



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

High stakes at Rome Summit. The European Council, to be held in Rome on Friday and Saturday, and the concurrent two InterGovernmental Conferences on Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and European Political Union (EPU), promise to be landmarks in European integration. The IGCs will signal the degree to which the "deepening" process of the EC will develop in the 1990s while the European Council Summit will have on its agenda such matters as the extent and timing of assistance to the Soviet Union and the future designs for European security and defence. The latest proposals on defence come from Gianni De Michelis, the Italian Foreign Minister, who has suggested that the nine-nation Western European Union should become the main vehicle for the common European security and defence policy together with the proposed European political union. However, these and other proposals are still very much in the melting pot. On the issue of "deepening" the EC, the Twelve are sticking by their tradition of moving in small steps towards a united Europe.

Aid to Soviet Union. EC officials flew to Moscow on Tuesday to spell out plans for short and medium term aid to the Soviet economy which, together with similar plans for Eastern and Central Europe, will be one of the topics for discussion and decision at the Rome Summit. In spite of the doubts over the financial consequences and the collapse of the Soviet food-distribution system, EC leaders are likely to approve some urgent aid in Rome. Emphasising that his proposals would imply a revamping of the Community's 1991 spending plans, Commission President Jacques Delors said: "If we are going to put some financial flesh on the bones of our agreements with the Soviet Union, we will have to revise our budget perspectives again".

GATT talks fail. Hopes of a new global free-trade system were dashed last Friday as four years of negotiations foundered on a dispute between the USA and the EC over farm subsidies. However, EC Heads of Government are expected to sanction immediate diplomatic moves to arrest the worsening state of EC-US relations when they meet in Rome at the weekend. Attempts will be made to revive the talks in Geneva in the new year, but there is no guarantee that the progress made in 14 other areas under discussion - including the lucrative liberalisation of services - will be maintained. At the end of the talks, EC Agriculture Commissioner Ray MacSharry insisted that the Community had been prepared to carry on talking but, in a clear reference to the US, added that "too many people came here determined to walk away". His view was endorsed by the UK Agriculture Secretary John Gummer. A breakthrough in the next month is crucial, because the US Administration has to present a trade bill to Congress before 1 March to use so-called fast-track legislation which commits Congress to accepting or rejecting it in its entirety. Commenting on the GATT talks breakdown, Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen said: "We were prepared to continue the negotiations. We have advocated during this round and particularly during the whole conference that we were prepared to negotiate on all issues and when at a certain moment five specific sectors were singled out as being of major importance we accepted fully to concentrate at that very moment on those sectors. I said in all sectors and that includes agriculture". To head off new EC-US clashes, US Agriculture Secretary Clayton Yeutter will meet Commissioner MacSharry in Brussels tomorrow (Friday).

Plan to save EC fish stocks. In an effort to correct the serious depletion of EC fish stocks, the Commission has proposed that all boats fishing for cod and haddock in the North Sea should take ten consecutive days off each month. The plan is part of the Commission's fishing quota package for 1991. In other endangered areas, the Commission is proposing a ban on herring fishing in the Irish Sea for limited periods, and restrictions on hake fishing in Spain and Portugal. The Commission also brought forward its long-awaited proposal banning all drift nets in EC waters, including the Mediterranean. The Commission's proposals will be discussed at the Fisheries Council on 19 December.

Eurobarometer. Public support for the EC has reached an all-time high. 69% of EC citizens now say their country's membership of the EC is "a good thing", while only 7% think it is "a bad thing". The Dutch (82%), Italians (77%), Luxemburgers (76%), Irish (76%) and Greeks (75%) are the most enthusiastic about Community membership at the present time. UK figure 53%. In addition, EC

Conferences in Rome. These include: the EC being responsible for common policy in matters of security and defence (66% for, 15% against: UK 57% for, 25 % against); the European Parliament having the right to decide together with the Council of Ministers representing the national governments on the legislation of the Community (64% for, 14% against: UK 54% for, 22% against); the EC having a common European Central Bank, with the heads of national central banks on its board of directors (56% for, 18% against: UK 45% for, 30% against); and a single common currency replacing the different currencies of the Member States in five or six years' time (55% for, 23% against: UK 38% for, 43% against).

Woman of Europe Award. Nominees from all twelve Member States gathered in Brussels last weekend for the presentation of the award for the Woman of Europe. The eventual winner was Niki Goulandris of Greece, Director of the Centre National d'Information des Femmes and a founder member of l'Association Europeenne pour le Developpement de l'Information des Femmes. Britain's nominee, Sally Greengross, General Secretary of Eurolink Age, was high among the contenders and has been invited to take part in a series of workshops to be held by the Club of Rhodes in Luxembourg next June.

New programme for Tyne and Wear. On a visit to the North-East of England last week, Commissioner Bruce Millan, responsible for Regional Policy, announced the launch of a new £50m package of support for Tyne and Wear. This package has been put together under the EC's special programme for areas badly hit by closures and job losses in the shipbuilding industry - the RENAVAL initiative. Money for the programme will come from a new injection of European funds to Tyne and Wear worth almost £25m. This will be matched by funds from central and local government in the region, together with an input from the private sector.

Sweden for EC. Sweden's Parliament this week voted to apply for European Community membership. Formal application could be made early next year following successful EC/EFTA negotiations.

"Mastering the new environmental policy agenda" is a new report from Environmental Policy Consultants which comprehensively analyses the environmental policies of the European Commission, the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. The report concludes that environmental policy battlelines have now been drawn with agreement predicted on 79 major policy targets. Their implementation and the final decision on 67 other major policy targets have, however, yet to be resolved. Report available from Environmental Policy Consultants, 33 Brailsford Road, London SW2 2TB. Price £45. Tel: 081-678 6865.

"Europe's Constitutional Future." A new and timely book from the Institute of Economic Affairs, 2 Lord North Street, London SW1P 3LB. Price £8.95 + 50p postage and packing.

Celex and Scad database training 3 - 4 January 1991. Portsmouth Polytechnic Library, £120 (covers 1 1/2 days' instruction and full documentation). Overnight accommodation can be provided at a cost of £10.35 a night. Further details from Barbara Zolynski, The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London WC2. Tel: 071-320 5947.

"Local Government and 1992" by Paul Bongers, Director of the Local Government International Bureau. This new book shows how 1992 will influence both the provision of local services and the constitutional position of the local authority in relation to the State. ISBN 0 582 07570 X. Price £19.95.

Conference and Diary Dates

Please note that Vice-President Martin Bangemann's briefing scheduled for 7 January has had to be postponed until further notice.

EMU and the Intergovernmental Conferences: practical consequences for European business. An EPIC/ACCESS Seminar to be held at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Fleet Room, Westminster - Friday, 18 January 1991. Details from Lucia Zivec, EPIC, European Parliament, MAE 822, 97-113 Rue Belliard, 1047 Brussels.

ECO/FIN Council	17 December	Brussels
Transport Council	17-18 December	Brussels
Social Affairs Council	18 December	Brussels
General Affairs Council	18-19 December	Brussels
ECO/SOC Plenary Session	18-19 December	Brussels
Fisheries Council	19 December	Brussels
Ministerial meeting EC/Latin America	20 December	Rome
Environment Council	20-21 December	Brussels
Research Council	21 December	Brussels

Our final briefing for 1990 will be on Thursday, 20 December at 11.30 am.