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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMON MARKET TO GIVE GENERALIZED PREFERENCES ON JULY 1

WASHINGTON, D.C. March 31 -- On July 1, 1971, the European Common Market will begin extending generalized preferences for manufactured and semi-finished imports -- including textiles -- from the developing countries of the world.

With this agreement reached in Brussels yesterday by the Council of Ministers of the European Communities, the Common Market became the first major trading power to act on a generalized preference plan, proposed to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) eight years ago. The "Group of Seventy-Seven" developing countries had formally asked the industrialized countries to act on this plan at the 1964 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). "Trade Not Aid" was their request.

Ralf Dahrendorf, Commission member with special responsibility for the Community's trade policy, called the Community's decision "an imperative act" to aid developing countries.

The Council will formally adopt the decisions activating this agreement at a subsequent meeting on the basis of proposals by the Commission.

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