



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

Prime Minister launches "Europe Against Cancer". Yesterday (Wednesday) the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher launched "Europe Against Cancer", the informative campaign by which 1989 has been designated European year of cancer information. Speaking at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London, the Prime Minister reminded her audience that in 1985 at the Milan meeting of the Heads of Government of the EC, it had been agreed to work together to combat cancer. She said the challenge was formidable since after heart disease cancer is the major cause of suffering and death in the Community. "It causes more than three quarters of a million deaths a year and, if present trends continue, this will rise to one million a year by the year 2000, with a further 2 million Community citizens suffering from the disease." She added; "In the United Kingdom alone, 249,000 people develop cancer every year and 159,000 die from it".

Introduced by John Drew, Head of the Commission's UK offices, Mrs Thatcher announced that the Government was making an extra £1m available to the Health Education Authority in 1989 to enable it to expand its cancer prevention and education activities. She also announced a new £2m a year campaign, aimed at halving the proportion of teenagers who smoke over the next four years, which will be run jointly by the Department of Health and the Health Education Authority. The main theme of the Prime Minister's speech, however, was that cancer can be both cured and prevented.

A full programme of activities for "Europe Against Cancer" has been initiated by the Commission. They include adoption of Community laws to help improve the awareness of Europeans about the hazards of tobacco smoking, in particular production and transmission of seven European TV programmes; European conferences on various aspects of cancer; distribution and publication of the results of European opinion polls measuring the perception of the European code among the general public, doctors and teachers; implementation of mobile exhibitions in every country; promotion of the European Code in conjunction with a major public sporting event in May and Europe Against Cancer week, 5 - 15 October.

Agricultural Ministers meeting. A package of six measures was adopted at the meeting in Brussels on 23/24 January. They were, first, further changes in the beef support arrangements; second, a minor measure on milk quotas; third, a scheme permitting Member States to grant direct income aids to less prosperous farmers; fourth, some financial aid to nut producers; fifth, a change in compensation for small cereal producers; lastly, changes to "green rates" for certain Member States, mainly in the beef sector. The package was adopted by majority vote with the UK voting against only because of strong objections to the concessions on beef intervention.

EC-USA trade dispute. The Foreign Ministers Council, meeting this week, took some heat out of the looming trade war between the EC and the USA which was precipitated by the EC ban on imports of hormone treated meat. Firstly, the Council noted the practical arrangement reached with the USA regarding a period of grace until 31 January 1989 for goods despatched by either side before 1 January 1989. Secondly, the Council called upon the Commission to

continue the action initiated in GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) against the unilateral retaliatory measures introduced by the USA. Lastly, the Council approved the revised list of EC counter-measures (raising duties on walnuts, apricots, peaches, prunes, apples, pears, paw-paws and fruit salads by 100%), but agreed to review the situation at its next session on 20 February 1989.

The European high speed train. EC railway chiefs plus those of Switzerland and Austria met Karel Van Miert, Commissioner in charge of Transport, on 24 January in Brussels. President of the delegation was Sir Robert Reid, Chairman of the British Railways Board. The delegation's report urged the establishment in the EC of a high speed train network in three successive stages (1995, 2005 and 2015). At the end of the final stage the European network should consist of 30,000 kilometres of track of which 19,000 will be new or upgraded for high speed trains. In 1985 terms, total investment will be in the order of 90bn ecus (£60bn) of which 15bn have already been spent or earmarked. Speeds of up to 200 km per hour should be reached on the majority of adopted lines and up to 250 - 300 km per hour on new lines.

ERDF Funds for Greater Manchester and Merseyside. On Tuesday the Commission approved grants from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for six investments in industry in Greater Manchester and Merseyside. A total of £733,674 will create 139 jobs in these areas and a further 887 jobs will be maintained. This is the eleventh allocation from the ERDF's 1988 budget.

Reform of the European Regional Development Fund. Bruce Millan, Commissioner in charge of Regional Policy, yesterday (Wednesday) presented a series of proposals designed to put into operation the root and branch reform of the Structural Funds and, in particular in 1989, of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Commissioner Millan stressed the need for the Commission to put in place soon decisions which will allow Member States to complete the preparation of their regional development plans, incorporating requests for EC funding. Millan also said: "The Regional Fund will spend about 4.5bn ecus (£3bn) in 1989, out of a total of some 7bn ecu (£6bn) for the Structural Funds as a whole. The proposals of Member States must come in by the end of March and we must deal with them as quickly as possible".

Until now the Community's regional policy has largely been limited to reimbursing Member States for national programmes. The new approach involves a "partnership" between the Commission and national, regional and local authorities. The agreed Community Support Frameworks will lay down the main lines of the assistance to be provided over periods of 3 or 5 years. Five priority objectives have been identified in the Structural Funds reform.

Diary Dates

Our Library is closed for refurbishing until 13 February. We regret any inconvenience.

Chris Patten, Minister for Overseas Development, will be holding a press conference at 8 Storey's Gate on 9 February at one o'clock. He will be presenting the UK government's policy towards co-operation with the ACP countries on the eve of his visit to Brazzaville for the EC-ACP Ministerial meeting on 16 and 17 February.

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| Internal Market Council | 30 January | Brussels |
| ECO/FIN Council | 13 February | Brussels |
| Informal Transport Ministers | 13 February | Murcia |
| Agriculture Council | 13/14 February | Brussels |
| Political Co-operation | 14 February | Madrid |
| Fishing Council | 15 February | Brussels |
| EEC/ACP Ministerial Council | 16/17 February | Brazzaville |
| General Affairs Council | 20/21 February | Brussels |

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday, 2 February at 11.30 am