



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

EC recognition for Croatia and Slovenia. The European Community duly recognised the independence of Croatia and Slovenia on Wednesday. Germany was the first Member State to set up an Embassy in the Croatian Capital of Zagreb. Others of the Twelve are expected to follow suit although there are still pressures on the Croatian authorities to fulfil in practice promises made concerning protection of minorities on their territory, especially Serbs. The two new European states have also been recognised by many other neighbouring countries although Russia and the United States have yet to decide. The EC move was denounced as an illegal act in the Serbian capital of Belgrade which still lays claim to be able to speak for the Yugoslav Federal Government. The first fifty of a 10,000 strong force of United Nations peace-keepers have already arrived in the area. Lord Carrington, who leads the EC's own peacekeeping negotiations, has said he still hopes for round table discussions on how to bring permanent peace to the area in which he would hope the Serbs would fully participate.

Andriessen defends EC stance in GATT. Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen said he was "disagreeably surprised" by President George Bush's criticism in Kansas City on Monday that the European Community's agricultural policy had set up an "Iron Curtain of protection during the GATT talks." In a statement issued in Brussels on Tuesday, Andriessen highlighted the efforts made especially in the last few months by European Community negotiators to contribute to the search for appropriate and equitable solutions to the problems thrown up in the Uruguay Round, including those of agriculture. The Community was taking part in these negotiations, Andriessen said, in a spirit of cooperation and consultation. As for the Commission, Andriessen said he did not think that the terms "cold war" and "iron curtain" used by President Bush really reflected the true state of relations between the United States and the Community as seen from this side of the Atlantic.

Sunrise joint venture cleared. The Commission has decided that the agreement between Walt Disney, The Guardian and Manchester Evening News, Scottish Television, London Weekend Television and Carlton Communications in respect of their holding of shares and control of the joint venture company Sunrise Television is not a concentration within the meaning of the EC Merger Regulation. Sunrise Television has been awarded the licence to provide national UK breakfast-time television from 1 January 1993 on ITV channel three. The notified agreement does not fall within the Merger Regulation in particular because Scottish Television, London Weekend Television (a subsidiary of Carlton Communications) and Sunrise Television are competitors for the supply of television advertising.

Green light for British steel. The Commission has authorised the acquisition by British Steel plc of two German steel companies - August Degels Eisengrosshandel GmbH and SBG Spaltband GmbH as the conditions set out in Article 66 (2) of the European Coal and Steel Treaty for the authorisation of concentrations have been met. Degels operates a coated steel products stockholding operation in Germany. Spaltband slits and processes coated steel strip on behalf of Degels. After the acquisition British Steel will have approximately 14% of the Community stockholding market and 9.8% of the German stockholding market for coated steel products.

Ravenscraig and the EC. Following comments by the British authorities concerning the possible creation of an Enterprise Zone in Lanarkshire to counteract the closure of the Ravenscraig steelworks, Commission Vice-President Sir Leon Brittan issued a statement saying that any application for approval of the creation of an Enterprise Zone will need to be considered by the Commission very carefully. Brittan added that so far no formal notification of such a request had been received.

New President of the European Parliament. The German leader of the European Peoples' Party (Christian Democrats) Egon Klepsch MEP won a relatively easy victory over three rivals this week to become the new President (Speaker) of the European Parliament. The 1989 deal between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists - the two biggest political groups in Strasbourg - to split the Presidency

over the five year life of the current Parliament ensured victory for Klepsch who won 253 votes out of 474 cast and now takes over from the Spanish socialist Enrique Baron Crespo in a job that has a powerful influence on the Parliament's internal organisation and on its negotiations with the Commission and the Council of Ministers.

Eurobarometer latest. Six out of ten people in the EC interviewed in the latest Eurobarometer poll due out tomorrow relate the completion of the Single European Market to "hope" but almost three out of ten relate it to "fear". Citizens' awareness of the Single Market project is higher than ever. 76% have heard about it, an increase of ten points since a year ago when the Gulf crisis dominated the news. For almost one in two EC citizens, the completion of the Single European Market by the end of 1992 will be "neither good nor bad for people like themselves." Among those who take a stand, five times as many think it will be "a good thing for them" than think it will be "a bad thing". Support for giving the Single Market a Social Dimension varies from a solid absolute majority in favour of 54% and more in Luxembourg, Denmark, the UK, France and Belgium to 75% and more in Portugal and Italy. Opposition varies: 1% in Portugal, over 9% in Luxembourg; 18% in the UK; 23% in Denmark.

Van Miert's review of progress in 1991. In a review of progress in 1991, Commissioner Karel van Miert said the outlook for consumer affairs was good as the Consumer Policy Service has in almost all respects implemented the range of projects in the three-year action plan (1990-92) and is now drafting measures looking beyond that date. Administrative modernisation continued in 1991 and will be intensified in 1992 to enable the Service to gear up for full-scale policy implementation. As for transport, the other part of his portfolio, milestones ahead include the preparation of a communication on the combined transport network, planning the extension of transport networks into Eastern Europe, the continuation of the internationalisation of transport policy and the imminent publication of a White Paper on Transport policy to the year 2000 and beyond.

UK shipbuilding aid schemes approved. Under the Seventh Directive on Aid to Shipbuilding the Commission has approved a number of UK aid schemes applicable to the shipbuilding sector. The approval concerns the following aid schemes: Operating aid (Shipbuilding Intervention Fund, Shipbuilders' Relief, Export Credit Guarantees, and Home Credit Guarantees); Investment aid (Regional selective assistance); aid for R and D (Collaborative Research project from DET); and closure aid (Wearside Opportunity and Sunderland Enterprise and Training Ltd) and £27.2m additional disposal and closure costs for British shipbuilders. Also approved is the Industrial Development (Northern Ireland) Order 1982 which enables the UK government to apply the Shipbuilding Intervention Fund and the Regional Selective Assistance aid to shipbuilding in Northern Ireland.

Ripa di Meana on Environmental Assessment. Environment Commissioner Carlo Ripa di Meana was given one of the main prizes at the Green House Awards ceremony in London last week. Illness prevented his presence in person, but in a video message he said the 1985 Environmental Impact Assessment Directive was a major pillar of the preventive action of the Community. In this he said he was in good, even Royal, company. The Commission would not accept in any Member State any limitation on the Community rules on public consultation. All was not well in the state of application of this Directive in the Member States. The Commission had opened proceedings under Article 169 of the Treaty against ten Member States including the UK with proceedings starting soon against an eleventh. 1992, said Ripa di Meana, was above all the year of the Rio conference which he considered to be the most crucial rendez-vous ever for the planet's survival and continuing well-being of the planet.

New European. The latest issue of the New European magazine just out contains an editorial on "Maastricht and the severity of the European prospect", articles by Brian Mulroney and by Otto von Habsburg. New European is published by MCB University Press Ltd and the Centre for European Studies, 62 Toller Lane, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD8 9BY. Contact Sue Bose on 0274-499821.

The Community Monitor. A review of the EC business, legal and financial changes. Edited by John Goldsworth, who for the past fourteen years has been concerned with the law on international trade and taxation and has particular experience of Community law. Published 20 times a year, the annual subscription is £20. Details from Gostick Hall Publications (Elmscroft) Ltd, The Mill Office, Wendens Ambo, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4JX. Fax 0799-526088. Tel: 0799-41152.

Diary Dates

Agriculture Council	27 - 28 January	Brussels
ECO/SOC Plenary Session	28 - 30 January	Brussels

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday 23 January at 11.30am