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**EEC MAY ACCEPT BIDS ON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
FROM FIRMS OF NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES**

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 6 -- The Commission of the European Economic Community (Common Market) decided today that nationals of non-member countries may participate in aid projects financed by the European Development Fund, established in 1958 to aid development of EEC-associated countries, most of which are in Africa.

Invitations to bid for labor and supply contracts in projects financed by the Development Fund had been limited to individuals or firms of the six EEC member countries or the associated countries themselves.

Initially, the Commission proposes to limit outside participation to contractors in countries cooperating with the Community in development aid on a permanent basis, either under special agreement or in joint bodies.

Before a call for bids is issued, the Commission will consult with the associated state in which a Development Fund project is to be launched. It will then, on the basis of the consultation, consider the possibility of awarding contracts to nationals of non-member countries.

The Commission's decision to permit wider participation in development projects was taken in light of discussions held in 1962 -- both within the Community and in various international organizations -- on the question of "tied aid" -- aid which limits participation to contractors from the donor country only.