

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(78) 663 final.

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## COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

Community exhibition in China

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Commission Communication to the Council

Subject: Community exhibition in China.

1. The Council's Working Party on Fairs and Exhibitions has been discussing the idea of a Community exhibition in China since 1975 (\*). Although an agreement in principle has emerged on the advisability of organizing such an event, the political importance of this question is such that the Delegation of one Member State has suggested that a position should be adopted at a higher level.

The Commission therefore proposes to the Council the following :

- i) that a firm decision be taken to hold a Community exhibition in China;
- ii) that the exhibition should go beyond the purely informative and should include for certain advanced sectors industrial equipment presented by the Member States.

2. Nature and subjects of the exhibition

From the outset, the Commission and certain Member States have favoured the idea of an exhibition which, in addition to an information section (to be organized by the Commission alone) on the development of the Community, would also include a section on the progress made by the Member States in the matter of advanced technology. This section would be prepared with the cooperation of the Member States.

Most of the representatives of the Member States in the Working Party, however, are in favour of an information exhibition illustrated with photos, models, drawings and films. Such an exhibition would illustrate the nature and development of the European Community, and at the same time two-thirds of the exhibition would be devoted to the development of advanced technology and research, concentrating on the sectors in which the Community has made a special effort.

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(\*) Working papers SEC(77) 3603 of 14 October 1977 and SEC(78) 1383 of 31 March 1978.

The majority of the representatives of the Member States were against exhibiting products, since most of the member countries has already held large trade fairs in China (or planned to do so in the future). The Embassies of Member States in Peking, consulted by the Working Party, were in favour of the idea of organizing a Community exhibition in China. They preferred a small photomontage-type exhibition (500 - 700 m<sup>2</sup>), which would visit several Chinese towns; the subject would be the growing unity of Europe, including cooperation projects, particularly in the field of advanced technology and research.

### 3. Attitude of the Chinese Government

As early as 1976, the Chinese Government has given its agreement in principle to the idea of a Community exhibition in China. They lately have expressed the opinion that an exhibition of photos and models without equipment would be of less interest to the Chinese visitor. They also thought that a surface area of 700 m<sup>2</sup> appeared on the small side compared to exhibitions held in the past by individual Member States.

### 4. Opinion of the Commission

The Commission is of the opinion that since this is the Community's first exhibition in China, and given the importance which the Chinese authorities attach to the Community at political level, the Community cannot present itself in a form which would be in too obvious contrast with the role which, in the eyes of the Chinese public, the Community plays in the world.

Moreover, at a time when it is China's intention to develop its trade with Europe, it is important that the latter should show what it is capable of in advanced sectors. An exhibition like this would of course be visited by technical specialists and persons of responsibility in the economy who, if they are interested, can bring to bear a certain amount of influence on purchasing decisions.

Consequently, since it is considered advisable to hold an exhibition in China, it is important to make sure that its size and content measure up to the objectives. In addition to the usual information material on the Community, the exhibition should include, for certain advanced sectors, industrial

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equipment presented by the Member States. An exhibition of this kind would also provide the opportunity to arrange a number of seminars aimed directly at representatives of trade and industry in China.

In case the Council decides to hold a Community exhibition in China, a request for a special budget will in accordance with practice for special events of this kind be introduced as an item under budgetary position 27.21.

