THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PLAN FOR EEC'S MEDIUM-TERM ECONOMIC POLICY IS REVEALED

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 6, 1966 -- The Commission of the European Economic Community announced in Brussels today the completion of a proposed medium-term economic policy outlining the development of the Community for the next five years.

The draft policy, which is the first in EEC history, predicts that in the period 1966-70 the Community will attain an annual real product growth of 4.3 per cent compared with an annual growth of 4.9 per cent for 1960-65, the reduction resulting primarily from a decrease in the German annual growth rate from 4.3 per cent to 3.5 per cent. In addition, the program forecasts that overall productivity or gross domestic product per worker will rise annually by 3.8 per cent in the Community during the same period, representing a doubling of productivity in less than 20 years.

In addition to the predictions of economic development in the EEC, the medium-term program suggests guidelines for cooperation among member governments and Community institutions. Its purposes are to assure healthy growth throughout the entire EEC, to establish a sound balance between private initiative and government action, and to permit coordination of all economic policy decisions affecting development of member states economies.

COMMISSION INTRODUCTION

The EEC Commission, in an introduction to the draft policy, reviews the major problems concerning EEC economic development and stresses the need to maintain price stability, to seek balanced progress in the solution of social and regional problems, and to undertake a comprehensive program for the advancement of scientific and technical research and development. Also, the Commission points out the

uncertainty of any economic balance which may be achieved and stresses the dangers of an excessive increase in private consumption and public expenditure.

GENERAL ASPECTS

The second part of the draft program, which was drawn up by a committee of national and Commission experts, defines the general concept of medium-term economic policy and analyzes the conditions which will govern economic growth from 1966 to 1970. It suggests general measures for various economic spheres and concludes with specific suggestions for such fields as employment, vocational training policy, budget policy, and regional policy.

GUIDELINES

The proposed guidelines will provide the necessary framework for measures to be taken by the member states and Community institutions. In general, these guidelines fall under two specific headings, the necessity to increase supply and the policy pertaining to the trend of demand.

1. Supply

In the fields of employment and vocational training the medium-term economic program recommends a vigorous immigration policy and measures to encourage women to seek jobs. Concerning investment policy the committee states that member countries must take action to facilitate the financing of investment through an appropriate tax policy and measures to improve the machinery of the capital market. They must also ensure that companies dispose of sufficient capital resources of their own.

Scientific and technical progress will determine more and more the pace of productivity and economic growth. Consequently, member states are warned not to lag behind efforts in technical and scientific fields in other highly industrialized countries. The committee also recommends the alignment of laws and tax provisions impeding the movement of production factors.

The draft program stresses the need for alleviating regional imbalances in the Community. In particular, the transport infrastructure is an important factor in this effort as is the establishment of development poles in which a group of firms

and factories can progress under their own momentum after initial help.

Finally, the committee points out the need to ensure workable and effective competition in the EEC and to encourage optimum size firms and improvements of industrial structures.

2. Demand trends

The main objective concerning demand is to reconcile rapid economic growth with satisfactory trends in prices and in the external balance of payments. For this purpose the committee recommends a number of measures including budgetary policy, monetary, credit and capital market policy, and incomes policy.

The draft program favors limitation as necessary of the increasing growth rate of government expenditure. When expenditure is to be covered by borrowing, this should take the form of long-term bonds issued at home. While not taking a stand against heavier taxation, the committee indicates that higher taxes should affect industrial investment and private saving as little as possible and should be consonant with plans for harmonizing the tax systems in the member states.

The committee also favors monetary, credit, and capital market policies ensuring that the expansion of monetary demand is reconciled with the needs of the economy, and recommends that the machinery of the capital market be improved in order to attract an adequate share of savings. Finally, the committee states that the main aim of an incomes policy must be to prevent recent inflationary trends from persisting by bringing incomes into line with the overall development of the economy ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLICY

The coordination of medium-term economic policy in the Community must be a continuous process, and the committee therefore plans annual adjustments in the program. These opportunities will also be used to study some questions more in detail than was possible in the preliminary draft.

PROCEDURE

The draft policy has been submitted to the EEC Council which will send it to the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee for their opinions. The Council and the individual governments of the member states must then give their approval, indicating their intention to act according to the guidelines set out in the medium-term economic policy.

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