



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

Jean Monnet House
8 Storey's Gate London SW1P 3AT
Telephone: 071-222 8122
Fax: 071-222 0900

WE/31/91
12 September 1991

THE WEEK IN EUROPE

EC promotes peace in Yugoslavia. The EC's peace conference on Yugoslavia duly opened last Saturday at the Peace Palace in The Hague under the Chairmanship of Lord Carrington with a statement that the common aim was to bring peace to all in Yugoslavia and to find lasting solutions "which do justice to their legitimate concerns and aspirations." To this end the EC decided to establish an Arbitration Commission in the framework of the Conference. The EC statement at the opening session also said the participants were determined never to recognise changes of any borders which have not been brought about by peaceful means and by agreement. Finally, despite the continuation of fighting in Croatia, the EC solemnly declared its will to do everything in its power to enable the conference on Yugoslavia to proceed in a peaceful environment "for which the ceasefire observed in all its elements immediately is essential." Speaking at the conference opening, Commission President Jacques Delors said that while politics were very important with such great principles as the right of peoples to self-determination and respect for human rights in question, the economy of Yugoslavia must not be forgotten. He reminded his audience that economic crises were often the origins of civil wars. Meanwhile EC monitors in Croatia and Slovenia will step up their work as the peace conference was due to reconvene today (Thursday) in The Hague. The monitors, which will number more than 300, have already spent the past several days travelling in regions of eastern Croatia which have borne the brunt of ethnic clashes also involving Serb militants and elements of the Yugoslav Federal forces.

New Dutch EMU proposals. Speaking at a meeting of EC Finance Ministers in Brussels on Monday, Netherlands Finance Minister Wim Kok explained the Presidency's approach towards Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) after presenting new draft proposals which were attacked by some EC Finance Ministers and the Commission for increasing the possibility of a two-speed Community. It is reported that Kok said the draft was prepared as a technical paper in order to prompt discussion. It received guarded support from the UK and Germany, while Italy and some southern EC countries were said to object to imposition of strict economic conditions. The Netherlands expects to table a formal draft treaty before the end of next month. Commission President Jacques Delors also criticised parts of the Dutch Paper, saying that a two-speed approach would be politically unacceptable.

EC and the Baltic States. On a visit to the Estonian capital, Tallinn, this week, Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen, responsible for external affairs, told ministers from the newly-independent Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that the EC wanted relations with them to develop "step by step." He said the three countries must settle for a first-generation agreement on trade and economic cooperation before they could obtain the formal association with the EC to which they aspire. EC officials were going on to Riga (Latvia) and Vilnius (Lithuania).

Queen to address European Parliament. HM Queen Elizabeth II is to address the European Parliament in Strasbourg next year. She is the only European Community Head of State not to have done so. A joint statement on Tuesday by the European Parliament and Buckingham Palace said the Queen would address the Parliament's 518 Members next summer. Next July the UK assumes the Presidency of the EC Council of Ministers for six months. The end of the British term will coincide with the inauguration of the Single European Market at the conclusion of the 1992 process.

EC protects time-share buyers. Consumer Affairs Commissioner Karel van Miert announced on Tuesday plans to introduce Community legislation which would allow buyers of time-share properties a "cooling off" period during which they could change their minds about a deal. The Commission may produce a draft directive protecting time-share customers against high-pressure salesmanship before the end of the year.

EC merger control task force. In its first 12 months the EC task force under its Director, Colin Overbury, investigated 49 mergers involving some of Europe's biggest corporations and blocked none. It gave confidential advice to companies contemplating mergers in a further 50-odd cases. At present, under merger

control legislation introduced a year ago, the EC has the authority to investigate takeovers where the combined turnover of the parties involved exceeds 5 billion ecus (£3.5bn) and their Community-wide turnover is more than 250m ecus (£175m). Competition Commissioner, vice-President Sir Leon Brittan, said in Brussels this week there were no current plans by the Commission for proposing a change in these thresholds, although, he added, the Commission's long-term policy has been known since 1989.

EC loan to Algeria. EC Finance Ministers on Monday approved a 400m ecus (£280m) loan to Algeria in support of the country's economic recovery. The loan will be disbursed in two tranches of 250m ecus and 150m ecus.

EC-Czechoslovakia textile protocol. A one-year protocol on trade in textile products was initialled last week between Czechoslovakia and the European Community. The new protocol is of a transitional nature, pending the conclusion of the Association Agreement. It governs Czechoslovakia's textile exports to the Community during the year 1992.

Pan-European Transport Conference. The Ministerial pan-European Transport conference organised jointly by the European Parliament and the Commission under the auspices of President of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic Vaclav Havel will take place in Prague 29 - 31 October 1991. Some 30 countries including EC and EFTA Member States, countries of Central and Eastern Europe are expected to attend.

Aid for Albania. Albania is to receive humanitarian aid following the visit of a joint Commission-World Health Organisation mission last month. The mission found aid urgently needed in three areas: medicines and pharmaceuticals (1.5m ecus); medical equipment (1.3m ecus) and means of transport (700,000 ecus). The first delivery of medicines - 10 tonnes - arrived in Tirana on 31 August.

PHARE. The Commission has just sent to the Council and to the European Parliament its annual report on economic aid from the Community to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 1990. The report details the financing of projects totalling 500m ecus (£350m) in favour of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, former East Germany, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. For 1991, the Community forecasts a PHARE budget of 785m ecus (£550m) in favour of the six countries plus Romania.

School for Advanced Urban Studies, University of Bristol, plans two short courses this autumn: "Labour market policy and the completion of the Single Market" 24 - 25 October; "The European Community: what price local self-government?" 9 - 10 December. Details: Katherine Green 0272 741 117 ext 263.

"Work versus Family?" A new book about practices at work that unite employment and caring responsibilities from the Dawcliffe Hall Educational Foundation. Price £7.88 plus p&p. Available from the Conference Secretary, Dawcliffe Hall Educational Foundation, 12 Gunnersbury Avenue, London W5 3NE.

Women of Europe Award. Reminder: deadline 11 October for nominations for the UK Woman of Europe Award 1991. Further information: Alison Parry on 081 891 1021; FAX 081 744 1980; or European Movement (Peter Luff/Stephen Woodard 071 839 6622).

Conference and Diary Dates.

The Further Education Euro-Unit: Yorkshire and Humberside will be officially launched in Leeds on Friday 20 September at the offices of YHAFHE. Details: Charles Rothwell or Jennie Stone on 0532 430 991 or 0532 440 751.

The European Pension Committee is organising a one-day debate and open forum on Supplementary Retirement Plans in the Single Market on Tuesday, 24 September in Brussels. Registration fee 360 ecus. Details from Mrs A. Wolters. Tel: 010 322 460 2284.

Annual European Seminar for Rangers, Wardens and Interpreters. "Green Tourism". 22 - 27 September at Losehill Hall, Peak National Park Centre, Castleton, Derbyshire S30 2WB. Tel: 0433 203 73.

The role of the Media in Multicultural Europe Post 1992. A three-day conference to be held in Amsterdam 24 - 26 October. Jointly organised by the Centre for Educational Opportunity - Luton College of Education and BBC Education. Tel: 0582 341 11. Fax: 0582 418 677.

Informal ECOFIN	21 - 22 September	Apeldoorn
Informal Social Affairs	23 - 24 September	Ootmarsum
Agricultural Council	23 - 24 September	Brussels
Informal Housing Ministers	24 - 25 September	Amsterdam
EEC-ACP Assembly	24 - 27 September	Amsterdam
Informal Agriculture	30 September - 1 October	Drachten

Our next briefing will be on Thursday, 19 September at 11.30am.