

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

9139/90 (Presse 150)

1431st Council meeting

- Industry -

Luxembourg, 15 October 1990

President: Mr Adolfo BATTAGLIA

Minister for Industry, Trade
and Craft Trades of the Italian
Republic

Italy

Mr Adolfo BATTAGLIA

Minister for Industry, Trade
and Craft Trades

Luxembourg

Mr Robert GOEBBELS

Minister for Economic Affairs

Netherlands

Mr P.C. NIEMAN

Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

Portugal

Mr Luis MIRA AMARAL

Minister for Industry and Energy

United Kingdom

Mr Douglas HOGG

Minister of State, Department of
Trade and Industry (Minister for
Industry and Enterprise)

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Commission

Mr Martin BANGEMANN

Vice-President

Sir Leon BRITTAN

Vice-President

Mr Antonio CARDOSO E CUNHA

Member

15.X.90

unw/MG/lr

THE COMMUNITY'S INDUSTRIAL POLICY

On the basis of a note from the Italian Presidency on the problem of the Community's industrial policy and in the light of a statement by Vice-President BANGEMANN describing the current state of preparation of a Commission paper on this subject, the Council held an initial policy debate on the guidelines to be marked out for the Community's general industrial policy within the frame of reference set by completion of the internal market in 1993, the appreciable advances towards political and monetary union and the forthcoming completion of the Uruguay Round.

At the close of its discussions, which highlighted a series of problems arising in this connection, the Council agreed to take its policy debate further at the next meeting of the Industry Council on 26 November 1990 on the basis of the communication which the Commission was shortly to submit; the final version of this communication would also take into account the economic impact of recent geopolitical developments.

In his summing-up, the President hoped that at its forthcoming meetings the Council would be able to lay the foundations for a consistent Community industrial policy alive to the problems faced by the rest of the world and capable of fostering harmonious and balanced development of Community industry while at the same time accommodating national and regional realities and giving due weight to the problems of environmental protection.

EFFECTS OF COMPETITION RULES ON INDUSTRIAL POLICY

1. The Council held an exchange of views on competition policy in the context of the internal market.

2. The Council took note of the following suggestions put forward by the Commission in the interests of transparency and legal security:
 - (a) once a year the Commission will submit its annual report on competition to the Council, for a general discussion; this report would cover, inter alia, the compendium referred to below

 - (b) twice a year, the Commission will hold a multilateral meeting of experts on State aids

 - (c) the Commission will publish a compendium
 - of procedures
 - of general implementing texts and
 - of judgments of the Court of Justicerelating to State aids.

INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATION WITH CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

After hearing Vice-President BANGEMANN introduce the Commission communication on industrial co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe, the Council held an exchange of views on the various aspects of this co-operation.

At the close of the discussion, the Council invited the Commission to keep it regularly informed of its progress in this area, and agreed that at the appropriate time it would examine the specific proposals which the Commission intended to submit.

A COMPETITIVE EUROPEAN AERONAUTICAL INDUSTRY

The Council heard a statement by Vice-President BANGEMANN introducing the Commission communication on a competitive European aeronautical industry.

The Council held a constructive discussion and asked the Commission to take account of the attitudes of the Member States in its subsequent work on promoting integration of the aeronautical industry on a European scale.

THE EUROPEAN SEMI-CONDUCTOR INDUSTRY

Since Vice-President PANDOLFI was unable to attend the meeting, this item was held over for a future Council meeting.

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LUXEMBOURG, 15 OCTOBER 1990.

NOTE BIO(90) 304 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
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CONSEIL INDUSTRIE (M. BERENDT)

A BID BY THE PRESIDENCY TO INTRODUCE GREATER COUNCIL OF MINISTERS INVOLVEMENT INTO THE CONTROL OF STATE AIDS WAS UNSUCCESSFUL. THE PRESIDENCY HAD ARGUED THAT THE CRITERIA USED BY THE COMMISSION IN APPLYING STATE AID DISCIPLINE WERE NOT SUFFICIENTLY TRANSPARENT AND DID NOT TAKE SUFFICIENT ACCOUNT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. COUNCIL PRESIDENT BATTAGLIA HAD CALLED FOR THE COMMISSION TO COME FORWARD IN THE PROPOSAL UNDER ARTICLE 94 OF THE TREATY.

THIS APPROACH WAS SPECIFICALLY OPPOSED BY SIX MEMBER COUNTRIES, WHO SAW IT AS THREATENING THE COMMISSION'S ROLE AS INDEPENDENT ARBITRE AND - IN THE WORDS OF THE DUTCH REPRESENTATIVE - TURNING STATE AIDS INTO A POLITICAL FOOTBALL.

SIR LEON UNDERLINED THE POSITION GIVEN TO THE COMMISSION UNDER ARTICLE 92 AND 93 OF THE TREATY. HE UNDERTOOK THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD IMPROVE THE FLOOR OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES BY :

- PROVIDING A CORRIGENDUM OF THE EXISTING STATE AID GUIDELINES, FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVES, MAJOR COURT DECISIONS, ETC. IN THE STATE AID FIELD. SO THAT GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESSMEN WILL HAVE A CONVENIENT AND COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE CONTEXT OF COMMISSION ANALYSIS AND DECISION.

- ORGANISING AND PROVIDING A TWICE-YEARLY MEETING ON A UNILATERAL BASIS FOR SENIOR OFFICIALS OF MEMBER STATES. WHERE DEVELOPMENTS IN STATE AID POLICY COULD BE DISCUSSED.

- PARTICIPATING IN AN ANNUAL DEBATE IN THE COUNCIL WHERE THE COMMISSION REPORT TO THE PARLIAMENT ON COMPETITION POLICY COULD BE DEBATED.

THESE UNDERTAKINGS WERE GENERALLY WELCOMED BY THE COUNCIL AND ALL ATTEMPTS BY THE PRESIDENCY TO REFER THE QUESTION TO COREPER OR TO A FUTURE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL CAME TO NOTHING. THE VIEW

FOLLOWING THE COUNCIL IS THAT THIS MATTER IS NOW CLOSED.

MICHAEL BERENDT

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