



WE/42/90
29 November 1990

THE WEEK IN EUROPE

John Major takes over John Major succeeded Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister yesterday (Wednesday) following his victory in the Conservative Party leadership election this week. He immediately appointed the two other contenders to cabinet posts, keeping Douglas Hurd at the Foreign Office and bringing in Michael Heseltine as Environment Secretary. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Norman Lamont, may take the opportunity of attending the informal meeting of Economic and Finance Ministers (ECOFIN) taking place at Lesmo near Milan on Sunday. On the agenda are the Community's short and medium term economic perspectives and the draft statutes of the proposed European Central Bank. On the steps of 10 Downing Street after returning from Buckingham Palace, John Major gave this pledge: "We have in front of us the building and development of an entirely new Europe, a building and development in which this country will play a full and leading role".

Warning on North Sea fish Commission Vice-President Manuel Marin has painted a grim picture of the state of fish stocks in the North Sea. He warned that unless 40% of fishing boats in the EC are scrapped, there will soon be no cod, haddock or other species left to fish in the North Sea and no herrings or sprats in the Baltic. Marin said the present quota system was not working properly and that EC countries were abusing their quotas, not policing their fishing fleets nor monitoring the catches. He also said EC countries continued recklessly to build fishing boats. As a result, Marin said, the Commission is proposing a radical overhaul of the EC fisheries policy, starting in 1992.

Doubts voiced on Social Action Programme EC Social Affairs Ministers, meeting in Brussels on Monday, opposed proposals put forward by Commissioner Vasso Papandreou that part-time workers should get the same social security benefits as full-time employees. Ministers also criticised the Commission's choice of the majority voting option for its proposals and said Community actions on social questions must be agreed unanimously. The matter is of crucial importance to the Commission's "Social Action Programme" as the proposals themselves stand a better chance of being adopted on a qualified majority than on a unanimous basis. The UK, for example, strongly opposes the content of the directive on part-time work, which insists that such workers should be entitled to the same benefits and conditions as full-time workers.

EC countries offered Olympic inducement The National Olympic Committees of the 12 EC countries are reported to have been offered nearly £3 million by the Commission of their competitors wear the insignia of the 12 stars of the EC on their tracksuits at 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. The UK could possibly get £400,000 of the total sum which will come from the public relations budget. The EC is eager to see greater international recognition of the Community in 1992, the year the Single Market is due to be completed.

Shipbuilding package agreed EC Industry ministers agreed on Monday in Brussels on new conditions for rationalising and reducing subsidies to the Community shipbuilding industry. The new conditions will give shipyards a further three years of protection, but under stricter conditions. The new scheme - the seventh EC shipbuilding directive - will run for three years and replace the one which expires at the end of 1992.

More PHARE financing With the financing approved by the Commission yesterday (Wednesday), of seven new projects in central and eastern Europe, the Commission has now committed almost all of the 500 million ECUs (£350 million) planned for 1990 under the PHARE programme. The beneficiaries are Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland.

Dial 112 for help Meeting last week in Brussels the Civil Protection Council reached political agreement on the need to introduce the number 112 as the EC-wide emergency telephone line. The Commission proposed 31 December 1992 as the date for the introduction of the 112 number, with derogations permitted until 31 December 1996 at the latest.

EIB loan for UK water management The European Investment Bank is to lend £45 million for schemes to ensure the security of drinking water supplies and improve the quality of bathing waters and rivers in the South-West of England. The funds are for investment forming part of South-West Water Services Ltd's long-term programme to maintain and develop water and sewerage facilities. The services cover a residential population of some 1.5 million, mainly along the coastal areas, and caters for about 6 million tourists during summer. This loan brings to £385 million the total of EIB support this year for investment water companies in the UK.

Unemployment in the Community According to the most recent available data, Eurostat estimates the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate to be 8.3% for the EC as a whole in September 1990. Unemployment rates have remained stable in most Member States since June 1990. There were slight decreases, however, over this period in the FRG (-0.2%), Portugal (-0.2%) and Spain (-0.2%) and slight increases in Belgium (+0.2%), Denmark (+0.2%) and the UK (+0.2%).

Action for the Elderly The Social Affairs Council has adopted the decision regarding Community actions for the Elderly during the period 1 January 1991 to 31 December 1993. 1993 has been proclaimed "The European Year of the Elderly and solidarity between generations". This coincides with a £750,000 inquiry on the Third Age, launched by the Carnegie UK Trust.

Vaclav Havel and the EBRD The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development announces that Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia, has agreed to become Chairman of the Jury for the bank's international design competition. The competition, launched by the EBRD's President Jacques Attali, aims at finding a suitable logo for the bank. It is open to leading schools of design within the bank's 39 member countries to whom the design brief and details of the competitions are being sent. Details: contact Simon Rostron on 071 930 7642 or James Rosenstein on 071 496 0060.

"Journalism training in Europe" conference The first EC conference on journalism training took place in Brussels last week. Organised by the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) and the Commission, it brought together some 150 representatives of training centres, journalism associations and unions, newspaper, radio and TV editors. Representatives from central and eastern European Journalism unions and training centres were present as observers. The conference was based on a research report carried out, with the support of the Commission, by Hugh Stephenson, professor of journalism at the Graduate Centre for Journalism, City University, London, and Pierre Mory, lecturer at the Institut des Hautes Etudes des Communications Sociales, IHECS, Brussels. Commissioner Jean Dondelinger, responsible for Information, Communications and Culture, delivered the final speech of the conference.

"Lawyers in Europe Companion" is a pocket-sized directory providing information in 150 pages on all institutional, judicial and legal professional bodies of Europe. Prices: £14 per copy for orders of over 6 copies; £16 per copy for orders between 2-5 copies; or £20 for a single copy. Contact Professional and Business Information, Munro House, 14 St Cross Street, London EC1N 8YY. Tel: 071 430 2020. Fax: 071 430 1773.

"Your Watch-dogs in Europe" What Britain's Conservative MEPs are doing for you. A booklet edited by Christopher Jackson MEP. Price £1.00. Available from Conservatives in the European Parliament, CCO sales, 16 Stadium Way, Reading RG3 6BX. Tel: 0734 416436.

Pesticide directives approved Under the chairmanship of Vito Saccomandi of Italy, the Agricultural Council, meeting in Brussels on Tuesday, approved directives on pesticide levels, rabbit meat and farmed game meat, and the disposal and processing of animal waste. They also gave full support to Agriculture Commissioner Ray MacSharry who will take part in the GATT talks starting in Brussels on Monday.

Diary Dates

Health Council	3 December 1990	Brussels
ECO/FIN Council	3 December 1990	Brussels
Uruguay Round conference	3-7 December 1990	Brussels
General Affairs Council	4 December 1990	Brussels
Education Council	6 December 1990	Brussels
Consumers Council	7 December 1990	Brussels
European Parliament session	10-14 December 1990	Strasbourg
Agriculture Council	10-11 December 1990	Brussels
Internal Market Council	13 December 1990	Brussels
European Council	13-14 December 1990	Rome
IGC's on EMU and EPU	14-15 December 1990	Rome

Our next briefing will be on Thursday 6 December at 11.30 am.