

European Communities Commission Background Report

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SAILING UNDER COMMUNITY COLOURS

"Traité de Rome" Well Up in Round World Race

Judith Herbert, a young secretary from Plymouth, part of a crew of nine from all the Community countries, hopes to claim a place among the first three winners of the Whitbread round-the-world sailing race, due to finish in Portsmouth around Easter.

The boat, the <u>Traité de Rome</u>, carrying the insignia EUR 1 on its sails, is the smallest in the race but, with her handicap rating, she has so far done well. She finished fifth in the first leg of the race (Portsmouth to Cape Town), second in the second leg (Cape Town to Auckland) and third in the third leg (Auckland to Rio de Janeiro). Her crew reckon that she has a good chance of coming in second in Portsmouth.

The idea of raising a Community crew for the race came from Patricia Colmant, a young French journalist covering EC affairs for Le Soir in Belgium. She thought it would be a good way to celebrate the Community's 21st birthday in March this year, and to show that young people can give the Community an identity by working together as a team.

She set about finding a ship, crew and money. Sailing round the world is not cheap and to do it she needed £100,000. So far, with the help of the European Commission, the Belgian, French and Luxembourg governments, private donations from individuals and companies and the sale of special T-shirts, anoraks, stickers and so on, £75,000 has been raised. Among British backers, Rank-Xerox, Advance Laundries, and Barclays Bank have given donations, as has the Britain-in-Europe residual Fund. Mr Edward Heath, with leading politicians from the other Community countries, and Mr Roy Jenkins, President of the Commission, have given the project their backing, while Mr Leo Tindemans, the Belgian Prime Minister, christ**ene**d the ship at Ostend in July 1977. 'You must show that Europe rules the waves', he told the crew.

The skipper of <u>Traité de Rome</u> is Phil**li**pe Hamin and all nine Community countries have been represented in the crew. The race is jointly organized by Whitbreads and the Royal Naval Sailing Association.

The hope of the young people sailing under Community colours is that they are but the forerunner of many other such sporting teams in the future.

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