



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

Yugoslav crisis. EC Foreign Ministers meet in The Hague today (Thursday) to discuss the deepening crisis in Yugoslavia. Lord Carrington is expected to report in his mission to Yugoslavia earlier this week. He persuaded the warring factions there to sign a new ceasefire but he returned speaking openly of a last chance for peace. Today's meeting will be held in conjunction with a special meeting of Western European Union. Nine of the twelve Member States make up the WEU and the Foreign Ministers are expected to look at various options for strengthening the EC's current ceasefire monitoring operation. Some WEU members are already on record for saying that WEU may have to think of setting up a stronger peace-keeping operation if the warring factions inside Yugoslavia cannot agree among themselves. British concerns about the handling of the Yugoslav crisis were spelled out by Prime Minister John Major during talks yesterday (Wednesday) with the Dutch Prime Minister and current EC President Ruud Lubbers in The Hague although their meeting was primarily designed to discuss the draft treaties on economic and monetary union and on political union.

Higher anti-cartel fines likely. Speaking to the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels this week, Commission Vice-President Sir Leon Brittan signalled a policy of high fines against companies infringing the EC's anti-cartel regulations. At present, companies found guilty of infringing anti-cartel regulations can be fined up to 10% of their previous year's turnover. Sir Leon said that turnover-related fines may be more extensively applied to companies making a number of products. He added: "Multi-product industrial combines cannot safely think that they will continue to be treated more leniently if they engage in hard-core activities." Sir Leon defended the EC's "dawn raids" against companies, saying the "smoking gun" evidence found during such investigations would never have been produced on a voluntary basis. He also called on the British government to find parliamentary time to give the UK's Office of Fair Trading the same powers as those of the EC. Currently, companies intending to merge and who have a combined turnover of more than 5bn ecus (£3.5bn) and an EC turnover of 250m ecus (£175m) each have to be referred to Brussels. Sir Leon, who was delivering the second in a series of lectures on the EC's competition policy, said he hoped "in due course" these thresholds would be reduced to 2bn ecus (£1.4bn) and 100m ecus (£70m) respectively.

Millan on the role of the regions. Giving the Trades House Lecture at Strathclyde University last Friday, Commissioner Bruce Millan reviewed the importance of cross-border cooperation of the various regional structures throughout the EC. His analysis included Germany, the only federal state in the present Community; Belgium whose regions and communities resemble in many respects member states of a federation; the semi-autonomous regions of Italy, Spain and Portugal, all political entities within constitutionally unitary states; French regions and Dutch provinces; and finally the countries or regions of the UK, Denmark and Ireland where their legal status is very similar to that of municipalities.

MacSharry seeks GATT breakthrough. Commissioner Ray MacSharry, responsible for Agriculture, met his American counterpart Edward Madigan on Tuesday in Washington DC in an effort to make a breakthrough in the stalled Uruguay Round of talks on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Agriculture subsidies have been one of the main stumbling blocks to a successful conclusion of the talks. The G7 summit in July set the end of the year as a deadline for agreement. The so-called Quadrilateral Group, made up of the US, the EC, Japan and Canada at Angers in Western France met at the weekend to try to get the GATT talks moving. Carla Hills, US Trade Representative, said progress would depend on reform of the EC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and she did not expect this to start until next month. After their meeting the four negotiators agreed that events in central and eastern Europe and the Soviet Union made a successful conclusion of the negotiations even more necessary than before. Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen, the EC chief trade negotiator, is reported to have said that the emergence of new states from within the Soviet Union was creating problems for the world trading system. He added it was too soon to take any decisions on how much aid was required or to whom it should be provided, or whether the Soviet Union or its component republics should become full members of GATT.

Speeding-up single market legislation. Speaking after a weekend's informal meeting of Internal Market Ministers in Amsterdam, Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Piet Dankert said joint meetings between Internal Market Ministers and Agriculture and Finance Ministers may be proposed by the Dutch Presidency to increase the pace of legislation essential for a barrier-free single European market. He said the Dutch viewed the Internal Market Council as something of an engine to push the others at the necessary speed to meet the deadline of the end of 1992. Internal Market Ministers are also reported to have agreed to ask national officials to develop a single computer information system linking national customs, police and tax authorities after 1992. Most of the 69 outstanding single market measures are the responsibility of Finance and Agriculture Ministers. Internal Market Ministers themselves still face problems with priority issues such as the establishment of an EC trade mark office.

New challenges for maritime policy. The Commission is proposing to begin a dialogue to improve competitiveness in the shipping industry by setting up a forum on maritime policy in Europe. The forum is being asked to present its report to the Commission before next summer.

Commission okays Ford plan. The Commission has approved a proposal by the French Government to award aid of FF38m (about £3.8m) to the Ford Motor Company for the expansion and installation of new production lines at its motor components plant at Charleville in the Department of the Ardennes.

First Community Programme for Older People. The First European Community programme for older people had its formal launch in Brussels on 17 - 18 September with the conference "The older European citizen in the 1990s." Almost 400 people attended this launch.

Albania comes to Brussels. Ministers from Albania presented an overview of the political, economic and social situation and the reform measures in their country at a meeting in Brussels yesterday (Wednesday) under the joint chairmanship of the EC and the United Nations Development Programme. The EC intends to start negotiations with newly democratising Albania on a Trade and Cooperation Agreement shortly.

Green light for UK Eureka project. The Commission has decided to approve under Article 92 (3), the UK's participation in the PROMETHEUS project which is Eureka project 45. The UK share of the projects amounts to £7.03m from 1991 up to and including 1994, and a maximum aid of £2.2m will be awarded to Lucas Automotive Ltd, Pilkington PLC and Jaguar cars.

European Urban and Regional Planning Awards. As part of the process of bringing together the regions of the European Community, the winners of the first ever European Urban and Regional Planning Awards are due to be announced in Brussels tomorrow (Friday). More than 200 entries were received from local and regional authorities. The awards will be presented by Commissioner Bruce Millan.

Major conference in The Hague. Commissioner Vasso Papandreou will give the opening speech on the occasion of the Third European Conference of Directors of Human Resources on Thursday, 3 October in The Hague. The conference will be closed by Commission President Jacques Delors and Ruud Lubbers, Dutch Prime Minister.

Dorset in Europe. Festival 5 - 13 October. Details and programme available from Festival coordinators Barbara Reckman and Marilyn Ward on 0202-559000 / 559090.

Conference and Diary Dates

Thames Valley Euro Info Centre seminars. "Profit from Europe." No.1. "Standards for Success" an 18 October at Easthampstead Park, Bracknell. No.2. "Meet the Environmental Challenge on 22 November at the Coach House Hotel, Newport Pagnell. No.3. "141 Billion market at home and abroad" on 17 January 1992 at Foxcomb Lodge Hotel, Oxford. Details from Julia Rees on 0753 577 877. Fax: 0753 524 644.

Agriculture Council	23-24 September	Brussels
Informal Social Affairs	23-24 September	Ootmarsum
ACP-EEC Assembly	23-27 September	Amsterdam
Informal Housing Ministers	24-25 September	Amsterdam
Informal Agriculture Ministers	30 September - 1 October	Drachten
General Affairs Council	30 September	Brussels

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