



COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

Frontier-free broadcasting approved. EC Foreign Ministers, meeting in Luxembourg on Tuesday, approved by a 10-2 majority a Directive setting minimum standards for television programmes which from the early 1990's could be broadcast freely across each other's frontiers. Denmark and Belgium voted against, the former arguing against Community competence in this field, the latter insisting on continued protection for its linguistically fragmented TV industry. The agreement, which will regulate television advertising, programming and sex and violence on the screen came in the wake of months of wrangling over the amount and form of television advertising and how much non-European made programming should be screened. The final 27-article Directive came after a subtly worded compromise to allay concern over mandatory quotas for European-made programmes. The US had threatened retaliation if the original plans for a maximum 40% quota of non-European programmes was adopted. The Directive will come into effect for most EC States by 1992 with a further grace period for Greece and Portugal. It sets minimum intervals between advertisements - a 15% ceiling as a share of total transmission time, rising to 20% in peak viewing periods. It forbids pornography and gratuitous violence that could harm young viewers, and bans cigarette advertising. In theory these standards apply only to programmes broadcast across EC borders, allowing governments to block programmes conforming to the EC norm only in exceptional circumstances. EC States are asked to strive "by practical and appropriate means" towards European-made programmes filling a majority of air-time, excluding news and sports bulletins, advertising and games programmes. Faced with strong opposition from the UK and FRG to any insistence that more than half of programmes broadcast across frontiers must be made in Europe, the Commission gave assurances that the majority European content requirement was politically, but not legally binding. Commission Vice-President Martin Bangemann confirmed this when he said that failure to reach the local content goal "would not be sufficient for the Commission to bring Member States to Court" for breaching the Directive. The new agreement should make it easier for European broadcasters to sell their programmes to EC stations. The Directive closely parallels the broadcasting convention already drawn up by the 23 nation Council of Europe which has already been ratified by most of its members. On Monday, 26 European countries agreed, at an International Broadcasting Conference in Paris, to sponsor action to help their TV industries pool technical and artistic skills. The project, Eureka Audiovisual, would channel government cash to cross-border TV investments. These would include international co-productions, research into improved techniques for dubbing foreign language programmes and simultaneous translation techniques. Commission President Jacques Delors announced he would ask the next European Summit in Strasbourg to endorse the idea of a 250m ecus (£168m) contribution of Commission funds over five years to finance an audiovisual strategy.

Prospect of EIB loans to Hungary & Poland. Commission Vice-President Henning Christophersen outlined on Monday a proposal for a Council decision to make it possible for the European Investment Bank to grant loans to Poland and Hungary. The new proposal envisages a total amount of possible loans to the two countries in the order of 800-1000m ecus (£530-£665m) over three years. In order for the EIB to grant loans outside the Community a Council decision is necessary. Christophersen stressed that the possible loans from the EIB

are not to be confused with the ongoing IMF negotiations for a rescheduling of the Polish debt. Meanwhile the EIB has allocated 611m ecus (£404m) for investment in Italy, more than half of which is earmarked for projects in the Mezzogiorno. The major investment there is to be the expansion of the Fiat vehicle production at Cassino.

ERDF aid for Plymouth. Commissioner Bruce Millan, responsible for regional policy, has announced that the Plymouth Travel to Work Area (TTWA) should become the first area in the UK to receive European Regional Development Fund aid under the special RENAVAL programme, which is intended to help areas particularly hard hit by the decline of the shipbuilding industry. No sum of money has yet been decided but a programme of measures for RENAVAL grants is being prepared. These grants are made towards the cost of infrastructures linked to job-creations and the improvement of run-down industrial areas, for the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises and for tourism. The Plymouth TTWA covers Plymouth City and part of the district of South Hams, Caradon and West Devon.

EC to act on hazardous waste. Commissioner Carlo Ripa di Meana, responsible for the environment, said yesterday (Wednesday) in London that tougher proposals are being drawn up by the EC to make the producers of hazardous waste liable for the damage and injury it might cause. He also said the EC would very soon issue a Directive aimed at stopping dumping of raw sewage at sea.

European Newsletter produced by Cameron Markby Hewitt provides advice to clients on European legal matters and is increasingly involved in advising on the 1992 legislative programme. Details from Sceptre Court, 40 Tower Hill, London EC3N 4BB. Tel: 01-702 2345.

Communique An analysis of strategic and regulatory issues for banking and financial services in Europe. Published by Price Waterhouse. Details from Andrew Duncan, No. 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9Q2. Tel: 01-378 7200.

The New European "A Europe of Many Circles" by John Coleman on the problems of decision-making in the EC. Now available, price £2, from 14-16 Carroun Road, London SW8 1JT.

European Schools and Colleges Competition 1989/90. Theme for the year is "Tourism as a Resource for the Development of European Citizenship". Closing date 28 February 1990. Details from Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, Seymour Mews House, Seymour Mews, London W1H 9PE. Tel: 01-486 5101 ext 277/240.

Conference and Diary Dates

University of Manchester and UACES. "The Education and Training Policy of the EC". Staff House, UMIST, Sackville Street, Manchester. Saturday 14 October 1989.

UACES. "Retrospective on the Euro-elections". Committee Room, King's College, London. Friday, 20th October 1989.

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	Chateau d'Esclimont
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	29-31 October	Beaune
Energy Council	30 October	Luxembourg
Social Affairs Council	30 October	Luxembourg

Our next briefing will be on Thursday, 12 October at 11.30 am.