

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM (79) 627 Final

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WORK CONCERNING EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION

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(Commission information memo)

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1. In its conclusions of 25 September 1978 concerning external representation, the Council invited the Commission "to submit an annual report to the Council on its medium-term plans" (see point 5 of the Council's conclusions). It was understood that, generally speaking, these reports should be conducive to a permanent two-way discussion for the purpose of:

ensuring effective coordination between the Council and the Commission with regard to external representation;

examining how cooperation between the Commission's external offices and the diplomatic missions of the Member States could be improved and greater complementarity achieved in the performance of Community tasks;

examining what progress the Commission has made in the coordination efforts referred to in point 6 of the abovementioned conclusions.

2. In its communication of 1 June 1979 (7383/79 FIN 327), the Commission informed the Council concerning its current plans for the opening of new delegations in 1980, namely one delegation in Australia (Canberra) and one in Yugoslavia (Belgrade). The Commission has, therefore, complied with the request contained in the first paragraph of point 5 of the Council conclusions referred to above. Apart from the plans mentioned, the Commission has not, at this stage, taken any other decisions with regard to its future network of external representation. Examination of the matter will have to be resumed by the Commission early next year, in the framework of the preparation of the Preliminary Draft Budget for 1981. Further information concerning this re-examination will be given at the appropriate time.

3. The Commission wishes to communicate the additional information set out below; it concerns developments since the Council conclusions of September 1978 and relates on the one hand to cooperation between the Commission's external representations and the diplomatic missions of the Member States (see point 4 below), and, on the other, to efforts

to coordinate the operating conditions and administrative procedures of the Commission's various external representations (see point 5 below).

4. The new procedures adopted by the Council, addressed to the Member States' commercial counsellors in non-member countries and concerning information for the embassies of the Nine on decisions taken by the Community authorities, have resulted inter alia in greater complementarity between the activities of the Commission's external delegations and the diplomatic missions of the Member States.

- (a) On 5 February 1979 the Council approved new directives to be given to the Member States' commercial counsellors serving in non-member countries. The aim of these directives is to rationalize the drawing up of the joint reports and to assign to them an increasingly important role, from the standpoint both of the Commission and of the Member States. The directives also refer specifically to participation by the Commission's external delegations in the work of the commercial counsellors, thereby endorsing in an official text a de facto situation that has grown up over the years. The external delegations, acting on instructions from Commission headquarters, keep the Member States' diplomatic missions in the host country closely informed concerning Community activities in the field of external commercial and economic policy, notably with regard to schemes and measures which the delegations are called upon to implement as part of the exercise of the Commission's own responsibilities in the area concerned. The recent example of the passage into American legislation of the results of the Tokyo Round multilateral trade negotiations and the efforts undertaken in this context by the Commission's departments perfectly illustrate the major role played by the Commission Delegation in the United States, in close collaboration with the Member States' diplomatic missions in that country.

With regard to the results of the joint reports drawn up by the commercial counsellors in implementation of the Council directives, the Commission will present a separate report to the relevant Council working party.

- (b) In accordance with the conclusions of the senior officials of the Member States responsible for the supply of information to non-member countries, Coreper approved on 6 June new measures for informing the Member States' embassies in non-member countries concerning certain Commission decisions. In adopting these measures the Member States rightly emphasized the role of the external representations of the Commission. In non-member countries where the Commission has such a representation, it is responsible, generally speaking, for keeping the embassies of

the Nine - and particularly that of the country holding the Presidency of the Council - permanently informed concerning decisions and initiatives taken by the Commission on its own responsibility and within the scope of its powers. The new measures referred to above strengthen this role of the Commission's external offices.

- (c) Attention should also be drawn to the cooperation which has been instituted between the Commission's information departments and the foreign ministries of the Member States. A notable result of this cooperation has been to make available to the embassies of the Member States in non-member countries a range of information material that is better suited to their requirements and is updated more frequently (e.g. brochures and audio-visual material). Mention should also be made of the cooperation that exists between information officers in the Member States' embassies in non-Community countries and the Commission, via the periodic reports drawn up by the officers in question and the replies which are transmitted to them; the reports are examined, moreover, by the Council's Working Party on Information, with which the Commission's Directorate-General for Information is in permanent contact in Brussels.

5. With regard to the coordination of operating conditions and administrative procedures, the Commission has taken decisions - following work carried out on an inter-service basis - on the system of remuneration of officials posted to external representations, administrative and financial management and the improvement of the arrangements for supplying information to external representations (see paragraph (a) below). The Commission has also instructed the inter-service group to continue its work on the basis of guidelines it has laid down with a view to a more detailed re-examination of the system of remuneration of officials serving outside the Community, the administration of the various external representations, movement of officials between headquarters and external delegations, and the arrangements for inspecting delegations (see paragraph (b) below).

(a) These decisions have led:

(i) as regards remuneration:

to the remuneration arrangements being harmonized through the updating of the exchange rates stipulated in Article 63 of the Staff Regulations, and the regulation implementing Article 17 of Annex VII being applied more flexibly, enabling certain officials posted outside the Community to receive up to 65% of their net remuneration in a currency other than that of the place of employment;

to the rules governing the granting of housing allowances to staff serving in external offices being revised;

periodic examination of the general implementing provisions governing the reimbursement of representation expenses on the basis of half-yearly reports;

instructions relating to the arrangements for reimbursing medical expenses, the system of education allowances, the reimbursement of settling-in expenses and the arrangements for annual leave and the annual travel allowance;

- (ii) as regards administrative and financial management: to greater flexibility in the management of external delegations;
  - (iii) as regards the supply of information to the delegations: to a number of measures ensuring both greater coordination in the flow of information and instructions from headquarters to the external delegations and an improvement in the telexing of urgent information dealing with all activities of general interest to the external delegations.
- (b) The guidelines worked out by the Commission with a view to improving coordination deal in particular with the following:
- (i) the system of remuneration of officials serving outside the Community, the object set being that all staff appointed to the delegations should, by various means, enjoy equivalent conditions of employment. The Commission has instructed the inter-service group to examine different ways of achieving this objective;
  - (ii) the administrative procedures, with a view to introducing a coherent system which could be applied to all delegations while taking account of the special characteristics attached to the operating conditions of staff serving in different non-member countries. In this context the Commission would also point out that a proposal for the reorganization of the European Agency for Cooperation is being examined. This reorganization will be an important factor in the search for greater coordination on the administrative side;
  - (iii) increased staff mobility, which should result in greater flexibility from the angle of personnel management, notably as regards the secondment of officials from headquarters to the external delegations and the reintegration of such officials into the headquarters departments on their return;
  - (iv) the arrangements for inspecting external delegations. For this purpose the Commission, by adopting certain improvements to the present system, has initiated work aimed at giving greater weight to the inspection of all delegations through the establishment of an inspection body headed by a person of acknowledged personal authority who will have direct access to the Commission. This inspection body will be integrated with the internal inspection arrangements.