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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

**ECSC EXECUTIVE SEEKS UNIFORM STEEL TARIFF FOR COMMON MARKET
UNIFORM STEEL TARIFF SOUGHT FOR EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET**

WASHINGTON, December 3 -- The Council of Ministers of the European Coal and Steel Community has postponed a decision to raise the external tariff on steel to a uniform level for the six member nations, it was reported from Luxembourg today.

The Council rejected a proposal by the ECSC executive branch, the High Authority, to "level up" the present harmonized tariff schedule to the nine per cent level for Italian steel. However, it gave the High Authority a mandate to consult with "traditional foreign suppliers of steel" to the Six on the proposed uniform level. At the present time, the external tariffs on steel imported into the Community range from a low of six per cent applied by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Benelux to seven per cent for France, and nine per cent for Italy.

The Council of Ministers will consider on January 7, 1964, the results of the High Authority's consultations.

Proposal Facilitates "Kennedy Round"

The proposal, the High Authority said, was presented to facilitate steel negotiations in the forthcoming "Kennedy Round" in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Council Chairman Maurice Bokanowski, France's Minister of Industry, stressed that an eventual uniform (single) Community tariff would not effect those items included in the Six's external steel tariffs which have been bound under GATT regulations.

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The High Authority also said that the proposal would improve the Community's steel market position in view of the rapid influx of low priced steel imports into the Community. To stabilize imports from the Eastern bloc, the Council agreed to the High Authority proposal that steel quotas on imports, in force since June-July 1963, be extended through 1964. The Council also consented to the application of a specific duty of \$10 per ton to imports of cast iron.

Internal Market Rules To Be Strengthened

The Council of Ministers unanimously supported a High Authority proposal to strengthen the market regulations within the Community, making steel dealers subject to the same rules existing for Community steel producers. In particular, the High Authority was given the right to examine the trade practices of dealers and other intermediaries.

In response to Dutch opposition, the Council rejected the High Authority proposal to prohibit price alignments on imports from the Eastern bloc. The proposal, previously approved by the ECSC Consultative Committee representing coal and steel producers, consumers and workers, would have prevented Community producers from lowering their prices to meet low price imports from outside the Community.

Proposal Answers French Request

The agreement for an eventual uniform tariff represents a step forward in European solidarity, Mr. Bokanowski said. Answering press questions on the possibility of French unilateral measures, he said that these would have been taken only if France had felt herself abandoned by the other member states and the ECSC High Authority. Since the High Authority now seemed determined to seek a solution, France had no further reason to act on her own, he said.