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Brussels, 4 July 1990

**POLISH AND HUNGARIAN BANK TRAINEES VISIT COMMISSION**

A group of 55 bank officials from Poland and Hungary who are beginning a six-month period as trainees in commercial banks in the European Community, was welcomed in Brussels today by Sir Leon Brittan, Commission Vice-President responsible for financial services. The group is visiting the Commission before departing for various member states. Of the total, 33 are from Poland and 22 from Hungary.

Sir Leon, who launched the scheme in September 1989, said how much he appreciated the prompt response from so many European banks in offering places to the trainees. "A modern banking system is an absolute prerequisite for the reconstruction of the economies of Eastern Europe, yet the practical expertise is often lacking. I hope that this scheme will help to fill the gap by giving the participants a working knowledge of banking methods in a free economy. We are delighted that the places have been taken up and wish our guests every success."

The costs of travel for the participants are being met from the PHARE programme; the banks will bear the full costs of the training period.

Contact for Journalists: Mr. M. Berendt