
No. 23/1983
December 9, 1983

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THE FAILURE OF THE ATHENS SUMMIT DOES NOT MEAN THE FAILURE OF THE COMMUNITY

The Commission of the European Communities says it will work to "relaunch" the European Community following the failure this week of a summit meeting in Athens to resolve the Community's financial crisis.

The three-day European Council meeting, attended by the heads of government of the 10 Community member states and the president of the Commission, broke up December 6 without producing an agreement on proposed reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and to EC financing mechanisms.

While "disappointment is deep," the Commission said in a statement issued December 7, the failure of a summit meeting does not mean the failure of the Community, let alone of a "historical process that is to ensure the prosperity and strength of Europe."

However, the Community must take immediate steps to "restore confidence and underpin economic recovery," the Commission said, and it must return to procedures that put the "higher interest of the Community," rather than conflicting national interests, at the center of the debate.

Among the prerequisites for reactivating the Community, it added, are adequate financial resources, a lasting solution to budget problems, increased efficiency of the CAP, and enlargement of the Community to include Spain and Portugal.

Gaston Thorn, president of the Commission, said in a press conference December 6 that he hopes the Athens failure will make member states recognize the steps they must take to find a "European solution" to the Community's problems.

Pieter Dankert, president of the European Parliament, said in a December 6 statement that the summit's failure demonstrates the "paralysis" of the Community and the inability of the European Council to work as a Community institution. He called for Europe to reflect on its "reasons for being" under the leadership of the Parliament, which he described as the only Community institution legitimized by universal suffrage.

The text of the Commission's statement is as follows:

"Following Athens, disappointment is deep. The difficulties were real, and they have been made worse. However, the failure of a European Council/"

session is not the failure of the Community, let alone the failure of a historical process that is to ensure the prosperity and strength of Europe.

"The Commission will face its obligations to ensure that the Community's achievements are preserved and progress continues without delay, and to create the conditions for a relaunching of the Community.

"Preserving the Community's achievements require that there be no further uncertainties beyond those arising from the Athens European Council session. The Commission is anxious that conditions be established for speedy adoption of the 1984 budget. As the European Council did not decide on economic measures proposed by the Commission, the Commission will take its responsibilities and submit to the Council the proposals that are necessary to implement the 1984 budget.

"It is imperative that the decisions be made on schedule so that the Community can honor its pledges to itself, its citizens and non-member countries.

"It would not be right for the Community to wait until it had settled all of its problems before embarking on the urgent action necessary to its future development. Accordingly, steps must be taken immediately to restore confidence and underpin economic recovery. Quick decisions must be reached on the projects of Community interest submitted by the Commission in order not to jeopardize their success.

"The Community's obligation to certain social groups, certain sectors and certain regions still stands.

"To uphold the Community's interests, the Commission will continue to fully meet its responsibilities in negotiations with non-member countries.

"The Commission will take every action in order to make sure that the current crisis results in the relaunching of the Community. The prerequisites for this are well known:

"That the benefits of the European dimension be fully realized; that the Community be afforded the necessary resources to ensure its development; that a lasting solution be worked out for the budget problems; that the Common Agricultural Policy be enabled to perform its function more efficiently; that the resources available be more efficiently managed; that the Community be enlarged to include Portugal and Spain.

"This involves ending the clash of conflicting national interests on too many unrelated issues and returning to Treaty procedures, the only ones whereby the higher interest of the Community can once again be made the center of the debate. In this way the conditions will be established for a solution.

"Europe belongs to its citizens. And its citizens demand of their institutions that they enable the Community to bring about economic recovery and pave the way for them to look forward to a better future."
