



WE/9/91  
7 March 1991

### THE WEEK IN EUROPE

EC Mission to Middle East. A delegation of European Community Foreign Ministers, formed by the current "Troika" from Luxembourg, Netherlands and Italy, flew to Damascus yesterday (Wednesday) in the aftermath of the Gulf war. After Damascus they fly on to Jerusalem and Amman, ending on Friday in Tripoli for a meeting of Mahgreb States under Libyan chairmanship. The arrival of the EC mission in Damascus coincided with a meeting which Syria has convened of the six Gulf Cooperation countries and Egypt. There was general agreement among the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve, meeting in Brussels on Monday, that a conference on peace and cooperation in the Middle East should still be pursued. Ministers struck a political compromise between Israel and the occupied territories by agreeing to give a 160m ecus (£112.5m) loan to Israel on standard market terms, but with a 27.5m ecus (£19.25m) interest rate subsidy from the EC budget, and a 60m ecus (£42m) grant to the Palestinians. Reports from Damascus this (Thursday) morning say the Troika have already issued a statement supporting the Gulf States Damascus Agreement on the deployment of an Arab peacekeeping force in the area as Western members of the allied Kuwait liberation force begin to withdraw.

Delors on Politics and Security. Commission President Jacques Delors was delivering a major speech in London today on how he sees the European Community's political and security future in the wake of the Gulf war and the collapse of Soviet Power in Central and Eastern Europe. After his Alistair Buchan Memorial Lecture at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Delors was due to dine with Prime Minister John Major in Downing Street.

Frosty reception for new Parliament role plan. Proposals for a far-reaching increase in the powers of the European Parliament vis-a-vis the other EC institutions were coolly received at the EC Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels on Monday. A majority of Member States argued against any great change in the weight of the Parliament in the EC's decision-making structure. During discussions in the Intergovernmental Conference on European Political Union Jacques Poos, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister, said there was a majority against "any significant upheaval in the balance between the EC institutions". There was however initial agreement with Commission President Jacques Delors that the number of Commissioners might be reduced with each country having only one. At present the larger Member States - Germany, France, UK, Italy and Spain - are entitled to name two. Delors admitted, however, that he was not satisfied with the response of the EC governments to the need to improve the democratic accountability of the EC decision-making bodies.

Cyprus initiative planned. The EC is planning an initiative which it hopes may break the deadlock over Cyprus as part of a new effort to find solutions to long-standing problems in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Jacques Poos and UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar are reported to be aiming at encouraging a resumption of negotiations between the Cyprus government and leaders of the Turkish Cypriot Community on a new constitution to reunite the island. The EC had hoped that in order to pave the way for any eventual negotiations on the Cyprus issue, Greece could be persuaded to lift its veto on some £420m of EC financial aid for Turkey. However, at the meeting of EC Foreign Ministers on Monday, Greece resisted pressure arguing that progress first had to be made towards a settlement of Turkey's occupation of Northern Cyprus.

Green light for Soviet aid. EC Foreign Ministers have agreed in principle to release £350m in food credits to the Soviet Union on condition the money is spent in Europe. The agreement was a response to the lack of interference in the Referenda in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Andriessen on five nation tour. Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen, responsible for external affairs, has just left on a fact-finding tour of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. The tour follows recent EC approval of 100m ecus (£70m) of aid to Bulgaria and Romania. Andriessen is likely to hear of the increasing economic crises facing the five nations of Central and Eastern Europe as the economic side effects of the Gulf war are added to the near collapse of sectors of their economies amid widening international recession.

EC Farm Ministers fail to agree. Still grappling with the contentious problem of reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, EC Farm Ministers, meeting in Brussels on Monday, took strong issue with the Commission's plans to cut prices further this year. Most Ministers argued that EC farmers should not have to pay the additional cost to the CAP because of the need to accommodate East German farmers. The debate will continue at the next meeting.

Brittan on Far East tour. Ending a five day visit to Japan and South Korea on Monday, Commission Vice-president Sir Leon Brittan said non-discrimination was "a crucial condition for the achievement of harmonious trade relations in every sector". He urged South Korea, now the world's 7th industrial power, to publish "clear, open rules" on trade and said the EC wanted to see firm evidence that Japan was opening its markets to non-Japanese companies. Sir Leon used his speech to the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan to reinforce EC hints that it might be time for Europe and Japan to set up a framework for dialogue similar to the EC's recent declaration on US-EC relations.

Delors receives European businessmen. Commission President Jacques Delors received a delegation in Brussels on Monday from UNICE, the European Employers Association, led by Carlos Ferrer. The UNICE delegation pressed Delors for a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round talks as soon as possible.

Urban Renewal. Environment Commissioner Carlo Ripa di Meana speaks on the urban environment at a "Vision for London" seminar in Dean's Yard, Westminster, on 14 March. He is expected to outline what is expected of the European Commission's pilot project tackling inner city blight in London and Marseilles.

BC-NET extended to EFTA. The signing of the agreement extending the Business Cooperation Network to members of the European Free Trade Association took place today (Thursday) in Brussels. Commissioner Antonia Cardoso e Cunha presided over the ceremony. BC-Net was created in mid 1988 and its experimental phase terminated at the end of July 1990.

HELIOS programme results. The Commission has issued an intermediate report on the results of the HELIOS programme for handicapped persons in the period January 1988 - end June 1990.

"Smoking" In an attempt to reduce the 450,000 smoking-related deaths in Europe every year, the Europe Against Cancer programme has commissioned a "Smoking" film in collaboration with public bodies and anti-cancer organisations. The film will be screened as a BBC1 QED investigation of the single most deadly environmental cause of cancer at 9.30pm on national "No Smoking Day", 13 March. Having recruited the help of world famous photographer, Lennart Nilsson, "Smoking" takes viewers on a journey into the respiratory system following a puff of tobacco smoke and includes pictures of how an unborn child is affected at the moment its mother smokes a cigarette.

"Our Food, our Land" by Sir Richard Body MP; a trenchant analysis of the way in which the farming and food industries have changed during the last 50 years and what can be done about the current crisis in the CAP. Published by Rider - price £15.99. ISBN 0-7126-4640-X.

University of Surrey: Diploma/MA/MPhil/PhD in European Area Studies on part-time or full-time basis. Research may start at any time. Enquiries: the MA Secretary, Dept LIS, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey. Tel: 0483-751281 ext 2828. Fax: 0483-300803.

Conference and Diary Dates

Information Sources on Social Issues in the European Community. A one day seminar, organised by Aslib Social Sciences Information Group. 26 March at Aslib, 20-24 Old Street, London EC1V. Details: Iain Murray, National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE. Tel: 071-278 9441. Fax: 071-278 9512.

EC Seminars from SAUS. Seminars on 27-28 March, 30-31 May, 10-11 June, 24-25 October, 9-10 November organised by the School for Advanced Urban Studies of the University of Bristol, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Bristol BS8 4EA. Tel: 0272-741 117. Fax: 0272-737 308. SAUS contact: Carroll Pierce, Publicity Officer.

Industry Council	19 March	Brussels
EEC/Latin America Ministerial Meeting	18-19 March	Nicaragua
ECO/SOC Plenary Session	20-21 March	Brussels
Internal Market Council	21-22 March	Brussels
Agriculture Council	25-26 March	Brussels
Transport Council	27 March	Brussels

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday, 14 March at 11.30 am.