

European BACKGROUND INFORMATION Community

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BACKGROUND NOTE

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THE EUROPEAN SUMMIT

The Council of Ministers of the European Community met in Rome at the end of March, and issued the following statements.

1. The European Council considered the prospects for economic development within the Community and agreed that, in order to promote sustained economic recovery and mitigate the severe unemployment being experienced in Member countries, without risking the renewal of inflation, there is a need for intensified cooperation at the Community as well as the international level.
2. The European Council recognized that such action must in large part be undertaken on a world scale in which the Community has an important role to play. In this connection they noted first that Community Finance Ministers have reached a large measure of agreement on the views they will put forward on international financing problems at the meeting of the IMF Interim Committee in Washington at the end of April, and secondly that ways of encouraging a stronger, but still balanced, growth of world economic activity will be a major theme of the London Summit in early May.
3. The European Council further agreed in particular to seek action at the Community level in three directions: firstly to promote measures to help resolve specific labor market problems, especially in improving training and employment opportunities for young people and women: secondly to encourage higher levels of investment in the Member States: and thirdly to halt divergence and promote convergence in their economic performance. To this end, the European Council invited on the one hand the Commission, in particular by the better use of Community instruments, and on the other hand the Board of Governors of the European Investment Bank to seek ways of improving the effectiveness of their activities.

4. The European Council emphasized the importance of cooperation between the social partners in these matters and have agreed to the holding of a further tripartite conference in the first half of this year, at a date to be agreed, at which progress and possibilities could be reviewed. The European Council agreed to reconsider progress on this range of problems at its own projected meeting in June.
5. The European Council agreed to conduct at its meeting at the end of the year an examination of the results obtained in the fields of growth, employment and the fight against inflation, and to assess the Community's prospects of making progress towards Economic and Monetary Union.

The European Council, recalling its statement of 30 November 1976,

- reaffirms the importance it attaches to maintaining good relations between the Community and Japan;
- notes that some progress has been made over the past 4 months towards resolving certain specific trade problems;
- observes however that not all the problems have yet been solved and considers that efforts have to be continued particularly with a view to the sustained expansion of exports from the Community to Japan;
- invites accordingly the responsible Community Institutions to continue the intensive discussions with the Japanese authorities with the aim of resolving outstanding difficulties as rapidly as possible.

DECLARATION ON THE SITUATION IN THE STEEL SECTOR

The European Council has considered the situation in the steel sector, on the basis of a communication from the Commission. This sector is experiencing a depression more serious than at any time in the history of the Coal and Steel Community. The Heads of State and Heads of Government have taken this opportunity to reaffirm their resolve to restore to the steel industry through the appropriate measures, the viability and competitiveness essential to the maintenance of a truly European industrial potential.

The European Council expresses its appreciation of the efforts being undertaken by the Commission to put forward at an early date practical proposals and initiatives for short term remedial measures to stabilize the market, for a longer term structural reorganization of the European steel industry and for measures in the social field to assist workers adversely affected by such reorganization.

The European Council expresses the wish that the Council of Ministers gives its urgent attention to the Commission's proposals and initiatives on these issues.