



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

Economic and Monetary Union. Confusing signals emerged after the latest attempt by Economic and Finance Ministers to define attitudes towards economic and monetary union. After last Monday's meeting in Luxembourg, several of the UK's partners expressed their belief that Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont had signalled a more conciliatory attitude towards the discussions on setting up a Central Bank and moving towards a single currency for the European Community. However both the Chancellor and Prime Minister John Major answering questions later in the House of Commons took pains to emphasise that the UK's view on the issues had not changed. However Commission Economic Vice-President Henning Christophersen noted that Chancellor Lamont had been ready to discuss all three stages of EMU as laid down in the Report presented by Commission President Jacques Delors. He told reporters that he had the clear impression that the UK accepts that if it is reasonable to allow the UK Parliament to take its own decision about a single currency, it would not be appropriate for them to prevent the rest of the Community from pursuing their objectives. The EMU Treaty is expected to come up for adoption by EC leaders at a European Council Summit in Maastricht, Holland, at the end of the year. Meanwhile German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Prime Minister John Major, meeting in the UK last weekend, are reported to have agreed that this month's Luxembourg Summit of European Community leaders should simply review progress on EMU and European Political Union (EPU) rather than seek to set the pace for the next six months under the Presidency of the Netherlands, which takes over from Luxembourg on 1 July.

Money laundering measure. The Finance Ministers however agreed an anti money-laundering measure under which anyone depositing more than 15,000 ecus (£10,425) in a bank will be asked to identify himself and the source of the money. The new law should come into force from 1 January 1993. Commission Vice-President Sir Leon Brittan, responsible for financial services, said it would remove any "hidden place for criminal proceeds in our financial system". In addition Member States can compel banks to make special inquiries about casual depositors of less than 15,000 ecus. Banks will also have to keep records for five years after the closure of an account and let judicial authorities check out suspicion of laundering.

Into the 1992 home stretch. With eighteen months to go before the single market programme is to take full effect, the legislative scorecard has chalked up the impressive figure of 193 Directives passed with 89 still to go. In its latest progress report, the Commission expects that by the time Luxembourg hands over the Presidency on 30 June, some 220 single market measures should have won approval. There are some snags though: Italy, for example, has put barely half the EC Directives on its national statute books.

Delors meets Mandela. African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela met Commission President Jacques Delors in Brussels on Monday and was told that because of the EC's worries about the situation in South Africa, the issue has been put on the agenda of the Summit meeting of EC leaders later this month. The meeting between the two took place less than 24 hours after Mandela had telephoned Brussels to express his concern at developments in South Africa. He was, it is reported, reminded by Delors of his personal commitment to ending the apartheid system. Delors also undertook to make direct contact with the twelve EC governments on the issue. At the same time, on Monday in Luxembourg, that country's Foreign Minister Jacques Poos, received a delegation of leaders of anti-apartheid organisations.

Level odds. Following complaints from UK bookmakers Ladbroke, the Commission opened a procedure in December 1990 under Article 93.2 of the EEC Treaty to investigate the compatibility of seven aid measures granted by the French authorities to the Pari Mutuel Urbain, the group representing French race course companies and having an effective monopoly for all off-course horse race betting in France as well as on bets placed in France on foreign races and foreign bets placed on French races. The Commission has now decided to require the French authorities immediately to suspend payment of three aid measures (deferment of certain payments, exemption from the usual one month delay rule for VAT payment, and exemption from the social housing levy paid by employers). The suspension decision will allow the interests of competitors, including Ladbroke, to be protected while consideration of the final decision on the compatibility of all seven aids continues.

EC-Poland negotiations. The fifth session of the negotiations to reach an Association Agreement between the EC and Poland took place in Brussels on Tuesday. The EC delegation was led by Pablo Benavides and the Polish delegation by Jaroslaw Mulewicz.

EIB loan for Ireland. Construction of the Athlone by-pass and water and waste-water improvement schemes in Ireland are being financed with £10.2m (13.2m ecus) in loans from the European Investment Bank. Including these loans, the EIB has provided £76m equivalent for projects in Ireland so far this year.

Eurobarometer. The latest EC-wide telephone poll shows Sweden to be the most popular of the candidates who are lining up or who have already applied for EC membership: 89% thought Sweden should join. Next in the popularity stakes were Norway (88% in favour), Austria (86%), Switzerland (85%) and Finland (85%). Least favoured for EC membership by those interviewed were Turkey and Albania. On the question of assistance to the Kurds, just under half (46%) have heard of the EC's aid programme to Kurdish refugees. Four out of five (79%) thought it a good idea.

Millan on the regions. Speaking in Graz, Austria, last week Commissioner Bruce Millan said it was not until 1975 and partly as a result of UK accession, that a European Regional Development Fund was established. He added that in fulfilment of its commitment to help reduce regional disparities, the Community launched in 1989 a considerably increased programme of financial assistance from the Structural Funds which will deliver over 60bn ecus to poorer and disadvantaged regions in the Community by 1993. To this was added in 1990 3bn ecus for the new Laender in Germany. Millan said most of this assistance is going to the poorest regions (the so-called Objective 1 regions), that is Portugal, Greece, Ireland, Northern Ireland, large parts of Italy and Spain, Corsica and the French Overseas Departments. But, he concluded, the potential contribution of the Community's Structural Funds to reducing regional disparities is limited. The resources being transferred through them to the three Member States with the lowest GDP per head - Greece, Portugal and Ireland - will amount to roughly 3% of their GDP by 1993.

Women of Europe Award. The first extra-ordinary meeting of the Club of Rhodes, the Club set up by the Organisation of the Women of Europe Award, is being held in Luxembourg on 14, 15 and 16 June. Working Committees will cover a variety of subject areas including ecology, identity, democracy and security, and the European cultural identity. Women representing all parts of the UK will attend the conference. Details from Alison Parry on 081-891 1021, fax: 081-744 1980 or Luxembourg 010-352 48 58 88; fax 010-352 43 67 38.

"New European" The new issue has contributions by Lord Sterling on British shipping as a European asset, Ronald Butt on Europe and the Gulf, Barney Milligan on Christianity in Europe and an article by John Coleman on the elements of supranationalism in the Europe of Many Circles. Available from MCB University Press, Bradford BD8 9BY.

Conference and Diary Dates

1992 Briefing. Commissioner Christiane Scrivener will brief on "Progress in Indirect Taxation" at 3.30pm on 18 June here at 8 Storey's Gate. Other briefing dates: Commissioner Karel van Miert on "Future Transport Policies of the EC" on 25 June; Commissioner Bruce Millan on "The Future of EC Regional Policy" on 27 June. Both at the usual time of 11.00am.

London Language Show. 18-20 June at the Barbican Centre, London. Commission and the Office for EC Official Publications is represented at the show by the Task Force of Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth.

A European Conference on technology in the food industry will take place in Lyons, France, 19-21 June. The conference is supported by the SPRINT programme. Subjects range from the dairy industry and other food sectors to meat. Details from Corrine Gugliemi on 0452-70283.

Cities of London and Westminster Conservative Association Annual Savoy Luncheon, Savoy Hotel, London WC2 on 4 July at 12.15pm for 1.00pm. Guest speaker the Rt Hon Sir Leon Brittan QC. Tickets £50.00 from Donald Stewart, 90 Ebury Street, London SW1W 9QD.

Informal Agriculture Ministers	17-18 June	Luxembourg
General Affairs Council	17-18 June	Luxembourg
Internal Market Council	18-19 June	Luxembourg
Transport Council	20-21 June	Luxembourg
Social Affairs Council	25-26 June	Luxembourg
European Council	28-29 June	Luxembourg

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday, 20 June at 11.30am.