

European Community NEWS

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PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION; CLOSER EUROPEAN LINKS?

By promising democracy in Portugal, Lisbon's April 25 military revolution opens up the prospect of closer links between that country and the European Community.

Like other European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, Portugal has a free trade agreement with the Common Market; but, as with Spain, Portugal's dictatorship has precluded Portugal from consideration in the EC. A democratic, multiparty Portugal might conceivably seek membership and be considered acceptable some day.

Improved farm incomes through Europe's common agricultural policy, and industrial and other forms of modernization through the European Development Fund would be two obvious advantages of EC membership for Portugal, the poorest and least developed country in Western Europe.

The prospect of peace in Portugal's three main African colonies -- Lisbon's "Viet Nam" and the immediate reason for the revolution -- should not only transfer funds from defense to more constructive purposes and help the economy by ending the present system of four years'

military service for young men but also bring home some of the million Portuguese emigrants who have been brawn- and brain-drained to other European countries, where they frequently live in squalor. If Portugal joined the Community, Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea could be expected to qualify for EC aid and cooperation.

PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS 40 HOUR WEEK - WOMEN'S EQUALITY

The European Parliament gave support to generalizing the 40-hour work week and a four-week paid vacation throughout the European Community, in an April 26 resolution. The resolution supports the Commission's proposal that member states apply the 40-hour work week as of January 1, 1975, and the four-week paid vacation as of January 1, 1976.

The Parliament also approved the Commission's proposed directive seeking effective application of the principle of equal pay for men and women performing the same work. This principle is embodied in Article 119 of the Common Market Treaty. The Parliament also called for an end to indirect discrimination against women by improving job access and classification, vocational training, social benefits, etc.

THIRD OF NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS IN EC

Nearly one-third of the world's operating nuclear power stations are in the European Community. Of a total 134 stations, the Common Market and the United States both have 42 stations. The EC Commission forecasts estimate that by 1980, there will be about 400 nuclear stations, of which 90 will be in the Community.

SOAMES -- OFFICIAL VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA

EC Commission Vice President Sir Christopher Soames made an official visit to Yugoslavia April 29-30. Soames, responsible for EC external relations, led a delegation of Commission officials. He held talks with Dzemal Bijedic, Yugoslavian Executive Council President, Council Vice President M. Minic, and Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs Boris Snurdel. Soames also met with the Federal Secretaries for Agriculture and for External Trade. A non-preferential trade agreement between the Community and Yugoslavia has been in force since September 1, 1973.

ORTOLI DEFENDS NEED FOR EUROPEAN UNITY

Europe's new situation illustrates its problems and dependence and heavily underscores the need for unity, EC Commission President Francois-Xavier Ortoli told the European Parliament on April 24 in Strasbourg, France. Ortoli rejected the idea that the Community should stop work temporarily, maintaining that it would degenerate to stagnation giving rise to the feeling that European progress is unnecessary. What's left of Europe's monetary solidarity must be preserved, and a "bridge" between those currencies in and out of the joint EC float must be maintained, he said.

Pointing to the need for reinforcing Europe's institutions, Ortoli said the Commission sees no reason for not strengthening the Parliament's budgetary powers. Furthermore, he continued "the Council should once again become a Council of Ministers," by deciding broad policy lines instead of debating details.

COMMISSION PUTS HOLD ON TAKE-OVER PLAN

The EC Commission has taken action to maintain the status quo in a joint takeover by two French companies, Société Schneider, SA and Marine Firminy, SA. In October 1970, the Commission authorized Schneider and Marine to establish joint equal control of the Société Creusot-Loire. Although both firms agreed to maintain the balance of their Creusot holdings by not purchasing stock from each other, Schneider purchased 34 per cent of Marine stock in November 1973. Due to Marine opposition to the purchase, Schneider placed the shares in escrow until April 15, 1974. The Commission is investigating the transaction and, at Marine's request, has ordered conservatory measures to preserve that company's independence until final evaluation.

NEW PLAN FOR COMMON EC ENERGY POLICY SEEN

The European Community Energy Committee is finishing a plan for a new strategy for the EC energy policy. The committee, made up of national officials, was set up January 31 to advise the Commission in preparing energy proposals. The plan, approved in principle at the committee's April 5 meeting in Brussels, will be completed in time for the Commission to submit formal proposals to the Council in mid-May.

HIGHER SOCIAL FUND SELECTIVITY NEEDED

"The new Social Fund must not be just a sort of Red Cross in the field of employment," Sir Patrick Hillery said, calling on Member States to be more selective in recommending projects for fund aid. Hillery, EC Commissioner responsible for social affairs addressed the European Parliament on the first annual report of the activities of the new European Social Fund on April 25. Emphasizing the need for a rigorously selective policy to make the best use of fund resources, Hillery said member states had not taken this into account in forwarding applications to the Commission.

Projects worthy of fund support, he said, should have both a promotional and catalytic effect and fit into a Community perspective. The fund's role, he continued, should be to establish durable solutions to structural employment problems and define where public responsibilities lie in a framework of a labor mobility policy.

THOMSON SAYS BRITISH EC MEMBERSHIP A MUST

"For Britain the Commonwealth is not an alternative to the Community," George Thomson, EC Commissioner responsible for regional policy, told the Royal Commonwealth Society April 26. Thomson said the age of cheap food is "over for good," pointing out that the world price of wheat had more than doubled in 1973. Britain is getting its wheat more cheaply from France than from Canada, and the Commonwealth sugar and butter quotas into Britain are underfilled, he said.

The case for Britain's being part of the European Community was never stronger than now, according to Thomson. The best service Britain can perform

for the old Commonwealth of New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, he continued, is to make a success of its EC membership, and ensure a stronger European partnership in the Atlantic alliance. Additionally, Britain's best service for the new developing Commonwealth, he said, would be to make a success of the present EC "association" negotiations.

SOCIAL FUND GETS AID APPLICATIONS

The European Social Fund is reviewing applications for aid totaling 126 million units of account (UA) (one UA equals \$1.20635 at current rates). Bids to redevelop priority areas, to develop technology, and encourage company regrouping total UA 105 million. About UA 21 million was asked for several social or industry related projects

EC STEPS UP EAGGF ANTI-FRAUD EFFORTS

The European Community is stepping up its fight against fraud practiced on the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). Special investigating teams of auditors, set up by the Commission last year, have been traveling throughout the Community to check EAGGF recipients' financial accounting.

Additionally, a meeting of national public authorities was organized by the Commission April 24 to examine fraudulent practices, investigative methods, and ways to coordinate EC member state anti-fraud efforts. The Commission relies heavily on national services to discover and repress illegal activities as well as recover EAGGF funds unduly paid out. A total of 2.1 million units of account (UA) was wrongly paid out by the fund in 1972, according to the 1972 EAGGF financial report (one UA equals \$1.20635 at current rates).

MORE EC AID FOR SAHEL REGION

The European Community dispatched 30.5 million units of account (UA) in food aid to the famine-stricken Sahel region of Africa in 1973, the Commission said April 9 in response to a written question from a member of the European Parliament. (One UA equals \$1,20635 at current rates.) Nearly 109,000 tons of cereals and 13,000 tons of powdered milk were sent to Upper Volta, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Chad, and Ethiopia. Despite transportation, storage, and distribution difficulties, 85 per cent of the aid was dispatched before or during the period of shortage, the Commission said. The Community paid transport costs both to the African ports of debarkation and from there to the aid distribution centers. Additionally, several EC member states placed trucks, aircraft, and other special transport facilities at the Sahel countries' disposal.

The Community's 1974 food aid program calls for sending 130,000 tons of cereals, 14,000 tons of skimmed milk powder, and 6,000 tons of butter-oil to the same countries. The Community has decided to improve transport and storage facilities in 1974 by

- providing and maintaining trucks capable of traveling over dirt roads to distribution centers
 - repairing and constructing roads to eliminate the need for airlifts
 - constructing mobile and easily built medium-sized warehouses.
- The European Parliament has added UA five million to the EC budget for these purposes.

MAY CALENDAR

- 7- Council of Ministers meets in Brussels to discuss foreign affairs.
- 9- Twenty-fourth Anniversary of French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman's declaration urging other European countries to join France and Germany in pooling their coal and steel resources.
- 13-17- Plenary session of the European Parliament meets in Strasbourg, France.
- 20- Council of Ministers meets in Brussels on economic and financial matters.
- 29-30- Economic and Social Committee meets in Brussels.
- 31- Council of Ministers meets in Brussels on research.

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