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Joint Press Communiqué

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MEETING OF THE EEC-PORTUGAL JOINT COMMITTEE

The Joint Committee responsible for administering the Agreement signed in 1972 between the European Economic Community and Portugal held its sixth meeting on 28 and 29 October in Lisbon under the chairmanship of Mr. Pierre Duchateau, Director in the Directorate-General for External Relations of the Commission of the European Communities, who also headed the Community delegation. Mr. Roland de Kergorlay's visit to Lisbon had to be cut short and limited to the talks with the Portuguese authorities scheduled to take place on the occasion of this meeting. The Portuguese delegation was led by His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Siqueira Freire, Head of the Portuguese Mission to the European Communities.

At the opening of the meeting, the Portuguese delegation explained the difficulties which the Portuguese economy is currently up against and which have resulted in a worsening of the balance-of-payments deficit. These difficulties have increased since the last meeting of the Joint Committee in May 1975 and this has led the Portuguese authorities to raise the rates of surcharge and to introduce an import deposit scheme for certain goods.

The Joint Committee then examined the functioning of the 1972 Agreement and was pleased that its implementation had not raised any special problems.

Lastly, the Joint Committee noted with satisfaction that the procedures required for the Interim Agreement signed on 20 September last to enter into force had been completed by the parties concerned, thus enabling the trade provisions of the additional protocol to be applied on 1 November 1976. The text in question, which in particular lays down arrangements for cooperation, is currently undergoing ratification procedures, as is the financial protocol which will take over from the emergency aid granted to Portugal in October 1975. Pending the entry into force of these two protocols, it has been agreed to examine the preparatory work with a view to implementing the cooperation provided for in those protocols.

The short-term economic measures which Portugal has had to take, like the implementation of the agreements recently concluded with the Community, are intended to straighten out the country's economic situation, which is an important element in the development in relations between the two parties.

The Community delegation very much appreciated the warm welcome which it received and the two delegations expressed their satisfaction at the excellent atmosphere which reigned throughout the meetings, which augurs well of the new prospects being opened up in relations between the Community and Portugal.