

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY NEWS

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ITALIAN IMPORT CURBS LIFTED BY GOVERNMENT

The EC Commission applauded the Italian Government's March 21 decision to lift import and credit restrictions imposed May 8, 1974. The restrictions, which required importers to deposit an amount equal to 50 per cent of their imports' value, were imposed in an effort to improve Italy's balance of payments. The Commission authorized the restrictions -- which covered about 40 per cent of imported goods -- with the stipulation that they be removed as soon as Italy's balance of payments improved. Agricultural products were exempted from the restrictions last November.

Medium-term financial aid to Italy, the result of a December 17 EC Council decision, helped relieve some of Italy's balance of payments difficulties.

BRITISH LIBERALS VISIT COMMISSION

Calling the potential consequences of British withdrawal from the European Community "disastrous," British Liberal Party leader Jeremy Thorpe called on member state political figures to actively participate in the coming referendum campaign in Britain. Speaking in Brussels during a March 20 Commission visit of UK Liberal Members of Parliament, Thorpe told newsmen that Commission Vice President

Christopher Soames, EC Commissioners George Thomson and Guido Brunner, Luxembourg Foreign Minister Gaston Thorn, and Danish Liberal Party leader Poul Hartling are expected to visit Britain on a referendum campaign tour.

SOAMES JOURNEYS TO CHINA IN MAY

EC Commission Vice President Christopher Soames, responsible for external relations, will visit China in the first part of May. Traveling at the invitation of the Institute of Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China, Soames will spend several days in Peking discussing future EC-China relations with Chinese authorities. He will be accompanied by two or three senior Commission officials.

TEXTILE AGREEMENT WITH HONG KONG NEARS

The European Community soon hopes to conclude a bilateral textile agreement with Hong Kong, following four days of intensive negotiations in Brussels, which ended March 20. The negotiations were held within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade's (GATT) Arrangement Regarding International Trade in Textiles. The Community accepted administration of export restraints by Hong Kong as a premise for negotiations and voiced hope for early agreement on Community proposals regarding products to be covered, base levels, and growth percentages.

**COMMON STANDARDS
FOR BEER PROPOSED**

The European Community may soon have harmonized standards for beer, according to a Commission answer to a recent written question from the European Parliament. The optional type directive -- a modification of a 1970 Commission proposal on beer -- would allow beer brewed in accordance with Community standards free passage over member state borders. National specialty beers not complying with Community standards could still be traded within producing EC countries and between member states having the same brewing standards.

**COLLEGE OF EUROPE
APPLICATIONS CALL**

Applications from American students are now being taken for the 1975-76 academic year at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. The College of Europe is one-year, post-graduate institution offering studies in European integration. Specializations are offered in administrative, economic, legal, or social areas to students who are competent

in French and English. Requests for information and application forms can be made to: Information and Admissions Bureau, College of Europe, Dyver 7, B-8000, Bruges, Belgium.

**EDF GRANTS AID TO
AFRICAN NATIONS**

The Commission approved five European Development Fund grants totaling 11,297,000 units of account in Brussels, March 10. (One UA equals \$1.20635) Countries receiving the grants are:

Malagasy Republic: UA 5,041,000 for bridges and access roads on the southern central highway

Somalia: UA 4,053,000 for a grapefruit plantation, buildings, roads, wells, and other agricultural improvements

Togo: UA 1,044,000 for development of cattle breeding

Chad: UA 673,000 for a bridge over the Ba-illi River

Dahomey: UA 486,000 for expanding the Cotonou water supply system.

PUBLICATION NOTICE -- The next issue of *European Community News* will be published April 11.

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