



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

EC shocked by China Events. A series of quick responses to the developing crisis in China has been taken by the EC. A statement from the twelve Member States from Madrid, issued on Tuesday, said: "The Twelve, deeply shocked by the tragic developments in China, strongly condemn the violent repression used against peaceful demonstrators, which has resulted in widespread loss of life there". The statement went on to urge the Chinese authorities to stop the use of force against the unarmed civilian population in Peking and elsewhere and appealed to the Chinese leadership to engage without delay in the search for a peaceful solution to the present conflict, adding that "such a solution cannot be attained without political dialogue". The statement went on to say: "Continuing repressive actions, in violation of universally recognised human rights' principles, will greatly prejudice China's international standing and compromise the reform and open-door policies which the European Community and its member States have actively supported". The statement concluded by saying the EC and Member States have already taken a number of measures, including suspension of high-level contacts, and will continue to keep developments in China under urgent review.

Simultaneously, Commission President Jacques Delors and Vice-President Frans Andriessen cancelled a scheduled high-level meeting of the EEC-China Co-operation Committee on Monday. They decided they could not receive China's Foreign Trade Minister Zheng Tuobin who was to have co-chaired the meeting together with a high-level consultation planned for Tuesday. The meeting was the tenth in an annual series of talks and was to have covered general trade and commercial co-operation and the progress of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The EC only began to expand economic relations with China after an initial trade agreement was signed in 1978, but two years later China was given a special agreement giving privileged access to exports in the EEC market. Last year Chinese exports to the EC totalled £5bn - £1bn more than its exports to China.

UK wins lorry weight reprieve. EC Transport Ministers, meeting in Luxembourg earlier this week, decided to give the UK and Ireland more time to adapt bridges to the introduction of 40 tonne lorries. The new deadline for allowing 40 tonne lorries with five and six axles on British and Irish roads is the end of December 1998. Paul Channon, the UK Transport Secretary, said the new deadline to raise the limit from 38 tonnes was "a considerable improvement" on the date of 1996 put forward by the Commission and the 1993 target already accepted by most Member States.

At the same meeting Transport Ministers agreed on a proposal to harmonise minimum tyre treads for cars on the road at 1.6 mm, compared with the limit of 1mm currently typical in most of the Community. Ministers also voted for a more liberal regime governing inter-regional air services. This agreement brings regional air services into line with the three-part package agreed in November 1987 which relaxed government-to-government capacity arrangements as well as opening up new possibilities for cheap, off-peak fares. Now some restrictions placed on flights from regional airports - such as the 400km limit and the exclusion of aircraft with more than 70 seats - have been removed.

ERASMUS programme to double student mobility. Now in its third year of operation, the ERASMUS inter-university co-operation programme has had this year's budget raised to 52.5m ecus (£35m), the highest ever for a Commission-sponsored education initiative. More than 2,200 applications from over 1000 higher education establishments have been received this year. 1,348 applications for student mobility programmes, 272 for teacher mobility projects, 97 common teaching plans and 104 applications for intensive programmes have been received. Total direct financial aid to universities amounts to 15.95m ecus (£10.64m) or 10,584 ecus (£7,146) per programme. The UK had the biggest number of university applications with a total of 737 in 1989/90, up from 571 the previous year. In 1989, 26m ecus (£17.2m) were allocated to 13,000 students, each getting an average grant of 2,000 ecus (£1,333). Scholarships were awarded to 2,062 UK students. As the average length of stay for grant holders is six and a half months, the Commission has calculated that around 20,000 students will receive financial support under the ERASMUS Programme in 1989/90 (compared to 12,000 in 1988/89).

Spain to join EMS next year. The Spanish Government announced on Tuesday that it plans to take the peseta into the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System before 1 July next year. The pledge by Spanish Finance Minister, Carlos Solchaga, is intended to coincide with the implementation of phase one of the timetable mapped out in the report of the Delors Committee on Monetary Union. Only the UK, Spain, Portugal and Greece remain outside the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS at present.

New right of residence proposals. Yesterday (Wednesday) the Commission tabled three new proposals to guarantee students, pensioners and other non-wage earners the right to live and study freely in other EC Member States. The new proposals divide students and pensioners into a category requiring only a qualified majority approval by Member States while the proposal covering other economically inactive people will still need Governments' unanimous acceptance.

Exeter gets EuroInfo Centre. Exeter Enterprises, the consultancy arm of the University of Exeter, has been chosen as the site of the first EuroInfo Centre for the far south-west of England.

EIB Loans for UK. The European Investment Bank is lending some £115m in the UK for investment in an air terminal at Stansted Airport, a waste recycling plant in the South-East, a trade centre in Wales and a chemical plant in the North-West.

The Europe 1992 Directory. This new research and information guide provides comprehensive information on the major aspects of the 1992 programme and identifies information sources including organisations, books, databases, documentation, speeches and consultancies so that readers can expand and update material according to their own requirements. Published by ITCU/Coventry Polytechnic. Price £10.95. Available from CDU, Coventry Polytechnic, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB. Tel: (0203) 838727. Fax: (0203) 221396.

Diary Dates

Social Affairs Council	12 June	Luxembourg
General Affairs Council	12-13 June	Luxembourg
Internal Market Council	14-15 June	Luxembourg
European Parliament Elections	15-18 June	
ECO/FIN Council	19 June	Luxembourg
Agricultural Council	19-20 June	Luxembourg
ECO/SOC Plenary Session	21-22 June	Brussels
European Council Summit	26-27 June	Madrid

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday, 15 June at 11.30 am.