

European BACKGROUND INFORMATION Community

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICE

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BACKGROUND NOTE

No. 9/1976

February 20, 1976

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COMMISSION PRESIDENT TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT FORD

Francois-Xavier Ortoli, President of the European Communities Commission, arrives in Washington Monday for meetings with President Gerald R. Ford and other Administration officials on February 23 and 24.

Discussions will range over a variety of topics coloring the Community's relations with the United States including the economic situation, trade relations, and the state of European political integration. President Ortoli is scheduled to meet President Ford at 9:30 a.m. on February 24. He will also meet with Deputy Secretary of State Robert S. Ingersoll, Secretary of the Treasury William F. Simon, Chairman of the Federal Reserve System's Board Arthur F. Burns, and members of the Congress.

This will be President Ortoli's second visit to a US President as Commission President. In October 1973, he made an official visit to the United States at the invitation of former President Richard M. Nixon.

Ortoli's Career

"The career of Francois-Xavier Ortoli reads as though he had been trained from the cradle by France for the job he now holds in Brussels," commented *The Economist* of London shortly after Ortoli became Commission President on January 1, 1973. President Ortoli was born February 16, 1925, in Ajaccio, Corsica. He received his education in Hanoi, where his father, a diplomat, was stationed. After earning a degree in law (*license*) at the Hanoi Faculty of Law, he entered the *Ecole nationale d'administration* in Paris and became an Inspector of Finances in 1948. He held various posts in the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

President Ortoli became Director General of the EC Commission's Internal Market Directorate in 1958, and played a crucial role in the formation of customs union.

In 1962, he became a member of Prime Minister Georges Pompidou's cabinet,

serving first as technical counselor and later as director.

In 1966, at the age of 40, Ortoli became *Commissaire General au Plan*, responsible for managing France's Fifth Economic Plan.

April 1967 saw the beginning of a series of Ortoli appointments to head Ministries: 1967 Minister of Supply and Housing; 1968 Minister of Education; 1968 Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, and 1969 Minister of Industrial and Scientific Development.

President Ortoli will be accompanied by his chief executive assistant (*chef de cabinet*) Philippe de Margerie and Leslie Fielding, director at the Commission's Directorate General for External Relations.