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COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

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PRESS RELEASE

5586/84 (Presse 46)

915th Council meeting

- Internal Market -

Brussels, 8 March 1984

President: Mrs Catherine LALUMIERE

State Secretary
attached to the Minister for Economic Affairs,
Finance and the Budget,
responsible for Consumer Affairs,
of the French Republic

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Paul de KEERSMAEKER
State Secretary,
European Affairs and Agriculture

Denmark:

Mr Jakob RYTTER
Deputy Permanent Representative

Germany:

Mr Dieter von WÜRZEN
State Secretary,
Federal Ministry of Economic
Affairs

Greece:

Mr Andréas KAZAZIS
State Secretary,
Ministry of Trade

France:

Mrs Catherine LALUMIERE
State Secretary attached to the
Minister for Economic Affairs,
Finance and the Budget,
responsible for Consumer Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Edward COLLINS
Minister of State at the
Department of Industry, Trade,
Commerce and Tourism

Italy:

Mr Francesco FORTE
Minister for the Co-ordination
of Community Policies

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean DONDELINGER
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

Netherlands:

Mr F. BOLKENSTEIN
Minister for Foreign Trade

Mr W.F. van EEKELEN
State Secretary,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom

Mr Alexander FLETCHER
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Corporate and
Consumer Affairs

Commission:

Mr Etienne DAVIGNON
Vice-President

Mr Christopher TUGENDHAT
Vice-President

Mr Karl-Heinz NARJES
Member

Mr Georges CONTOGEOGRIS
Member

NEW COMMERCIAL POLICY INSTRUMENT

The Council resumed its examination of the proposal for a Regulation on the strengthening of the common commercial policy, with regard in particular to protection against illicit commercial practices.

It instructed a Working Party to examine further certain ideas put forward by the Commission during the debate and to report to the Council meeting on Foreign Affairs on 12 and 13 March 1984.

ABOLITION OF TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

The Council resumed its examination of the 15 harmonization Directives before it and noted at the end of the debate that all delegations wished to see them adopted rapidly. The Council accordingly requested the Permanent Representatives Committee to resume forthwith its examination of the matter and of the last remaining obstacles to the proposed compromise, instructing it in particular to prepare all the texts so that the Council could adopt the Directives as "A" items on its agenda as soon as all the conditions for doing so were met.

EASING OF FRONTIER FORMALITIES

- Commission statement

The Council took note of an oral statement by Mr NARJES, Member of the Commission, on all the measures necessary to achieve the relaxation of border formalities.

The ensuing debate enabled the Council to conduct an overall exchange of views on all the problems arising in this area.

The Council recognized the need to continue and expedite its efforts to strengthen the internal market and appealed to the Council in its other compositions - Agriculture, Economic Affairs and Finance, Transport - to speed up work in their respective areas of competence.

- Extension of the arrangements for movement within the Community

When it adopted the Regulation on movement within the Community in December 1983, the Council undertook to continue working on the consolidation and extension of these arrangements. Thus at this meeting it reached agreement on a list of commercial samples to be included in the arrangements.

At the end of its debate the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to formalize the decisions reached so that it could definitively adopt the list of commercial samples before 1 May 1984.

The Council also confirmed its will to extend the arrangements to the works of painters and other artists, and instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examining this question actively with a view to a definitive decision by 1 July 1984.

- Single document and draft Resolution on computerization of customs procedures

The Council continued its discussions on the introduction of a single document. It confirmed the policy followed in the recent proceedings of the Working Party of Senior Officials and asked the Working Party to continue its work with a view to submitting a complex draft by the end of the first half of 1984.

The Council also discussed a draft Resolution on the introduction of a computerized procedure in Community trade. At the end of a debate on the main points of the Resolution, on which a broad convergence of views was reached, it asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to conclude its examination so that the Resolution could be adopted as an "A" item at a forthcoming Council meeting.

- 6th Directive: tax exemptions for travellers

The Council noted the progress made in proceedings on the 6th Directive on tax exemptions for travellers. This proposition is aimed at increasing the level of exemptions and abolishing certain quantitative restrictions applicable in international travel. In conclusion, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to expedite its proceedings on the matter so that it would be able in particular to update once again from the beginning of July 1984, the amount of travellers' tax exemptions.

- 14th Directive: deferred payment of VAT on importation

The Council heard a Commission statement on contacts the Commission had with certain Member States concerning the 14th Directive on deferred payment of VAT on importation. The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its proceedings on the matter.

- Facilitation of checks during the transport of goods

Following the adoption of Directive 83/643/EEC in December 1983, the aim of which was to reduce waiting time at borders and improve carriers' working conditions, the Council noted that those Member States which had stated their intention to exercise the option of deferring application of certain provisions of that Directive until 31 December 1986 would endeavour to apply the Directive in full within the shortest possible time.

The French delegation announced that it would not be exercising this option.

It was agreed that this dossier would be examined again at the Transport Council on 22 March 1984.

- Taxes imposed on vehicles passing through certain third countries

The Council held a discussion on the tax to which Member States' vehicles have been subject since 1979 when passing through Austria, and on the road tax which, from 1 January 1985, will be levied on freight vehicles in Switzerland.

The Council noted the Commission's intention to submit to the Transport Council on 22 March a report on the talks to be held on 9 March with Switzerland, possibly accompanied by appropriate proposals. Problems arising with Austria in this respect would be dealt with with Austria on the basis of the negotiating directives adopted by the Council on 20 December 1983.

STANDARDIZATION

The Council noted a Commission communication on progress in proceedings on standardization.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISION

Environment

The Council adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, a Directive on limit values and quality objectives for mercury discharges by sectors other than the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry (see press release 11446/83 (Presse 228) of 16.XII.83 - p. 3).

Bruxelles, le 7 mars 1984.

Note BIO (84) 105 aux Bureaux Nationaux
cc: aux membres du Groupe 'du Porte Parole

PREPARATION CONSEIL MARCHE INTERIEUR 8 mars 1984 (O. von
Schwerin)

Le Conseil a ete convoque d'urgence a la suite des
evenements aux frontieres (Italie, France, Brenner).

L'ordre du jour est tres charge: outre les problemes des
frontieres (voir note MEMO 20/84 du 28 fevrier), les questions
restees ouvertes apres la serie des Conseils Marche Interieur en
1983 seront reexaminees:

1. Nouvel instrument commercial (renforcement de la politique
commerciale exterieure: P M proposition de la Commission
de 1982 a la suite d'une demande du Conseil Europeen).
La discussion porte toujours sur le mecanisme de
decision.
La France ayant etabli un lien entre adoption de cette
proposition et:
2. Elimination des entraves techniques: les 15 directives

d'harmonisation techniques, probleme de certification pays
tiers. Adoption possible sur la base du compromis d'ensemble
du 23. 11. Depend du lien avec point 1 ci-dessus.
3. Allegement des formalites aux frontieres:
Voir MEMO 20/84 (Communication Commission: en discussion)
 - a) completer le reglement dit "plombier": echantillons
commerciaux, oeuvres d'art.
 - b) Document unique: rapport du "groupe haut niveau" sur
informatisation.
 - c) Problemes fiscaux: 14eme directive TVA (voir MEMO 20/84);
rapport Commission a la suite des pourparlers Tugendhat;
6eme directive franchises fiscales: idem.

Le Vice-President Christopher Tugendhat insistera sur
deux propositions de la Commission, dont il est
responsable, et qui pourraient faciliter le passage
des frontieres aussi bien pour les routiers que pour
les voyageurs prives.

Il s'agit en premier lieu:

- d'une proposition de directive relative au rapport
de paiement de la taxe sur les importations a un
moment ulterieur. Les formalites necessaires au
moment de l'importation pourraient donc se limiter
au simple depot des documents requis ainsi qu'au
controle par sondage des marchandises (voir P-38
de juin 1982, 14eme directive)

- la deuxième proposition tend à porter de 210 ECUS à 400 ECUS, en 4 étapes, les franchises fiscales dont bénéficient actuellement les voyageurs dans la Communauté (6ème directive, voir P-22 de mars 1983).

4. Directive allègement contrôle marchandises:

Directive adoptée en décembre 1983 (MEMO 20/84):

Problème de transformation en droit national - réduction éventuelle du délai transitoire (1987) pour les heures d'ouvertures des postes douaniers accordée à plusieurs Etats Membres (I, FR, GR, L).

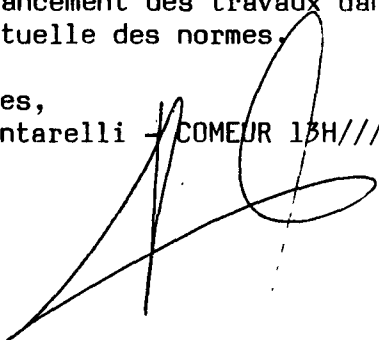
5. Normalisation: rapport d'avancement par Commission:

Transformation en droit national de la directive système d'information communautaire sur les nouvelles normes:

établissement d'un réseau communautaire. De plus, avancement des travaux dans le domaine de la reconnaissance mutuelle des normes.

Amitiés,

M. Santarelli - COMEUR 13H////



Brussels, 8 March 1984

BIO (84) 105 suite 1 TO NATIONAL OFFICES
CC MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

Internal Market Council (8.3.84)

Travellers allowances (Elphick)

After a lengthy discussion which continued over lunch, the Council agreed that COREPER should be asked to look at this problem again with a remit to look at a short term improvement in the present allowance (210 ECUs per journey - see P-22 of March 1983), and report back to the Council in April. The issue of raising the allowance by stages would also be examined. Several Member States articulated their opposition to aspects of the Commission's proposal, although there seemed to be general understanding that derogations might be arranged. For the Commission, Vice-President Tugendhat urged the Council to make the change before the holiday season begins.

Fourteenth VAT Directive

(See P-38 of June 1982). No progress was made on the Commission's proposal that all Member States should agree to ease border delays by allowing importers to pay VAT with their normal returns rather than at the moment of crossing frontiers. This move would also help cut down delays such as those which provoked the French routiers to make their protest recently. However, several Member States pointed out the difficulties such a move would bring - loss of revenue for a period, changes in customary practices, job losses - and no agreement was in evidence. Mr. Tugendhat said the Commission understood the special problems of some Member States and there would be no problem of phasing in the changes if necessary. However, his pleas fell on deaf ears and COREPER is to be asked to continue studying the dossier. No date was set for bringing it back to the Council. Mr. Tugendhat said the Commission would in any case bring the subject up again before the end of the French Presidency.

N. B. : CORRIGENDUM BIO COM (84) 107 of 7.3.84 last paragraph please read : "The Commission however continues to be concerned with the numerous petitions for import relief still outstanding in other sectors."

Amities,

M. SANTARELLI COMEUR 18.00 ////



Bruxelles, le 9 mars 1984

Note Bio(84) 105 suite 2 et fin aux Bureaux Nationaux
c.c. aux membres du Groupe du Porte-Parole

CONSEIL MARCHE INTERIEUR (O. von Schwerin)

Le Conseil s'est termine apres douze heures de discussions sans aboutir sur un des problemes majeurs comme on devait s'y attendre apres la convocation hative qui n'a pas permis une preparation approfondie de l'ordre du jour fort charge.

C'est pourquoi la qualification finale par la presidente, Madame Lalumiere, d'un conseil "bon" ou "prometteur" parait justifiee meme si quelques organes de presse avaient fait des rapports interimaire plutot negatifs dans l'apres-midi.

Les resultats des differents points (voir Bio Preparation 105 du 7.3.84):

1. NOUVEL INSTRUMENT COMMERCIAL:

Bien que les delegations aient largement maintenus leurs positions, il s'est dessine un accord de principe sur l'opportunit  d'un tel instrument dans l'interet de l'efficacite et de la rapidite des reactions de la Communaute face a des agressions deloyales de la part des partenaires commerciaux. Le desaccord persiste d'autre part sur le mecanisme decisionnel, les quatre delegations (DK, RFA, PB, RU) insistant sur une majorite qualifiee positive conformement a l'article 113.

M. Davignon s'est engage   soumettre au Conseil des Affaires etrangeres le 12 mars prochain un document qui pourrait dessiner une solution sur la base du compromis belge.

2. ELEMINATION DES ENTRAVES TECHNIQUES :

A part une reserve danoise toutes les autres reserves ont pu  tre levees, et les 15 directives d'harmonisation technique pourraient  tre adoptees en point A, pourvu que le lien etabli par la delegation francaise avec l'instrument commercial le permette.

3. ALLEGEMENT DES FORMALITES AUX FRONTIERES

La declaration faite par M. Narjes au debut des travaux (voir IP-105 du 8 mars) au lieu de la communication de la Commission annoncee auparavant, a trouve un large accord au sein du Conseil.

a) le reglement dit "plombier" a  te complete par l'inclusion du volet echantillons commerciaux pour lesquels le Conseil a pu arreter une definition ainsi qu'une liste commune; d'autre part, les oeuvres d'art restent toujours exclues de ce reglement.

b) le Document unique a fait l'objet d'un accord de principe sur son opportunit  ; le probleme de l'informatisation sur base du rapport des hauts fonctionnaires devrait  tre resolu avant le mois de juillet prochain. La presidence a souligne l'importance primordiale de ce projet en vue d'une facilitation et modernisation des formalites aux frontieres.

c) Problemes fiscaux
(franchise voyageurs et 14eme directive TVA) : voir Bio
separee Elphick).

4. DIRECTIVE ALLEGEMENT DES CONTROLES DES MARCHANDISES.

Des quatres Etats membres profitant d'une periode de transition particuliere pour la transformation en droit national de la directive du 1.12.1983 seule la France a formellement declare qu'elle envisage d'appliquer la directive entierement a partir du 1.1.1985. Les delegations italienne et grecque se sont engagees a realiser la transformation dans les meilleurs delais, et certainement avant le 31.12.1986, mais sans pour autant se lier formellement a une date anterieure, comme certains rapports de la presse l'ont insinues.

5. NORMALISATION :

M. Narjes a donne un rapport sur l'etat des travaux (transformation de la directive d'information sur les nouvelles normes).

DIVERS

Vignette suisse :

Information orale par M. Contogeorgis; la Commission fera une communication formelle au Conseil Transport le 22 mars 1983.

Amities,

M. SANTARELLI, Comeur ////

