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## UPDATE ON E.C. AID TO THE KURDS

The EC Commission said today that it has disbursed 75 million ECU\* of the 105 million ECU agreed European Community emergency relief package for Iraqi refugees. The bilateral efforts of the individual EC member states total a further 250 million ECU.

In the case of Iran, the Community has already financed more than 220 flights (of which 180 have been carried out) to transport 45,000 tents, 1.25 million blankets, and 10,000 metric tons of food.

In Turkey, the EC has already financed more than 80 flights transporting 21,500 tents, 218,000 blankets, and 16,000 metric tons of food. Moreover, other forms of assistance (including supply of 20,000 blankets, 135,000 pairs of shoes, 1,550 metric tons of food and more than 200 civilians) are operating in Iraqi territory to facilitate the return of the masses of Kurdish refugees to the Turkish border. The Commission is in close contact with the Turkish authorities in an effort to smooth out difficulties which could reduce the efficacy of the aid and to clarify the figures concerning the total EC effort.

The European Community and other countries aiding the Kurdish refugees have in recent days been the target of some criticism by the authorities in Iran and Turkey, and by the United Nations in some cases, for what is perceived as an insufficient response to the crisis.

It is clear that the EC alone has donated more than the Iranian authorities have acknowledged. The EC has discussed this in connection with on-the-spot distribution problems during meetings with the Iranian authorities today.

The EC Commission regrets to note that criticism of its efforts is based on partial or mistaken figures relating to the aid sent in by donors, and primarily the EC and its member states. These figures often reflect only aid that has been administered by a specific non-government organization, or requested by a particular institution.

A Commission spokesman pointed out that for reasons of speed and efficacy, several channels of distribution are operational and that what is important is the amount of aid and the efficiency with which it reaches the refugees.

\* ECU (European Currency Unit) = \$1.18 on April 28, 1991.

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