

No. 27/86
September 16, 1986

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44/11/86

E.C. PLACES ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA

European Community Foreign Ministers today agreed to ban imports of iron, steel and gold coins from South Africa as a protest against that country's apartheid system.

Meeting in Brussels, the 12 Ministers also decided to ban new investment in South Africa. Although most member states also favored a ban on coal imports, the participants could not reach a consensus on that issue.

The Ministers noted that South Africa had not taken the necessary steps toward a "genuine national dialogue" that were identified by E.C. Heads of State or Government (the European Council) at a June meeting in The Hague. (See European Community News No. 22/86.)

The text of the Foreign Ministers' statement follows.

STATEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA MINISTERIAL MEETING: SEPTEMBER 15-16, 1986

The Foreign Ministers of the Twelve reviewed their policy towards South Africa in the light of decisions adopted at The Hague European Council on June 26-27. They heard a report from Sir Geoffrey Howe on the mission to the region which he undertook at the request of Heads of State or Government.

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Ministers expressed their grave concern that the situation in South Africa appeared to have entered a new phase of increased tension under the State of Emergency. They shared the widespread anxiety within the Member States over reports of the conditions in which some detainees are being held. They once again condemned the practice of detention without trial. They called for the release of all people so detained under the State of Emergency, which they wished to see brought to an end.

The Ministers underlined the importance they attached to the strengthening and more effective coordination of the positive measures being taken to assist the victims of apartheid both by Member States and by the Community itself. They noted that the draft Community Budget for 1987 forwarded to the European Parliament by the Council on September 10 contained an increased provision for the Community program, with particular emphasis on training.

Ministers reaffirmed the urgent need for a genuine national dialogue, across lines of color, politics and religion. They deplored the fact that the South African Government was not yet prepared to take the steps necessary to make this possible. Two steps in particular were identified at The Hague:

- the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners;
- the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress, the Pan African Congress of Azania and other political parties.

They undertook to work towards a program of political action designed to promote the achievement of these objectives.

In view of the South African Government's failure to respond and after consultation with other industrialized countries, Ministers decided that the Twelve should now proceed to adopt a package of restrictive measures on the lines envisaged at The Hague. This consists of bans on new investment and on the import of iron, steel and gold coins from South Africa. On implementation, they took an immediate decision to suspend imports of iron and steel in the framework of the European Coal and Steel Community Council with effect from September 27.

Ministers also decided to ban the import of gold coins originating in South Africa and new investments in that country, without prejudice to the means of implementation of these measures which will be the subject of further examination by the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Political Committee.

Most partners were also willing to implement a ban on the import of coal from South Africa if a consensus on this could be achieved. On this question, the Presidency will continue to seek consensus on the basis of the statement made by The Hague European Council.