



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

EC orders Renault repayment. The Commission has ordered Renault, the publicly-controlled French car manufacturer, to pay back FF 6bn (£600m) of illicit state aid to the French Government; FF 3.5bn (£350m) of this will be paid immediately to the French Treasury and FF 2.5bn (£250m) will be written into the accounts as long-term debt. The deal was announced after hectic last-minute bargaining between the Commission and the French Government. It means that Renault will have to repay only part of the FF 12bn state debt write-off that the Commission had originally declared as being contrary to EC competition rules. Welcoming the agreement, Commission Vice-president Sir Leon Brittan, responsible for Competition Policy, said it was in everyone's interest to have a settlement agreed rather than imposed through the Court of Justice. He added that it was better to have three quarters of the money immediately than the full amount in two years time. The Commission, which has a Treaty right to ban trade-distorting state aids granted unconditionally, had approved aid for Renault two years ago on condition that the French car maker was put under normal commercial law and that it cut its capacity. The dispute with the Commission has been especially sensitive in France, partly because of Renault's historic importance in industrial politics, where it has led the way in wage and social policies and been the scene of some of France's most heated industrial disputes since the war.

London to host EBRD. At a meeting in Paris last Saturday, the 40 government shareholders of the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development voted by 32 to 8 to select Jacques Attali, special adviser to President Mitterrand of France, as President of the new multinational institution and by 23 to 17 for London as its location. The EBRD will come to life once the Parliaments of two thirds of Member Governments have ratified the agreement. The UK Parliament is expected to ratify the statutes before the end of this year and it is likely the bank will be operational by the spring of 1991. The EBRD, with a capital of almost £7.5bn, will lend money at market rates to those countries in Central and Eastern Europe committed to applying the principles of multi-party democracy, pluralism and market economics. The decision now has to be taken on where in London to locate the EBRD, which will initially employ a staff of about 600, drawn from throughout the Community.

Caution at EC Foreign Ministers meeting. Meeting in Ireland last weekend, EC Foreign Ministers spent a considerable time discussing what European Political Union did not mean but also managed to "get the train started", in the words of French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, who added: "Everybody agrees we now have to make a qualitative leap". Gerry Collins, Irish Foreign Minister and current Chairman of the Council, was more cautious. "I must emphasise that we are only at the very start of this process," he said. Ministers agreed that Community institutions should be subject to more democratic control and discussed ways of improving efficiency within the EC system. Commission President Jacques Delors said nobody could expect a federal structure to be in place overnight. "We cannot discuss the final stages of political union, but instead we must discuss the weaknesses of the present institutional system within the EC and see how it can be improved." Douglas Hurd, UK Foreign Secretary, said the June EC Summit would be limited to taking a decision on whether or not to hold a second Intergovernmental Conference on political union at the end of the year in parallel to a similar conference on monetary union.

Parliamentary scrutiny of EC legislation. On Monday the UK Government published its response to the report from the House of Commons Select Committee on Procedure on the scrutiny of EC legislation. The Government accepted the majority of the Procedure Committee's recommendations and has agreed on the need to make the six-monthly Commons debate on developments in the EC more forward looking. It also agreed in principle to establish Special Standing Committees on EC documents with the power to hear statements from Ministers and question them before debating the relevant documents. The Government has confirmed its intention to try to bring proposals rapidly before the Commons Select Committee on European legislation and arrange prompt debates where the Committee so recommends. Finally, the Government has recognised the value of improved informal links between the House of Commons and members of the European parliament and has asked the House of Commons Services Committee to consider some practical measures to achieve this.

Mrs Thatcher opens East Anglia EuroInfoCentre. Opening the new EuroInfoCentre for East Anglia in Norwich yesterday (Wednesday), Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said the centres were particularly important for the UK being an island cut off from the Continent. They were, she continued, vital too for young people in the UK who were being brought up in the context of the New Europe. For EuroinfoCentre details contact Sarah Abercrombie on 0603-625977

Energy Ministers approve Thermie programmes. Meeting in Brussels on Monday, EC Energy Ministers approved the Thermie plan 1990-94 for the promotion of energy technology. The budget for the next three years, 1990-92, will be 350m ecus (£262m). A common position was reached on the proposed Directive concerning cross-border electricity supplies.

Go-ahead grants. The Prince's Trust is now supporting Go-Ahead grants for inter-European collaborative projects for young people under 26 and out of full-time education. This follows support for the Go and See grants. The areas of activity eligible are the arts, craft, design, communications, new technology, tourism and the environment. Each grant is individually tailored and amounts range from £1,000 to £10,000. There is no application form. For details contact Anne Engel on 071-405 5799 or write to The Prince's Trust, 8 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4BA.

Insurance 1992. The new report on the Money Manager's Library series, Insurance 1992, has now been published by Eurostudy Publishing Company. In anticipation of 1992 and the creation of the Single Market, the authors, a team of financial specialists, have compiled this report to highlight the ensuing changes. Price £60. ISBN: 1 85271 1019.

Renewed Mediterranean policy proposed. The Commission has proposed a renewed Mediterranean policy to the Council with a budget of 420m ecus (£315m) scheduled for the period 1992-96. Loans to the area from the European Investment Bank are to rise to an estimated 3,500m ecus (£2.52bn)

New Esprit projects. 107 new projects have been selected by the Commission for launching within the European Strategic Programmes for Research and Development in Information Technology (Esprit). This is the result of a thorough evaluation by over 200 independent experts of the 450 submissions to Esprit. Also included are three projects forming part of the 18 month start-up phase of JESSI (Joint European Sub-Micron Silicon). JESSI is a Eureka initiative designed to strengthen Europe's international competitiveness in the design, manufacture and application of a new generation of standard and customised microchips.

Emilas '89 Awards Ceremony. The Lighting Industry Federation is holding its Emilas Awards Ceremony for more efficient use of energy on 1 June at the Cafe Royal, London. The three winners will be presented with their trophies by Clive Jones, Deputy Director-General of DG XVII (Energy) of the European Commission.

Humberside's Third Euroweek will begin as part of a month long Euro-festival on 3 June. Among the many conferences are "Towards a Greener Europe" to be opened by former Environment Commissioner Lord Clinton-Davis in Hull on 7 June; "Urban Regeneration" in Hull on 5 June; "The older European-Social and health care issues" in Hull on 7 June. Details from Dr Juliet Hodge, EC Research Unit, University of Hull, HU6 7RX. Tel: 0482-46311. For bookings and information contact angela Mounfield on 0482-466466.

Conference and Diary Dates 1992 Briefing: Commissioner Bruce Millan, responsible for Regional Policy, will conduct a 1992 briefing in this office starting at 11.30am on 1 June.

Regional Policy in Dublin Castle. Commissioners Bruce Millan and Antonio Cardoso e Cunha (Energy and Enterprise) will be taking part in a big Conference in Dublin Castle on 10/11 June to help strengthen the role of private enterprise in the development of the European Community's Regional Policy. Organised by the Commission in conjunction with the Irish presidency, the Conference is intended to stimulate investment in the less developed areas of the Community. Details: Etienne Reuter - Tel: (Brussels) 235 4323; Terry Stewart (Dublin) 71 22 44.

The 14th Thomas Corbishley Memorial Lecture entitled "The Spirit of 1989: Europe on the threshold of a new era?" will be given by Professor Dr Frans Alting von Geusau of the University of Leiden on 7 June at 6.00pm at the Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, London WC2. Details from Fiona Shipley, Keeley House, 22-30 Keeley Road, Croydon CRO 1TE. Tel: 081-686 7171.

Industry Council	28 May	Brussels
Development Council	29 May	Brussels
Social Affairs Council	29 May	Brussels
ECO/SOC Plenary Session	30-31 May	Brussels
Education Council	31 May	Brussels

Our next briefing will be on Thursday, 31 May at 11.30 am.

The following texts are now available from this office. Please send written requests to the Press Office, enclosing a SAE (postage equivalent to 20p per text).

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- T7 - SPEECH BY FRANS ANDRIESEN, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EC COMMISSION, AT THE WORLD AUTOMOTIVE FORUM, DEARBORN - 23/24 FEBRUARY 1990 - "LATEST EC THINKING CONCERNING EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF AUTOMOTIVE TRADE AND INVESTMENT"
- T8 - ADDRESS BY MANUEL MARIN, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EC COMMISSION, TO THE EUROPEAN MEETING ON SOUTHERN AFRICA ORGANISED BY AWEPA, BRUSSELS, 1 MARCH 1990
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- T10 - SPEECH BY RAY MACSHARRY, EC COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE BASS IRISH LECTURE, BELFAST - 26 FEBRUARY 1990 - "RURAL DEVELOPMENT - THE CHALLENGE OF THE 1990S"
- T11 - ADDRESS BY MRS CHRISTIANE SCRIVENER, EC COMMISSIONER, TO THE AMERICAN ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON - 7 MARCH 1990 - "EC POLICY ON RULES OF ORIGIN"
- T12 - ADDRESS BY FILIPPO PANDOLFI, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EC, AT THE US NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES FORUM, WASHINGTON - 5 MARCH 1990
- T13 - SPEECH BY MR FRANS ANDRIESEN, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EC COMMISSION, BRUSSELS - 16 MARCH 1990 - "A FUTURE FOR THE EUROPEAN TEXTILE AND CLOTHING INDUSTRIES"

- T14 - ADDRESS BY MR MANUEL MARIN, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EC COMMISSION, AT THE ACP/EEC JOINT ASSEMBLY, PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA - 20 MARCH 1990 - "THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE PACIFIC ACP STATES"
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- T16 - EXTRACTS OF A SPEECH BY THE RT HON SIR LEON BRITTAN QC, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, TO THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON - 23 MARCH 1990 - "OPENING WORLD BANKING MARKETS"
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