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Europe Day at the Teheran International Fair (15 October)

Speech by M. A. Coppé, member of the Commission

On 15 October, M. Albert Coppé, member of the Commission, gave a speech in Teheran in connection with the participation of the European Communities in the "Asia 1969" International Fair. He discussed first the relations between Iran and the Community. Iran was the first non-member country with which the Community had concluded a commercial agreement. This was in 1963. The European Community was the leading customer and also the leading supplier of Iran: approximately half of Iran's exports went to the Community and approximately one-third of her imports came from the Community.

M. Coppé then spoke of the special relations between the Community and developing countries other than Iran. He said the figures proved that the Community bought more from these developing countries generally than it sold to them, thus enabling them to achieve a foreign exchange surplus. Moreover, the figures for total sales of products from developing countries were growing rapidly in the Community member countries.

M. Coppé then examined the current problems of the Community. Enlargement, a topical problem, was seen by some as a threat to the nature of the Community. M. Coppé, however, thought that enlargement would strengthen the Community by ensuring better political balance. The commercial weight of the Community was already considerable: it was the world's leading importer and exporter. Internally, however, it had not yet succeeded in creating a true free market. This was a prerequisite for achieving economic union. It called for changes in structure, and these raised an institutional problem.

Enlargement meant that the powers of the institutions would have to be strengthened. In particular the Commission would have to be given wider powers, together with some measure of financial independence.

M. Coppé concluded by reminding his audience of the part which the European Community could play in the world. Europe should once again become a political force contributing to world peace. Peace was linked with development and progress, two key objectives of the European Community.