig MØLLER Minister for the Environment
Mr Leo BJØRNESKOV State Secretary for the Environment

Germany

Mr Klaus TOEPFER Federal Minister for the Environment,
Nature Conservation and Reactor Safety

Greece

Mr Stephanos MANOS Minister for the Environment,
Regional Planning and Public Works

Spain

Mr José BORRELL Minister for Infrastructures

France

Mr Brice LALONDE State Secretary for the Environment

Ireland

Mrs Mary HARNEY Minister of State for the Environment

Italy

Mr Giorgio RUFFOLO Minister for the Environment

Luxembourg

Mr Alex BODRY

Minister for the Environment

Netherlands

Mr J.G.M. ALDERS

Minister for Housing, Planning and
the Environment

Portugal

Mr Fernando REAL

Minister for the Environment and
Natural Resources

Mr José MACARIO CORREIA

State Secretary for the Environment

United Kingdom

Mr Michael HESELTINE

Secretary of State for the Environment

Mr David TRIPPIER

Minister of State,
Department of the Environment (Minister
for the Environment and Countryside)

Commission

Mr Carlo RIPA DI MEANA

Member

MUNICIPAL WASTE WATER

The Council adopted a Directive concerning municipal waste water treatment.

The Directive adopts rules for the collection, treatment and discharge of municipal waste water and biodegradable water from certain industrial sectors, and for the discharge of sludge; these stipulations vary according to the characteristics of the receiving waters and the size of the conurbations concerned.

In particular, the Directive lays down that, as a general rule, waste water entering the collecting system must be subjected to secondary treatment before being discharged, in accordance with a timetable which will vary depending on the size of the population and the type and location of the receiving waters (between the years 2000 and 2005).

However, more stringent treatment must be applied at an earlier date to waste waters discharged into sensitive areas where the population exceeds a certain threshold (equivalent of 10 000 inhabitants). Sensitive areas are to be identified by the Member States on the basis of particular criteria.

Conversely, the Member States may apply less stringent treatment to waste waters discharged in less sensitive areas identified on the basis of particular criteria. This possibility will apply when the population is below a given threshold (150 000 p.e in the case of coastal waters, 10 000 p.e. in the case of estuaries), and under certain conditions.

Duly justified derogations (to the timetable and the population threshold, in particular) may be granted in exceptional cases.

The Member States must ensure that situation reports concerning the discharging of municipal waste water and sludge in their sector are published.

DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES: CLASSIFICATION, PACKAGING, LABELLING

The Council reached substantive agreement with a view to adopting a common position on the seventh amendment to Directive 67/548/EEC ⁽¹⁾.

The purpose of this proposal for an amendment is to rectify certain anomalies which have appeared since the previous amendment and to implement this Directive more efficiently. The proposal lays down in particular:

- the supply of information and extra tests in certain circumstances
- the introduction of a simplified, harmonized notification procedure in the case of substances placed on the market in quantities of less than 1 tonne per year
- the setting up of a procedure to avoid duplication of tests on animals
- the adaptation of all the annexes to technical progress by means of a committee procedure
- the working out of common principles for assessing risks associated with substances

(1) The purpose of Directive 67/548 is to approximate the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances.

- the introduction of a safety data sheet

- the extension of the application of the safeguard clause.

In order better to control the export of dangerous products to developing countries, the Council will ask the Commission to submit proposals to it; which the Commission undertakes to do. The following would be amended:

- (a) Regulation 1734/88 concerning export from and import into the Community of certain dangerous chemicals

 - (b) Directive 82/501/EEC on the major accident hazards of certain industrial activities
- animals: the Commission will submit proposals for reducing the number of animals used experimentally for the products covered by the Directive.

POLLUTION BY COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

The Council reached substantive agreement on a common position amending the 1987 Directive on the reduction of pollutant emissions from diesel engines for use in commercial vehicles.

The purpose of the common position is to apply a two stage further reduction in the limit values for emissions by commercial vehicles of the three types of gaseous pollutants (carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides) and to introduce the control of particulate emissions by such vehicles.

The values adopted are as follows:

- First stage

CO : 4,5 g/kWh
HC : 1,1 g/kWh
NoX : 8,0 g/kWh
particulates : 0,36 g/kWh

- Second stage

CO : 4,0 g/kWh
HC : 1,1 g/kWh
NoX : 7,0 g/kWh
particulates : 0,15 g/kWh

Dates for entry into force are as follows:

- First stage for new types: 1 July 1992
- Second stage for new types: 1 October 1995
- First stage for entry into service: 1 October 1993
- Second stage for entry into service: 1 October 1996

In order to comply with the Directive it is planned that before April 1991 the Commission will submit a proposal to ensure the availability in the Member States of improved diesel fuel with a maximum permitted sulphur content of 0,05%.

From the date of publication of the Directive until the compulsory entry into force of the emission values, Member States will be able to plan tax incentives for vehicles referred to by this Directive.

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ery/AH/mh

ECO-LABEL

The Council held a policy debate on a proposal for a Regulation on a Community award scheme for an Eco-label, on which the Opinions of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee are awaited.

This proposal for a Regulation plans the setting-up of a Community system for awarding an Eco-label to promote products which are best for the environment. This system should encourage manufacturers to design and produce products with minimal effect on the environment throughout their manufacture, distribution, consumption and use and when being disposed of after use.

The most important questions raised were:

- whether the new system should co-exist with national systems,
- how the label should be awarded.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue work in the light of today's discussions, with a view to adopting the provisions as soon as possible.

SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF SHIPMENTS OF WASTE

The Council held an exchange of views on a proposal for a Regulation on the supervision and control of shipments of waste within, into and out of the European Community; the Opinions of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee are awaited.

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ery/AH/mh

The Council concentrated on two essential issues:

- the principle of banning exports of waste from the Community
- the principle of self-sufficiency in waste disposal.

It is pointed out that the Council today adopted the strengthening of the Framework Directive on waste. At its meeting on 7 May 1990, the Council adopted a Resolution on the Community's general strategies for dealing with waste.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its discussions to allow the Council to resume work on this file at its next meeting in June.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS OF EXISTING SUBSTANCES

The Council held an exchange of views on a proposal for a Regulation on the evaluation and control of the environmental risks of existing substances, on which the Opinion of the European Parliament is awaited.

The aim of this proposal, which was introduced pursuant to the Fourth Community Action Programme on the Environment (1987-1992), is to ensure, on the basis of information collected, appropriate evaluation and control of the risk of existing substances to man and the environment.

18/19.III.1991

ill/AH/mh

LIFE - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

ACNAT

The Council held a preliminary exchange of views on:

- a proposal for a Regulation establishing a financial instrument for the environment (LIFE); here the Opinions of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee are awaited;
- a proposal for a Regulation on action by the Community relating to nature conservation (ACNAT).

LIFE

The purpose of the proposal on LIFE, which ensues in particular from the invitation from the European Council meeting on 25 and 26 June 1990, is to establish a financial instrument for the environment (LIFE) which will ensure a coherent framework for financing and will be better adjusted in terms of Community environmental action while complying with the polluter pays principle and the principle of subsidiarity.

The proposal also provides for the other existing or prospective instruments for environmental protection, such as ACE, MEDSPA, ACNAT and NORSPA, to be incorporated into the new financial instrument (LIFE).

ACNAT

The proposal on ACNAT provides for the possibility of granting financial support for incentive projects directed towards contributing to the maintenance or restoration of biotopes containing endangered species or seriously threatened habitats of special importance to the Community or the implementation of measures for the conservation or restoration of endangered

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species, pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC (on wild birds) or of the future Directive on the protection of natural and semi-natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

A reminder is given that the ACE Regulation - actions by the Community relating to the environment - expires on 30 July 1991.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to expedite its proceedings with a view to the early adoption of the ACNAT and NORSPA proposals.

The Council also invited the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue in parallel its examination of the LIFE proposal.

PROTECTION OF HABITATS

The Council held a policy debate on the key points of a proposal for a Directive on the protection of natural and semi-natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

The proposal is designed to establish a coherent Community policy on wildlife protection, taking as its starting point existing Community legislation (Directive on wild birds) and relevant international agreements (e.g. Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Habitats). To that end the proposal provides for the creation of a network of protected areas aimed at conserving vulnerable species and habitats.

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The Council noted that there were still differences of opinion concerning in particular the detailed financing procedures envisaged in the proposal and competence to designate the areas to be protected.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to resolve the problems outstanding so as to enable the Council to resume its examination of the issue at its next meeting.

COMBATING POLLUTION IN THE GULF - COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

Following talks with Bahrain's Minister for Health, Mr JIAWAD SALIN AL ARRAYYED, who is also Secretary of the Gulf Regional Organisation for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), the Council, at its meeting on 18 March 1991, held a broad exchange of views on combating pollution in the Gulf and its consequences for human health and ecosystems.

It paid tribute to the emergency efforts already undertaken by the Member States and various international organizations, in particular the WHO, the UNEP and the IMO.

It also emphasized the need, in co-operation with the States of the region, for a coherent and effective international response capable both of continuing with emergency action in the immediate future and of dealing with longer-term problems.

With regard to Community action as such, it noted with interest a Commission report on initiatives undertaken in the region, in particular by the Task Force on Pollution at Sea.

After considering the worsening of the environmental situation, the Council asked the Commission, as part of a coherent international response and in close co-operation with the international organizations concerned, to pursue these

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initiatives and to undertake further ones in order to step up Community support to the authorities in the region in charge of operations to recover the spilled hydrocarbons. It also called on the Commission to examine possibilities for co-ordinating the potential assistance available within European industry for extinguishing the burning oil wells and for protecting both the health of the population and the ecosystems. In addition, the Council emphasized the need to assist the Gulf States to identify measures which could help to restore the affected ecosystems in the medium and long term.

The Council invited the Commission to work closely with the Member states with a view to reinforcing the co-ordination of efforts to deal with the ecological problems in the Gulf.

Lastly, the Council noted that the Commission would consider the possibility of widening the type of assistance deployed by the Task Force on Pollution at Sea to cover other types of ecological disasters as well, and submit specific proposals as part of the strengthening of Community co-operation in this area, taking account of related initiatives by other internal organizations.

OTHER DECISIONS ON ENVIRONMENT

STRENGTHENING OF DIRECTIVE 75/422 ON WASTE

The Council adopted an amendment strengthening Directive 75/442/EEC on waste, which will now become a Framework Directive.

This Directive is part of the overall Community strategy on waste, which is the subject of the Resolution adopted by the Council on 7 May 1990.

The purpose of the new provisions is mainly to:

- establish an integrated and adequate network of waste disposal installations which, on the one hand, should enable the Community as a whole to become self-sufficient in waste disposal and, on the other, limit the hazards of shipments of waste by promoting the disposal of waste in an appropriate installation close to the production site
- strengthen certain priorities, notably the promotion of clean technologies and recyclable and re-usable products
- improve the definitions of, in particular, the terms "waste" and "disposal", in order to ensure better harmonization of waste management
- introduce a procedure for adapting the Annexes to the Directive to technical progress.

Dangerous accumulators and batteries

The Council adopted a Directive on batteries and accumulators containing certain dangerous substances.

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This Directive will set out to encourage recycling or controlled disposal of used batteries containing dangerous substances. It also aims to encourage the placing on the market of batteries with a low content of heavy metals and other dangerous and/or polluting substances.

The Directive lays down in particular:

- a ban, except for certain very limited exemptions, on manganese alkaline batteries containing more than 0,025% of mercury by weight
- marking of batteries and accumulators with information concerning separate collection, and if necessary recycling and the heavy metal content
- that, with the exception of certain very specific cases, batteries and accumulators may be fitted into appliances only on condition that they can easily be removed by the consumer after use
- procedures for adapting the Directive to technical progress.

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

5200/91 (Presse 35)

1478th Council meeting

- INTERNAL MARKET -

Brussels, 21 March 1991

President : Mr Georges WOHLFART,
State Secretary
for Foreign Affairs
and Foreign Trade
of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Paul DE KEERSMAEKER State Secretary for European Affairs

Denmark:

Ms Anne-Brigitte LUNDHOLT Minister for Industry

Germany:

Mr Otto SCHLECHT State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs

Greece:

Mr G. THEOPHANOUS Secretary-General, Ministry of Trade

Spain:

Mr Carlos WESTENDORP State Secretary for Relations with the European Communities

France:

Mr Jean CADET Deputy Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Terry LEYDEN Minister of State at the Department of Industry and Commerce with special responsibility for Trade and Marketing

Italy:

Mr Pierluigi ROMITA Minister for Community Policies

Luxembourg:

Mr Georges WOHLFART State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

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Netherlands:

Mr Piet DANKERT

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Vitor MARTINS

State Secretary for European
Integration

United Kingdom:

Mr John REDWOOD

Minister of State, Department of Trade
and Industry (Minister for Corporate
Affairs)

Commission:

Mr. Martin BANGEMANN
Mr Bruce MILLAN

Vice-President
Member

VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS (MATTHAEUS)

The Council adopted by a qualified majority a common position concerning the Decision on the adoption of a programme of Community action on the subject of the vocational training of customs officials (MATTHAEUS).

This proposal for a Decision is among the projects initiated in the framework of measures to strengthen the customs union in the context of the setting up of the internal market. By providing in particular for exchanges of customs officials and for training seminars, the MATTHAEUS Programme is designed to ensure that Community customs regulations are uniformly applied at the Community's external borders.

The programme is a follow-up to the pilot project involving exchanges of officials which was introduced by the Commission in 1990 and in which 578 customs officials took part.

MATTHAEUS will provide for 1 200 exchanges of officials in the period between now and the end of 1993 and will constitute a first step towards the creation of a European customs structure within which officials will be interchangeable.

TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS

The Council held a detailed discussion of a draft Resolution adopting the action programme on trans-European networks.

The Council paid particular attention to two aspects of the draft Resolution, vocational training networks and financing.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examining the matter in the light of this discussion to enable the Council to return to it at its next meeting in May.

It will be remembered that the Council adopted a Resolution on trans-European networks in January 1990, the Commission having in December 1990 forwarded a communication containing a programme for the establishment of the major trans-European networks.

BAN ON THE USE OF PENTACHLOROPHENOL (PCP)

The Council adopted by a qualified majority a ninth amendment to Directive 76/769/EEC banning in principle the marketing of pentachlorophenol, although four exceptions are made for specific uses. These exceptions are to be re-examined not more than three years after the implementation of the Directive.

Four delegations considered it necessary to apply national provisions totally banning the use of PCP and therefore invoked Article 100a(4) of the Treaty.

EEC-SWITZERLAND AGREEMENT (Insurance)

The Council adopted three common positions on a Decision, a Directive and a Regulation concerning an Agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the European Economic Community on direct insurance other than life assurance.

Overall agreement was reached on the text of the Agreement and on the three Community instruments in September 1989 and the Agreement was signed, subject to approval, in Luxembourg on 10 October 1989.

All three of the Community instruments are based on Article 57 and two of them on Article 235 also. The procedure for consulting the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee has therefore been initiated, on the understanding that the Opinion delivered by the European Parliament will also constitute the first phase of the co-operation procedure.

GREEN PAPER ON STANDARDIZATION

The Council held an exchange of views on the Commission's green paper on the development of European standardization: Action for faster technological integration in Europe.

The Commission sent the Council this green paper in early October 1990. The paper was very widely circulated, in particular to the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the professional circles concerned.

The Commission announced that on the basis of the outcome of the consultations it would be submitting a further communication to the Council before the summer.

The green paper, which is a consultative document, suggests widening the framework for European standardization while at the same time making institutional changes and adjustments to improve productivity and speed.



MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Customs union

The Council adopted Regulations:

- on the single administrative document. The purpose of this Regulation is to adapt the existing regulations concerning the single administrative document to meet the needs of the area without internal frontiers due to be established on 1 January 1993. Its main function is to abolish Regulations Nos 678/85, 679/85 and 1900/85, while reintroducing in a new Council act those provisions of Regulation No 1900/85 that remain valid;
- amending Regulation No 3/84 introducing arrangements for movement within the Community of goods sent from one Member State for temporary use in one or more other Member States by:
 - = repealing the Regulation as from 1 January 1993, on which date it will become superfluous;
 - = extending it to cover carpets that constitute commercial samples and to unaccompanied works of art;
- on the use in the Community of TIR and ATA carnets as transit documents;
- amending Regulation No 2763/83 on arrangements permitting goods to be processed under customs control before being put into free circulation. The purpose of this amendment is to facilitate management of the arrangements. The Council delegates to the Commission the responsibility for establishing the list of goods qualifying for the arrangements. The Commission may also adopt any implementing provisions required.

The Council adopted a common position with a view to adopting a Council Directive amending Directive 83/643/EEC of 1 December 1983 on the facilitation of physical inspections and administrative formalities in respect of the carriage of goods between Member States. The amendment stipulates that

- Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that in the course of any carriage operation the various inspections and formalities are carried out with the minimum of delay necessary and
 - = as far as possible, in one place, preferably the place of departure and/or destination of the goods;
 - = with the inspections being carried out by means of spot checks, except in duly justified circumstances;
- the minimum business hours of major inspection offices inside Member States are to be extended in order to facilitate the completion of controls and formalities at the place of departure or destination of goods.

Fisheries - EEC-Morocco relations

The Council adopted a Regulation on the conclusion of Protocol No 2 establishing, for the period 1 April 1990 to 31 March 1991, the crawfish fishing opportunities and corresponding financial compensation provided for in the Agreement on relations in the sea fisheries sector between the European Economic Community and the Kingdom of Morocco.

Relations with Mediterranean countries

The Council:

- approved the Agreement in the form of Exchanges of Letters negotiated by the Commission with Algeria, Morocco and Turkey on untreated olive oil, and decided to sign these Agreements maintaining until 31 December 1991 the additional amounts to be deducted from the levy on imports into the Community of unprocessed olive oil originating in those three countries;
 - adopted the Decisions on the conclusion of these Agreements and the Regulations implementing them.
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COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

5393/91 (Presse 38)

1479th meeting of the Council
- Agriculture -
Brussels, 25 and 26 March 1991

President:

Mr René STEICHEN

Minister for Agriculture
of the Grand Duchy of
Luxembourg

25/26.III.91

vic/MI/ms

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Paul de KEERSMAEKER State Secretary for European Affairs
and Agriculture

Denmark:

Mr Laurits TOERNAES Minister for Agriculture

Germany:

Mr Ignaz KIECHLE Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture
and Forestry

Mr Walter KITTEL State Secretary for Food,
Agriculture and Forestry

Greece:

Mr Michaelis PAPACONSTANTINOU Minister for Agriculture

Spain:

Mr Pedro SOLBES MIRA Minister for Agriculture

France:

Mr Louis MERMAZ Minister for Agriculture

Ireland:

Mr Michael O'KENNEDY Minister for Agriculture and Food

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Italy:

Mr Vito SACCOMANDI Minister for Agriculture

Luxembourg:

Mr René STEICHEN Minister for Agriculture and
Viticulture

Netherlands:

Mr Piet BUKMAN Minister for Agriculture,
Nature Protection and
Fisheries

Portugal:

Mr Arlindo CUNHA Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

United Kingdom:

Mr John Selwyn GUMMER Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

Mr David CURRY Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture

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Commission:

Mr Ray MAC SHARRY Member

25/26.III.91

vic/MI/ms

PRICES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND RELATED MEASURES (1991-1992)

The Council continued its work on the fixing of agricultural prices and on related measures for the 1991-1992 marketing year.

The Council conducted a full examination of the Commission proposals in the course of its discussions over both days.

It began by holding a wide-ranging discussion over the proposed measures for the various product sectors.

The Council then examined the Commission agri-monetary proposals, which were made in the light of the disappearance of monetary gaps which was due to occur by 1 January 1993.

Lastly, the Council devoted its full attention to the general and budgetary circumstances in which the Commission had drawn up its proposals, bearing in mind the provisions on budgetary discipline.

The discussion on the proposals on the fixing of agricultural prices will be continued at the next meeting of the Council on 22, 23 and 24 April 1991.

In the meantime the Council extended until 28 April 1991 the current marketing years for milk and milk products and for beef and veal.

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URUGUAY ROUND: AGRICULTURAL ASPECTS

The Council took note of information from Mr MAC SHARRY, Member of the Commission, on the situation regarding the agricultural aspects of the Uruguay Round negotiations.

The Commission confirmed that these discussions were proceeding as far as the Community was concerned, within the overall approach which the latter had approved.

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MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Other decisions relating to the common agricultural policy

The Council adopted:

- the Regulation amending Regulation No 1424/76 as regards the conditions under which products may be sold for supply as food aid.

The purpose of this amendment is to apply to food aid in the form of rice, mobilized from intervention stocks, the same arrangements as those applicable to Community food aid for intervention cereals.

- the Directive laying down zootechnical and pedigree requirements for the marketing of pure-bred animals and amending Directives 77/504/EEC and 90/425/EEC.

The purpose of this Directive is to establish at Community level harmonized marketing rules with a view to completion of the internal market in respect of pure-bred animals, for which zootechnical requirements had not yet been covered by Community legislation.

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Fisheries

Following the conclusion of the consultations with Sweden and Norway on the fisheries arrangements in the Skagerrak and Kattegat for 1991, the Council fixed the Community shares available for those areas.

These shares are as follows:

- Herring - area IIIa - Belgium 44 070 tonnes
 Denmark 710 tonnes

- Sprat - area IIIa - Denmark 32 830 tonnes
 Germany 70 tonnes

- Deepwater prawns - zone IIIa (Skagerrak)
 Denmark 3 235 tonnes.

Research

The Council adopted the Decision concerning the conclusion of a co-operation agreement between the EEC and the Republic of Iceland on a programme plan to stimulate the international co-operation and interchange needed by European research scientists (SCIENCE).

This agreement, like those already concluded with Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, associates Iceland with the implementation of the Stimulation Plan by stipulating for research and development bodies and persons that the terms and conditions for the submission and evaluation of proposals for research and the terms and conditions for the granting and conclusion of contracts under the Stimulation Plan shall be the same as those applicable to research and development bodies and persons within the Community.

The financial contributions of the contracting parties to the Stimulation Plan are determined by a proportionality factor based on GDP. Thus, Iceland's contribution to the total amount estimated to be necessary for the execution of the SCIENCE programme of ECU 167 million is ECU 108 000. (1)

Commercial policy

The Council adopted:

- a Regulation extending the provisional anti-dumping duty on imports of aspartame originating in Japan and the United States of America (for a period not exceeding two months as from 30 March 1991);
- the Decision authorizing the automatic renewal or maintenance in force of provisions governing matters covered by the common commercial policy contained in the friendship, trade and navigation treaties and similar agreements concluded between Member States and third countries.

Commodities

The Council adopted the decisions on acceptance by the Community of the terms of reference of the International Tin and Copper study groups.

(1) For the record: Financial contributions are respectively as follows:
ECU 3 271 800 for Austria, ECU 2 460 000 for Finland, ECU 2 394 810 for Norway, ECU 4 514 100 for Sweden and ECU 4 600 200 for Switzerland.

PRESS RELEASE

5395/91 (Presse 40)

1480th Council Meeting

- TRANSPORT -

Brussels, 27 March 1991

President: Mr Robert GOEBBELS,
Minister for Transport
of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg

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rob/HM/bzb

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Jean-Lux DEHAENE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister
for Communications

Denmark:

Mr Kaj IKAST Minister for Transport

Germany:

Mr Günther KRAUSE Federal Minister for Transport

Mr Wolfgang GRÖBL Parliamentary State Secretary,
Federal Ministry of Transport

Greece:

Mr K. STEFANAKOS Secretary-General

Spain:

Mr José BORRELL Minister for Public Works and
Transport

France:

Mr Louis BESSON Minister attached to the Minister for
Infrastructure, Housing, Transport
and the Sea, with responsibility for
Housing

Mr Georges SARRE State Secretary attached to the
Minister for Infrastructure, Housing,
Transport and the Sea, with
responsibility for Road and River
Transport

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Ireland:

Mr Denis LYONS

Deputy Minister for Tourism,
Department of Tourism and Transport

Italy:

Mr Gualtiero NEPI

State Secretary, Ministry of Transport

Luxembourg:

Mr Robert GOEBBELS

Minister for Transport

Netherlands:

Mrs Hanja MAIJ-WEGGEN

Minister for Transport and Public
Works

Portugal:

Mr Jorge MENDES ANTAS

State Secretary, Ministry of Transport

United Kingdom:

Mr Malcolm RIFKIND

Secretary of State for Transport

Commission:

Sir Leon BRITTAN
Mr Karel VAN MIERT

Vice-President
Member

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RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES OF TRANSIT (AUSTRIA, SWITZERLAND AND YUGOSLAVIA)

On the basis of a detailed report by Mr VAN MIERT, the Council held a detailed discussion on the progress of the negotiations with the three third countries of transit (Austria, Switzerland and Yugoslavia).

The Council welcomed the conclusion of the negotiations with Yugoslavia and noted that the Commission had recently initialled the relevant Agreement. The Council asked the Commission to forward the text of the draft Agreement as soon as possible so that it could be signed without delay.

The Council noted the progress made in the negotiations with Austria and Switzerland and asked the Commission to press ahead so as to complete them if possible by mid May although the negotiating mandate would remain valid until the end of June.

The Council welcomed the Commission's approach of continuing the negotiations on the basis of an "environmental model" which would maintain the present number of heavy goods vehicles in transit and allowed for a possible increase in the context of a reduction in pollution caused by transit traffic. This approach should be implemented by a simple and non-bureaucratic system, and the Community and the Member States should be involved in its management. The other outstanding road transport questions should be resolved in the context of this approach.

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On the question of the tonnage limits imposed by Switzerland on heavy goods vehicles, the Council asked the Commission to investigate all the possibilities for exemption which might be granted for such vehicles.

Finally, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to monitor the progress of the negotiations in the light of the Commission's interim reports.

RAILWAYS

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT

The Council held an initial policy debate on the aims of the proposal for a Directive on the development of the Community railways. The purpose of this Directive is to clarify the relationship between the railways and the State and to establish the conditions whereby the technical advantages offered by rail can be fully exploited.

Specifically, the aim of the proposal is to lay the foundations for the creation of a Community railway system which is adapted to the needs of a single transport market. With that market in mind, the Commission believes that the railways offer genuine prospects for expansion in comparison with other modes of transport because of the economies of space and the energy savings which they can achieve and their environmentally friendly nature.

On the basis of a note from the Presidency, the Council examined the following objectives in particular:

- opening of national networks to railway carriers other than existing public undertakings;
- financial restructuring of the existing public railway undertakings through the introduction of arrangements for absorbing debts incurred in the past in order to create a sound financial situation;
- legal autonomy of railway undertakings and reinforcement of their operational independence;
- distinction between the operation of the infrastructure and the provision of transport services;

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- right for international groupings of railway undertakings to have access to the infrastructure of the Member States in which the grouped undertakings are established and to transit via the infrastructure of the other Member States.

At the end of the debate, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to press on with its discussions so as to enable the Council to approve the Directive at its next meeting on 20 June.

The Council also asked the Commission to propose suitable measures at an early date for advancing technical harmonization in the railway sector.

PUBLIC SERVICE

The Council discussed a proposal for amending Regulation No 1191/69 on action by Member States concerning the obligations inherent in the concept of a public service in transport by rail, road and inland waterway.

Other than for certain transport undertakings or the supply of certain services, this proposal would remove the obligations inherent in the concept of a public service as imposed by the Member States on transport by rail, road and inland waterway and would introduce an optional system of public service contracts. The competent authorities of a Member State and the transport undertakings would negotiate the conditions and detailed procedures for the provision of a public service in a contract.

At the end of the discussion, the Council:

- noted a broad convergence of views on the draft Regulation;

- noted that some delegations had established a link between the draft Regulation and the proposal for a Directive on the development of the Community railways;
- accordingly instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to finalize the draft Regulation in the light of the guidelines to be established when the proposed Directive was examined, with a view to both the Regulation and the Directive being adopted at the Council meeting on 20 and 21 June 1991.

COMBINED CARRIAGE OF GOODS

The Council adopted a Directive amending Directive 75/130/EEC on the establishment of common rules for certain types of combined carriage of goods between Member States.

By means of this Directive the Council intends to develop the combined carriage of goods further.

Increased use of this method of carriage as a substitute for long-distance intra-Community road haulage should help to resolve the growing problems of:

- road congestion, as well as damage to the environment and the undermining of road safety;
- the boom in trade which the large single market will bring in 1993;
- the increased demand for the carriage of goods brought about by the opening up of Eastern Europe;
- transit across certain third countries.

(See also Press Release No 10872/90 of 17 December 1990).

ROAD TRAFFIC

DRIVING LICENCE

The Council discussed the progress made on the proposal for a second Directive on the driving licence. This Directive should replace Directive 80/1263/EEC and is designed in particular to ensure the mutual recognition of each Member State's driving licences throughout the Community, regardless of the State of residence of the holder.

The Council:

- noted the stage reached in discussions on this question;
- in this connection, noted with satisfaction that substantial progress had been made by the relevant Council bodies;
- instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examining the outstanding problems so as to enable the Council to take a decision on the matter at its meeting in June 1991.

ROADWORTHINESS TESTS FOR VEHICLES

- Test standards and methods

The Council adopted a Directive amending Directive 77/143/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers.

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Directive 77/143/EEC established the principle of compulsory roadworthiness tests for certain categories of vehicles, but the standards and methods used for the tests have remained unharmonized at Community level. It has therefore been impossible to guarantee the same level of safety and environmental friendliness in all the Member States. The new Directive sets out to harmonize test standards and methods, in particular by:

- = establishing a system whereby the Council will, on the basis of proposals from the Commission, adopt separate Directives laying down the standards and methods for testing the points listed in Annex II to Directive 77/143/EEC;
- = setting up a Committee on adaptation to technical progress of the resulting technical standards.

- Extension to private cars

The Council examined in detail a proposal for a Directive amending Directive 77/143/EEC to cover private cars; following the adoption of Directive 88/449/EEC, that Directive now covers heavy lorries, coaches and buses, taxis and ambulances, light goods vehicles and mini-buses.

At the end of its discussion, the Council, noting that there was broad agreement on the key aspects of the proposal, instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to press ahead with examining the proposal so as to enable it to take a decision at its June meeting.

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ROAD TRANSPORT TAXATION

The Council held an exchange of views on the draft conclusions prepared by the Presidency and noted that the ECOFIN Council would be examining them at its forthcoming meeting on 8 April 1991.

Further to the instructions from the European Council in Rome on 14 and 15 December 1990 and on the basis of the recent proposals submitted by the Commission, the Council must decide in favour of a consistent Community approach (excise duties on fuel, taxes and tolls) with regard to the taxation of road transport to be implemented in parallel with the process of liberalizing activities in the transport sector.

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AIR TRANSPORT

SITUATION OF AIRLINES

On the basis of the Commission communication to the Member States of 20 February 1991 and additional information provided by Sir Leon BRITTAN and Mr VAN MIERT, the Council held an exchange of views on the temporary measures to be taken to alleviate the effects of the Gulf War on Community airlines.

PREDATORY FARES AND OTHER PREDATORY PRACTICES

By a qualified majority, the Council agreed on a proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 3975/87 laying down the procedure for the application of the rules on competition to undertakings in the air transport sector.

This amendment will enable the Commission to adopt temporary emergency measures to combat predatory fares and other predatory practices in the air transport sector.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to have the draft Regulation finalized for formal adoption at a forthcoming Council meeting.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EEC AND NORWAY AND SWEDEN ON AIR TRANSPORT

The Council noted with satisfaction that on completion of the negotiations between the Commission and Norway and Sweden on 20 March 1991, the parties had reached an agreement.

The Council hoped that the Commission would as soon as possible forward the text of the draft agreement for adoption.

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This agreement will cover the acceptance by Norway and Sweden of the "acquis communautaire", the rules on competition and future legislation on air transport.

AIR CARGO

Mr VAN MIERT introduced the report forwarded by the Commission to the Council on 26 March 1991 on the definition of "Community air cargo carrier" as provided for in the existing Regulation on the operation of air cargo services.

The Council discussed this matter and instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examining the question in the light of its discussion.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Iraq/Kuwait embargo

The Council adopted a Regulation amending for the third time Regulation (EEC) No 2340/90 preventing trade by the Community as regards Iraq and Kuwait.

This amendment will enable the Community henceforth to provide Iraq, in addition to medicines and food products intended for humanitarian purposes, with other products for medical use, subject to their being supplied under the strict supervision of the Community or of the Government of a Member State or of any suitable humanitarian aid organization.

Relations with the EFTA countries: EEA negotiations

The Council authorized the Commission to extend the negotiations on the creation of the EEA to cover ECSC products.

Trade policy

The Council adopted a Decision authorizing extension or tacit renewal of certain trade agreements concluded between Member States and third countries.

Spray-suppression systems of certain categories of motor vehicles

The Council adopted a Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the spray-suppression systems of certain categories of motor vehicles and their trailers.

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Travellers' allowances

The Council adopted the Directive amending Directive 69/169/EEC regarding allowances on tax-paid purchases made in the course of intra-Community travel, specifically covering the derogation granted to the Kingdom of Denmark and to Ireland as regards duty-free import arrangements for travellers (see ECOFIN Council Press Release No 5198/91 of 18 March 1991).

ECSC

The Council gave its assent

- pursuant to Article 54, second paragraph, of the ECSC Treaty, for the granting of a loan to Eurotunnel Finance SA and Eurotunnel Finance Ltd.;
- pursuant to Article 56(2)(a) of the ECSC Treaty concerning
 - = Industria de Turbo-Propulsores SA (Spain)
 - = E.N. HULLERAS del Norte SA (Spain).

Appointment

The Council replaced a member of the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work for the remainder of his term of office.