

European Community



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EC SEEKS TO LIMIT OIL IMPORTS

Leaders Say Nuclear Energy Vital

The EC will limit its oil imports over the next six years to the 1978 level of 3.5 billion barrels, if its industrialized partners undertake a similar commitment.

EC heads of government reached this decision at their European Council meeting in Strasbourg, France, on 21-22 June.

Their communiqué said: "It will not be possible to make an effort of this magnitude unless an effort on the same scale is made at the same time by the other industrialized consumer countries, which must also restrict their oil imports."

EC leaders said oil consumer and producer countries should together work out a world energy strategy to:

- ensure more moderate and rational use of oil as an irreplaceable natural resource,
- permit continued economic growth, but based on the development of other energy sources rather than on increased consumption of oil,
- ensure that developing countries could obtain the energy they need for economic growth.

The communiqué warned that "if such a strategy cannot be worked out, the world will rapidly move toward a large-scale economic and social crisis."

On long-term alternative energy sources, the communiqué said nuclear energy must be used under conditions guaranteeing public safety.

"Without the development of nuclear energy in the coming decades, no economic growth will be possible. Nuclear programmes must, therefore, be given strong fresh impetus," it said.

Commenting on the European Council's action to tackle energy issues, EC Commission President Roy Jenkins said:

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"The continuing energy crisis has reinforced the need for energy problems to be tackled on a collective Community rather than dispersed national basis. Firm and coordinated policies to save energy in the many ways open to us, to avoid oil prices escalating dangerously on the open markets, and to develop alternative and in particular nuclear sources of energy are indispensable, if we are to play the part commensurate with our collective weight in dealing both with our industrialized partners and the oil-producing countries.

"The decisions taken today should equip those attending the Tokyo summit next week with a solid Community contribution to problems which affect the industrialized world as a whole. Some things are too big for individual nations: some things are even too big for the Community. The industrialized countries have to act together. We also look forward to developing our relations with the producer countries, and we appeal to them to take account of the importance of the world energy balance and harmonious economic development."

Prospects For 1980s

On the EC's prospects, Mr. Jenkins said: "While energy dominated our deliberations, we also took the opportunity to have a preliminary look forward to the prospects for the 1980s on the basis of a paper produced by the Commission. This will be considered in greater depth together with supplementary studies by the Commission at Dublin in November. If we are to cope with our future problems, we must already seek to identify the main issues and shape our policies in a long perspective. Here I put forward some thoughts about both the demographic changes which will greatly affect the social and economic situations in the next ten to fifteen years and the technological developments of our economy. In the judgment of the Commission we need to ensure that the silent revolution in our affairs, which the development of information processing is bringing about, is considered on a Community-wide scale, if our economies are to remain fully competitive and we are to retain our place among the industrial leaders of the world. The future place of Europe will critically depend on our ability to develop the new electronic technologies on a continental scale and to use them as they should and must be used."

EC Budget

Referring to the EC budget, Mr. Jenkins stated: "Not unnaturally much interest has focussed on convergence and the budget of the Community. As you will see from the communiqué, the Commission will make an objective study of the budgetary situation, and after the Council of economic and finance ministers has been seized of our study, the Commission will make concrete proposals for dealing with the problem. This would be in time for the European Council in Dublin to be able to take the necessary decisions.

"This European Council has been one of the more valuable I have attended. It has shown how the Community is able to react to the challenges which concern us and to confront the consequences for policy. Together we are strong, individually much weaker. This Council has been a good demonstration of the Community effectively at work."
