



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

Jean Monnet House
8 Storey's Gate London SW1P 3AT
Telephone: 071-973 1992
Fax: 071-973 1900

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

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EP debates Birmingham Summit. The European Parliament's special session called yesterday in Strasbourg to debate the Birmingham Summit heard Commission President Jacques Delors urge Member States to re-establish a "climate of confidence". Subsidiarity was a "state of mind", he said, not a list of EC laws from which they can pick and choose. Delors expressed his support for the idea of an accord to define the spirit and application of subsidiarity to span all of the Community institutions. Member States should declare their intention to ratify the Maastricht Treaty as it was, even if it that meant adding declarations to resolve the problem of Denmark's rejection of the Treaty in a referendum last June. Community leaders should give impetus to the EC's long-term aims by showing readiness to adopt the Delors II package of finance and by reaffirming the EC's commitment to open Community membership to other European states. Speaking for the UK Presidency, FCO Minister Tristan Garel-Jones said the Summit would have to address "openness and the protection of national identities" and show the Treaty "in its true colours".

Danes reflect on Maastricht. The Danish government released its white paper last Friday reflecting on the country's future relations with the Community. The document aims to give a general idea of what seems practicable, rather than present a blueprint for a "choice" between the various possibilities. The paper concludes that it would be difficult to imagine how it would be legally possible for some Member States to adhere solely to the Treaty of Rome while others applied the Maastricht Treaty. If the Maastricht Treaty was not adopted, Europe's progress over the last 45 years may be put in question.

Coal pit closures. Regional Affairs Commissioner Bruce Millan expressed regret at the effects of the UK pit closures just announced. He said these would be a set-back to the work of the Community's structural funds and deal a blow to employment in areas already facing severe economic difficulties. No additional money would be available from the EC's RECHAR scheme, he said. The UK was already receiving £140m from the Community's RECHAR scheme, more than half the total budget. The RECHAR budget was now exhausted. There were no contingency funds and he very much regretted it would not be possible to agree to the UK government's request for £24.7m to assist the affected areas.

GATT progress. EC and US GATT negotiators said they had made "good progress" in narrowing down their differences over EC farm subsidies following talks in Brussels at the weekend. Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen said afterwards that the aim had been to make a serious effort to "assemble the elements for a final settlement". He said that the meeting had provided "elements" only and not a complete agreement. The issue of EC subsidies to oil seed producers remains unresolved. Technical discussions continued overnight to prepare for a further EC-US round of talks on the fringes of a trade ministers' meeting in Canada at the weekend.

Cuban/EC trade. The EC urged US President Bush again last week to veto the Cuban Democracy Act under which the US is seeking to speed up Cuba's transition to democracy by imposing a reinforced trade embargo on US and Cuban trading partners. An EC statement pointed out that the sanctions would be in conflict with international law, as well as damaging to international shipping and EC trade with the US. While the EC expressed its support for a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba, last Thursday's statement said it could not accept US unilateral moves which restrict EC commercial and economic relations with any foreign nation.

EC tribute to Willy Brandt. Commission President Jacques Delors joined in the tributes to former German Chancellor Willy Brandt who died last week. He said he was a man who not only desired the liberty, unity and dignity of his country, but also wished for a strengthened Germany to contribute to the peace and stability of Europe. "We are all called upon to follow the ideals of Willy Brandt, ideals which both stimulate and challenge us," he said.

Aid to Irish firms. Competition Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan is examining plans announced by the Irish government last week to set up a Ir£50m fund to assist firms which have been seriously affected by recent changes in the exchange rate. The proposal to grant Ir£50 a week per employee to companies hit by the devaluation of sterling may not be compatible with EC state aid rules.

Regional funds praised. Commissioner Bruce Millan has praised the role of subsidiarity in the operation of the Community's regional funds. Speaking to the UK's Audit Commission in London last week, he said these would counter the charges of "excessive centralisation" levelled against the Commission. For each region there should be a real discussion on structural fund priorities to include not just the Commission and national authorities but regions and localities also. He said that in terms of the Community's public image, the structural funds were always a big plus. The quickest way to squander that advantage would be to make the funds an excuse for interference. Millan confirmed there was no evidence of interference or threat of it in the future.

Prize for Euro-journalism. Two UK publications, "The Independent" and "The Economist", were awarded prizes for outstanding coverage of European current and social affairs and the ECU respectively at last weekend's presentation in Seville of the third Stendhal Prize for articles on Europe. The prize for best all-round coverage, press or television, went to Italy's financial paper, "Il Sole 24 Ore", for its "Europa" supplement. Another Italian publication, "Primavera", was winner of a new category for articles aimed at young people. The prize, sponsored by the Commission, provides a 15,000 ECU (£11,250) grant for winning editorial teams to finance journalism training in Europe.

Kaleidoscope 1993. The Commission has just published details in the Official Journal (C237) of its Kaleidoscope 1993 scheme to promote cross-cultural links in the Community. Applications for sponsorship for up to 30,000 ECUs or 25% of total costs, are invited from organizers for events with a European dimension where partners from at least three Member States are involved. Events must either promote contemporary arts and culture or awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage.

Lomé funds. The Commission has approved 158.5m ECUs (£118.9m) under the Lomé IV co-operation agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries for development projects ranging from reforestation and health to roads and education. Tanzania and Kenya jointly receive the largest tranche of 48m ECUs (£36m) for improvements to roads between the two countries which are vital for links to the African interior. Nigeria will receive some 25m ECUs (£18.75m) to prevent further desertification of the Katsina region. Other ACP beneficiaries include Guinea, Lesotho, Burundi and Senegal.

UK health & safety week. To boost awareness of the 1992 European Year of Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work, the UK is holding a "Workplace Health and Safety Week" to run from 23-27 November. The event has four main themes: clean air at work; safe working practices; well-being at work; and noise and vibration. The message for firms is "good health is good business". To obtain an action pack, contact Ms Felicity Harte, UK National Committee, HSE, Baynards House, 1-13 Chepstow Place, Westbourne Grove, London W2 4TF. Tel 071 243 6226.

The Simple Guide to Maastricht This publication by Peter Luff, director of The European Movement, explains the Maastricht Treaty in simple terms. It also gives a brief history of the Community and a guide to the institutions with a foreword by Sir Michael Palliser, one of the key negotiators of Britain's entry into the EC. Price £2.95 plus 30p p&p from the European Movement, 158 Buckingham Palace Rd, London SW1W 9TR. Tel: 071 824 8388 or fax: 071 824 8124.

Conference & diary dates:

Commissioner's briefing. The Community's chief trade negotiator and "foreign minister" Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen will be giving a briefing here at Jean Monnet House next Thursday 22 October starting at 10am. He is speaking on "the external challenge of the European Community". Registration begins 9.30am. Please note the early start.

Competition Policy in Transition A one-day conference at which the Director of the EC Mergers' Task Force Colin Overbury gives the EC's current approach. Other speakers include MMC Chairman Sir Sydney Lipworth QC and DTI Corporate Affairs Minister, Neil Hamilton MP. November 3, at the London Marriott. For details tel: 071 730 0430 or fax: 071 730 0460.

Lancashire Europe week. 26-31 October. For details, contact John Arnfield on 0772 263 422.

Euro Breakfast briefings - Thames Valley Euro Info Centre is organising three briefings (27 October, 6 & 17 November) to inform businesses of the challenges the Single Market. Cost £25, tel: 0753 577877.

European Arts Festival October update. A three-week festival of Irish theatre at the Tron Theatre, Glasgow, 16th; Twelve Stars contemporary art exhibition (from the EP collection) opens at the Arts Council Gallery, Belfast on 16th; Chamber Orchestra of Europe plays Hadyn, Beethoven and Schumann at the Barbican, 17th; Musicians les Arts Florissants play the Elmwood Hall, Belfast, 20th;

Council meetings:

European Council	16 October	Birmingham (Summit)
Ecofin	19 October	Luxembourg
Fisheries	19 October	Luxembourg
Environment	20 October	Luxembourg

Our next briefing will be on Thursday, 22 October at 11.30am