

# European Community NEWS

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**EUROPEAN COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICE** 2100 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037 Telephone: (202) 872-8350

277 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017 Telephone: (212) 371-3804

NO. 9 MARCH 7, 1975

## BRITAIN WORKING OUT EC REFERENDUM PROCEDURES

The British Government has proposed the mechanics for conducting a national referendum on whether Britain should remain in the European Community, in a February 25 "White Paper." The vote is scheduled for late June. The proposals call for deciding the issue on a simple majority and counting the votes nationally (at a single center such as London), rather than by constituency or region. Every household would be provided with documents explaining the renegotiated EC membership terms, the Government's recommendation, and statements by each of the opposing sides. Standard election laws and procedures would apply to the referendum. Membership advocates and opponents would be free to advertise their positions.

## LITTLE GROWTH IN EC ELECTRICITY USE

Electricity use in the European Community during 1974 showed the lowest growth rate in 25 years, according to recently published EC statistics. Net electricity consumption in the nine EC countries reached 993,000 kilowatt hours last year, an increase of 2 per cent over 1973. The slowdown was attributed to a general stagnation of most EC industrial activity -- prompted by the energy crisis -- an unusually warm winter, and the British miners strike in the early months of 1974.

## ORTOLI HAILS SIGNING OF EC-ACP CONVENTION

The Lome Convention "represents, in the field of international cooperation, the most comprehensive and thorough-going attack yet made on poverty and underdevelopment," Commission President Francois-Xavier Ortoli said in a February 28 address on the occasion of the signing of the convention in Lome, Togo. The convention is a wide ranging five-year trade-and-aid agreement linking the Community to 46 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. "The Lome Convention proves that it is possible... to bring about the difficult birth of a new world order through cooperation, not confrontation," Ortoli said.

## NEW EC CUSTOMS UNION SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAM

A new wide-ranging program for simplifying customs procedures in the European Community was proposed to the Council of Ministers by the Commission, February 27. The two-year program deals with customs nomenclature, regulations, rules of customs procedures, and documents and information required of importers. This is the third and most comprehensive plan submitted by the Commission since June 1973. At a February 28 press conference in Brussels, Commissioner Finn Gundelach said the program was designed to eliminate bureaucratic difficulties for private citizens as well as for commercial traders.

**EC-MEXICO TRADE  
TALKS AUTHORIZED**

The EC Commission was given the go-ahead by the Council of Ministers on March 4 to open negotiations for a trade agreement with Mexico. A Mexican Government request for such talks was transmitted to the European Community during May 1973. The EC-Mexico accord would be a five-year non-preferential agreement similar to the EC-India pact. An EC-Mexico joint commission would be set up to oversee the accord and to further economic and commercial cooperation. The Community has already concluded agreements with three other Latin American countries -- Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil.

**GUIDELINES FOR EC  
AT UNIDO CONFERENCE**

General guidelines for European Community participation at the March 12 to 26 Second General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), at Lima, were adopted by the Council of Ministers March 4. The conference will seek to determine basic principles for an international declaration on development and industrial cooperation and to de-

fine a wide range plan of action for assistance to developing countries. The Council's guidelines call for: avoiding confrontation and setting up a constructive dialogue with the "Group of 77" developing countries; accepting the document of the "77" as a base for discussion; maintaining close coordination between the EC-Nine; seeking a consensus with other western countries, and keeping close contact with the African, Caribbean, and Pacific nations.

**UK NUCLEAR POWER  
PLANTS GET EIB HELP**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) recently granted two 12-year loans totaling more than \$56 million to help build new nuclear power plants in the United Kingdom. The loans went to the South of Scotland Electricity Board for construction of a nuclear power station on Scotland's west coast and to the Electricity Council of Hartlepool for the construction of a similar plant in the northeast of England.

Britain has received more than \$327 million in EIB loans since entering the European Community -- more than \$118 million since last summer.

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2100 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037