

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY NEWS

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DAIRY EXPORTS REFUNDS ENDED

The suspension of refunds to EC exporters to cheese to the United States were announced by the Commission on July 11. This action, welcomed by US trade officials, marks the end of all EC rebates on exports of dairy products. Earlier this year, refunds on skimmed milk powder and butter exports were eliminated.

AGREEMENT ON DEVELOP- MENT AID PRINCIPLES

The EC Council of Ministers adopted a resolution at a July 16 meeting in Brussels confirming principles of financial and technical aid to be given developing countries not associated with the Community. Although differences in the application of aid by member states still persist, the resolution improves the coordination of specific types of aid and focuses EC action on the developing countries' poorest regions.

SPEED LIMIT HARMONIZATION?

Worried that wide differences in national speed limits could create difficulties in road safety, the Commission has invited EC member states to examine the possibility of concerted action at the EC level. A meeting of government experts is to be held in Brussels soon.

COMMISSION ACTS ON MEAT SURPLUS

The Commission has taken measures to reduce the large EC meat surplus, Commissioner Petrus J. Lardinois announced at a European Parliament plenary session in Strasbourg, France, on July 8. The Commission proposes to encourage consumption, improve intervention arrangements, and restrict imports. In the attempt to alleviate the meat surpluses, social institutions and the poor may receive beef and veal at reduced prices, while developing countries could get processed surplus meat as part of a food aid program, Lardinois said. He is responsible for the EC common agricultural policy.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFLATION

Despite the oil crisis, economic activity has remained strong due to increased EC exports to third countries and growing investments by firms within the Community, according to the EC Commission's quarterly report on the current EC economic situation and the outlook for the second half of 1974. However, growth has slowed to 2.5 per cent this year compared to 5.5 per cent in 1973, while inflation is averaging 13 per cent after an 8 per cent rate last year. Growth prospects for the rest of 1974 are good, since exports are expected to increase and demand should continue to expand. Inflation will, however, remain a grave economic problem. Only Germany and the Benelux states may run balance-of-payments surpluses.

MEET WITH COMMISSION

Italian labor leaders held a four-hour meeting with EC Commission members July 10 in Brussels to discuss the urgent economic measures recently enacted by the Italian Government. All participants agreed that the Italian austerity program must be buttressed by a medium-term economic policy for improving Italy's economic and social structure.

LAPPAS TO MEET WITH US OFFICIALS

Alfons Lappas, head of the EC Economic and Social Committee, will visit Washington and New York next week to confer with several US economic and labor officials. Lappas is expected to meet on July 22 with Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors, Herbert Stein; Labor Secretary Peter J. Brennan, and Commerce Secretary Frederick R. Dent. Later during his visit he is scheduled to meet with the AFL-CIO President George Meany and New York Mayor Abraham Beame.

FINANCE MINISTERS DISCUSS INFLATION

Finance ministers of the EC "Nine" met July 16 in Brussels to discuss ways of fighting inflation and re-

ducing deficits in the balance of payments of several member states. Stressing the need to control demand while also avoiding recessionist policies, the ministers decided to remain in close consultation over the next two months to observe price developments before meeting again in September.

FORTHCOMING COMMISSION STUDY ON FEMALE WORKERS

A comprehensive report on women's working conditions in the European Community is being prepared by the Commission. The Commission recently assigned a group of experts to report on the situation in Britain, Denmark, and Ireland to complete the document to be published this fall.

COMMISSION INVESTIGATES OIL COMPANY PRACTICES

In response to a European Parliament question about the refusal of some oil companies to supply crude oil to Belgium at current prices, the EC Commission said it is now gathering information to see whether these companies have violated Article 86 of the European Economic Community Treaty, which forbids any abuse of a dominant position within the Common Market.

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