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PRESS RELEASE

Commission memorandum to the Council
on problems connected with Rhine traffic.

On 22 June 1966 the Commission submitted to the Council a communication on arrangements to regulate the capacity of vessels that carry freight by inland waterway. The Commission gives its objections - economic, legal and institutional - to the scheme put forward by the Central Commission for Rhine Navigation, under which an International Union would be set up for Rhine navigation.

The Commission considers that the capacity of inland waterway vessels must be regulated at the Community level. It indicated the broad outlines for such arrangements and the general policy that should be pursued. It suggests short-term measures to encourage voluntary laying-up, subject to compensation when temporary excess capacity occurs. Long-term measures proposed include drawing up development and modernization programme; creation of a common fund to compensate firms willing to cut down excess capacity by withdrawing vessels (the fund to be financed by contributions payable on the commissioning of new craft); making the building and commissioning of new vessels subject to authorization; grants for having vessels broken up.

The Commission considers that the consent of Switzerland will have to be obtained if the system is to be effective and there are to be uniform arrangements governing Rhine transport.

The Commission requests the Council to ask the Member States concerned, i.e. Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands, to postpone taking any decision on the IUNR plan. It will inform the Council of the outcome of the talks it is proposing to hold with Switzerland.
