



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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WE/32/89
28 September 1989

THE WEEK IN EUROPE

European Community Social Charter. The European Commission yesterday (Wednesday) adopted a proposal to be put to the Heads of State and Government calling for a Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights. The Declaration will be debated at the Community Summit in Strasbourg in December. It shows a few modifications from the previous proposal which was opposed by the UK at the Madrid European Council last June. Presenting the Declaration in Brussels, the Social Affairs Commissioner Vasso Papandreou said the Community could not create a huge single market after 1992 without regard for its people. "We want to build a Europe better in all respects, not just a better Europe for companies", she said. The Declaration is the result of several months' negotiation and discussion with both sides of industry. It has no legally binding provisions, but will be buttressed by an Action programme which the Commission says will be presented before the end of the year. Some reports suggest that elements of the Action programme could be presented as early as the next meeting of Social Affairs Ministers set for the end of October. The Declaration includes chapters enshrining: the right of all citizens to freedom of movement throughout the Community; a decent wage; improved living and working conditions; the right to social protection; the right to join (or not to join) a trade union and the right to collective bargaining; the right to vocational training; equal treatment for men and women; the right of workers to information, consultation and participation; health protection and safety in the workplace; protection of children and adolescents (minimum employment age is set at 16 years); a decent standard of living for the elderly and the disabled. The Declaration calls on Member States to "commit themselves to take such steps as are appropriate and to mobilise all the resources that may be necessary in order to guarantee the fundamental social rights contained in this Charter and full implementation of the social measures indispensable to the efficient operation of the internal market".

New Community aid for Poland and Hungary. At a meeting of the 24 industrialised countries taking part in operation PHARE (Poland and Hungary: assistance in restructuring economies) in Brussels on Tuesday, the European Commission proposed new Community aid to the two countries of 300m ecus (£203m) and challenged other Western countries to match EC assistance. The Commission also suggested that Poland and Hungary should be made eligible for loans from the European Investment Bank. Frans Andriessen, Commission Vice-President for External Affairs, said the new move "will succeed only if it stimulates additional measures beyond those already planned". Up to Tuesday, Western Governments had promised a total of 271m ecus (£180m), mainly from the EC and USA. However, several EFTA and neutral European countries pledged a further 125m ecus (£84m) in non-food aid. Meanwhile, Commission Vice-President Sir Leon Brittan has put forward plans for a bank trainee programme which would help to develop the financial systems in Poland and Hungary. This initiative, which is based on studies identifying a lack of managerial and financial expertise as a key problem in the development of Poland and - to a lesser extent - Hungary, is linked with the range of actions to be undertaken as part of PHARE.

Commission wins Hoechst appeal case. The European Court of Justice has ruled that the Commission did not breach fundamental rights when its officials raided the offices of the German chemicals company Hoechst, and upheld the

fine imposed on the company for non-cooperation. The case was brought by Hoechst in 1987 after the Commission had carried out a series of surprise visits on chemical companies during its investigations into a cartel in PVC and low density polyethelene. Commenting on the judgement Commission Vice-President Sir Leon Brittan said: "The judgement is a welcome confirmation of the Commission's powers in implementing the competition rules of the Treaties. As the single European market develops, the Commission's role in fighting cartels and other commercial activities which are damaging to competition becomes increasingly important. (Today's) judgement sets out clearly how the Commission is carrying out investigations and the national authorities in assisting them should do their jobs".

New Zealand butter agreement reached. Meeting in Brussels on Monday, Agriculture Ministers reached agreement on renewing the special terms under which New Zealand butter is imported into the UK. A total of 64,500 tonnes will be covered for this year (10,000 tonnes less than 1988), 61,340 tonnes in 1990, 56,170 tonnes in 1991, 55,000 tonnes in 1992). At the same time Ministers also concluded an agreement on the voluntary limitation of exports of New Zealand sheep meat to the EC. Finally, the Council approved the reform of the sheap and goat meat markets.

Italy alone in opposing steel closure plan. At the Industry Council in Brusels on Tuesday, the Italian Government maintained its opposition to adoption of the Commission draft decision of June 1989 which included extended closure dates for Italian steel plant. This was despite a clear willingness by the 11 other Member States to give their agreement to the proposal. Since unanimity is required, the legal position is that the December 1988 decision is still valid, which would have required the closure of the liquid phase of the Bagnoli plant near Naples at the end of June 1989. The Italian Minister argued that the buoyant situation in the steel industry made it difficult to close the Bagnoli plant within the deadline of 31 March 1990 put forward in the Commission's new draft decision.

Europe Against Cancer Week is to be launched at 10.30 am on Monday 9 October at the Royal College of Physicians, St Andrews Place, Regents Park, London NW1 4LE. Details from Catherine Packer, Publicis-PR, 67 Brompton Road, London SW3 1EF. Tel: 01-823 9000.

1992 Briefing. David Williamson, Secretary-General of the European Commission, is to hold a second briefing on 1992 at the Commission's London offices at 11.00 am on 29 September. Acceptances only to Carole Smith on 01-222 8122 Ext 236.

1992 Online. Export Network Ltd analyses the measures in the EC's 1992 programme and monitors their progress daily. For details contact Billy McGilvray on 01-494 4030.

Diary Dates

General Affairs Council	3 October	Luxembourg
Education Council	6 October	Luxembourg
Air Transport Ministers (informal)	6 October	Lille
ECO/FIN Council	9 October	Luxembourg
European Parliament Session	9-13 October	Strasbourg
Internal Market Council	10 October	Luxembourg
Foreign Ministers (informal)	14-15 October	Luxembourg
Transport Council	16 October	Luxembourg
Research Council	17 October	Luxembourg
ECO/SOC Plenary Session	18-19 October	Brussels
Agriculture Council	23-24 October	Luxembourg
4th ACP/EEC Ministerial Session	27-29 October	Luxembourg
Agriculture Ministers (informal)	29-31 October	Beaune
Energy Council	30 October	Luxembourg
Social Affairs Council	30 October	Luxembourg

Our next briefing will be on Thursday 5 October at 11.30am.