

European Community

News Release

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY NEWS SHEET

SUMMARY

- P. 1 EUROPEAN HOLIDAYMAKERS STAY CLOSE TO HOME
Europeans, undeterred by terrorism publicity, favour own countries for their holidays.
- EC FOLLOWS THROUGH ON PLEDGE TO AID VICTIMS OF APARTHEID
Aid funds granted to non-violent African organizations will finance welfare and humanitarian aid schemes.
- P. 2 EC TO AID KHMER AND AFGHAN REFUGEES
Aid to refugees keyed to achievement of self-sufficiency.
- P. 3 EC AND U.S. JOIN FORCES TO HELP COMBAT LOCUST THREAT IN SUDAN
Serious locust infestation expected in September, according to UN early warning. Neighbour country protection stressed.
- FAMILY VS. FEMINISM : EC SEARCHES FOR A POLICY
A clash of viewpoints bedevils implementation of 1983 European Parliament resolution.
- P. 4 FOREST FIRES : EMERGENCY AID FOR VICTIMS IN PORTUGAL
Rules eased to favour aid to Portugal in wake of forest fires.

For additional information, please contact Roy Christensen or David Levy, Press and Information Service, at (613) 238-6464 or write to : Press and Information Service, The Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities, Suite 1110, 350 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7S8.

 **Delegation of the Commission
of the European Communities**
Press and Information Service

EUROPEAN HOLIDAYMAKERS STAY CLOSE TO HOME

Each year about 185 million EC citizens (140 million adults and 45 million children) out of a total population of about 328 million go on holiday. To bring this major people movement into focus, the EC Commission Member responsible for Information, A Peoples Europe and Tourism, asked his staff to undertake a survey into the numbers, nature and attitudes of Community holidaymakers. Polling 11,840 individuals, they found that :

- * In contrast to North Americans, whose fear of terrorism has persuaded many to avoid Europe, the Europeans themselves seem only slightly deterred by any sense of insecurity. Hardly one European in 100 cites this as a reason for not going on holiday.
- * The number of people actually taking a holiday varies very greatly between the Member States. Reasons are principally economic, the figures varying from 65% taking a holiday in the Netherlands and 45% in Denmark down to 31% in Portugal and 39% in Ireland.
- * Two-thirds of Europeans choose to spend their holidays in their own country (67%). After that, they choose, in order of preference, other Community countries (20%), a non-Community country (10%). Only 3% spend their holidays on another continent.
- * Most travel by car (68%), but air travel (13%) is now almost as popular as rail travel (14%).
- * When holidays are taken continues to pose the major problem with a concentration of 34% of holidays taken in August and 28% in July, confirming a need for some levelling action, already an aim of the Commission Programme, with a view to spreading tourism better over time and geography.

EC FOLLOWS THROUGH ON PLEDGE TO AID VICTIMS OF APARTHEID

The European Council that convened in The Hague at the end of June issued a Statement on South Africa, which, among other things, called for a "concerted European programme of assistance to the victims of Apartheid".

By mid-July, initial financing decisions for such a programme were announced. The EC Commission had approved initial contributions amounting to 5 million ECU*.

The aid funds will be made available to South African organizations with non-violent aims, notably churches and trade unions, and will be used to finance welfare and humanitarian aid schemes, in particular

educational and training programmes. The aid is currently being transferred to the recipients via European Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and trade union organizations.

The funds in questions are drawn from the 10 million ECU entered in the 1986 Budget (Article 953) as a result of political cooperation decisions taken in Luxembourg on 10 September last year by the Ten Member States of the Community, together with Spain and Portugal.

*
1 ECU = 1.39 CAD

EC TO AID KHMER AND AFGHAN REFUGEES

The EC Commission will finance schemes to help Khmer displaced persons along Thailand's frontiers and Afghan refugees in Pakistan. This aid falls within the context of appropriations to help groups of refugees, displaced persons and others who have left their countries of origin achieve self-sufficiency.

Khmer refugees - 1,400,000 ECU*

Some 240,000 Kampuchean at present living in camps along the Kampuchea-Thailand border under supervision of the United Nations Border Relief Organization, are fully dependent on humanitarian aid supplied to them and coordinated by UNBRO with the agreement of the Thai government and the participation of 13 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Since 1979 the Community has contributed over 20 million ECU* towards the survival of these people, 3.3 million ECU of it in the form of food and emergency aid.

This latest Community aid will provide financial and technical resources required to enable Khmer refugees covered by the scheme (about 218,000) and living in the camps to start achieving some self-sufficiency through the supply of water, market-gardening activities, small live-stock, weaving and dressmaking, vaccinations and training.

Afghan refugees - 1,705,000 ECU*

Afghan refugees have been massing on the Pakistan frontier since 1980, 2.6 million of them officially registered. Most are at present living in some 106 villages, 74 per cent in the Northwest frontier province, 20 per cent in Baluchistan and 4 per cent in the Punjab. They form the largest group of refugees in the world.

*
1 ECU = 1.39 CAD

EC AND U.S. JOIN FORCES TO HELP COMBAT LOCUST THREAT IN SUDAN

The European Commission has approved an Emergency Locust Control Programme for the Sudan, to be implemented in close collaboration with the U.S. government, acting through the Agency for International Development (AID), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

The EC seized the initiative earlier this year with an emergency programme to combat the threat following an early warning by the UN and FAO of a potentially serious locust infestation that could emerge by September this year. A speedy response was called for, but mobilization time was short.

On July 29, EC's Deputy Director-General for Development, Mr. Maurice Foley and the U.S. Ambassador to the European Communities, H.E. J. William Middendorf II, signed an agreement in Brussels on the U.S. contribution of \$1 million to add to the EC's own participation of over one million ECU*.

The objective of the locust control programme is to assist the Sudanese authorities in combatting a real locust threat to this year's harvest as well as in preventing possible dangers for neighbouring countries. It provides for full support of field teams through purchase and transport of supplies, including pesticides, equipment and vehicles and technical expertise.

This campaign is to cover August to December and includes monitoring and early warning measures to improve preparedness against similar threats in the future. EC contributions are funded from emergency aid and from the 1986 Revival and Rehabilitation Plan.

* 1 ECU = 1.39 CAD

FAMILY VS. FEMINISM : EC SEARCHES FOR A POLICY

One side says the family is the basic unit in society, but the other side says it is not, and the very use of the term "family" as designating a basic social unit is inappropriate. These two very different viewpoints appear in two documents presented to the European Parliament, and they suggest why the subject of a "Community family" is so explosive.

The European Parliament has a long-standing interest in the subject, however. In 1983 it adopted a resolution calling for a European family policy as an integral part of all Community policies. And now its Committee on Social Affairs and Employment has adopted a draft resolution and report renewing its earlier call.

The first viewpoint is that of the French report's author, the French Euro-MP Nicole Chouraqui, the second that of the Committee on Women's Rights, as expressed in its opinion on the Chouraqui report. The clash between the two indicates why the European Commission's reply to Parliament's demand for an action programme has been largely limited to allocating ECU 300,000* for the implementation of a family policy.

But the family needs to be taken seriously by the Community, says Mde. Chouraqui, who claims that it is involved in almost all policy decisions, including key economic decisions, and that it has been deeply affected by the present economic crisis. The report in fact states that the crisis cannot be considered in purely economic terms. "Any solution must take into account the family", it says. A family policy is needed too because the size of families has been changing since 1960. In the EC as a whole the birth rate has fallen by 30 per cent, and an ageing population can be expected to affect European dynamism adversely.

The report indicates three guidelines "which should govern family policy". The first is the interest of the child, which the report notes "may seem obvious" but is often ignored. The second is the freedom of the individual and the responsibility of families. While the Community cannot dictate the number of children in a family, for example, it must "encourage the provision of resources to make families' choices easier".

Finally, the report wants girls and women to have equal access with men to education and professional activity. The EC, it notes, must prevent women from being (1) penalized in their professional life because of their role as mothers and (2) disregarded as mothers because of their professional activity.

FOPEST FIRES : EMERGENCY AID FOR VICTIMS IN PORTUGAL

In the European Community's southern regions forest fires invariably accompany a long, hot summer. The Community's emergency aid, granted to victims of such natural disasters as floods and earthquakes, is not normally available in the case of forest fires. But as a mark of solidarity with one of its newest, and poorest, Member States, the Commission broke this rule by giving ECU 175,000* in emergency aid to help the victims of a fire which destroyed 8,000 hectares of forest in central Portugal. Some 16 people died in the fire which gutted a school building and destroyed fire-fighting equipment.

* 1 ECU = 1.39 CAD