



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

New Bank to be the "financial crossroads" between East and West. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London on Monday, UK Prime Minister John Major told Government leaders, Finance Ministers and officials from the 39 countries and two European institutions that have set up the Bank, that the inauguration marked a new beginning and was a monument to European co-operation. French President Francois Mitterrand said the Bank's creation was a step towards the development of a "great Europe". Underlining the EBRD's role Jacques Attali, its President, said the organisation was unique for three reasons: it was the first institution of the post-Cold War period; the first institution of a united Europe; and the first institution of a new World order. After the fanfare surrounding inauguration, the European Commission called on the EBRD not to overstep its mandate. Commission President Jacques Delors insisted that the Bank had first and foremost to act as a Bank. He was echoed by Commission Vice-President Henning Christophersen who told a press conference that the EBRD must not be a political institution. Christophersen added that the role of co-ordinating institutions that run assistance programmes for Eastern and Central Europe was best left to the leading industrialised nations. The new Bank will have 10bn ecus (£6.9bn) capital.

New urgency in efforts to help Kurds. A new sense of urgency and coherence has emerged in Western efforts to ease the suffering of the 1.5m Kurdish refugees. EC Foreign Ministers meeting US Secretary of State James Baker on Wednesday gave their full backing to the plan to set up safe havens for Kurds in Northern Iraq under US, UK and French protection. Several countries, notably Germany, indicated that they would be releasing emergency funding over and above their share of the £105m in aid agreed at the EC special Summit in Luxembourg on 8 April. Abel Matutes, EC Commissioner for Middle Eastern affairs, complained that although all the EC funding already agreed was ready for disbursement, the Commission was not receiving enough relief proposals from non-governmental aid agencies.

Some EC sanctions against South Africa lifted. EC Foreign Ministers agreed on Monday to lift sanctions affecting imports of South African steel, iron and gold coins despite protests from the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and from the European Parliament which felt it should have been consulted. UK Foreign Office Minister Tristan Garel-Jones told the meeting that the international community should consider lifting all remaining sanctions against South Africa including the ban on sporting links. President of the Council, Jacques Poos, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister, stressed that United Nations' sanctions on the sale of arms and the voluntary ban on the supply of crude oil to South Africa remained in force, as did international sporting bans.

Emergency food for Africa. EC Foreign Ministers agreed on Monday to send about 400,000 tonnes of emergency food aid to the Horn of Africa. This new move is in response to the desperate plight of more than 27m Africans facing hunger and starvation. A lethal mix of drought and civil war has left six sub-Saharan countries - Ethiopia, Sudan, Mozambique, Angola, Malawi and Liberia - facing an emergency food deficit of 4m tonnes. Up to this latest move by the EC fewer than 2m tonnes had been pledged by the major aid donors and even less - probably no more than a fifth delivered.

Progress on EC political union. On Tuesday the Community Presidency published a draft of a compromise on EC political union. Tabling of the 95-page document comes after three months of negotiation in the InterGovernmental Conference where Luxembourg hopes to get agreement by the end of June. Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos said that two important proposals had the backing of most Member countries. These cover a common foreign and security policy and an increase in the law-making powers of the European Parliament. The new proposals would also give EC citizens the right to vote elsewhere in the Community and cut the Commission to one representative for each of the twelve Member States' Governments. In addition the new document endorses, for the first time, inter-governmental cooperation among the Twelve on police and immigration issues. Revision of the EC Treaty requires unanimous assent of the twelve Member States along with ratification by the twelve national Parliaments.

Commission report on GATT trade policy. A Commission report on the trade policy review mechanisms of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade has been presented to the GATT Council meeting in Geneva on 15-16 April. The Commission's report gives a broad overview of policy and practice against the background of its historical and economic development and describes the specific nature of the Community in international trade in terms of its participation in GATT. The EC represents 20% of world exports and imports and accounts for one quarter of the world's GDP, two-thirds of which arise from services, one-third industry, only 3% agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Woman of Europe. Mary Robinson, President of the Republic of Ireland, will present the Woman of Europe award for 1990 to Niki Goulandris, the Greek ecologist, in Dublin tomorrow, Friday, 19 April. For further details about the Woman of Europe Award 1991 contact Alison Parry - Tel: 081-891 1021.

Emergency aid for Genoa oil tanker victims. The Commission has decided to grant 500,000 ecus (£350,000) to the those affected by the explosion of the oil tanker Haven off the coast of Genoa.

Aeronautics day 1991. Around 600 industrialists, academics and public policy-makers in the field of aeronautics, took in the opening of the "BRITE/EURAM Aeronautics Day" on 16 April at the Palais des Congres in Brussels. The main focus of interest was the future of aeronautics research in Europe and the strategic issues at stake.

Aylwin meets Delors. The President of Chile Patricio Aylwin met Commission President Jacques Delors and Commissioner Abel Matutes in Strasbourg on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Chilean President was received in solemn session by the European Parliament on Tuesday. This is the first visit to the European institutions by a Chilean President for 25 years.

European Charter for the Private Security Industry. After successfully lobbying the European Parliament for support, APEX Partnership, part of the UK's General Union, GMB, has published the full text of its demand for a properly regulated and trained private security service with rules covering the entire Community. Their brochure is in three languages, English, French and German and may be had from GMB HQ, 22-24 Worple Road, London SW19 4DD - Tel: 081-947 3131 or from GMB Regional Offices.

Third EC-Yugoslavia financial protocol. Negotiations over the third financial protocol between the EC and Yugoslavia took place last week. A new provisional text provides for the granting of a loan to Yugoslavia by the European Investment Bank of 730m (£511m) in the period up to 30 June 1996. 580m ecus of this loan will go on financing transport infrastructure projects.

Bow Group pamphlet urges greater Westminster role in Europe. "National Parliaments and the European Parliament: how to improve democratic accountability in the EC" by Anthony Teasdale and Quentin Huxham. A Bow Group memorandum (No. M690) at £5.00. The authors examine various ways that national Parliaments could become more closely involved in the way the EC is governed. Available from the Bow Group, 92 Bishop's Bridge Road, London W2 5AB or Anthony Teasdale on 071-603 3143.

Guide to European Business Media. A new publication from Grice Wheeler Business communications provides a practical manual which will help to develop direct relationships with specialist journalists. The guide will be updated three times a year. Annual subscription £100. Countries covered include the EC, Austria, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Details: Sue Wheeler on 0371-830 307.

Conference and Diary Dates

European Conference - organised by Business in Europe in conjunction with the European Movement. Keynote speaker Lord Plumb MEP. 3 May at the Welcombe Hotel. Details from Business in Europe, The Maltings, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 0TJ. Tel: 0789-267096.

"Achieving Business Success in Europe." Seminar in Cardiff on 13 May. Organised by Edwards Geldard, solicitors, and Ernst and Young, accountants, dealing with the commercial, financial and legal aspects of achieving business success in Europe. For details contact Dr Rose D'Sa, International Relations Consultant, Edward Geldard, Solicitors, 16 St Andrews Crescent, Cardiff CF1 3RD. Tel: 0222-238239. Fax: 0222-237268.

"European Monetary Union in a turbulent world economy." A one day conference convened by The Association for the Monetary Union of Europe and the Royal Institute of International Affairs at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London W1 on 30 May. Speakers include Rt Hon Norman Lamont MP, Sir Christopher Tugendhat, Giovanni Agnelli, Jacques Attali, Michel Camdessus of the IMF and Karl Otto Poehl of the Bundesbank. Details - Tel: 071-930 2233. Fax: 071-839 3593.

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday, 25 April 11.30am.