



European Community Newsletter

from the New York
Press and Information Office

Vol. 1 No. 4.

Sept.-Oct. 1984

The 39th Session of the General Assembly began with the customary general debate in which 150 speakers took part. Amongst them was Mr Peter Barry, the Foreign Minister of Ireland, the current President of the EC Council, who spoke on behalf of the European Community and its Member States. His speech on 25 September, the product of extensive preparation within the EC framework, gave EC views on the range of issues on the international agenda. Concern over the critical situation in Africa, the need for peace and stability in the Middle

East and the ever-present importance of arms control measures, were amongst the topics covered, setting the stage for further discussions in the main Committees. The speech was delivered on the eve of a major meeting in Costa Rica between the European Community and its Member States and the States of Central America. This and other issues are dealt with below, in a summary of the EC position on some of the main topics before the present Session.

The Critical Economic Situation in Africa

The European Community has close links with Africa, reflected in a series of agreements, most notably the Lomé Conventions. As was said in a statement delivered by the Irish Representative, Ambassador Robert McDonagh, on 2 November in the course of the Plenary debate, the Community and its Member States are gravely concerned at the situation in which the African peoples find themselves:

“There are long historic ties between Europe and Africa, ties which are both cultural and economic and which extend to all spheres of human activity. We cannot substitute for the African countries’ own efforts and they do not ask us to do so. But we can give our assistance and support and we want to make this as effective as possible.”

Negotiations towards a new Lomé Convention were well advanced and the signing is expected to take place in December. So far as trade is concerned, the African countries have completely free access to the Community market for the vast majority of their products. Of African exports of \$56 billion in 1983, \$33 billion (58%) went to the European Community. The Stabex system aimed at establishing export earnings covers 85% of ACP agricultural exports and Sysmin completes the mechanism for the mineral sector.

It is clear however that the problems facing the African countries are so immense as to be beyond their capacity to overcome them by their own efforts alone. It is essential that financial resources, including official development assistance, should be commensurate with their needs. To quote Ambassador McDonagh again:

“The European Community and its Member States account for slightly more than half the aid going to Africa—about \$5 billion. Two-thirds of the EEC’s assistance and half of the bilateral assistance from our Member States goes to Africa. These figures do not include assistance channelled through multilateral institutions such as IDA, World Food Programme, UNDP, and others. Our aid programmes are large and pay particular attention to sub-Saharan Africa. They are highly concessional, are mostly in the form of grants and are largely untied; hence they are particularly suited to the conditions of Africa.”

Between 1980 and 1982 the World Bank Group’s ODA net disbursements for Africa averaged \$650 million a year; the equivalent EC figure (European Development Fund and EC budget) was \$730 million.

While much therefore is in hand, designed to help African countries overcome the deep rooted problems which face them, action also has to be taken to deal with emergency situations. At the beginning of 1984 the Community decided on an emergency plan for Africa in view of the grave position of food supplies. 80 million ECU have been allocated to the plan, of which 43.8 million ECU have been assigned for Ethiopia. 117,000 tons of cereals and 5,000 tons of dairy products have been supplied to that country.

In the light of the deteriorating situation in Ethiopia, the Sahel and other drought-affected African countries, a further 32 million ECU in immediate aid measures and 25 million ECU in short term food supplies are to be made available to these countries on an urgent basis. In announcing these measures on 30 October, Mr Edgard Pisani, the Member of the Commission responsible for development, stated that Community aid represented a quarter of total Ethiopian imports. To overcome the logistical problems of

the transport and distribution of the aid (emergency needs are estimated at 45,000 tons of cereals a month, while the internal transport infrastructure has an estimated capacity of 15,000 tons a month), the Commission has an air lift in operation which has transported 2,000 tons of cereals within the country. Co-ordination of the aid efforts made by the Community and its Member States will be pursued further, as part of a widespread effort, undertaken in collaboration with the local authorities, to deal with the grave problems of hunger and malnutrition that now affect the populations concerned.

The overall relief aid allocated by the European Community for the thirty most affected African countries amounts to a total of 241 million ECU (approximately \$174 million) this year, of which 61.8 million ECU (approximately \$45 million) is assigned to Ethiopia.

The European Community and Central America

Twelve European Ministers of Foreign Affairs (those of the Ten, Portugal and Spain) and Mr Edgard Pisani, the Member of the Commission responsible for development, met in the Costa Rican capital of San José, on 28 and 29 September, with their opposite numbers from the Central American Common Market States (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) and the four Contadora group nations (Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela). The communiqué issued following the meeting was circulated as a UN document (A/39/539).



EC Commissioner Edgard Pisani

The meeting, as the Irish Minister Mr O'Keefe declared to the European Parliament on 9 October, had three aims: (1) to inaugurate a new structure of political and economic dialogue between the Community and Central America; (2) to announce formally the intention of entering into negotiations for a framework agreement for regional economic co-operation; and (3) to support the efforts of the Central American countries themselves and the measures envisaged by the Contadora process to restore peace and stability in the region. Viewed in the light of those objectives, Mr O'Keefe stated that the meeting had been a distinct success and represented a marked progress.

On the economic side, the EC Ministers particularly underlined the importance of development based on regional integration. They agreed that additional aid on a Community basis of the order of 100 million ECU over five years should be given to Central America for the financing of regional projects. On behalf of the Commission, Mr Pisani stressed the importance of the operation of a genuine Central American common market. The European Community

would be able to demonstrate its support most effectively when a common market of the five countries was revived and thriving politically. Such an entity would open up completely new prospects for investment, competitiveness and diversification. The Community could provide support through the promotion of Central American products on world markets, by encouraging European investment in the region, and through financial aid. At present about 20% of external aid to Central America is provided by Europe.

These themes were taken up again during the Assembly's consideration of the item "The Situation in Central America." As was stated by Ambassador McDonagh in the Plenary debate on 24 October:

"The Ten believe that the decisions taken at the San José meeting and the increased practical co-operation that will result from them will provide an important reinforcement of the efforts of the countries of Central America and the Contadora Group to bring an end to violence and instability and to promote social justice, economic development and respect for human rights and democratic liberties in the region. Ministerial representatives of the twenty-one countries present were united in the view that the problems of Central America cannot be solved by armed force but only by political solutions springing from the region itself."

Trade between the European Community and the Central American Common Market countries (1983, Million ECU)

	Total	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
EC Imports	887	242	227	183	124	111
EC Exports	484	110	91	106	98	76
EC Balance	-403	-132	-136	-77	-26	-35

(In 1983 1 Ecu = \$0.89)

European Community aid to CACM countries (1983, Million ECU)

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
	0.74	2.42	1.72	14.47	15.23

EC aid in 1983 for all countries in the region (including regional projects) totalled 44.9 million ECU.

United Nations Decade for Women and Preparations for The 1985 World Conference

During the present Session the Assembly's Third Committee has dealt with a series of items on the United Nations Decade for Women, and the preparations for the Conference that will be held in Nairobi in July 1985 to review the achievements of the Decade. Mr Ivor Richard, Member of the Commission responsible for Employment and Social Affairs, took

part in the debate and described the Community's activities in the field of equal treatment for men and women.

As he explained in his statement on 31 October, the EEC Treaty applies to men and women on an equal basis and Article 119 refers specifically to equality for women at work. Each Member State is required to ensure the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work. In order to implement this objective, three directives (i.e. Community legislative acts, binding as to the objective but leaving the exact means to be determined by the Member State) had been adopted: on equal pay (1975), equal treatment in employment (1976), and equal treatment in social security (1979). A vital aspect concerned the position of women in the Community's labour market. Here a number of important developments were taking place. There had been a significant increase in the participation of women in the labour market, despite present unemployment levels. The female activity rate in the European Community had risen to 32% by 1982 and the gap between the activity rate of men and women would continue to shrink. Nevertheless, the types of jobs women held tended to remain concentrated in a limited number of traditionally female occupations; they were overrepresented in the service sector.

Notwithstanding the disadvantages women may face, there was an increased demand for work by women that had persisted throughout the recent period of economic recession. The Community Action Programme on the promotion of equal opportunities, which had been launched in 1982 and was to be completed by 1985, covered a series of specific objectives to improve the position of women on the labour market and to provide them with more equal opportunities. It was important that women should be given better vocational choices to enable them to enter more easily the growth sectors and the industries of the future. The positive actions to be taken included both those with direct effects, such as the development of measures in the field of education, training and guidance, and indirect actions, for example more flexible working time for both sexes and better childcare facilities.

The Community's approach, and the range of aspects covered, which include the application of the equality principle to immigrant women (which was the subject of a special section of the Community Action Programme), the improvement of data on the position of women on the labour market (undertaken with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)), and the increasing attention paid to the role of women in the development process, showed the extent of Community activity in the wide area of women's issues.

The considerable action underway within the European framework, as steps were taken to harmonise policies and improve the position of women, was thus of interest for those concerned with action on an international scale. Regional and international efforts needed to be complementary. The European Community, concluded Mr Richard, looked forward to participating in the 1985 United Nations Conference which, it was hoped, would lead to the adoption of further strategies to foster greater equality for women throughout the world.

Conference on Technology Transfer and Investment between The European Community and India

The Commission of the European Communities is organising a Conference entitled "Technology Transfer and Investment: European Community-India" to be held at the International Congress Centre in Berlin on 26-27 November 1984. This is one of a series of actions undertaken in the framework of the Community's Commercial and Economic Co-operation Agreement with India aimed at stimulating industrial co-operation between the two partners.

The discussions at the Conference will be based on the results of a joint study in which over 240 European and 170 Indian firms have been surveyed on the problems and perspectives of technology collaboration agreements between firms on both sides. Specific emphasis will be placed on collaboration in the chemical, electronics and mechanical engineering sectors.

Participants will include European and Indian firms who have been involved in industrial collaborations and those who are interested in doing so. Chambers of Commerce, European and Indian Trade Associations and international banks will also be participating. An official Indian delegation composed of senior government officials and leaders of industry will be present during the two day Conference. It is hoped that the discussion will lead to suggestions for further measures which will improve the flow of technology between the two partners.

EC-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Dublin

Sixteen Foreign Ministers from the European Community and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will meet in Dublin on 15-16 November for the Fifth Ministerial meeting to be held in the framework of the current EC-ASEAN Cooperation Agreement. The meeting will provide both sides with an opportunity to review cooperation over the past five years and discuss the direction future relations should take, and mark the increase in the ASEAN side from five to six with the official signing of the Protocol of extension to include Brunei Darussalem.