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PRESS RELEASE

"Initiative 1964" and customs union

The EEC Commission has submitted to the Council a draft decision on the abolition of intra-Community customs duties, the application of the common customs tariff and the prohibition of quotas between the Member States.

Under the proposal, the Member States will reduce, as from January 1, 1966 the duties on each of the products not listed in Annex II of the Rome Treaty to 20% of the basic duty. The remaining duties will be abolished on July 1, 1967.

The duty on each of the products listed in Annex II will be reduced to 35% of the basic duty on January 1, 1966 and to 20% on January 1, 1967. The remaining duties will be abolished on July 1, 1967.

For a number of products subject to Community regulations, the abolition of customs duties and the "fixed component" in intra-Community trade and the application of the common customs tariff and standardization of the "fixed component" in trade with non-member countries will take place by July 1, 1967 at the latest. The Commission will submit the relevant proposals to the Council by March 31, 1965.

July 1, 1967 will also be the date of entry into force of the common customs tariff for the whole range of industrial and agricultural products.

Lastly, all quantitative restrictions on imports of products not listed in Annex II from other Member States are prohibited.

* These proposals form part of "Initiative 1964". In view of the considerable advance on the timing laid down in the Treaty in the matter of reducing intra-Community duties and lifting quotas, the Commission considers that it is not only possible but in many respects necessary to maintain the faster pace already set. Consequently, the customs union should come into being two and a half years ahead of the original deadline of January 1, 1970.

* See Information Memo P/59 of October 1964.