



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

Anglo-German accord. UK Prime Minister John Major and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl had what was described on the British side as a "relaxed and friendly" meeting in Bonn on Monday. The talks took place privately without officials and no details were made officially available. According to UK sources, however, the two statesmen touched on the problem of Economic and Monetary Union only briefly as part of a wide-ranging discussion on such matters as the Gulf war, South Africa, developments in the Soviet Union and possible links between their respective Political parties in the European Parliament. Reports from Bonn in the UK press said the two promised to step up bilateral contacts with frequent further meetings and that Major had invited Kohl to "see a bit more of the English countryside when the weather is better".

Hurd backs EC talks over Gulf. After talks in Rome with his Italian counterpart Gianni De Michelis, UK Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd called on Monday for an early meeting between EC Foreign Ministers and the Gulf States to explore possible Middle East security arrangements. Hurd strongly supported having a role in defining a new peace and security order in the Gulf region and in promoting an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. But the UK at present appears cool on the ideas of the EC establishing new mechanisms for forging common foreign and defence policies - the subject of the second Intergovernmental Conference in Brussels. The differences in approach between the UK and some of its Community partners over what strategy should be pursued after the Gulf war will be discussed at a special meeting of EC Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg next Tuesday.

CAP in crisis. According to a confidential memorandum leaked to the press, the EC's agricultural budget situation "is deteriorating rapidly". The document shows a record increase of 7.9bn ecus (£5.6bn) forecast for farm price supports this year. The new figure, if correct, exceeds the budget approved only last December by 1.9bn ecus, bringing farm support to 33bn ecus (£23bn). Farm spending accounts for 60% of the EC budget. Commissioners were urgently examining the figures at their regular meeting in Brussels yesterday.

Commission acts on airlines. Speaking in London last week, Commission Vice-President Sir Leon Brittan said the Commission is willing to relax a range of regulations on airlines temporarily to help them through the drop in business caused by the Gulf war. Sir Leon said that applications for fare changes and the approval of joint ventures would be speeded up to enable airlines to respond quickly to events. Capacity-sharing between two airlines would be considered sympathetically for the next three months.

Commission approves East German subsidies. The Commission has told the Bonn government it will permit a range of special subsidies in the territory of the former East Germany for a three year period. However, regional subsidies in West Germany had to be cut much further than currently envisaged. Speaking in Bonn Sir Leon Brittan said the recent decision to reduce from 39% to 30% the population area in West Germany subject to regional subsidy was "insufficient."

Prize for Stansted. The Mies Van Der Rohe prize for European Architecture has been awarded by a jury of international experts to the Airport Terminal at Stansted in Essex. The winning project, designed by Foster Associates, was selected from among 23 finalists out of a total of 80 proposed projects. The award was established in 1987 by the Commission, the European Parliament and the Barcelona Mies Van Der Rohe Foundation. The prize will be presented to the winner by Commissioner Jean Dondelinger on 27 April in Barcelona.

Unemployment falls. The unemployment rate for the Community was 8.3% for the year 1990, compared to 8.9% for the previous year according to Eurostat. The monthly rate rose slightly, however, to 8.4% in December compared with 8.3% in November and 8.5% in December 1989. Expressing satisfaction with the fall in 1990, Commission Vice-President Henning Christophersen said the Commission's latest forecasts foresee an EC growth rate of 2.2% which will not be enough for unemployment to fall in 1991.

He added that the Commission expected the growth rate in 1992 to be 2.5% which would prevent a further increase in the jobless figures.

Energy Charter. The Commission this week adopted a preliminary draft of the European Energy Charter, establishing the principles, objectives and means of pan-European energy cooperation.

Excise duties on fuels. On the initiative of Commissioner Christiane Scrivener, the Commission yesterday (Wednesday) adopted a proposal concerning excise duties on petrol and gasoil from 1 January 1993.

Greenlight for UK beer deal. The Commission has given its agreement to proposals by UK group Grand Metropolitan and Courage for restructuring the beer interests of the two companies. The agreement will put a time limit on Courage's exclusive beer supply arrangements to the pubs currently owned by the two groups and will mean that the tenanted pubs of the two companies will become free houses when the exclusive arrangements expire in 1997. Representatives of Grand Metropolitan and Courage approached the Commission in February 1990 to discuss the restructuring of their beer interests. The proposal included the sale by Grand Metropolitan of all its breweries to Courage and the creation of a 50-50% joint venture (IEL) which would own and control the on-licensed tenanted estate of the two parties.

Earthquake aid. The Commission has granted emergency aid of 500,000 ecus (£350,000) to help victims of the earthquake on 1 February in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Aid for Peruvian cholera victims. The Commission is to give 500,000 ecus (£350,000) to help victims of the cholera epidemic in Peru which has affected between 190,000 and 280,000 people.

Van Miert in Hong Kong. Speaking to the International Shippers Conference in Hong Kong last week, Transport Commissioner Karel van Miert said that as far as shipping is concerned there are two aspects of importance to the Community: more than 90% of the Community's imports and exports by volume are carried by sea and more than 30% of goods moved between the Member States are transported by ship. Van Miert went on to say that EC shipping policy rested on four principles: freedom to provide shipping services, regardless of where the shipping company is established; competition in the shipping industry should be fair and on a commercial basis; there should be free access to trade; and the aspirations of developing countries to take part in shipping activities should be respected.

European patent. A leaflet explaining the processes through which European patents may be obtained has been issued in English. Details from European Patent Office (EPO), Erhardstrasse 27, W-8000 Munich, Germany. Tel: 010 49 89 23990. Fax: 010 49 89 2399 4465.

"Towards 1992: Europe at the crossroads." Editor Paul Hainsworth. This collection of short essays deals with some of the most salient aspects of the path towards a Single European Market, the 1992 process and the emerging Europe of the 1990s. 91 pages. Price £3.00 plus 50p postage from Staff Development, Room 4F02, University of Ulster, Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT37 OQB, Northern Ireland. Cheques made payable to "Staff Development."

"A European Environment Charter." Fabian pamphlet 543 by Nick Robins. According to the author the EC is suffering from an "environmental deficit" just as serious as any "democratic deficit." Consequently, he argues, Europe needs an Environment Charter. Price £3.50 from Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1.

Conference and Diary Dates.

"Vision for London" conference. Sponsored by the European Commission. 14-15 March at Church House, Dean's Yard, London SW1. Details from Judy Monahan on 071 829 8349.

"The European Dimension to Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Consumer issues. One day conference organised jointly by Association of London Authorities and the London Borough of Islington. Venue - Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1. 19 March. Details from Beate Hellowell, ALA, 36 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9JF Tel: 071 222 7799 ext. 210.

"Dosimetry in Diagnostic Radiology." seminar. 19-21 March, Luxembourg. Organised by Commission and PTB in collaboration with WHO and ICRU. For information contact CEC, K Schnuer, Bat. Wagner C331. L-2920 Luxembourg. Tel: 010 352 4301 6388. Fax: 010 352 4301 4646.

Internal Market Council	18 February	Brussels
European Parliament Session	18-22 February	Strasbourg
ECO/FIN Council	25 February	Brussels

Our next meeting will take place on Thursday 21 February at 11.30am.