



European Communities
Commission
Press Release

27 Kensington Palace Gardens
London W8 4QQ
Telephone: 01-727 8090

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THE EEC AND OXFAM

Decision on Milk Powder for Angola

Because of widespread recurring reports in the press, and on radio and television about recent communications between Oxfam and the Community, it is felt necessary to clear the air.

It was widely reported that the "EEC Intervention Board" refused to sell Oxfam 10 tons of surplus skimmed milk powder for distribution among refugees in Angola because of its refusal to recognise Oxfam, or until Oxfam had established its "bona fides".

It was also reported that Commission procedures for approving the subsidised sale of skimmed milk powder could take up to two months, because details would first have to be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

The United Kingdom Intervention Board merely acts as a "post office" between the applicant and the Commission in Brussels in such cases.

The Commission in Brussels received only this morning a formal application from Oxfam, via the UK Intervention Board, for 10 tons of skimmed milk powder for free distribution in Angola under EEC Regulation 602/75. The application will be dealt with at the meeting of the appropriate management committee tomorrow (Thursday).

Last March, when Oxfam applied to the Commission for skimmed milk powder for India, its credentials were naturally acceptable. There is no question of Oxfam or any other potential recipient requiring to be "registered" with either the Board or the Commission, as was reported.

In August Oxfam sought information on the availability of this commodity and on the procedures to obtain it. This information was given, including the appropriate Regulation which formally requires identification of the proper standing of the recipient to prevent fraud (the price of skimmed milk for food aid is only 25 per cent of the intervention price).

Two other formal applications for skimmed milk were received at the Commission in August. One was approved the next day, the other on the same day - a matter of hours.

Publication in the Official Journal as a record of the transaction is at a later date of no particular significance.

Contrary to what was also widely reported, there has been no "bureaucratic bungling". Intervention stocks of skimmed milk powder are still available to Oxfam and other appropriate organisations at the heavily subsidised Community rate.

Applications will be dealt with at each next weekly meeting of the management committee, including those arriving directly at the Commission by telex on the same day.

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