

# EUROPEAN BACKGROUND INFORMATION COMMUNITY

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BACKGROUND NOTE

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## EC VICE PRESIDENT HILLERY BECOMES PRESIDENT ELECT OF IRELAND

EC Commission Vice President Patrick J. Hillery became Ireland's President Elect yesterday. He was nominated unanimously by Ireland's three political parties to take the place of Cearbhall O'Dalaigh, who resigned on October 23 in a disagreement over the constitutionality of a bill giving the Government emergency powers over terrorists.

Quite appropriately, Ireland had appointed Hillery as its first member of the EC Commission, following Irish membership on January 1, 1973. It was Hillery, as Ireland's Foreign Minister and chief negotiator, who worked out the terms of his most enthusiastically "European" country's membership in the Community.

A physician, with a penchant for bright shirts, Hillery was responsible for Community social and labor policy on the Commission. During his tenure, the Community authorized aid to retrain migrant workers for new jobs. Hillery also staunchly defended women's rights to equal pay for equal work.

Born on May 2, 1923, in Miltown-Malby, County Clare, Hillery was educated at Miltown-Milbay National School, at Rockwell College, Cashel, and at University College Dublin, where he received a Bachelor of Science in 1943. He further pursued his studies in medicine to obtain his Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, and Bachelor of Obstetrics in 1947 and, in 1952, his Diploma in Public Health. He practiced medicine from 1957 until 1959.

Hillery's career in politics began in 1951 when he won a seat in the Dail (the Irish Parliament) for Fianna Fail for County Clare, a seat he held until December 1972, just before joining the EC Commission. He has served in the Irish Government as Minister of Education, Minister of Industry and Commerce, and Minister of Labor.

He is married and has two children. Hillery is a keen golfer and an accomplished amateur artist.

EC Commission President Francois-Xavier Ortoli in a congratulatory telegram to Mr. Hillery yesterday said that his nomination was "...a great honor to you personally and a recognition of your achievements as the Minister directly responsible for negotiating successfully Ireland's accession to the European Communities and subsequently serving with such distinction as Vice President of the Commission."