

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

**PRESS RELEASE**

**9281/93 (Presse 170)**

**1695th Council meeting**

**ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS**

**Luxembourg, 25 October 1993**

**President: Mr Philippe MAYSTADT,  
Minister for Finance  
of the Kingdom of Belgium**

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

Belgium:

Mr Philippe MAYSTADT Minister for Finance

Denmark:

Mrs Marianne JELVED Minister for Economic Affairs

Germany:

Mr Johann EEKHOFF State Secretary for Economic Affairs

Mr Gert HALLER State Secretary for Economic Affairs

Mr Franz-Christoph ZEITLER State Secretary for Finance

Greece:

Mr Georges ROMAIOS Undersecretary, National Economy

Spain:

Mr Pedro SOLBES MIRA Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance

Mr Alfredo PASTOR BODMER State Secretary for Economic Affairs and Finance

France:

Mr Edmond ALPHANDERY Minister for Economic Affairs

Ireland:

Ms Eithne FITZGERALD Minister of State at the Department of Finance

Italy:

Mr Piero BARUCCI Minister for the Treasury

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER Minister for Finance

Netherlands:

Mr Marius VAN AMELSVOORT State Secretary for Finance

Portugal:

Mr Jorge BRAGA DE MACEDO Minister for Finance

Mr José BRAZ State Secretary for the Treasury

United Kingdom:

Mr Kenneth CLARKE Chancellor of the Exchequer

- + -

Commission:

Mr Jacques DELORS President

Mr Henning CHRISTOPHERSEN Vice-President

Mr Raniero VANNI d'ARCHIRAFI Member

Ms Christiane SCRIVENER Member

- + -

The following also attended:

Sir Brian UNWIN President of the EIB

Sir Nigel WICKS Chairman of the Monetary Committee

Mr François MONIER Chairman of the Economic Policy Committee

### DEALING WITH BUDGET BALANCES

The Council adopted a statement on the solution of the problem of dealing with budget balances and instructed its President to forward it to the European Parliament.

### PREPARATION FOR THE 2nd STAGE OF EMU

The Council reached political agreement on a series of seven draft texts containing the secondary legislation for the 2nd stage of EMU.

As soon as the Treaty on European Union enters into force on 1 November, the drafts submitted by the Commission will become formal proposals subject, as appropriate, to the co-operation procedure (Article 189c of the Treaty for the texts on monetary financing and privileged access) or consultation with the European Parliament (for the other texts).

The Council wanted these procedures with the European Parliament to be brought to a conclusion as quickly as possible so that it could adopt the texts by the end of the year, with a view to entry into force on 1 January 1994.

The main features of the seven draft texts are as follows:

- Prohibition on privileged access to financial institutions for the government sector

The draft Regulation is designed to establish, amongst other things, the following principles concerning the prohibition on privileged access laid down in Article 104a of the Treaty:

- = privileged access is deemed to cover not only any obligation on financial institutions to acquire or hold public debt, but also any tax or financial advantages which might be

conferred on those financial institutions in order to encourage them to acquire or hold that debt;

= obligations to fund social housing are not regarded as privileged access provided that the same terms are applied to the public and private sectors.

- Prohibition on monetary financing by Central Banks

The aim of this draft Regulation is to spell out definitions for application of the prohibition on any monetary financing of the public sector by Central Banks which is laid down in Article 104(1) of the Treaty. Amongst other things, the text makes an exemption for securities acquired by Central Banks from the public sector to ensure the conversion into negotiable securities under market conditions of claims acquired before 1 January 1994. Such conversion is also felt to be desirable if the monetary policy of the future European Central Bank is to have the requisite flexibility.

- Excessive deficit procedure

In accordance with Article 104c(14) of the Treaty, this draft Regulation is designed to lay down detailed rules and definitions for the application of the provisions of the Protocol on the excessive deficit procedure. It confirms that the terms "government deficit" and "government debt" are to be defined according to the European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA), while specifying that:

- = amounts outstanding in the government debt from the financing of public undertakings will be the subject of a separate presentation;
- = for short-term trade credit, only that represented by financial instruments will be taken into account.

- Key for the financial resources of the EMI (European Monetary Institute)

The draft Decision is designed to specify the statistical sources which will supply the parameters used to calculate each Central Bank's share in the European Monetary Institute's resources and, at a later stage, in the capital of the European Central Bank.

In practice, this means each Member State's share in the population of the Community and in Community Gross Domestic Product, each of which will be halved for the purposes of the key.

- Consultation of the EMI on draft legislation

Under Article 109f(6) of the Treaty, Member States must consult the European Monetary Institute on any draft legislative provision within its field of competence. The draft Decision is intended to lay down detailed rules for this consultation procedure, both as regards its scope and the time limits to be observed.

- Taxation and privileges and immunities of EMI officials

These draft Regulations are designed to extend application of the tax for the benefit of the EC to EMI staff, and to extend the privileges and immunities of EC officials and other servants to such staff.

## GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT

In the run-up to the extraordinary European Council on 29 October, the Council took stock of progress made since the Edinburgh European Council in implementing the growth initiative, at both Community and national level. Vice-President Christophersen presented a note on the subject from the Commission.

In this connection, the Council noted that the Member States would do all they could to complete national ratification procedures for the European Investment Fund by the end of the year, so that it could become operational from the beginning of 1994.

The Council also took note of a paper from the Commission dated 20 October on the

feasibility of recourse, under the EIB's temporary lending facility, to a Community initiative programme for granting interest subsidies to SMEs.

Lastly, the Council heard a report from the Chairman of the EIB on the Bank's operation of the temporary lending facility, and discussed broadening its scope in order to generate sufficient investment volume to have a significant effect on the economy.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the Council President would brief the President of the European Council on the outcome of the day's discussions.

#### **NOMINATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN MONETARY INSTITUTE**

The Council gave its opinion in favour of the recommendation from the Committee of Governors of the Central Banks to the Heads of State and Government that Baron Alexandre Lamfalussy, currently General Manager of the Bank for International Settlements, be appointed President of the European Monetary Institute.

### UNDERTAKINGS FOR COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT IN TRANSFERABLE SECURITIES (UCITS)

The Council held an initial discussion on the scope of a new Directive aimed at amending the 1985 UCITS Directive. The Commission proposal is designed to supplement the 1985 Directive in several respects, in particular by extending its scope to cover UCITS investing in the units of other UCITS and funds investing solely in bank deposits (cash funds).

At the close of the discussion, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue work on the subject in the light of the forthcoming European Parliament Opinion and of further particulars to be supplied by the Commission.

### TAXATION OF SAVINGS

The Council held an exchange of views on this matter, after hearing a statement by its President drawing attention, *inter alia*, to the consequences of the fact that there was no minimum harmonization of savings taxation.

In conclusion, it asked the ad hoc Working Party to continue its discussions on the subject without giving precedence at Community level to withholding tax or to a return-based system.

### TAXATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT

The Council adopted a Directive on the application by Member States of taxes on certain vehicles used for the carriage of goods by road and tolls and charges for the use of certain infrastructures. The Directive was adopted at the same time as the Regulation on road haulage cabotage (see Miscellaneous decisions - page I).

It will be remembered that the Transport Council of 28 September registered its agreement on the drafts of the two texts, further to the political agreement reached on 19 June 1993 (see press release 7345/93 Presse 107 for the contents of the Directive).

At this meeting the Council and the Commission agreed on the following statement:

"During a transitional period from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 1997:

- Member States whose tax rates on 1 January 1995 are twice the minimum rates or more may lower their tax rates to twice the minimum rates;
- Member States whose tax rates on 1 January 1995 are less than twice the minimum rates may not reduce their tax rates as a rule, unless these reductions are offset by new charges imposed on the transport sector in such a way that the overall competitive situation in the sector is unchanged. The only exemption that may nevertheless be allowed will be for certain specific categories of lorry."

#### TRAVELLERS' ALLOWANCES

The Council reached political agreement on:

- raising allowances for travellers from third countries from ECU 45 to ECU 175 (and from ECU 23 to 90 for adolescents) and the limits on tax-free purchases in intra-Community travel from ECU 45 to 90; this latter figure could be subject to review in 1995;



- allowing Germany to be exempt from application of the new third-country allowances until 1997 in respect of travellers coming from third countries, other than EFTA countries, within which Germany has a common border, and entering German territory by a land border or by a coastal sea route;
- allowing Spain to apply, until 31 December 2000, an allowance of ECU 600 for imports of goods by travellers from the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla entering Spanish tax territory.

#### OPERATION OF THE NEW INDIRECT TAXATION SCHEMES

The Council heard a statement from Ms Scrivener on the operation of the new indirect taxation schemes since 1 January 1993. Concluding her statement, Ms Scrivener announced that in the next few weeks the Commission would be submitting a written report taking initial stock of six to nine months of operation of the indirect taxation schemes. The Council requested the ad hoc Working Party of Senior Officials responsible for considering indirect taxation questions to study the report.

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO MOLDAVIA AND BELARUS

The Council raised the question of a Community contribution to financial aid for Moldavia and Belarus and asked the Monetary Committee and the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examining the question.



## MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

(adopted unanimously and without debate, unless stated otherwise)

### Exemptions from the 6th VAT Directive

The Council adopted nine Decisions authorizing Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom to apply a measure derogating from Articles 2(1) and 17 of the Sixth Directive (77/388/EEC) on the harmonization of the laws of the Member States relating to turnover taxes.

The measure is designed to simplify the current rules of the transitional VAT arrangements applicable to certain repairs and domestic goods transport services which are causing difficulties for undertakings, particularly as regards the tax refund provided for by the 8th and 13th VAT Directives.

In point of fact, the territoriality principle as applied to these services, requiring them to be taxed in the place where they are physically carried out, has the effect of obliging taxable persons who are not in the territory of the Member State where the services were performed to pay the VAT in that country and then apply for a refund under the 8th or 13th Directive. The resulting proliferation of applications for refund is hampering the freedom to provide services within the single market.

### Transport

The Council adopted a Regulation laying down the conditions under which non-resident carriers may operate road haulage services within a Member State (road haulage cabotage) following the agreement of principle registered by the Council on 19 June 1993 (see press release 7345/93 Presse 107).

With adoption of this Regulation, which comes, as planned, at the same time as that of the Directive harmonizing the taxation of road transport, a further step has been taken towards completion of the internal market in the transport sector.

The definitive cabotage arrangements for road haulage are scheduled to enter into force on 1 July 1998. Prior to that, between 1 January 1994 and 30 June 1998, there will be a phasing-in period during which each Member State will have to allow non-resident carriers to carry out domestic haulage on a temporary basis without making them subject to national quantitative restrictions on access to the market, provided that such haulage operations are carried out in the framework of a Community cabotage authorization and quota system.

On 1 January 1994, the Community cabotage quota will comprise 30 000 cabotage authorizations lasting two months. It will be increased annually by 30%, starting on 1 January 1995.

The definitive cabotage arrangements, which will come into force on 1 July 1998, will involve the generalized admission of duly qualified carriers established in one Member State, on a temporary basis and without quantitative restrictions, to domestic road haulage services in another Member State.

#### Relations with the ACP

The Council adopted a Regulation prohibiting the supply of certain goods to UNITA. As from 7 October 1993, the Regulation prohibits:

- the sale or supply of petroleum and petroleum products, whether or not originating in the Community, in the territory of Angola through points of entry other than the airports of Luanda and Katumbela (Benguela province) and the ports of Luanda, Malongo (Cabinda province), Lobito (Benguela province) and Namibe (Namibe province);
- any activity the object or effect of which is, directly or indirectly, to promote sale or supply transactions.

#### Anti-dumping measures

Following the review of Decision 87/66/EEC accepting undertakings given in connection with imports of binder and baler twine originating in Brazil and Mexico, the Council took note of a draft Decision renewing the above measures submitted by the Commission on 7 September 1993, and noted that there was no qualified majority within the Council "to decide otherwise" within the meaning of the basic Regulation.

#### Deposit-guarantee schemes

Following the agreement of principle reached at its meeting on 13 September (see press release 8233/93 Presse 135), the Council, acting by a qualified majority and with the German delegation voting against, formally adopted its common position on the Directive on deposit-guarantee schemes.

#### Consumer protection

With the German delegation abstaining, the Council adopted a Decision concerning the institution of a Community system for the exchange of information in respect of certain products which may jeopardize consumers' health or safety.

The Decision is applicable until 29 June 1994, the date on which the notification procedure provided for by Directive 92/59/EEC on general product safety will be introduced.

The Decision is ancillary to the removal of technical controls at internal frontiers and does not pre-determine the arrangements for administrative co-operation under implementation of the internal market.

The system is based on notification to the Commission by the Member States of any regulations, laws or administrative measures they adopt to prevent, restrict or attach particular conditions to the marketing or use within their territory of a product batch, on the grounds that it does not comply with the relevant Community or national rules and might jeopardize the health or safety of consumers when used in normal and foreseeable conditions.

On receipt of the information, and after holding consultations with the parties concerned if necessary, the Commission will forward it to the competent authorities of the other Member States.

The enacting terms apply to products intended for use by consumers, except products intended exclusively for professional use. It does not apply to the following products, which are already subject to specific Community notification procedures: agricultural products, foodstuffs, cosmetics, tobacco products, materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs, medicines, medical devices including means of in vitro diagnosis and plant-health products.

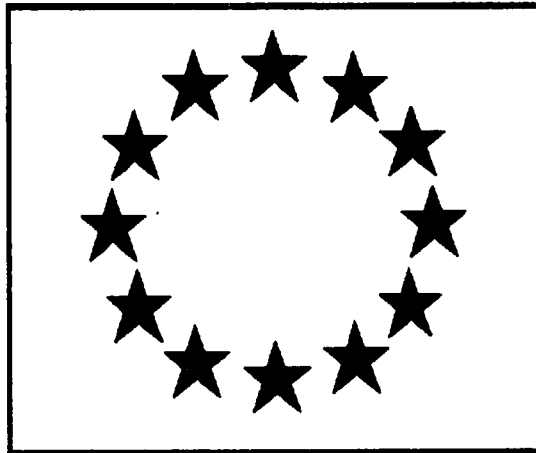
#### Environment

The Council adopted a Decision concerning the conclusion of the Convention on Biological Diversity signed by the Community on 13 June 1992 at the UNCED in Rio de Janeiro.

The objectives of the Convention are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by suitable funding.

In adopting this Decision, the Council considered, amongst other things, that the Community and its Member States should participate in international efforts in this area, particularly by encouraging the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and in attaining agreed rules on utilization and sharing the benefits which are generated.





COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPEENNES  
COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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TO : C.E. WASHINGTON - WASHINGTON  
REF : 3298010835 - 25-10-1993 11:29

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7 FAXCP117  
SUBJECT "Conseil Ecofin 25 octobre Luxembourg "

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Bruxelles, le 22 octobre 1993

NOTE BIO(93) 244 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX

cc : Aux Membres du Service du Porte-Parole

CONSEIL ECOFIN DU 25 OCTOBRE - FISCALITE  
(Isabella La Moal-Ollive et Paula Laissy)

Le Conseil abordera certains dossiers de fiscalité dans l'après-midi du 25 octobre. Au cours du déjeuner, le Ministre Maystadt fera part des réflexions de la Présidence au sujet de la fiscalité de l'épargne de façon à préciser le mandat du groupe de travail et organiser la suite des travaux sur ce sujet. L'objectif du Conseil et de la Commission en cette matière se limite à définir des orientations avant la fin de l'année.

Franchises pour les voyageurs en provenance des pays tiers et limites d'achats en boutique hors-taxes dans la Communauté

Le Conseil pourrait trouver lundi un consensus sur ce point qui est en négociation depuis maintenant une année. Madame Scrivener insistera sur la nécessité de conclure enfin ce dossier qui bénéficiera aux citoyens européens.

Depuis 1981, les franchises pour les marchandises dans les bagages personnels des voyageurs en provenance des pays tiers sont fixées à 45 Ecus. Parallèlement, les limites aux achats effectués dans les boutiques hors taxes par les voyageurs intracommunautaires sont alignés sur ces montants et donc fixés à 45 Ecus.

Rappelons que ces boutiques sont autorisées à vendre des marchandises hors taxes à l'intérieur de la Communauté jusqu'au 30 juin 1999 seulement.

En octobre 1992, la Présidence du Conseil Ecofin, appuyée par la Commission a proposé le relèvement du seuil des franchises pays-tiers à 175 Ecus (pour les mineurs) et en parallèle le relèvement du seuil des limites d'achats hors taxes à 90 Ecus.

Depuis lors, deux délégations éprouvent des difficultés à adhérer à cette proposition :

- d'une part, la délégation allemande qui craint des risques de fraude sur certaines de ses frontières demande le report de l'application du relèvement de la franchise pays tiers jusqu'au 30 juin 1999 pour les voyageurs en provenance de pays ayant une frontière commune avec son territoire;
- d'autre part, la délégation française souhaite relever le niveau des limites d'achats dans les boutiques hors taxes de 90 à 150 ou 200 Ecus.

La Présidence, soutenue par la Commission, devrait être en mesure de proposer un compromis pour conclure cette affaire lundi



Rappelons qu'en tout état de cause depuis le 1 janvier 1993 il n'y a plus aucune limite aux achats toutes taxes comprises des voyageurs se déplaçant à l'intérieur de la Communauté.

Bilan du fonctionnement des nouveaux régimes de fiscalité indirecte dans une Communauté sans frontières

Madame Scrivener présentera oralement aux Ministres des Finances les résultats du premier bilan du fonctionnement des régimes de TVA et d'accises sans frontières. Le Commissaire évoquera tant les aspects relatifs aux entreprises qu'aux citoyens. Les avantages du nouveau système mais aussi les difficultés rencontrées dans certains domaines seront abordés ainsi que les perspectives de simplification à venir.

Madame Scrivener fera le point avec la presse à ce sujet lundi après midi à l'issue du Conseil.

Fiscalité routière

Le Conseil va en principe adopter formellement la directive sur la fiscalité routière suite à l'accord politique obtenu lors du Conseil Transport de juin et qui a été consolidé lors du Conseil du 28 septembre dernier. Reste le problème de la reconsultation du Parlement européen. Etant donné l'entrée en vigueur du Traité de l'Union, le Conseil voudrait cette adoption en urgence de façon à éviter de réouvrir la procédure sur une nouvelle base juridique (tel que prévu par le nouveau Traité). En dehors de ce caractère d'urgence, la Commission n'a pas d'objections de principe à la reconsultation du Parlement.

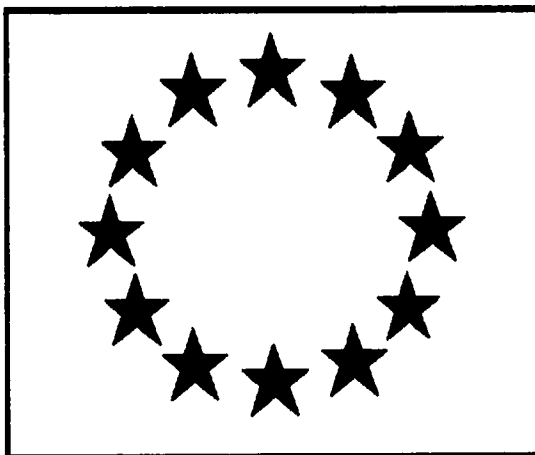
Cette adoption permettrait ainsi de conclure le deuxième volet du dossier de la fiscalité des transports routiers destiné à mettre en place des conditions loyales de concurrence au sein du Marché intérieur. Le premier volet, qui prévoyait l'harmonisation des taux minima des droits d'accises sur le diesel est déjà entré en vigueur le 1 janvier 1993.

Amitiés,

Bruno Dethomas



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**COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPEENNES**  
**COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES**

FROM : C.E.C. - M181 GEORGES.L  
TO : C.E. WASHINGTON - WASHINGTON  
REF : 3298011781 - 25-10-1993 17:32

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Luxemburg, 25th October 1993.

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CC. aux membres du service du porte-Parole

Conseil ECOFIN - 25 October 1993

(T. Krajer)

After today Ecofin Council, Vice-President Henning Christophersen spoke to journalists on two issues: secondary legislation and the growth initiative.

\* Secondary legislation

The Vice-President told journalists that the Council had reached a political agreement on the seven proposals from the Commission concerning secondary EMU legislation (concerning for example monetary financing, privileged access and excessive deficits). The agreement follows to a large degree the conclusions of the informal Ecofin Council in Geneva two weeks ago.

The Vice-President underlined that the proposals will now be examined by the European Parliament and he expressed the hope final adoption can take place before the end of the year.

\* The growth initiative

M. Christophersen said that the application by the BEI of the Edinburgh facility was going well. However, he was not satisfied with the way which other measures are being implemented.

As to the Edinburgh facility of 5 billion ECU, carried to 8 billion at the Summit of Copenhagen, the Vice-President said that more than 3 billion ECU have now being engaged. In terms of reinforcing this initiative he thought it would be useful to look at the eligibility of projects benefiting from the facility. For example, the scope of activities could be enlarged to include housing and renovation in inner cities.

As to national measures he said that the Member States are generally following the recommendations adopted at the Edinburgh Summit. Member States have generally switched from current spending to capital

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spending.

Member States have also given priority to private investment for example by means of tax incentives and bonifications to house building and/or renovations. Also, in the field of structural measures the Member States are taking steps in line with the conclusions from Edinburgh.

As to the economic forecasts the Vice-President said that the Commission

still believes that growth in the Community will be -0.5 this year and grow to between 1% and 1.5% next year. However, if German growth will move from -1.5% this year to +1.5% next year as now suggested in new German forecasts, Community growth could be between 1.5% and 2% next year. At any rate, he was convinced that the bottom has been reached and that recovery is slowly under way. Higher rates are however needed to bring down the unemployment.

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Amitiés,

T. Kroyer

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Bruxelles, le 26 octobre 1993

NOTE BIO(93) 244 (suite no2) AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX  
cc : aux Membres su Service du Porte-Parole

CONSEIL ECOFIN DU 25 OCTOBRE - FISCALITE (Isabelle La Moal-Ollive)

Le Conseil Ecofin du 25 octobre a pris deux décisions importantes et pris acte du premier bilan de fonctionnement des nouveaux régimes de fiscalité indirecte sans frontières, présenté par Madame Scrivener. Une longue discussion a été consacrée au cours du déjeuner à la question de la fiscalité de l'épargne.

Adoption de la fiscalité des transports routiers

Le Conseil a formellement adopté la directive relative à l'application par les Etats membres d'un système commun de taxes sur les poids lourds (> 12 tonnes), de péages et de droits d'usage de leurs infrastructures (voir détails dans la note BIO(93)162 suite 1).

Lié à ce dossier, le règlement fixant les conditions de cabotage dans le marché intérieur a été également adopté en point A.

Cette double adoption permet de conclure le deuxième volet du dossier de la fiscalité des transports routiers destiné à mettre en place des conditions loyales de concurrence entre transporteurs dans le marché unique.

Le premier volet, qui prévoyait l'harmonisation des taux minima des droits d'accise sur le gazole diesel est déjà entré en vigueur le 1 janvier 1993.

Accord sur les franchises voyageurs en provenance des pays tiers et sur les limites d'achats hors taxes à l'intérieur de la Communauté

Les Ministres des finances ont marqué leur accord politique sur ce dossier en attendant une prochaine adoption formelle après information du Parlement européen.

- a) Le plafond de la franchise fiscale prévue pour les voyageurs en provenance de pays tiers fixé en 1981 à 45 Ecus a été relevé à 175 Ecus. Ce plafond concerne les marchandises que l'on achète toutes taxes comprises dans un pays tiers pour les apporter dans la Communauté sans droits de douane ni formalités.





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Deux dérogations ont été autorisées :

- L'Espagne peut appliquer jusqu'au 31 décembre 1996 une franchise de 600 Ecus aux marchandises importées par les voyageurs en provenance des Iles Canaries, de Ceuta et de Melilla (ces régions ne font pas partie du territoire fiscal de la Communauté).
- L'Allemagne peut différer jusqu'au 1 janvier 1998 le relèvement de cette franchise pour les voyageurs en provenance des pays non AEE limitrophes de son territoire par voie terrestre et maritime. La limite restera donc de 45 Ecus jusqu'à cette date.

- b) Le plafond des limites d'achats effectués dans les boutiques hors taxes de la Communauté par les voyageurs qui voyagent d'un port ou d'un aéroport de la Communauté vers un autre port ou aéroport de la Communauté a doublé, il passe de 45 à 90 Ecus.

Rappelons que cette possibilité d'acheter des marchandises hors taxes (TVA et accises) dans la Communauté est maintenue jusqu'au 30 juin 1999. Après cette date, elle sera supprimée pour tous les voyages à l'intérieur de la Communauté.

En tout état de cause depuis cette date, il n'y a plus aucune limite aux achats effectués dans les commerces ordinaires par les voyageurs qui se déplacent à l'intérieur de la Communauté.

Le Conseil des Ministres a décidé de revoir ce montant de 90 Ecus en 1996 pour la période 1995/1999.

Le relèvement de ces deux plafonds, franchise pays tiers et achats hors taxes, devra être mis en oeuvre en principe le 1 janvier 1994.

Madame Scrivener s'est félicitée au nom de la Commission de ce résultat concret, fruit d'une longue négociation avec les Etats membres. "Ce réajustement réaliste donne aux voyageurs de la Communauté un sujet de satisfaction supplémentaire, en complément de la liberté totale d'achat dont il jouit déjà à l'intérieur du marché unique. C'est important pour l'Europe des citoyens".

#### Premier bilan du fonctionnement des nouveaux régimes de fiscalité indirecte dans une Communauté sans frontières

Madame Scrivener a transmis ce bilan aux Ministres de finances et présenté oralement ses conclusions : (texte intégral diffusé sous forme de discours)

- b) Ce bilan est le résultat des différents suivis de la situation : Comité permanent de coopération administrative, Comité d'écoute des entreprises et correspondance avec les Ministres des finances des Etats membres.



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- Ce premier bilan est globalement positif, il identifie les difficultés concrètes des opérateurs et annonce les solutions à venir

Aucun problème fondamental n'a été signalé, alors que la réforme est d'une ampleur sans précédent.

Le nouveau système a été mis en place dans les délais, il fonctionne dans toutes ses dimensions et satisfait les besoins des opérateurs (réduction des coûts et des délais), des consommateurs (liberté totale d'achats) et des Etats membres (lutte contre la fraude).

L'effet de la réforme sur les recettes de TVA est neutre, les baisses de TVA enregistrées par certains Etats membres au premier trimestre 1993 ne peuvent lui être imputés.

- Les difficultés rencontrées tiennent beaucoup à la rigidité de certains régimes particuliers adoptés pour sécuriser certains Etats membres dans certains secteurs d'activité économique et donc à un manque d'harmonisation.

Les opérateurs exigent légitimement de nouvelles initiatives, la Commission y travaille concrètement en ce qui concerne les transferts imposables, le travail à façon, certaines prestations de transport et certains travaux réalisés sur des biens meubles. Dans ce dernier cas une solution provisoire a été adoptée hier par le Conseil sous forme d'une dérogation demandée par neuf Etats membres.

Les Ministres des finances ont vivement remercié la Commission pour ce travail de fond et procéderont à l'examen du bilan avant la fin de cette année.

#### Fiscalité de l'épargne

Monsieur Maystadt a introduit ce sujet lors de la conférence de presse finale en indiquant qu'après les progrès des travaux sur le plan technique il lui avait paru nécessaire de faire le point au niveau politique

La Présidence estime que l'on ne peut privilégier l'un ou l'autre des systèmes défendus par les Etats membres, le système déclaratif ou le système de retenue à la source. Il est nécessaire de poursuivre les travaux au plan technique pour trouver une formule permettant de combiner les deux au niveau communautaire.



**BELGIAN PRESIDENCY'S WORK PROGRAMME**

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Pursuant to the conclusions of the Edinburgh European Council on transparency, the Council began its meeting with a discussion on the economic and financial aspects of the Belgian Presidency's work programme in a session open to the public (via televised broadcast).

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**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

The Council took note of the Commission's intention to submit in the immediate future specific proposals for financial support from the Community to the Peace Process in the Middle East.

The Council agreed that 20 million will be added to the amount of ECU 70 million already in the budget for 1993. This amount, to be financed within the overall 1993 budget through transfers between lines, will be used to help establishing necessary administrative structures in Jericho and Gaza in particular for education and health, help in setting up small enterprises, and food aid.

The Council also agreed to examine urgently the Commission's proposals for a 5-year assistance programme comprising loans and grants.

The Council recalls that the Community over the years has contributed close to ECU 1 billion of aid to the Palestinian population.

The Community plans for the coming five-year period also comprise substantial assistance to neighbouring countries affected by the Peace Process.

