



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

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GATT and CAP. Talks between the EC and US aimed at resolving the long-running oilseed dispute resumed in Washington yesterday. Commissioners Ray MacSharry and Frans Andriessen hope to reach agreement on EC farm subsidies before the US imposes swingeing tariffs on some EC goods in two weeks time. Addressing the European Parliament on Wednesday, Commission President Jacques Delors stressed that the Council had renewed its mandate to the Commission. The Commission now had its negotiators in Washington and these negotiators had the full confidence of the Commission which, he said, spoke with one voice on the matter. The European Parliament would have to judge for itself the outcome of the GATT talks, which had to be "global and balanced". Any compromise on the agriculture question had to be compatible with the CAP reforms already agreed.

Eurobarometer. The latest Eurobarometer, published last week, reveals that more citizens in the UK would vote against the Maastricht Treaty than anywhere else in the Community. The survey, conducted shortly after sterling's withdrawal from the Exchange Rate Mechanism, shows 62% against the Treaty and 38% in favour. Denmark followed with 53% against. The highest score in favour was 85% recorded by Italy, although more Italians admitted that they had not heard anything about the Treaty recently. Jean Dondelinger, Commissioner for Information, said that Maastricht had been a watershed for the development of the Community. Basic information on "how Europe works" was still lacking, he said.

Woman of Europe Award. The UK Woman of Europe Award will be announced next Thursday, 26 November, at midday, in the European Commission's London offices. Helena Kennedy QC will make the presentation. The Women of Europe Award was set up in 1987 through the cooperation of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Movement. Presented annually, it recognises outstanding voluntary contribution towards the development of the European Community. The 1991 UK and overall European winner Juliet Lodge, Professor of European Politics at the University of Hull, will also be present. National winners from all twelve Member States gather in London on Friday, 27 November, for the overall European Woman of Europe Award to be presented at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Details, Alison Parry, tel: 081 891 1021 or fax: 081 744 1980.

Delors on Denmark. President Delors told MEPs yesterday that the outcome of the current debate on subsidiarity should allay Danish fears about a loss of national identity under the Maastricht Treaty. Delors said he had read the Danish Memorandum on Maastricht "carefully". He had confidence that the Danes would accept the concept of European citizenship. It was simply a matter of removing ambiguity and misunderstanding. He pointed out that the Danish protocol added to the Maastricht text upheld the Danes' national prerogatives in any decision about Economic and Monetary Union. The Community was built on "dynamic compromise", he stressed. Member States had to work out what was possible.

Tobacco advertising. Social Affairs Commissioner Vasso Papandreou told Health Ministers last Friday that the impasse on the proposal to ban tobacco advertising put the credibility of the Council at stake. She reminded ministers that after completion of the Single Market Member States already exercising the ban may legitimately restrict material carrying tobacco adverts, such as magazines, on the grounds of protecting public health. The Commissioner urged the ministers to agree to the ban even if their counterparts in the Finance and Agriculture Councils opposed the move.

Aid to Wales. Road schemes in West Glamorgan will receive a 29m ECUs (£23m) loan from the European Investment Bank. The loan to West Glamorgan County Council will go towards road improvements to encourage new industrial and service businesses to set up in the region which has suffered heavily from the decline in coal and steel. The UK has received some £1,000m in EIB loans so far this year, with £127m going to local authorities. (NB. 1 ECU = £0.81).

Drug Prevention Week. More than 35% of young people in the Community say they have been offered drugs before the age of 19. This is the background to European Drug Prevention Week, launched in London with a flagship conference on Tuesday addressed by HRH the Princess of Wales, UK Secretary of State for Health, Virginia Bottomley and Social Affairs Commissioner Vasso Papandreou. The week, organised by the European Community and Member States, seeks to bring home the importance of drug prevention and reduce demand, especially among children and young people. The Commission has donated 2m ECUs to sponsor national efforts.

Long-term unemployed. The UK will receive some 525.7m ECUs next year from the European Social Fund to support training and employment programmes for the long-term unemployed and help young people get on the job ladder. Announcing the Community Support Framework for 1993 last week in Brussels, Vasso Papandreou said that the Commission was responsive to the need for more resources at a time when unemployment was rising again the Community.

Aid to Irish SMEs. The Commission has decided to approve a temporary aid scheme to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Irish Republic who are in financial difficulties after the exchange rate changes in the ERM which saw the Irish pound appreciate by 18% against Sterling. Up to 67 ECUs (Ir£50) per employee may be paid to SMEs who can show that their survival and employees' jobs are under substantial threat. The Commission approved the aid after considering the exceptional and unforeseeable changes in the ERM, the Republic's historic trade links with Britain and Ireland's position as one of the EC's least-favoured regions. The scheme will run until March next year.

Interference in monopolies. Competition Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan welcomed a judgement by the European Court of Justice on Tuesday confirming the Commission's power to prevent national monopolies which act against the wider Community interest. Four Member States, Belgium, France, Spain and Italy, complained that the Commission had abused its powers under Article 90 in a 1988 Directive which obliged Member States to abolish existing monopoly rights on the supply of telecommunications services, other than simple voice telephony.

BA/Dan Air takeover. Sir Leon Brittan this week defended the Commission's decision to allow British Airways to take over Dan Air. He was replying to complaints voiced publicly by Air France President, Bernard Attali, that the Commission had applied double standards to airline mergers. Air France deals with the Belgian carrier Sabine and two internal French airlines were blocked on competition grounds. In a letter, Sir Leon pointed out that the BA merger was outside of Commission competence. The annual turnover fell below the threshold of 250m ECUs at which the Commission could intervene.

Economic legal system for the CIS. Senior Commission officials met leaders of the newly-independent states (NIS) in Kiev last week to discuss the creation of a "sound, homogenous" legal framework for the nascent market economies of the ex-Soviet republics. At the conference, organised under the EC's TACIS programme, Director-General for Finance and Economics Giovanni Ravasio said that legal and economic reforms were closely linked together. The Community and Commission are to provide assistance towards legal reforms to help strengthen trade between the NIS themselves and with the international business community.

Disabled students. A Commission report out this week, reveals that 2%, some 1.2 million, of the Community's school age children and students are disabled. Practical measures to integrate the handicapped into school life are well under way in all Member States, although approaches vary. Some Member States provide special schools, others favour integrating the disabled into the school system. The UK, France, Greece and Ireland work both systems using a case by case evaluation of the level of disability. The report concludes that integration into the normal school environment should consider the effects on all students involved, not just the handicapped.

UK's first "Health & Safety Week". To mark the 1992 European Year of Safety, Hygiene & Health Protection at Work, the UK's Health and Safety Executive is promoting a week (23-27 November) of initiatives which reinforce the year's themes with three main messages: make your business safe and sound; good health is good business; and take a fresh look at health and safety hazards in your workplace. The HSE is awarding certificates to all participants. For details, contact your local HSE area office, Morris Johns on 071 243 6447 or George Dyson on 071 243 6912 at the HSE in London.

Health & Safety: the European Challenge. This set of four videotapes, co-financed by the European Commission, provides a unique introduction to the health and safety in the workplace across the Community. Contact Trade Films on 091 477 5532 or fax 091 478 3681.

Conference & Diary Dates:

"The EC and Industry after 1992". Ann Robinson speaks at the Federal Trust, 6pm on 25 November at Europe House, 158 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1. Contact Judy Keep on 071 259 9990.

European Arts Festival November update. Boudin Exhibition opens at the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 20th; Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Gustav Leonhardt begins the Purcell weekend at Queen Elizabeth Hall, London on 21st; and Portuguese Jazz at the same venue on 22nd.

Council meetings:

Telecommunications	19 November	Brussels
Ecofin	23 November	Brussels
Fisheries	23 November	Brussels
Industrial Affairs	24 November	Brussels

Our next briefing will be on Thursday, 26 November at 11.30am.