

PRESS RELEASE

5181/94 (Presse 31)

1735th meeting of the Council

- GENERAL AFFAIRS -

Brussels, 7 and 8 March 1994

Presidents:

Mr Karolos PAPOULIAS
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Hellenic Republic

Mr Theodoros PANGALOS
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Hellenic Republic

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Community were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Willy CLAES
Mr Robert URBAIN

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Foreign Trade and European Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Niels HELVEG PETERSEN
Mr Jorgen ØSTRØM MØLLER

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Klaus KINKEL
Ms Ursula SEILER-ALBRING
Mr Jürgen TRUMPF

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister of State, Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Mr Karolos PAPOULIAS
Mr Theodoros PANGALOS

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Javier SOLANA MADARIAGA
Mr Carlos WESTENDORP
Mr Apolonio RUÍZ LIGERO

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for Relations with the European Communities
State Secretary for Foreign Trade

France:

Mr Alain JUPPE
Mr Gérard LONGUET

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Industry, Posts and Telecommunications and Foreign Trade

Mr Alain LAMASSOURE

Minister with special responsibility for European Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Dick SPRING
Ms Eithne FITZGERALD

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister of State at the Office of the Tanaiste

Italy:

Mr Beniamino ANDREATTA
Mr Paolo BARATTA

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Foreign Trade

Luxembourg:

Mr Jacques POOS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Piet DANKERT

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr José Manuel DURÃO BARROSO
Mr Vitor MARTINS

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for European Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Douglas HURD
Mr David HEATHCOAT-AMORY
Mr Richard NEEDHAM

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Minister of State (Minister for Trade)

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Commission:

Mr Jacques DELORS
Mr Hans VAN DEN BROEK
Sir Leon BRITTAN
Mr René STEICHEN
Mr YANNIS PALEOCRASSAS
Mr Peter SCHMIDHUBER

President
Member
Member
Member
Member
Member

ENLARGEMENT

The Council continued discussing the final chapters outstanding in the accession negotiations with the four applicant countries, which were, in the case of Norway, the fisheries chapter in particular ⁽¹⁾, and in the case of all four applicants, the institutions chapter (in particular the question of Council voting).

The Council agreed to continue its discussion on the afternoon of Tuesday 15 March.

ASSOCIATION WITH HUNGARY AND POLAND

The Council determined the positions to be taken by the Union at the first meetings of the Hungary and Poland Association Councils under the Europe Agreements which came into force on 1 February 1994.

Those meetings were held at the end of the morning of Monday 7 March (see Conclusions of the Association Council with Hungary: UE-H 1504/94 Presse 32 and Conclusions of the Association Council with Poland: UE-PL 1404/94 Presse 33).

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In this context and further to the initiative launched on 17 December 1993 by Mr Hurd and Mr Andreatta to strengthen ties with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the field of CFSP and Home Affairs and Justice, the Council approved conclusions on the reinforcement of the political dialogue with the associated CEECs. That text is attached as an Annex.

(¹) On the basis of the Council's discussions, agreement was reached with Norway at this meeting in the fields of agriculture, the budget, regional policy, customs union and taxation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHITE PAPER

The Council heard a statement by President DELORS on progress made by the Commission in implementing the various chapters of the White Paper, namely furthering of the internal market, the creation of major infrastructure networks and the information society and problems relating to employment systems.

After the ensuing exchange of views the Council confirmed its intention to prepare the discussion of this important subject by the European Council in Corfu with particular care, and that it would therefore be included on the agenda for every General Affairs Council between now and the end of June.

IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM

The Council heard a statement by President DELORS presenting the Commission's communication on immigration and asylum, representing an adjunct to the action plan adopted by the Council on 29-30 November 1993 which was intended to stimulate discussion of this subject within the institutions of the Union.

FINANCING OF THE CFSP

The Council noted the progress made in the Permanent Representatives Committee in drawing up a general framework for financing the common foreign and security policy. It instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its work with all due diligence so that the Council could reach a final conclusion at its meeting in April.

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The Ministers held a detailed exchange of views on the situation in the former Yugoslavia. They reached the following conclusions:

- The EU welcomes the agreement reached in Washington on 1 March. Such agreements constitute an important step on the path to a negotiated settlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The EU hopes that the negotiations in Vienna will produce an early result.
- The negotiations held under the aegis of the United States are complementary to the Union's efforts in the context of the international conference on the former Yugoslavia. However, the EU notes that further efforts will be needed to reach an overall solution of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Those efforts should be based on the results and aims of the EU's action plan, which constitutes the only existing framework for an overall settlement.
- Any solution to the conflict must have the agreement of all parties involved, including the Serbs. Russia's contribution to the process is particularly important in this respect.
- The EU has been involved in the efforts to resolve the conflict for a long time. The EU will continue to assume its responsibilities, in co-operation with the United States and Russia, by playing a role commensurate with its interests in the region and the scale of its aid. The possibility of convening a high-level trilateral meeting with the United States and Russia was raised in this context.
- The EU calls on the Moslems and Croats of Bosnia to comply with the ceasefire concluded on 23 February through the intermediary of UNPROFOR. Full compliance will facilitate the urgent task of bringing humanitarian aid to those regions which have hitherto been practically impossible to reach.

- The EU is extremely concerned at the continued fighting in certain parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly the Bihac region.
- The EU welcomes the UN Security Council's adoption of Resolution 900.
- The agreement reached between the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, Mr Y. AKASHI, and the Bosnian Serbs, concerning the opening of Tuzla airport for delivery of humanitarian aid supplies, a longstanding aim of the EU, is particularly encouraging.
- A fact-finding mission of the Troika, assisted by technical experts, will shortly be dispatched to Mostar. The mission will demonstrate to all parties the Union's continued desire to help in reaching a settlement of the conflict and will establish the aid that the EU is prepared to provide for the administration of Mostar.
- The EU stressed that UNPROFOR must be provided with additional resources as a matter of urgency, in view of its increased workload resulting from the present situation. It pointed out that this matter was currently being given close consideration by certain partners and that contributions from outside the EU, in particular from associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, were expected.

SUPPORT FOR THE CONVOYING OF HUMANITARIAN AID IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The Council decided to extend until 30 September 1994 the joint action on support for the convoying of humanitarian aid in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It also agreed that in view of developments in the situation since the adoption of the action in December, a new assessment of priority needs on the ground was urgently required, in order to provide the victims of the war in that country with the best possible assistance.

The Council also instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its work on the outstanding questions: cost-sharing formula, administrative procedures etc.

STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Whereas the recent tragic events in Hebron, which the European Union has already condemned, should not interrupt the peace process in the Middle East, the Council of the European Union:

1. encourages the resumption of the peace process negotiations between all parties and appeals to the Security Council to adopt an appropriate Resolution swiftly;
2. while welcoming the measures recently adopted by the Israeli Government to ensure the safety of Palestinians, notes that Israel is responsible for the safety and protection of all inhabitants in the Occupied Territories;
3. appeals to the parties to discuss the question of the safety of Palestinians, including the issue of certain settlements, and to agree on appropriate measures;
4. supports the establishment, by the Security Council, in the Occupied Territories of an international presence in which the European Union declares its willingness to participate.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY FROM THE BALTIC COUNTRIES

Following the statement by Russia that 31 August 1994 no longer applied as the date for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Estonia, the Presidency reaffirmed that the European Union expected Russia to honour its commitment to the complete withdrawal of its troops by that date. The Union cannot accept the linkage of withdrawal to other questions.

The Union considers that the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic countries will help to create the climate of mutual confidence which is vital for the security and stability of the region.

URUGUAY ROUND - PREPARATION OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN MARRAKESH

The Council heard a statement by Sir Leon Brittan on the different aspects of the preparations for the Ministerial Conference in Marrakesh on 15 April 1994 such as the latest state of play in the market access negotiations and on the question of an "agreed Ministerial Declaration".

The Council held an exchange of views on this subject at the end of which it approved the conclusions below; in this context, the Council also adopted conclusions on the announcement of the United States' intention to resuscitate the Super 301 procedures of the 1974 Trade Act.

Market access negotiations

The Council heard a detailed report by Sir Leon Brittan on the finalization of market access negotiations and the difficulties resulting from certain technical problems which have delayed the presentation in the agreed format of the final list of offers by the United States. The Council shared the Commission's concerns that these final offers might compromise the expected balance of mutual concessions agreed to on 15 December and therefore need readjustment of the Community's schedules.

Such readjustment should be of a limited character and bear in mind the need to avoid being held responsible for any unravelling of the tariff negotiations results. Any such adjustment should be undertaken by the Commission in close co-operation with the Article 113 Committee targeting products where the USA is the supplier of 90% of EU imports.

Signature of the Uruguay Round agreements in Marrakesh

The Council decided that its President and Sir Leon Brittan will sign - on behalf of the Community in Marrakesh on 15 April 1994 - the Final Act of the Uruguay Round negotiations and the agreement establishing the World Trade Organization.

Representatives of Member States will also sign this Final Act and the WTO agreement on behalf of their governments.

Ministerial Marrakesh Declaration

The Council has taken note of the positions of Member States and the Commission on a possible agreed Ministerial Declaration in Marrakesh and its content.

The Council has asked the Commission to monitor closely developments in the preparatory work in Geneva in this respect, taking account of delegations' positions, and, if appropriate, take the necessary initiatives. The Commission should do this in close co-operation with the Article 113 Committee.

The Council reserves the possibility of finalizing, if necessary, the position of the European Union in co-ordination on the spot at the beginning of the Marrakesh Conference.

US Super 301 Legislation

The Council expressed its concern at the announcement last Thursday by the United States of its intention to resuscitate the Super 301 procedures of the 1974 Trade Act. The Council repeated its firm opposition to the use of unilateralism in international trade disputes. The Council, while noting the assurance of the US, stressed the need for all trading partners to act in full conformity with the process and rules of the GATT, including the trade obligations the United States has agreed to in the Uruguay Round. The Council requested the Commission to scrutinize the legality and implementation of these provisions to ensure that the European Community's GATT rights are not violated and to report to the Council.

SIR LEON BRITTAN'S VISIT TO CHINA

Sir Leon Brittan reported to the Council on his recent visit to China. Among the items he raised with his counterparts were human rights, economic reform as well as questions related to China's future status in the GATT and non-discrimination among Member States.

BUDGETARY DISCIPLINE

The Council examined the draft Decision on budgetary discipline and in particular Article (voting procedure for increasing EAGGF-Guarantee Fund financing beyond the guideline a the contingency margin, whether or not to insert deadlines for monetary realignments to taken into account for the monetary reserve, financing the reform of the common market organizations for Mediterranean products).

The Council will resume its discussion of this matter at its meeting on 15 March, with the aim of reaching agreement on the draft Decision which is intended to give legal form to the conclusions of the Edinburgh European Council on financial matters.

NEW DECISION ON OWN RESOURCES

The Council examined the issues outstanding in connection with the new decision on own resources, also intended to give legal form to the provisions of the Edinburgh financial package.

The discussion enabled substantial progress to be made, which should in turn enable the Council to reach agreement on the text of the draft Decision at its meeting on 15 March.

EEA AGREEMENT - INTERIM PACKAGE

The Council reached political agreement - as regards the Community side - on the draft Decision of the EEA Joint Committee amending Protocol 47 and certain Annexes to the EEA Agreement. After formal adoption by the Council, this text must be approved by the EEA Joint Committee and then receive the assent of the European Parliament and parliamentary ratification in the EFTA countries.

This "interim package" is intended to supplement the EEA Agreement by incorporating in it the "acquis communautaire" adopted between 1 August 1991 (cut-off date for incorporation of acts of Community law in the EEA Agreement itself) and 1 January 1994 (date of entry into force of the EEA Agreement). It involves almost 400 acts of Community legislation concerning in particular the internal market, the application of which will thereby be extended to the EFTA partners.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPLYING THE EEA AGREEMENT

The Council noted that differences remained as to the procedure to be followed for implementing the safeguard clause provided for in the EEA Agreement and that, in the circumstances, it was unable to approve the internal Community implementing Regulation concerning the Agreement.

IMPORTATION OF STEEL PRODUCTS FROM RUSSIA, UKRAINE AND KAZAKHSTAN

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue to seek agreement on the mandate to be given to the Commission to negotiate bilateral agreements with Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan concerning imports of certain ECSC steel products.

REINFORCEMENT OF THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE
WITH CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
WHICH HAVE CONCLUDED A EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with the conclusions of the June 1993 Copenhagen European Council which called for a structured relationship between the Associated Central and Eastern European countries and the institutions of the European Union, the Council agrees that the following modalities shall be adopted for establishing an enhanced dialogue on foreign and security policy issues with the six Central European countries which have at present signed Europe Agreements:

- a meeting should be organized between the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission with the Heads of State or Government of the Associated countries in principle once a year;
- the Presidency of the European Union will brief the Ambassadors of the Associated countries following each European Council;
- meetings provided for by the European Council with Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Associated countries will be held in the form of meetings of a special Council with the Associated countries once per Presidency, in order to discuss CFSP matters. The agenda will be thoroughly prepared in order to cover matters of common interest with a view to arriving as far as possible at common operational conclusions and to accommodating specific concerns of the Associated countries. Further meetings in Troika format may be held at the discretion of the Presidency;

- in the same manner, political directors' meetings provided for by the Copenhagen European Council will be held in the format of a special session of the Political Committee during each Presidency, preferably in the run-up to each regular European Council. Further meetings in Troika format may also be held at the discretion of the Presidency on specific items of an urgent character;
- meetings at expert level with the Associated countries once per Presidency will be extended to other groups including security, terrorism, planners and human rights working groups. These meetings may be in Troika format, or with all partners present immediately after regular sessions. In every case the agenda should be organized so as to focus on matters of common interest;
- in appropriate cases the Associated countries will be invited through an agreed mechanism publicly to align themselves jointly with European Union declarations on a particular subject;
- when certain démarches are made by the Troika, Associated countries could be invited to support them;
- the Associated countries could be invited to associate themselves jointly with the implementation of joint actions, if appropriate;
- co-operation with the Associated countries in international organizations and in the run-up to and during international conferences should be intensified. They will be invited to co-ordinate their position with the European Union whenever appropriate;

- to facilitate co-ordination between themselves and the European Union, the Associated countries are invited to appoint Shadow European Correspondents. In addition they should be invited to nominate contact points for CFSP issues in their missions to the European Union which should establish regular contacts with their counterparts in the Member States' missions and the Commission as well as with the Council Secretariat;
- regular contacts between EU missions in third countries and at headquarters of international organizations and conferences and missions of the Associated countries shall be encouraged;
- the European Union shall examine the possibility of further co-operation between the administrations of the diplomatic services of Member States, the Commission and of the Associated countries.

The European Union notes that in some cases the modalities of co-operation between the Associated countries and the European Union might require the Associated countries to nominate a single representative. In particular, the Associated countries are invited to establish a system providing for a single representative on rotation for co-ordination purposes.

The European Union considers that the meetings provided for should focus on specific questions which need an in-depth discussion.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

(Adopted unanimously, without debate, unless otherwise specified)

Arms embargo against Sudan

The Council decided to impose an embargo on arms, ammunition and military equipment to Sudan.

Ukraine

Further to the Council's conclusions of 7 February 1994, the Council approved revised negotiating directives enabling the Commission to continue negotiations with Ukraine for the conclusion of a partnership and co-operation agreement.

Relations with the CIS countries other than Russia and Ukraine

The Council, which had already adopted revised directives for the negotiation of partnership and co-operation agreements with Russia (8.XI.1993) and Ukraine (see previous item), also approved certain guidelines for acceleration of the establishment of contractual relations with the other CIS Republics.

Trade policy

Further to the political agreement reached on 15 December 1993 concerning the strengthening of the Community's trade policy instruments (see Press Release 11192/93 Presse 239),

- the Council adopted by a qualified majority (the United Kingdom voting against) Regulations concerning:
 - = common rules for imports from certain third countries and repealing Regulations (EEC) Nos 1765/82, 1766/82 and 3420/83;
 - = the streamlining of decision-making procedures for certain instruments of commercial defence and amending the relevant Regulations;
 - = common rules for imports of textile products from certain third countries not covered by bilateral agreements, protocols or other arrangements, or by other specific Community import rules;

and adopted unanimously Regulations on:

- = common rules for imports and repealing Regulation No 288/82;
- = establishing a Community procedure for the administration of quantitative quotas;
- = the introduction of time limits for investigation procedures carried out against dumped or subsidized imports from countries not members of the European Community and amending the relevant Regulation.

At the same time, the Council adopted a Decision on the date of entry into force (15.3.1994) of the transfer to the Court of First Instance of the Court's jurisdiction in matters relating to measures to protect trade in the case of dumping and subsidies.

GATT

The Council adopted the Regulation extending until 31 December 1994 the measures taken under the Agreement between the EC and the United States for the conclusion of negotiations under GATT Article XXIV.6.

Anti-dumping

The Council adopted the Decision not to terminate the anti-dumping proceeding concerning imports into Spain of certain Portland cement originating in Turkey, Romania and Tunisia. On 9 February the Commission had proposed termination of this proceeding, but the Council decided unanimously not to agree to that proposal.
