



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

Strong EC condemnation of Iranian Speaker. In a joint statement issued by the twelve EC Member States on Monday, last week's call by Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the Speaker of Iran's Parliament, for Palestinians to kill Westerners in their quest for a homeland, was condemned as "totally unacceptable". The strongly-worded condemnation went on: "Yet again, one of the most senior Iranian leaders has violated the most elementary principles and obligations between sovereign states, threatening peaceful coexistence between nations." In February this year all 12 EC States withdrew their Ambassadors from Teheran in protest at the incitement by Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini to murder Salman Rushdie, the British author, for slighting Islam in his book "The Satanic Verses".

But the EC joint statement "noted with satisfaction the total rejection of these (Rafsanjani's) declarations by the highest leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation". By rejecting Mr Rafsanjani's call on Palestinians to avenge each one of their dead at the hands of Israeli forces by killing five Americans, Britons or Frenchmen, Palestinian leaders had confirmed their desire to achieve recognition for Palestinian rights by "peaceful means", the EC statement said. The EC Governments added that they would not spare any effort in the cause of "a just, lasting and global" settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Rafsanjani has since claimed he was "misquoted".

EC-US truce in hormone meat war. The USA is shortly expected to resume shipping hormone-free beef to the EC under an arrangement allowing Commission inspectors to vet US farms and slaughterhouses. The dispute centred on the EC's ban on 1 January on \$100m a year of US hormone-produced meat imports and from retaliatory US duties in EC food exports. A formal compromise is being sought by an EC-US task force which may come up with a permanent solution in mid-June.

New "Green" plans aired. Two new "Green" plans have taken shape after an informal meeting of Environment Ministers in Spain last weekend. The first is a controversial plan to raise billions of pounds from an energy tax to help save tropical rain forests from destruction. The idea for a charge on carbon emissions is contained in a discussion document likely to be debated by the Commission later this month. At a press conference after the meeting in Spain, Commissioner Carlo Ripa di Meana, responsible for the Environment, said he saw the issue of tropical rain forests as a high priority for Community environmental action. Experts in Brussels are understood to believe that developed countries will have to pay substantial sums of money if they wish to exert pressure on countries such as Brazil, since it is the industrialised world which is largely responsible for the increase of CO₂ in the atmosphere. However, the idea of a "CO₂ levy" is still at a very early stage and details have not yet been worked out.

The second "Green" initiative came from the same meeting at which it was generally agreed that plans for a new European Environmental Agency should be stepped up. Most Member States strongly endorsed the view of Ripa di Meana that a European co-ordinating body for the environment is urgently required. This initiative was first put forward by Commission President Jacques Delors in his keynote speech to the European parliament in January. It is understood that the Commission's ideas is that the agency would be the centre of a

network of regional and national, public and private facilities, with key tasks, such as monitoring air pollution or water purity devolved.

Right of residence directive withdrawn. A proposal for a directive on the right of residence for EC citizens has been withdrawn by the Commission following a meeting of the Internal Market Council on 3 May. Objections to the proposal, which has been under consideration by Ministers since July 1979, centred on the status of students and non-active citizens. Commission Vice-President Martin Bangemann commented: "We are in the process of disavowing the Treaty of Rome and of making a caricature of the free circulation of European citizens. It is not conceivable that on the one hand, the Community adopts programmes like Erasmus to promote the free circulation of students and that, on the other, we refuse these same students an elementary right, the right of residence". Bangemann said the Commission will put forward new proposals with the shortest possible delay.

Tougher car emissions limits. The Commission has taken up its pledge to impose tougher standards for emissions of car carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide from small cars (under 1.4 litres). Responding to the European Parliament's demands, a two stage tightening up is being proposed with limits to be reached for new models from 1 January 1991 (30 grammes per test for CO and 8 grammes per test for HC+NOX) and from 1 October 1991 (36 grammes and 10 grammes respectively). Further obligatory limits are being proposed from 1 January 1993 for new models (19 grammes and 5 grammes respectively) and from 1 October 1993 these limits will be 22 grammes and 5.8).

European Senior Citizens Card proposed. The Commission has just made a proposal for creating a European Senior Citizens card for people over 60. If accepted the proposal would bring reductions in public transport fares on an EC wide basis for pensioners by 1 January 1992 at the latest.

Second action plan against cancer. Yesterday (Wednesday) the Commission adopted a proposal for a Council decision on an action plan for the period 1990-1994 of the "Europe against Cancer" programme. The Commission has put in a bid for a budget of 55m ecus (#36m) for the five year period which is a further step towards the objective of reducing mortality by cancer by 15% between now and the year 2000.

"The Challenge of Europe: Can Britain Win?" a new book by The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP is being published on Tuesday by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, price #14.95 at most booksellers.

Conference and Diary Dates

Seminar at Harrogate, Yorks, on the finance, management and control of Community Funds on 31 May, 1 and 2 June. Organised by Financial Control with DGs V, VI, XVI and XXII, this seminar is meant for British national and regional public employees. Venue - Cairn Hotel, Ripon Road, Harrogate, North Yorks MG1 2JD.

Informal Agricultural Ministers	15-16 May	Salamanca
Development Council	16 May	Brussels
Health Council	16 May	Brussels
Culture Council	18 May	Brussels
Informal ECO/FIN Ministers	19-21 May	S'Agaro-Gerona
Education Council	22 May	Brussels
General Affairs Council	22-23 May	Brussels
European Parliament Session	22-26 May	Strasbourg
Informal Justice Ministers	25-27 May	San Sebastian
Industry Council	29 May	Brussels
Agriculture Council	29-30 May	Brussels
ECO/SOC Committee - Plenary Session	31 May - 1 June	Brussels

Our next briefing will take place on Thursday, 18 May at 11.30 am.