

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

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EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY • EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY • EUROPEAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMUNITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EEC COMMISSION AND ECSC HIGH AUTHORITY REGRET RECENT BRITISH IMPORT SURCHARGE

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 29 --- The Commission of the European Economic Community and the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community expressed today in separate statements their regret over the 15 per cent import surcharge announced October 26 by British Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

The EEC executive branch asked that the recent British protection measures be abolished as soon as possible so as not to hinder the 'Kennedy Round' negotiations scheduled to resume November 16. The ECSC High Authority announced that it will consult with the British government within the ECSC-United Kingdom Council of Association on the recent levy which it termed 'a serious obstacle to trade.'

The following is the EEC Commission's official communiqué:

Statement of the EEC Commission

"The Commission has followed, with the sympathetic interest natural in the case of a friendly country, the development of the economic situation in the United Kingdom. It is aware of the difficulties facing those directing British economic policy.

"Countries trading with Britain, including the European Economic Community, are seriously affected by the measures taken by the British government, and the Commission has asked itself whether measures increasing protection are in fact appropriate. It feels that they are not.

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"The Commission finds it regrettable that the British government made no prior approach to the countries with which it has trade relations and which are fellow members of several international organizations.

"The Commission feels that it is vital that these measures -- especially in regard to the eventual length of their application -- should not hamper the current GATT negotiations. Consequently, it takes the view that they should be withdrawn as soon as possible. The Commission will plead to that end at the consultations with the contracting parties of GATT."

The following is the ECSC High Authority's official communiqué.

Statement of the ECSC High Authority

"The High Authority has been officially informed of the measures taken by the government of the United Kingdom which has proposed to consult the High Authority on these within the framework of the Council of Association.

"The High Authority has stressed that the temporary levy on imports of 15 per cent introduced by the United Kingdom government is a serious obstacle to trade. It intends to examine the conformity of this measure with existing international agreements on the occasion of the above-mentioned consultations which it has requested should take place without delay.

"While fully appreciating the necessity for the United Kingdom to improve its balance of payments and to adopt a policy which contributes effectively to this, the High Authority strongly hopes that it will be possible to avoid any hindrance to trade between the United Kingdom and the Community caused by unilateral charges which, if they were to last, could only harm its even development.

"In the interval, a meeting of the trade relations committee of the Council of Association between the United Kingdom and the ECSC has been fixed for Friday, October 30."