

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY NEWS

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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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SUMMIT CALLS FOR EC ENERGY POLICY AND EUROPEAN UNION

A declaration of European identity, a call for speedier European union, and guidelines for a Community energy policy highlighted the "Summit" meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the European Communities Member States held in Copenhagen, December 14-15.

On international relations, the document called for the acceleration of progress toward speaking with a "single voice" in the face of the superpowers' growing influence. Conceding that there is "no alternative to the security provided by the nuclear weapons of the United States and by the presence of North American forces in Europe," the Nine stressed their intention to "maintain their constructive dialogue and develop their cooperation with the United States on the basis of equality and in a spirit of friendship."

The Summit leaders decided to meet more frequently, when necessary to provide a stimulus or lay down further guidelines for the construction of a united Europe or when required by the international situation.

Danish Prime Minister Anker Joergensen, spokesman for the nine nations, delivered a statement to the press on the meeting. This statement welcomed the forthcoming Middle East Peace Conference in Geneva and reaffirmed the Community's November 6 call for the return of Arab and Israeli forces to the October 22 lines.

With regard to the Community, the Summit participants called on EC institutions to hasten progress toward complete economic and monetary union, to define a common position on international monetary reform, establish a Regional Development Fund in 1974, carry out a social action program, improve cooperation and communication channels between Community institutions, and speed development of a common policy on industrial, scientific and technical cooperation.

Stressing the need for an effective common energy policy, the EC leaders called for rapid decision making machinery.

COMMON
CONSUMER
POLICY
FRAMEWORK
PROPOSED

A draft Consumer Information and Protection Program, which would lay the groundwork for a Community consumer policy, has been sent to the Council of Ministers by the Commission.

The program stresses that the consumer must be seen as a person with valid social and environmental concerns, not merely as a purchaser of goods and services.

EC consumer policy, the Commission said, should ensure more complete and accurate information, minimize health and safety risks of goods and services, explain clearly Community policies and measures, and improve consumer participation in matters affecting their interests.

The Program gives priority to raising health and safety standards for goods, particularly foods and dangerous products; eliminating deceptive business practices, such as supplying unsolicited goods, unfair contracts, and misleading advertising, and securing fair terms for leases of equipment with the option to buy and other forms of credit. In the consumer information field, priority is given to providing clear explanations and comparative statistics on prices, improving labeling, and giving wide exposure to EC consumer-related policies and actions.

LOW LEAD
GASOLINE
STANDARDS
PROPOSED

The European Community continues its campaign against air pollution with proposals for Community-wide standards that would lower the lead content of automobile gasoline.

The Commission's December 6 proposals would allow automobile gasoline to contain no more than 0.4 grams of lead per liter (1.06 quarts) by January 1, 1976. After January 1, 1978, the top limit for "regular" gasoline would be reduced to 0.15 grams of lead per liter. The proposals would also prevent producers from increasing the amounts of other pollutant chemicals in gasoline, to comply with the new regulations.

BLUEPRINT FOR
FOUNDATION
ON EUROPEAN
LIVING AND
WORKING
CONDITIONS

Proposals for creating a European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, setting up a General Committee on Safety at Work, and broadening the responsibilities of the Mines Safety and Health Commission have been sent to the Council of Ministers by the Commission. The proposals concern three of the priority actions listed in the draft Social Action Program, sent to the Council on October 24.

Seeking ways to improve living conditions, Foundation studies would delve into problems of ecology, energy production, recreation facilities, urban renewal and restoration, family and health security, immigration, and integration of non-European peoples into Community society. In the interest of bettering working conditions, the Foundation would, for instance, explore ideas for upgrading the worker's position through such means as joint management, job enrichment, further education, and adjusting machine operating schedules to the worker's needs. It would also study problems facing parts of the labor force such as young people, the handicapped, and immigrants.

EC AID FOR SAHEL AND ETHIOPIA

Emergency Community assistance, totalling 35 million units of account (UA), has been earmarked for the drought stricken countries in the "Sahel" region, bordering the Sahara, and Ethiopia. (One UA equals one 1970 dollar.) Acting on the recommendation of the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers approved the aid on December 11. The funds, coming from the 1974 EC budget, will help finance structural projects to build food stocks and reestablish agricultural and stock farming productivity in the disaster areas. Specific projects include improving water supplies by drilling new wells and deepening existing ones; developing cultivation of certain essential crops, creating government grain stocks to feed 6 million people over 3 months; stockpiling cattle feed; and instituting health measures for calves and lambs.

The Council is currently reviewing the Commission's December 12 proposal to send a total of UA 52 million in food aid to these areas. The Sahel would receive 110,000 tons of cereals, 12,000 tons of powdered milk, and 4,700 tons of butter-oil. Ethiopia would be allocated 20,000 tons of cereals, 2,500 tons of powdered milk, and 1,300 tons of butter-oil.

RETRAINING THE HANDICAPPED

The European Community organized a seminar on the professional re-adaptation of adult handicapped persons in Mulhouse, France, December 10-14. Sixty experts attended. The group drew up recommendations for the optimal use of European Social Fund money in this field.

COUNCIL CALLS FOR MEASURES TO COMBAT INFLATION

In a December 4 call to Member States to take emergency action to combat inflation, the EC Council of Ministers recommended:

- a strict curb on the growth in spending
- a review of business and trade subsidies
- reduction of public investment commitments, especially in construction
- greater medium and long-term borrowing to cover budget deficits
- faster tax collection, but restraint on tax methods which boost demand
- stricter management of finances of central and local authorities.

Specifically to curb price increases, the Council called for:

- quantitative control of monetary aggregates
- aid to productive investment, especially in the energy sector
- an end to compensation for sales of foreign currencies
- savings inducements through adjustment of the interest rate hierarchy.

Other optional measures suggested were:

- strict surveillance of pricing methods and profit margins
- stricter rules on the posting of prices
- a freeze on public service dues through March 31, 1974
- stricter control of price abuse resulting from a controlling market position
- a consumer information campaign concerning mass-production prices.

Initial results of a European Community public opinion poll show that people in the six original Member States are more convinced of the usefulness of the Common Market than are the three newer members (Britain, Denmark, and Ireland). The poll, published November 27 by the EC Commission, reached 13,000 persons, 15 years of age or older.

By nationality, Italy emerges as the most European nation in Europe. Britain, followed closely by Denmark, was least enthusiastic about the Community.

Asked if it was good for their country to belong to the Community, 69 per cent of Italians said "yes," compared to 31 per cent of Britons. Over 60 per cent in Germany, France, Holland, and Luxembourg, over 50 per cent in Belgium and Ireland, and 42 per cent in Denmark concurred in this view.

Asked if the Community was good for the individual, EC popularity dropped to 54 per cent in Italy, 50 per cent in France, and less than 50 per cent elsewhere. Denmark (32 per cent) and Britain (22 per cent) ranked the lowest.

Two Italians, Germans, and Luxemburgers out of three favor political union in Europe, contrasted with 35 per cent in Ireland, 28 per cent in Denmark, and 26 per cent in Britain. Support was similarly varied for the proposal that the Community have a directly elected Parliament.

Conversely, most Europeans, ranging from 88 per cent in Italy to 59 per cent in Britain, felt all Europe should go to the aid of a fellow Member State undergoing economic difficulties.

NOTICE OF
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THE NEXT ISSUE OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY NEWS WILL BE PUBLISHED
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