



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

EC and UK co-finance more aid to EC Kurds. As part of the multilateral and multinational aid packages organised for Kurdish refugees, the European Community and the British government are co-financing the deployment of twenty Mobile Support Teams of ten members each to assist Kurdish refugees as they return voluntarily to Iraq. The Commission announced in Brussels that each Mobile Support Team will comprise ten members with a mix of skills in basic health services, sanitation work and disaster relief. At least one member of each team will be a Kurdish speaker. The first ninety team members, all volunteers from the fire, rescue, emergency services as well as doctors and nurses, left Stansted airport at midnight last Sunday directly for the Turkish/Iraqi frontier area. The Mobile Support Teams will work under the direct supervision of the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) Refugee Co-ordinator in Turkey, and in constant liaison with the EC Refugee Co-ordinator and the British and allied military authorities. The total cost is estimated at 2.9m ecus (just over £2m) for three months of which the EC will provide 2m ecus (about £1.4m) and the British government 900,000 ecus (about £630,000). In addition to the British effort, the Government of Spain and the EC have agreed to co-finance the installation of a camp for 5,000 Kurdish refugees on the Iraqi-Turkey border. The EC will finance to the value of 675,000 ecus (£472,000) the purchase of 468 tents, 10,000 blankets, electricity generators and water purifiers. The Spanish armed forces will oversee the operation. The total EC package is 105m ecus (£73.5m) of which 75.5m ecus (52.8m) have already been taken up. The bilateral aid from EC Member States amounts to around 250m ecus (£175m). On the Iran-Iraq frontier the EC has already financed 220 mercy flights (of which around 180 have already taken place) which have transported around 45,000 tents, 1.23m blankets, 10,000 tonnes of food and 120 aid personnel from abroad. On the Turkish side of Iraq, the EC has financed 80 flights transporting 21,500 tents, 218,000 blankets, 16,000 tonnes of food and 100 foreign aid personnel.

More EC aid to Africa and Bangladesh. The Commission has also been quick to respond to the disaster in Bangladesh caused by cyclones and the threat of famine in the Horn of Africa. A total, so far, of 10m ecus (£7m) has been pledged by the EC to Bangladesh. A spokesman for the Commission said it had agreed to buy \$9.6m worth of wheat and vegetable oil from Bangladeshi government stocks for immediate distribution. In Africa the EC is working on ways to fund 400,000 tonnes of food which has been already agreed in principle. A further 3m ecus (£2m) has been allocated as emergency aid for the people of Somalia, which has already received 8m ecus (£5.6m) in recent aid from the EC. The total amount of aid pledged to Africa at present amounts to 140m ecus (£98m).

Delors in Africa. Speaking to Senegal's national assembly in Dakar last week, Commission President Jacques Delors called on African leaders to support democratic principles which he said could provide an engine for change in developing countries. He said further democratisation was essential if African countries were to meet the economic challenges ahead. Delors, accompanied by Commission Vice-President Manuel Marin, was on his first visit as Commission President to sub-Saharan Africa. The visit was seen as an opportunity to reaffirm the links between the EC and Africa now that the potential for confrontation between superpowers in the African continent is diminishing. The EC's latest five year 12bn ecus (£8.34bn) aid package for African, Caribbean and Pacific States includes structural adjustment funds.

Commission issues social security guidelines. On Tuesday, the Commission put forward guidelines intended to harmonise and improve social security benefits throughout the EC. Behind this move is the belief that endorsement of the guidelines by Member States would show stronger commitment to the Community's social aims than the support given to the Social Charter, adopted in December 1989 with the sole dissent of the UK. The Commission wants a general right to benefits, based on need, to be recognised all over the EC. It also wants such benefits to be without a time limit, to be extended to non-EC nationals resident in the Community, and to be accompanied by access to health care, housing and training.

Student mobility with ERASMUS. In 1991/92 the EC Commission is to finance 1,645 Interuniversity Cooperation Programmes involving around 1,200 Higher Education Institutions and 59,000 students. This means in effect that nearly 4% of all EC students will be eligible for a period of study abroad in another Member State within ERASMUS. Some 60% of the total ERASMUS budget of 74m ecus (£51.8m) has been earmarked for student grants. In addition to the ERASMUS programme, 149 Interuniversity Cooperation Programmes have been selected in the framework of the LINGUA programme for improving the knowledge of foreign languages within the Community. In the period 1991/92 an estimated 4,180 students will spend a period of recognised study in another Member State, an increase of 12% compared with last year's figure of 2,283.

Scottish Nuclear approval. The European Commission has agreed an exemption to competition rules to an agreement between Scottish Nuclear Ltd, and soon to be privatised Scottish Power PLC and Scottish Hydro Electric PLC. The decision is valid for 15 years. A four year exemption has also been agreed for a pricing system arrangement between the companies.

UK Film Aids. The Commission has approved state aids to two schemes being managed by British Screen Finance Ltd. The three year loans to encourage new talent and European cooperation amount to £11m over three years.

European Communities Information Service and European Documentation Centre, Newcastle Polytechnic Library offers services such as Eurofunds, updates, seminars, Eurotitles, Euroscan and advice. Details from Anne Ramsey or Maimie Balfour, European Documentation Centre, Polytechnic Library, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST. Tel: 091 235 8136. Fax: 091 235 8563.

South Wales Europe Week. 9 - 18 May. For details contact the Commission's Cardiff office at 4 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF1 9SG. Tel: 0222 37 16 31. Fax: 0222 39 54 89.

Sail for Europe. Constitution Race 1991. On 15 June all the yachts taking part in the second "Constitution Race" will leave Philadelphia for Cape May by way of the Delaware River. The official start of this commemorative transatlantic race, conceived in 1987 by "Sail for Europe" to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and the bicentenary of the US Constitution will be from Cape May in the USA on Monday 17 June. The yacht "Europe", which will represent the EC, will be christened in Brussels' Grand' Place on 11 May.

Literary translation. The European Commission has launched a pilot scheme to aid the translation of contemporary literature. Financial support is available for works particularly in minority languages whose publication would not otherwise be viable in Europe. Application forms and information are in Official Journal C86 from DGX/C/1 in Brussels, Storey's Gate or from Dr Alistair Niven, Director of Literature, Arts Council of Great Britain, 105 Piccadilly, London, W1U OAU. Closing date: 15 September 1991.

Europe Day May 9 marks the 41st anniversary of the declaration by France's Foreign Minister Robert Schuman when he proposed a community of peaceful interests to the Federal Republic of Germany and any other European countries that wanted to join in. The declaration on May 9 1950, led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community by France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg which led to the creation of the European Economic Community, later joined by the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Greece, Spain and Portugal.

Conference and Diary Dates.

Labour & Europe. The Fabian Society offer a one-day seminar, May 20, aimed at City decision-makers to outline the Labour Party's views on Europe. Chief speakers are Bruce Millan, Regional Policy Commissioner in Brussels, and John Smith, MP, Shadow Chancellor. Details, Lois, tel: 071 222 8877. **London Euroinfocentre** with the Open University are holding a one-day workshop, May 20, "A bigger Europe for smaller business". Details from Beth Rayney Cucala on 071 248 4444 ext 3078.

Transport in Europe. 28 - 29 May. The FT Annual Transport Conference at the Intercontinental Hotel, Hyde Park, London. Opening address by Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State of Transport. Registration and enquiries to Philippa Challen. Tel: 071 925 2323.

European Foreign and Security Policies. An international conference presented by the European Movement. 7-8 June at Church House, Dean's Yard, Westminster, London SW1. Chairman Valery Giscard d'Estaing. Details from European Movement. Tel: 071 839 6622/3. Fax: 071 839 3120.

The future of Corporate Tax in the EC. Federal Trust seminar to discuss the findings of an expert study group chaired by Sir William Goodhart QC on 11 June at the Butchers Hall, London EC1. Enquiries to Judy Keep. Tel 071 839 6625. Fax: 071 839 3120.

The implications of German Packaging legislation. Conference organised by IIR Ltd. 26 June. At the New Connaught Rooms, London. Details from Maria Coghlan on 071 379 8040.

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday 16 May at 11.30am.