

**EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY
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COMMON MARKET • EURATOM • COAL & STEEL COMMUNITY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

February 16, 1960

**THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY'S
COMMON EXTERNAL TARIFF**

The European Community (Common Market) has announced that final arrangements for the proposed common external tariff of the six-nation community will soon be completed. The common tariff is scheduled to start taking effect on January 1, 1962, and will be completed in stages by the end of the transition period now planned to take place on December 31, 1969, or, at the latest, by December 31, 1972.

For most items the tariff is figured on the basis of the arithmetical average of the tariffs of the four trading units -- Benelux, France, the German Federal Republic, and Italy. The basis for the arithmetical average will be the tariffs applied by the member states on January 1, 1957.

Unanimous agreement of the member countries has been reached on approximately 95 per cent of the tariffs in question. Tariff items which totaled approximately 19,000 among the six countries have been consolidated into a group of about 3,000 items.

The common external tariff schedule will be submitted to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) at the earliest opportunity in order that member nations of GATT may have appropriate time for study before the GATT negotiations begin next September. At the last Ministerial meeting held February 12 and 13 in Brussels, the Community's Council of Ministers formally approved the common external tariff. Certain items on the "G" list, which concern tariffs to be negotiated within the Community rather than be based on arithmetical average, have yet to be settled. It is expected that the tariffs for these items will be set at the next meeting of the Council of Ministers scheduled to be held in Rome the end of February and early March.