

WHAT'S BLUE AND GOLD AND FLIES ALL OVER?

EC HOT AIR BALLOON KICKS OFF BALL STATE UNIVERSITY'S EUROPE YEAR

The European Community will send a hot-air balloon to Muncie, Indiana, for the opening of Europe Year on the Ball State University campus on September 20. This will be the first flight by an EC hot-air balloon over the United States.

The balloon is called the "9th May", after the European Community's Schuman Day holiday which commemorates the famous declaration by Frenchman Robert Schuman on May 9, 1950, calling for a United States of Europe.

Since its inauguration on May 9, 1988, the EC balloon has made about 30 appearances a year throughout Europe, starting in historic events such as the opening of the Berlin Wall, and more regularly, at the opening of the twice yearly EC Summits, so leaders may be inspired to go onward and upward.

Weather permitting, the "9th May" will actually make its US debut in the sky over Ball State one day before the opening of Europe Year -- on September 19 -- so spectators can familiarize themselves with the European Community flag (12 gold stars in a circle on a background of blue) which covers the balloon's surface. Manned by a crew of two, it will appear again over the campus on September 20 as part of Europe Year's opening activities. And on September 21, the players in the Ball State vs. Kent State (Ohio) college football game may briefly lose fans attention when "9th May" makes its final fly-over above the campus football field.

Andreas van Agt, the EC's Ambassador to the United States and Head of the EC Commission's Washington Delegation, will be in Ball State University to attend Europe Year's launch on September 20.

Leaving hot-air to the heavens, he and others (Steven Ramondt, Consul General of the Netherlands (Chicago); Detlof von Berg, Consul General of Germany (Detroit); and Niels Lassen, Consul General of Denmark (Chicago) will join in a morning discussion with Indiana business leaders on the topic "The New Europe and the United States: Charting the Future together".

At 12.30 pm EDT, Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Indiana) and Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Indiana) will join the discussion group live by satellite from Washington DC for a one-and-a-half-hour teleconference on the topic "The US and Europe: Forging a New Alliance".

For more information on Europe Year, contact Erdogan Kumcu, Europe Year Task Force Chairman, at (317) 285-5186, or Marc Ransford, Ball State University Public Information Office, at (317) 285-1560.