

EUROMEMO

Recent Developments in the European Community

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EC 1992 and telecommunications.....the completion of the EC's single market, the opening up of Central and Eastern Europe, and the possible extension of the single market (and legislation) to the seven countries of EFTA* will have a major impact on the telecommunications sector in Europe. Not surprisingly, EC leaders meeting in Maastricht (Netherlands) in December 1991, included the goal of creating trans-European networks in the new EC Treaty on European Union. Dr. Herbert Ungerer, who is a member of the Commission's directorate-general for telecommunications, addressed these developments in a speech "Europe 1992: Nations and Networks" to the COM NET '92 Conference held in Washington, DC, January 29 and 30. It outlines EC telecommunications policy, areas where liberalization is being achieved, and Europe-wide type approval and network access. A Background Paper, reviewing in detail the EC's 1987 Green Paper on liberalization of the telecommunications sector, is also available. *EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries are Austria, Finland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

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The EC and development aid in 1990....the European Community's development policy has undergone some changes in strategy and priorities. At all levels, there is more emphasis on sound domestic policies in the beneficiary countries, as well as respect for human rights and the environment. The EC also stresses the importance of trade in development, and in this respect sees an open multilateral trade system as an essential external condition. A recent Memorandum on the Community's Development Aid in 1990 describes developments in EC aid programs under headings including the volume of aid, multilateral contributions, sectoral trends, aid and the environment, and women in development. The analyses -- illustrated by graphs and tables -- cover EC relations with countries in Asia, Latin America, the Mediterranean, and the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) group.

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Energy and the new Europe....the European Energy Charter, which more than 30 countries signed in The Hague in December 1991, is a vital part of the emerging European architecture, according to EC Commissioner Cardoso E Cunha, whose portfolio includes energy matters. In a speech to the Ministerial Conference for the Signing of the European Energy Charter on December 16, 1991, the Commissioner described the initiative as "an international undertaking of unprecedented proportions". Working parties have already begun to give practical effect to the Charter and some protocols are already in the drafting stages.

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Industry, the environment and public awareness...the EC Commission has just proposed an "Eco-Audit" Regulation that would improve the environmental quality of industrial sites by creating a scheme to enable firms to test their environmental performance. Although the proposed scheme is voluntary, the in-built condition that all results be made public is expected to raise public awareness, and consequently demands for cleaner industry. The "eco-audit" scheme would be open to both large and small firms, and would operate on the basis of criteria set out in the proposed Regulation. The technical validity of these results would be verified by accredited bodies and then passed on to public authorities.

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European Union -- what it means for the man in the street.....the Community flag (12 gold stars against a background of blue) hangs side-by-side with the national flag in all EC member states and is a visible indication to Europeans that they are part of a larger political and economic entity. But there is also more tangible evidence, like a directly-elected European Parliament, a European Court of Justice, an EC passport, and, by the end of the decade, a single currency. A new brochure, entitled **A Citizen's Europe**, traces the transformation of a people's Europe from an abstract concept into an everyday reality. Compiled by an assistant to the late Jean Monnet, a founding father of the European Community, it provides an excellent overview of the development of Community law and policies, the status of 1992 objectives, as well as a preview of what must be done so citizens continue to support their governments' commitments to greater European unity.

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Job training in the 1990s.....job-training policies will become increasingly important during this decade as a result of the single market, profound economic restructuring and increased mobility of workers, according to Vasso Papandreou, the EC Commissioner whose Social Affairs portfolio includes education and training. To promote discussion on how to develop appropriate strategies, the Commission recently adopted a **Memorandum on Vocational Training in the European Community for the 1990s**. It focusses on key issues, including improving young people's basic training, retraining, industrial adaptation to the situation in the labor market, and linking of training programs. The Commission has also undertaken to study the matching of qualifications and job requirements as a basis for a future proposal on efficient training policies.

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EC Statistics...Eurostat, the EC's Statistical Office, has updated its brochure "**A Community of Twelve: Key figures**". The new edition contains a series of charts on population, standard of living, employment, the economy (by sector), comparisons with the EC's main trade partners, and the results of public opinion surveys on European questions.

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