

A WEEKLY SUMMARY OF PAST AND FUTURE EVENTS

Next Council Meetings

Brussels	December 12	Consumer Affairs
	December 12	Finance
	December 12/13	Agriculture
	December 13	Research
Strasbourg	December 13	Budget TO BE CONFIRMED
Brussels	December 14	Fisheries
	December 14	Steel
	December 16	Environment
	December 19/20	Foreign Affairs
	December 19	Energy
	December 20	Transport

Other Events

European Parliament:	Dec 12-16	(Strasbourg)
Economic & Social Committee Plenary Session:	Dec 13-15	(Brussels)

Provisional Dates Further Ahead

Finance Council:	Jan 9, Feb 20
Agriculture Council:	Jan 9/10, Feb 6/7
Consumer Affairs Council:	Jan 17
Industry Council:	Jan 19
Foreign Affairs Council:	Jan 23/24, Feb 20/21
Fisheries Council:	Jan 30
Energy Council:	Feb 14
Research Council:	Feb 28
Development Council:	Feb 28
Social Affairs Ministers (informal meeting):	Feb 2
European Parliament:	Jan 16-20 (Strasbourg)
	Feb 13-17 (Strasbourg)
European Council (summit):	March 19/20 (Brussels)

THE WEEK AHEAD

The collapse of the European Council in Athens this week raises many questions over the Community budget for 1984, which comes before the European Parliament for its second reading at the session next week. The Parliament has made certain aspects of the draft budget, including the budget rebate to the United Kingdom and Germany, subject to progress in Athens.

A week of negotiation begins tomorrow, December 9, when the presidents of the Parliament and the Commission, and a representative of the Council of Ministers, meet in Brussels. Next week the scene shifts to Strasbourg, with a conciliation meeting between Parliament and Council on Tuesday, a meeting of the Parliament's budget committee on Wednesday morning and a vote on Thursday morning. The political groups will be meeting during the week to decide which option to take: to reject or adopt the budget altogether, or (more likely) to vote for certain amendments, perhaps putting the rebates in a special chapter from which they can only be moved with Parliamentary agreement. There may well be further constitutional arguments over the powers of the Parliament in this field and further delay in final adoption of the budget.

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THE WEEK AHEAD (cont'd)

A large crop of Council meetings begins on Monday with Finance (economic guidelines for 1984), Consumer Affairs (long-delayed discussion of product liability, misleading advertising and doorstep selling) and Agriculture. On Tuesday the Agricultural Council continues and a Research Council will give further consideration to the ESPRIT project and other research and development programmes.

A further attempt to resolve the impasse over fish quotas will be made on Wednesday at the Fisheries Council, when quotas for 1984 will be considered. More difficult policy decisions will have to be taken at the Steel Council on the same day, when pricing and quotas come up for discussion. Environment ministers meet on Friday.

FLASHBACK

THE ATHENS SUMMIT: Leaders of the member states of the European Community met at Athens to consider issues which included the future shape of the Community's financing system, limits on agricultural expenditure, new Community policies and the adhesion of Spain and Portugal. But they reached agreement on none of these points, and the meeting broke up without a communiqué. Differences of opinion over agriculture and the British budgetary contribution had proved too great.

Commenting on the result in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister said that "the Community was not ready at Athens to take the necessary decisions" to agree the package defined at Stuttgart. Mrs Thatcher, however, refused to consider withholding the British contribution for the time being. In France President Mitterrand commented that the Community now knew that it was in a state of crisis. In Germany Chancellor Helmut Kohl described the meeting as a 'bitter defeat'.

The European Commission has issued a statement asserting that "it will shoulder its obligations to secure the preservation of the Community patrimony, make the vitally necessary progress without delay and establish the conditions needed to reactivate the Community." It also called for a return to the procedures of the Treaty of Rome.

The President of the European Parliament, Mr Piet Dankert, has said that the Parliament, as the only Community institution legitimised by universal suffrage, should now take an initiative.

Concern at the result of the Athens European Council has also been expressed by the Prime Ministers of Spain and Portugal.

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