



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

EC aid plan for Kurds swings into action. As part of its emergency aid package for Kurdish refugees, the Commission has just informed the Member States of its readiness to finance the installation of camps inside Iraqi territory. Up until now Community aid had gone exclusively to Kurdish refugees who had fled to Turkey and Iran. The Commission is now in touch with Member States, particularly those who dispose of on-the-spot military and logistical back-up, with a view to assessing the humanitarian needs that the EC financing will meet. The Commission has already spent more than half of the 100m ecus (£70m) of the immediate budgetary allocation made to help the Iraqi refugees at the European Council on 8 April. As of last night, the Community aid has given rise to 328 air flights bringing in 66,000 tents, more than 1,500,000 blankets and some 23,700 tonnes of food. The division of aid allocation to the refugees is roughly 30% for those in Turkey and 70% for those in Iran. Community personnel involved in the operation number 161 with a further 450 persons employed locally. In Brussels last week, Juan Prat, Commission Director-General for North-South relations, gave the media an account of his trip to Turkey and Iran. He headed the Commission delegation sent to these countries to make an evaluation of the needs of the refugees there and put the EC aid programme into operation. Prat described the refugees' situation as "dramatic", underlining, beyond the physical suffering, the "moral suffering of a whole people".

Andriessen proposes EC "affiliate" membership. Speaking in Brussels last week Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen, responsible for external affairs, floated a radical new idea of possible "affiliate" membership for the many European countries now seeking to join the EC. Such a plan could open the possibility for a sudden expansion of the Community from twelve members to twenty or more. Andriessen's embryonic scheme advocates political and economic affiliation particularly in the sphere of foreign decision-making and in sectors such as transport, energy, the environment, research and development. He called for "creative thinking" so that the Community could offer the benefits of membership, and the accompanying enhanced stability, without weakening its drive towards further integration and without subjecting the structure of new market economies to excessive pressure.

Millan discusses additionality with UK Ministers. As we went to press Commissioner Bruce Millan, responsible for regional policy, was today (Thursday) meeting seven different UK Ministers in London to discuss a number of issues linked to the use of Community Structural funds in the UK, including in particular the question of additionality. Peter Lilley, Minister of Trade and Industry, leads the UK delegation which will also include the Secretaries of State of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and Ministers from the Departments of Employment, Environment and MAFF.

Bangemann aims for goal. Commission Vice-President Martin Bangemann in a role as "referee" has come up with some surprising results in the negotiations he has been pursuing with representatives of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and other Community professional football bodies. From the 1992-93 football season, the national associations coming under UEFA will have to allow up to three non-national players plus two non-national players who have, by that date, been playing uninterrupted in the country concerned for five years, including three years spent in youth teams, to be on the line-up for domestic first division championship matches. The national associations or federations will also be able to apply more favourable systems if they so wish, as is already the case in England, Scotland and Belgium. As a general rule, clubs will be allowed to take on as many non-national players as they like, and the national associations which operate a licensing system will be required to issue licences to all of those players. Bangemann has also carried out a bit more whistle-blowing: the principle has been accepted that any professional footballer will be free to play for another club at the end of his contract with his former club irrespective of the usual negotiations between the buying and the selling club concerning compensation.

New EMU compromise proposals. Prospects for agreement on plans for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) appear to have improved sharply following new compromise proposals from the Luxembourg Presidency of the EC. Under the new plan, distributed to EC governments this week, a supranational EC Central Bank would be set up in 1996, with a preparatory special council of Central Bank Governors from the twelve Member States coming into being two years' from now. The Luxembourg Presidency believes that by delaying the start of the Central Bank from 1994 to 1996, there will be a better chance of winning general agreement.

Paper on biotech strategy. Unveiling a policy paper on strategy for the EC biotechnology industry, the Commission has promised to limit the regulatory burden of the industry and to set up a committee to tackle the ethical problems of genetic, environmental and human embryo research. The Commission would like to streamline product authorisation procedures, harmonise standards and ensure patent protection for EC biotechnology products to lure investment back from US industry.

Ministers defer fish conservation decision. Meeting in Luxembourg last week, EC Fisheries Ministers deferred until July taking a decision on the measures the Commission believes are needed to conserve fast-dwindling stocks of fish in the North Sea. They did, however, agree to set up a Community-wide statistical register to monitor the quantities of fish landed by each Member State. There is now urgent need to reach agreement on increasing net mesh sizes in order to allow immature cod and haddock, in particular, to escape.

Still no agreement on farm spending limits. In a two day session this week in Luxembourg, EC Farm Ministers continued discussion of farm spending limits and still failed to agree. On the second day the Ministers put aside their disagreements and focused instead on the specific market imbalances that threaten to break the Community's agriculture budget. The hope is that the Presidency and the Commission can distil from the Ministers' shopping lists a compromise to lay before the next Council of Agriculture Ministers on 21-22 May. However, the central dispute remains - whether an increase in the 32.5bn ecus (£22.75bn) guideline for this year is justified by the cost of bringing East German farmers into the Common Agricultural Policy.

UK undertaking. The Commission has accepted an undertaking from the UK Government that it will in future notify to the Commission any offers of aid made to individual firms under the general powers provided for in Section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982. The decision to accept the undertaking on ad hoc awards completes the Commission's renewal of this provision under Article 93.1 of the EEC Treaty.

Waste proposal. The Commission has just adopted a Directive proposing harmonisation of standards for the landfill of waste. At the moment there are widely differing patterns in the way waste, estimated in the EC to be around 2.2bn tonnes per year, is disposed of.

Suffolk leaps into Europe - 1992 and all that. On 3 May the Suffolk Schools Industry Project will launch an 18 month programme to increase the awareness of 1992 amongst primary schoolchildren. Funding is provided by the DTI and Suffolk County Council. Contact: V Mair on 0473-690987.

Norfolk Europe Week. 20-30 April. Details from Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 112 Barrack Street, Norwich NR3 1UB. Contact Hilary Warmoth on 0603-625977.

University of Strathclyde: LLM in European Law. A new taught postgraduate Course commencing in October 1991. Enquiries: Professor A G Toth, The Law School, University of Strathclyde, 173 Cathedral Street, Glasgow G4 0RG. Tel: 041-552 4400 Ext 3338.

Conference and Diary Dates.

"The challenge of a professional management career in wholesaling and retailing." One day conference on 8 May at Anglia Business School, Danbury Park Conference Centre, Essex. Details from Annabel Hunt, Conference Administrator on 0245-415511 Ext 234.

Industry Council	29 April	Luxembourg
Informal ECO/FIN Council	10-12 May	Luxembourg
Internal Market Council	13 May	Brussels
General Affairs Council	13-14 May	Brussels
European Parliament Session	13-17 May	Strasbourg

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday, 2 May 1991 at 11.30 am.