

PRESS RELEASE

4022/92 (Presse 4)

Special meeting
GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
- Political Co-operation -

Brussels, 10 January 1992

Presidents: Mr João PINHEIRO
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Fernando FARIA DE OLIVEIRA
Minister for Trade and Tourism
of the Portuguese Republic

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The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Marc EYSKENS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Robert URBAIN	Minister for Foreign Trade
Mr Paul DE KEERSMAEKER	State Secretary for European Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Laurits TOERNAES	Minister for Agriculture
Mr Ulrik FEDERSPIEL	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs
Mr Henrik IVERSEN	Deputy State Secretary for Trade and Economic Affairs

Germany:

Mr Hans-Dietrich GENSCHER	Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Jürgen MOELLEMANN	Federal Minister for Economic Affairs
Mr Ignaz KIECHLE	Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture and Forestry
Mr Walter KITTEL	State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry

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Greece:

Mr Antonio SAMARAS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Sotirios HATZIGAKIS	Minister for Agriculture
Mr G. THEOPHANOUS	Secretary-General, Ministry of Economic Affairs

Spain:

Mr Francisco FERNANDEZ ORDOÑEZ	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr José Claudio ARANZADI	Minister for Industry and Energy
Mr Pedro SOLBES MIRA	Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Mr Carlos WESTENDORP	State Secretary for Relations with the European Communities
Mr Miguel Angel FEITO	State Secretary for Trade

France:

Mr Roland DUMAS	Ministre d'Etat, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Louis MERMAZ	Minister for Agriculture and Forestry
Mr Dominique STRAUSS-KAHN	Minister for Industry and Foreign Trade

Ireland:

Mr Desmond O'MALLEY	Minister for Industry and Commerce
Mr Michael WOODS	Minister for Agriculture and Food
Mr Sean CALLEARY	Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs with special responsibility for Overseas Aid

Italy:

Mr Gianni DE MICHELIS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Vito LATTANZIO	Minister for Foreign Trade
Mr Giovanni GORIA	Minister for Agriculture

Luxembourg:

Mr Jacques F. POOS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr René STEICHEN	Minister for Agriculture
Mr Georges WOHLFART	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Netherlands:

Mr Hans VAN DEN BROEK	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Piet BUKMAN	Minister for Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fisheries
Ms Yvonne van ROOY	Minister for Foreign Trade

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Mr Piet DANKERT

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr João PINHEIRO

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Fernando FARIA DE OLIVEIRA

Minister for Trade and Tourism

Mr Arlindo CUNHA

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries
and Food

Mr Vitor MARTINS

State Secretary for European Integration

Mr Jose Manual DURÃO BARROSO

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs
and Co-operation

Mr Antonio SOUSA

State Secretary for Foreign Trade

United Kingdom:

Mr Douglas HOGG

Minister of State, Foreign and
Commonwealth Office

Mr Peter LILLEY

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

Mr John Selwyn GUMMER

Minister for Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

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Commission:

Mr Frans H.J.J. ANDRIESSEN

Vice-President

Mr Ray MACSHARRY

Member

RELATIONS WITH THE FORMER USSR

A. SITUATION IN THE FORMER USSR

1. The Council undertook an appraisal with a view to adapting the Community's policy as regards the new situation in the former USSR and laying down guidelines for its future action vis-à-vis the Republics. The appraisal was carried out on the basis of papers from the Presidency and the Commission.

2. In particular, the Council discussed:

- the tailoring of the Community's technical-assistance and humanitarian-aid programmes to the Republics' needs;
- the Commission's suggestions for the conclusion with the main independent States of specific co-operation agreements geared to the particular situation of each partner;
- the opening by the Commission of delegations in the main independent States;
- the possibility of combined diplomatic representation of the Commission and Member States in some capitals of independent States;
- the desirability of organizing meetings at a political level with leading figures from the Republics.

The Commission is to submit appropriate proposals in the light of the Council's discussions.

3. The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examining the papers from the Presidency and the Commission, to which it would return at its next meeting.

B. WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

The Council held a discussion in preparation for the Conference to be held in Washington on 22 and 23 January 1992 concerning emergency humanitarian aid for the independent States of the former USSR and related technical assistance.

The Community and its Member States, which are at present providing the bulk of the aid effort, consider that Conference politically important as a display of solidarity in the critical situation currently facing the former USSR and in order to make the various donors' efforts more effective by means of better co-ordination.

The Community and its Member States will participate in the Conference on the basis of a common position to be closely co-ordinated beforehand.

The four working party co-chairmanships assigned to Member States or the Commission will be held under a dual arrangement involving the Member State concerned and the Commission. It was agreed that the proceedings of the working party on technical assistance should also cover nuclear reactor safety.

The Council considered that the recipient Republics should be involved in subsequent proceedings in an appropriate manner.

The Community will express its willingness in principle to organize a follow-up Conference.

SOUTH AFRICA

- Repeal of restrictive trade measures

The Council took note of Denmark's withdrawal of its reservations on two Community decisions repealing restrictive measures vis-à-vis imports into the Community from South Africa of gold coins and certain products covered by the ECSC Treaty. At its next meeting, the Council will have before it texts for the formal adoption of those decisions.

URUGUAY ROUND

- Presidency conclusions

1. As a key world trading partner, the Community has consistently aimed at achieving growth in international trade as a basis for sustained economic development. It is indeed the most open economic area in the world. In the Uruguay Round the Community has displayed greater commitment to freer trade and the strengthening of multilateralism than any other contracting party.
2. The Council continued its examination of the paper submitted by Mr Dunkel, in his capacity as Chairman of the GATT Trade Negotiations Committee, as a reference document for the final phase of the negotiations. The Council confirmed the general conclusions which it had reached following an initial

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examination of this document on 23 December 1991 (see press release 10394/91 Presse 250).

3. The Council examined the various dossiers and listed the priority problems. It called on the Commission to take the appropriate action.
4. The Council stressed once again the importance of reaching an early successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round negotiations and asked the Commission to make every effort during the phase of the negotiations following the TNC meeting on 13 January to obtain the substantial improvements and crucial amendments which will be necessary to achieve a balanced, coherent overall result.
5. In conclusion, the Council repeated its call for all the main partners to make genuine efforts to negotiate the compromises necessary for the Round to achieve success. It also stressed that it was vitally important that the negotiations on access to markets and on initial undertakings regarding services should achieve the significant results advocated in the decisions taken following the Montreal mid-term review.

Bruxelles, le 11 janvier 1992

Note Bio 7 aux Bureaux Nationaux
cc aux Membres du Service du Porte-parole

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CONSEIL AFFAIRES GENERALES du 10.1.92
(Nico Wegter)

Le Conseil s'est réuni hier pour une session extraordinaire afin de discuter les points suivants:

- 1) Yougoslavie
- 2) Relations avec les Etats Indépendants de l'ancien URSS
- 3) Conférence de Washington du 22/23 janvier
- 4) Uruguay Round

1) Voir note bio

2) Relations avec les Etats Indépendants de l'ancien URSS

La discussion à cet égard s'est basée sur une communication de la Commission dans laquelle des idées sont exposées en ce qui concerne les futures relations de la Communauté avec les Etats Indépendants de l'ancien URSS.

La note BIO 4 ainsi que la note P-1 du 9 janvier 1992 vous explique l'essentiel de cette communication.

En effet il faut constater un accueil favorable et unanime du Conseil à cette communication. En annexe, vous trouvez l'exposé introductif prononcé par le Vice-Président Andriessen pour le débat au Conseil (voir annexe I).

L'exposé en question donne, entre autres, des explicitations en ce qui concerne les critères qui, d'après la Commission, devraient être pris en compte pour l'établissement des relations contractuelles avec les différents Etats Indépendants en question.

Sans que le Conseil se soit prononcé d'une façon spécifique vis-à-vis des différents éléments exposés par M. Andriessen, la Présidence, à titre de conclusion du débat, a toutefois constaté l'accord du Conseil permettant à la Commission d'entamer des discussions exploratoires avec les principaux nouveaux Etats Indépendants.

Le Vice-Président a souligné que la Commission se concentrera dans une première phase sur quatre Etats, à savoir la Russie, l'Ukraine, la Biélorussie, le Kazakhstan, mais qu'il n'est certainement pas exclu que d'autres Etats Indépendants soient également approchés dans un stade ultérieur, et ceci en fonction de l'évolution politique et économique des différents Etats en question.

Ceci implique donc que les contacts exploratoires précités débiteront dans les prochains mois permettant ainsi à la Commission de soumettre ensuite au Conseil des propositions concrètes visant des négociations pour établir des accords spécifiques avec les différents Etats concernés. La Commission espère que ces derniers accords pourraient être conclus au cours de cette année.

3) Conférence de Washington

Faisant référence à sa rencontre de mardi dernier à Washington avec le Secrétaire d'Etat Baker, le Vice-Président Andriessen a confirmé la participation active de la Commission et des différents Etats membres aux travaux de préparation de la Conférence à Washington. Cette Conférence devra constituer le début d'une coordination adéquate entre les pays donateurs en faveur des Etats indépendants de l'ancien URSS. Le Conseil, pratiquement à l'unanimité, a confirmé sa disposition à contribuer d'une façon positive à l'initiative américaine en question. Le débat au Conseil s'est concentré sur la question de savoir dans quelle mesure le caractère communautaire des initiatives de la part des Etats membres pourrait bien être confirmé.

Dans ce contexte, référence a été faite, aux travaux des différents groupes de travail et notamment à la question de la co-Présidence de ces différents groupes.

Sur la base des discussions préparatoires déjà effectuées par les organisateurs américains avec les différents pays invités, le tableau des différents groupes y compris leur co-présidence se présente comme suit:

- technical assistance - co-chairs: Commission, United States, Japan
- food: United Kingdom, Canada (the Commission?)
- energy: the Netherlands, Venezuela
- shelter: Italy
- medicines: United States, Japan.

Plusieurs délégations, tout en acceptant les engagements déjà pris, ont souligné la nécessité que les Etats membres de la Communauté se présentent d'une manière bien coordonnée et cohérente.

C'est pourquoi il a été finalement conclu de procéder de la manière suivante:

- la Présidence du Conseil se prononcera explicitement à la Conférence au nom de la Communauté
- les Etats membres ainsi que la Commission assureront une coordination adéquate avant et lors de la Conférence de Washington
- les Etats membres ayant été désigné comme co-Présidents de certains groupes de travail se présenteront devant un double panneau: par exemple, "Communauté/Pays-Bas", "Communauté/Italie", etc.
- Il est bien entendu que les structures maintenant arrangées pour la Conférence de Washington ne préjugent nullement les structures futures, c'est-à-dire, l'hypothèse d'une procédure de follow-up à la Conférence de Washington.
En effet, il est très vraisemblable qu'un "follow-up Conference" aura lieu dans quelques mois, probablement en Europe et auquel la Communauté jouera un rôle central. Bien sûr, aucune décision n'a été prise pour l'instant, attendant d'abord les résultats de la Conférence à Washington.

4) Uruguay Round

Les Ministres du Commerce ainsi que leurs collègues responsables pour l'Agriculture se sont rencontrés pendant toute la soirée (jusqu'à 01.00 heure) à titre d'un dîner afin de discuter l'état de l'Uruguay Round.

L'auteur de cette note Bio n'ayant pas eu la permission d'assister à ce dîner, il n'est pas en mesure de donner des indications précises et détaillées des échanges de vue qui ont eu lieu.

- Toutefois sur la base des informations diverses recueillies, il se dégage clairement que le Conseil n'a pas modifié sa position par rapport à la position déjà connue lors de la session précédente le 23 décembre dernier.

En effet, les conclusions du Conseil présentées à cette dernière session et qui vous ont été diffusées comme annexe d'une note bio, ont été confirmées.

Ceci implique donc une appréciation critique du Conseil du rapport Dunkel relatif à plusieurs chapitres et notamment le chapitre agricole. A ce dernier sujet les discussions d'hier soir ont confirmé que plusieurs éléments y relatifs sont inacceptables pour la Communauté, puisqu'ils risquent de mettre en cause la PAC. C'est pourquoi il est convenu que la Commission poursuivra les négociations à Genève afin d'améliorer ainsi le texte du rapport Dunkel.

Il faut encore signaler que les Ministres n'ont pas estimé utile hier soir de parvenir à des conclusions nouvelles et par écrit par rapport au texte des conclusions précitées datées du 23 décembre dernier.

C'est donc à partir du 13 janvier prochain que les négociations débiteront à nouveau et ceci pour entrer dans leur phase finale dont la durée pour l'instant n'est pas encore décidée. Toutefois, l'objectif de finaliser ces négociations si possible avant le 15 mars de cette année a été largement souscrit par les différents Ministres présents à ce dîner.

Annexe 1

"The Community's relations with the independent states of the former Soviet Union"

The Council has before it today a Communication from the Commission on the Community's relations with the independent states of the former Soviet Union as well as an informal document prepared by the Presidency on this subject. I should like to discuss with you briefly the key issues raised in this communication.

The independence of the former republics of the Soviet Union is now a reality, as the Council recognised at the end of last year. The creation of a stable political and economic order in these countries is a far more difficult question than that of diplomatic recognition and will not doubt require a considerable period to achieve. The Community has a major role in helping the new authorities to achieve a successful transition through various forms of political and economic support. The principal instruments now being deployed are outlined in the Communication as well as certain new initiatives which are needed.

Bilateral agreements

Let me first allude to the bilateral framework for our relations. As ministers are aware, the present trade and cooperation with the former Soviet Union needs to be replaced by new agreements with the independent states. The question immediately arises as to the nature of these future agreements.

Two observations can be made immediately.

First, the traditional type of trade and cooperation agreement, conceived before commitments had been made to democratisation and the shift to market economies, is insufficient in its familiar form.

Secondly, Europe agreements, such those recently signed with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, countries which are quite explicit about their desire to join the Community, are based on conditions which independent states will not be in a position to meet for quite some time.

What is needed therefore is a new intermediate type of cooperation agreement which can be concluded in the course of this year and which contains a number of new elements. I intend to explore these elements with the independent states in conversations over the coming weeks. But already I might suggest that they could include:

- all that is presently covered by the bilateral agreement with former Soviet Union
- provisions intended to strengthen the transition to systems based on political and economic freedom
- support for institution building and the strengthening of civil society
- financial as well as economic cooperation
- appropriate arrangements for political dialogue

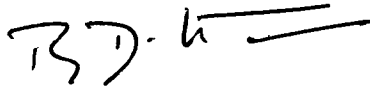
These elements will need to be modulated to take into account the capacities, needs, interests, level of development and geographic location of the country concerned. It should be recalled that some of the states in question have much in common with developing countries in Asia while others aspire to a process of development similar to that of the countries of central and eastern Europe. All this will need to be taken into account.

I hope to be in a position to present the Council with draft negotiating directives covering at least some of the independent states in the first half of the year.

Diplomatic representation

Both as a matter of principle and in order to supervise implementation of our various assistance programmes, the Community as such needs to be represented soon in the capitals of the independent states. In the principal states, delegations, albeit modest in scale, will be needed. In the others, we can begin with the presence of one or two Commission officials to guide the experts working on our projects and to establish a channel of communication. Back-up services in Brussels will also need to be strengthened. All this will, of course, have budgetary consequences and the Commission will be making the necessary proposals in the context of the revision of the financial perspectives.

I would lend my support to suggestions which have been made that the Community and the Member States explore ways, wherever possible, to pool their diplomatic representation in some of the capitals in order to lighten the administrative burden and to give expression to our desire increasingly to speak with a single voice."



Amitiés,
B. Dethomas

