

PRESS RELEASE

5050/88 (Presse 34)

1228th meeting of the Council

- Environment -

Brussels, 21 March 1988

President: Mr Klaus TOEPFER,  
Federal Minister for the Environment,  
Nature Conservation and  
Reactor Safety  
of the Federal Republic of Germany

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

Belgium:

Mrs Miet SMET State Secretary for the Environment

Denmark:

Mr Mogens BUNDGAARD-NIELSEN State Secretary,  
Ministry of the Environment

Germany:

Mr Klaus TOEPFER Federal Minister for the Environment,  
Nature Conservation and Reactor  
Safety

Mr Clemens STROETMANN State Secretary at the Federal  
Ministry of the Environment,  
Nature Conservation and Reactor  
Safety

Greece:

Mr Evangelos KOULOUMBIS Minister of Public Works, Regional  
Planning and the Environment

Spain:

Mr Javier SAENZ COSCULLUELA Minister for the Public Works and  
Town Planning

France:

Mr Alain CARIGNON Minister attached to the Minister  
for Infrastructure, Housing, Town  
and Country Planning and Transport,  
with responsibility for the  
Environment

Ireland:

Mr Padraig FLYNN Minister for the Environment

Italy:

Mr Enrico PIETROMARCHI Deputy Permanent Representative

Luxembourg:

Mr Robert KRIEPS Minister for the Environment

Netherlands:

Mr E.H.T.M. NIJPELS Minister for Housing,  
Planning and the Environment

Portugal:

Mr Luis VALENTE DE OLIVEIRA Minister for Planning and  
Territorial Administration

Mr MACARIO CORREIA State Secretary for the  
Environment and Natural Resources

United Kingdom:

The Earl of CAITHNESS Minister of State,  
Department of the Environment

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Commission:

Mr Stanley CLINTON-DAVIS Member

CLOSE OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The Council approved the following Resolution:

"The Council of the European Communities,

- referring to the decision of the European Council of 29 and 30 March 1985 designating 1987 as the "European Year of the Environment" and to the Council Resolution of 6 March 1986 on an action programme for that year;
- noting that, following adoption of the Single Act, environment protection policy has become a fully established policy of the European Community;
- THANKS the Commission and all those who have contributed, under the aegis of the Steering Committee and the National Committees, to the success of the European Year of the Environment;
- WELCOMES the impact made by and response to the European Year of the Environment in the Community, enabling awareness to be increased among a large number of those in positions of responsibility in administrations, industry and trade unions, local authorities and associations and also a broad spectrum of European public opinion, particularly young people;
- IS PLEASED that events were organized around practical projects and in a decentralized way, thereby enabling numerous regional and local bodies in the Community to participate;

- NOTES with interest the efforts made to encourage in particular, European, multinational or bilateral projects and to involve the business world in the European Year of the Environment;
- TAKES NOTE of the initiatives to encourage the submission and implementation of projects with an environmental aspect which may be eligible for the various Community Funds;
- NOTES with satisfaction that some non-member countries were involved in the European Year of the Environment and that the Commission carried out information, education and awareness projects directed at developing countries;
- HOPES that the information and awareness activities undertaken during the European Year of the Environment will have follow-on effects well beyond it and bring benefits and practical progress for the protection of the environment and of the world we live in;
- CALLS ON the Commission, on the basis of experience in the European Year of the Environment, and in co-operation with the Member States, to continue its information and education efforts and to carry out practical measures to that end, in association with interested organizations;
- EMPHASIZES in this connection that, if Community environmental policy is to progress in both its framing and its implementation, there is a need for greater convergence of interests and attitudes on the importance of environmental problems on the part of public opinion and the sectors concerned in all Member States;
- CALLS upon the Member States to pursue the objectives which inspired the European Year of the Environment in collaboration with interested groups and the Commission."

WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR CHROMIUM

On the basis of a compromise proposal from the Presidency, the Council continued its examination of the proposal for a Directive on water quality objectives for chromium and limits for chromium in waters.

After the discussion the Presidency noted that the Council was unable to reach agreement at this stage. The Presidency would consider what further action should be taken in this matter.

CHLOROFORM

The Council reached agreement on the proposal for a Directive laying down limit values and quality objectives for discharges of chloroform in the aquatic environment.

The aim of the Directive is to regulate chloroform Community-wide in the view of the dangerous nature and wide diffusion of this substance.

The Directive will be adopted after finalization of the texts and will mark a further stage in the Community-level regulation of dangerous substances falling within Annex I to Directive 76/464/EEC.

WASTE FROM THE TITANIUM DIOXIDE INDUSTRY

The Council acknowledged that the Directive on this matter was one of great importance and that every effort should be made to enable it to be adopted at the Council meeting on 16 June 1988. The Council therefore instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue seeking solutions to the various problems arising in the light of its discussion.

LARGE COMBUSTION PLANTS

On the basis of a compromise proposal from the Presidency, the Council continued the examination of the proposal for a Directive on the limitation of emissions of pollutants into the air from large combustion plants.

After the discussion, the Council asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to press ahead with its discussions on the subject so that it could take a decision at its meeting in June.

ENVIRONMENT AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION

The Council resumed the examination of the proposal for a Decision establishing a five-year Community-wide programme of projects illustrating how action taken in the environmental field can also contribute to employment creation. The Council mainly concentrated on the financial aspects of the proposal.

After the discussion, the Council asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its examination of this proposal and to resubmit it in due course.

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES WHICH DEplete THE OZONE LAYER

The Council held an initial exchange of views on the proposal for a Decision concluding and implementing the Vienna Convention for the protection of the ozone layer and the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer, and on the proposal for a Regulation on the implementation of the Montreal Protocol in the Community.

The Council noted that the political will existed for taking a decision on this matter in good time to enable the Montreal Protocol to come into force on 1 January 1989. It stressed the importance it attached to all the Member States ratifying the Vienna Convention as soon as possible and in any event by 1 October 1988. It instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to press ahead with its discussions so that it could act on the proposal for a Decision and the proposal for a Regulation at the next meeting in June.

POLLUTION FROM MOTOR VEHICLES (small cubic capacity)

Pending the European Parliament's Opinion, the Council held an initial exchange of views on the proposal for a Directive relating to measures to be taken against air pollution by gases from the engines of motor vehicles (small cubic capacity).

After the discussion, the Council stressed the need to reach an early decision on the subject. It therefore instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue the discussions with all due speed so that it could reach an agreement at its meeting in June, after the European Parliament's Opinion had been received.



Agricultural policy

The Council adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, Regulations:

- amending Regulation No 804/68 on the common organization of the market in milk and milk products. The aim of this amendment is to increase the effectiveness of the supplementary levy in the milk sector where Formula B applied (dairy quotas) (see Press Release 4443/88 Presse 13);
- amending Regulation No 1820/80 for the stimulation of agricultural development in the less-favoured areas of the West of Ireland. A common position on this matter was established by the Agriculture Council at its meeting on 7-9 March 1988 (see Press Release 4933/88 Presse 27).

Fisheries policy

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities a Decision fixing the customs duties on imports of redfish (*Sebastes Spp*), fresh, chilled or frozen, falling within codes 0302 69 31, 0302 69 33, 0303 79 35, 0303 79 37, ex 0304 10 99 and 0304 90 31 of the Combined Nomenclature and originating in Iceland.

Relations with the EFTA countries

The Council adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, Regulations on the application of Decisions No 3/87 of the EEC-EFTA Joint Committees amending Protocol No 3 with a view to determining the rules for the application of Decision No 3/86 in the case of Spain and the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla.

Social affairs

The Council agreed on the arrangements for the Community's participation in the proceedings of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (Vienna, 14 to 23 March 1988).

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Brussels, 18 March 1988

NOTE BIO (88) 98 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX  
CC: AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE PORTE-PAROLE

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RENDEZ-VOUS DE MIDI - 18 March 1988

PREPARATION ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL - 21 March 1988 - (M.F. Berendt)

The major issue on the agenda of this Council will be on large combustion installations, which includes power stations and industrial plant. The Council has been discussing for some years Commission proposals which would provide for a 60% reduction in SO<sub>2</sub> and a 40% reduction for NO<sub>x</sub> and dust on a national basis between 1980 and 1995. Strict standards would also be set for new plant. The presidency has put forward new compromise proposals which would lay down a three-phase reduction in SO<sub>2</sub> (40% by 1993, 60% by 1999, and 70% by 2003). This may prove too strict for the British, and the Spanish delegation is expected to ask for special exemptions for imported coal.

As far as new plant is concerned, the main argument will centre on the minimum size of installation, where Britain regards the 50MW proposed by the Commission as too small. The presidency is proposing 50 MW but with exemptions for new solid fuel plant which would be fixed at 100 MW.

A final decision on this dossier seems unlikely.

The Council will have the first opportunity to consider the Commission's new proposals for implementing the Montreal protocol on the reduction of CFC production. The Commission has proposed implementation on a Community basis of a freeze, followed by a 50% reduction in two stages.

The Commission's new proposals on small car emissions will also be on the agenda of Council for the first time. Opinion is expected to be evenly divided, half the Member States regarding the proposed norms as too strict and the others as too lax.

This Council marks the end of the European Year of the Environment. The results of the Year will be discussed in the Council and at 19.00 hrs. the closing ceremony will be held in the Centre Borschette where Ministers will see an exhibition on the projects which have been carried out during the year.

Other points on the agenda of the council include chrome, chloroform and titanium dioxide in water and also the Commission's proposals for Community financing of pilot projects for creating jobs through environmental investment.

Matériel distribué

IP 162 NETT - Nouveau réseau d'information pour le transfert  
de technologie dans le secteur de l'environnement  
Memo 45 Préparation du Conseil Environnement du 21.3.88  
Memo 44 Bulletin mensuel de l'Eurostat sur le chômage  
IP 165 Droit antidumping sur l'acide oxalique provenant du  
Taiwan, et de la Corée du Sud  
IP164 Aide alimentaire pour une valeur de 184 Mécus

Regards,

  
C.D. Ehlermann



WORK. AMONG THE NUMEROUS PROBLEMS IS THE THRESHOLD LEVEL AT WHICH THE DIRECTIVE WOULD APPLY, THE TIME-SCALE AND FIGURES ENVISAGED UNDER THE PRESIDENCY COMPROMISE, (700/0 REDUCTION IN SULPHUR DIOXIDE BY 2003) AND THE VARIOUS EXEMPTIONS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE AN OVERALL AGREEMENT.

MINISTERS GAVE THEIR FIRST REACTIONS TO THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS FOR EMISSION STANDARDS FOR CARS UP TO 1.4 LITRES. THESE PROPOSALS WOULD COMPLETE THE LUXEMBOURG PACKAGE WHICH WAS ADOPTED IN DECEMBER 1987 BY SETTING LEVELS OF 30 G. PER TEST FOR CARBON MONOXIDE AND 8 G. PER TEST FOR HYDROCARBONS AND NITROGEN OXIDES COMBINED. THE REACTION OF MINISTERS WAS PREDICTABLE. BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG AND IRELAND WERE ABLE TO ACCEPT THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL. DENMARK, GERMANY, NETHERLANDS AND GREECE REGARDED IT AS TOO LAX DEMANDING 20 G. AND 5 G., WHILE BRITAIN, FRANCE, ITALY, PORTUGAL AND SPAIN CALLED FOR NORMS WHICH WERE LESS STRICT, 35 G. AND 12 G. THIS PROPOSAL COMES UNDER ARTICLE 100A OF THE TREATY AND COULD EVENTUALLY BE TAKEN BY QUALIFIED MAJORITY FOLLOWING A DOUBLE READING PROCEDURE WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT.

ON CFCS MINISTERS WERE BROADLY IN FAVOUR OF THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS TO CONTROL SUPPLY RATHER THAN TRYING TO LIMIT THE LEVEL OF USE OF THESE PRODUCTS. ALL EXPRESSED THEIR INTENTION TO SIGN AND RATIFY THE PARENT VIENNA CONVENTION AND THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL ITSELF SO THEY COULD COME INTO EFFECT BY THE BEGINNING OF 1989. DENMARK, GERMANY, THE NETHERLANDS AND THE UK ANNOUNCED THAT THEY HAD ALL REACHED VOLUNTARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH MANUFACTURERS TO PHASE OUT THE USE OF CFCS IN AEROSOLS. NEGOTIATIONS WILL BEGIN IN EARNEST AT THE JUNE COUNCIL WHEN THE PRESIDENCY HOPES TO ACHIEVE A DECISION.

WATER POLLUTION

A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM WHICH BESET DISCUSSIONS ON DISCHARGES OF CHROME AND CHLOROFORM INTO WATER WAS THE BRITISH CONTENTION THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE TAKING SUCH DECISIONS FOR LIST I DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES, RATHER THAN WORKING ON THE SO-CALLED GREY LIST CHEMICALS. HOWEVER, THE COUNCIL WAS ABLE TO AGREE THE DIRECTIVE ON CHLOROFORM ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WOULD APPLY TO DISCHARGES FROM INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES AND THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD BE GIVING PRIORITY TO SUBSTANCES 'THAT ARE LIKELY TO BE PRESENT IN COMMUNITY WATERS AT LEVELS WHICH CAUSE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS'. THE NEW MEASURE SETS EMISSION LIMITS AND QUALITY OBJECTIVES IN WATER. IT REFLECTS THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PARTICULAR SUBSTANCE. NO SUCH COMPROMISE COULD BE FOUND TO ALLOW ADOPTION OF SIMILAR PROPOSALS ON CHROME. WORK WILL CONTINUE.

DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY FOR SOME YEARS ON THE DISCHARGE AND DUMPING OF TITANIUM DIOXIDE WASTE.  $TiO_2$  IS USED PARTICULARLY IN THE PAINTS AND VARNISHES INDUSTRY. THE FRENCH AND SPANISH MINISTERS WERE UNABLE TO ACCEPT THAT DISCHARGE AND DUMPING AT SEA SHOULD BE PHASED OUT BY THE END OF 1989, BUT THE ALTERNATIVE OF 1992 WAS REFUSED BY DENMARK AND ITALY. THE UK MINISTER REJECTED THE USE EMISSION LIMITS FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF WASTE.

#### EMPLOYMENT CREATION

THE COUNCIL HAD A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL FOR A 35 MILLION ECU FUND FOR PILOT EMPLOYMENT-CREATING PROJECTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR. IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THE RELUCTANCE OF SOME MEMBER STATES TO ACCEPT THIS SPECIAL FUNDING, THE COMMISSION AGREED TO SUBMIT A COMMUNICATION SETTING OUT A COHERENT COMMUNITY PROGRAMME FOR ALLOCATING SOME EXISTING COMMUNITY STRUCTURAL FUNDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT.

DURING THE EVENING MINISTERS VISITED AN EXTREMELY COMPREHENSIVE EXHIBITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH WAS HELD AT THE CENTRE BORSCHETTE, ALTHOUGH SOME MINISTERS DISCLAIMED THEIR WISH TO CELEBRATE AFTER A RATHER UNCONSTRUCTIVE COUNCIL MEETING. COMMISSIONER CLINTON DAVIS TOLD THE COUNCIL THERE WAS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR DECISIONS AND THAT FINE WORDS WOULD BE QUITE MEANINGLESS IF THE COUNCIL COULD NOT ACT TO ADVANCE ENVIRONMENT POLICY.

REGARDS,

C.D. EHLERMANN

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