

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY NEWS

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SCHEEL SAYS EC FAVORS AID FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The European Community sees the need for a new world-wide equilibrium, acting Council of Ministers President Walter Scheel told the United Nations Assembly meeting on raw materials April 11 in New York. Efforts to avoid economic recession and curb world wide inflation, he said, "can only take place in a spirit of solidarity among all States."

Referring to the adverse affect skyrocketing raw material prices have had on the buying power of the developing countries, Scheel pointed out the Community's past and present interests in the wellbeing of those countries. The Community was the first to introduce a system of generalized preferences and now favors the adoption of such a system by all industrialized countries. He added that the Community sees the multi-lateral system of economic relations as useful and effective and will seek to strengthen it in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and elsewhere. It will also participate in finding new methods for allowing all countries to have satisfactory access to raw material resources.

Despite their own economic problems, Scheel said the nine EC Member States will continue their efforts to maintain and expand EC development aid, both bilaterally and through multi-lateral institutions. With regard to the effect of the high cost of imported products on developing countries, Scheel said the Nine will examine the most effective ways of setting up a special international aid project to help these countries. This would be done, he continued, in conjunction with all interested states and international organizations.

EUROPEAN INFORMATION NETWORK PLAN REVIEWED

A plan for eventually setting up a European network of scientific, technological, and social information and documentation is being reviewed by the European Community Member States. The three year plan was drawn up by the Commission's directorate general on scientific and technical information. It calls for accelerating the development of sectoral information systems concerning nuclear energy, agriculture, education, etc., developing modern information dissemination techniques, and finding solutions to European problems. The plan has already been received favorably by national experts on the Council of Ministers committee for information, scientific and technical documentation.

ORTOLI FOR TURKEY ON OFFICIAL VISIT

Francois-Xavier Ortoli, President of the Commission of the European Communities will make an official visit to Turkey April 25-28. Accompanied by a delegation of high-level EC officials, Ortoli will discuss EC-Turkey relations with President Fahri Koruturk, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, and Foreign Affairs Minister Turan Gunas.

BERKHOUWER TALKS ON US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS

US-European links "can become firmly welded only when European Union is a fact and part and parcel of the day-to-day existence of our institutions and peoples," European Parliament President Cornelius Berkhouwer told a conference on American Foreign Policy and the new Europe in Blacksburg, Virginia, April 18. The conference was sponsored by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the University of South Carolina.

Noting that uneasiness in US-EC relations in the past was confined to the economic sphere, Berkhouwer pointed out major difficulties were avoided through arrangements for regularly discussing matters of contention. Berkhouwer called for achieving the same result in the fields of general defense and policy. On defense, he said unilateral withdrawal of US troops from Europe would only worsen US-EC relations and would jeopardize European security without any real progress toward detente.

Europeans are unanimous in proposing serious, sustained, and reciprocal consultations between the United States and the Community, he said. However, European reservations exist over the establishment of procedures going beyond information exchanges and consultations. The United States, he asserted, should make the best use of these procedures by

making them truly reciprocal rather than demanding the right to be given prior notice of all EC decisions.

While there are different interpretations of US-EC relations, Berkhouwer underlined the common interests held by both sides and the "common fund of human and political values which underlies our solidarity and our common destiny."

In addition to participating in the conference, Berkhouwer gave an address in San Francisco April 15 and held talks with senior US Administration officials and Congressmen in Washington April 16-18.

OUTLOOK FOR NORTH SEA OIL

By 1980, North Sea oil will cover 15 per cent of Community oil needs, says a Commission reply to a European Parliament question.

IVORY COAST GETS THREE EIB LOANS

A 5.4 million units of account (UA) European Investment Bank (EIB) loan was granted April 10 to begin construction of an Ivory Coast textile factory which will eventually produce denim for sale to an American blue jeans manufacturer. (One UA equals \$1.20635 at current rates.) The ten year loan was granted to COTIVO (La Cotonniere Ivoirienne). The spinning and weaving factory will produce 3,000 tons of indigo denim and 3,000 tons of raw cotton annually.

The EIB additionally granted two loans totaling UA 19.1 million in European Development Fund resources for reconstruction of a 130 km section of railway line between Dimbokro and Bouake in the Ivory Coast. The loans granted to Regie du Chemin de Fer Abidjan-Niger (RAN) will also help buy five new locomotives. The railway line is the main link between the Ivory Coast sea port of Abidjan and Ouagadougou in Upper Volta.

TOWARD IMPROVED EC VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Proposals for setting up a European Vocational Training Center were recently sent to the Council of Ministers by the EC Commission. The Center would give a European dimension to the development of vocational training by helping develop, coordinate, and assemble documentation on research in this field and disseminate information throughout the Community. The Center would be administered by a management board consisting of members appointed by the Commission and employers and workers organizations.

EDF CLEARS LOANS FOR \$ 21 MILLION

The European Development Fund has approved ten loans totaling 17,934,000 units of account (approximately \$21,521,000) for Dahomey, Madagascar, Ivory Coast, Congo-Brazzaville, Guadeloupe, Wallis and Futuna Islands, and the "Entente" group of French-speaking states in West Africa.

WORK TO BOLSTER EC MOVIE INDUSTRY

The Commission is working to speed up integration in the moviemaking industry according to an April 5 answer to a written question from the European Parliament. The European and especially the Italian cinematography industry is undergoing a steady decline due to rising production costs and falling national revenues. In effort to speed integration in this sector, the Commission said it is seeking to persuade Member States to qualify more foreign films for subsidies under their national aid arrangements. The Commission has been forwarding movie industry proposals to the Council of Ministers since 1968. More recently, it proposed the creation of a public film register in all Mem-

ber States to give more freedom in providing film distribution services and eventually increase production financing capabilities. A proposal on liberalizing the film industry, possibly with provisions for increasing the movement of cinema workers, will be forwarded to the Council in the near future.

FRANCE MODIFIES AID PLAN FOR ARTISANAL INDUSTRIES

France has assented to an EC Commission request by adjusting its taxation scheme for aiding the watchmaking, leather, and skin industries. France had been building up a special fund to bolster these declining sectors by levying parafiscal taxes on all related products, including those imported from its fellow Member States. In accordance with a December 17 Commission request, the government lifted the levies on all but national products.

NO SECRET AUTO TAX PLAN COMMISSION SAYS

There is no "secret plan" to tax motor vehicles driving into city centers, the Commission said April 5 in answer to a written question from the European Parliament. The German newspaper Deutsche Presse-Agentur had reported that the Commission planned to introduce a special motor vehicle tax for journeys into town centers whereby passengerless cars would pay twice the normal rate. The Commission pointed out that the question of charging for use of urban infrastructures had been dealt with in an earlier memorandum and proposal to the Council of Ministers and that the Parliament had given it a favorable opinion November 1973. The Commission also said it would report the findings of recent Member State surveys regarding a system of urban infrastructure charges, in the near future.

EC MIGRANT WORKER PROGRAM ON THE WAY

A wide ranging program for improving European Community migrant worker social conditions is being prepared by the Commission in consultation with the Member States and both sides of industry. The Commission set up a special in-house task force to draw up the program which will be sent to the Council of Ministers by the end of this year. The Commission recently issued an interim report on measures it urged be carried out this year. They include: improving information on job availability, European Social Fund financing of integrated projects for migrant workers, improving social services, giving better social security coverage such as family benefits and maternity allowances, and coordinating migration policies vis-a-vis non-member countries.

COUNCIL SCORED FOR INADEQUATE ENERGY ACTION

The European Community Council of Ministers has been sharply criticized for remaining unconvinced of the urgent need for a common EC

energy policy, despite the Commission's efforts at persuasion. The criticism came from the European Parliament's Energy, Research, and Technology Committee in its April 10 opinion on the seventh General Report on Community activities. The Committee emphasized the Council's inability to act despite the mandate for a common energy policy given by the EC Heads of State or Government at the December 14-15 "Summit" conference in Copenhagen. The Committee urged the Commission and the Council to move toward creating independent and integrated sources of energy within the Common Market as a key to progress in other areas of EC policy.

TOBACCO EXCISE TAX HARMONIZATION PLAN

The EC Commission has sent proposals to harmonize excise taxes on tobacco to the Council of Ministers. One proposal would extend the application date of the Community's first tobacco tax harmonization directive to June 30, 1976. By the first directive, Member States agreed to limit tobacco fiscality to turnover and excise taxes.

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