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COMMUNITIES

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THE WEEK IN EUROPE

Summit gives go-ahead to EMU. With very few political fireworks, the European Council, meeting in Strasbourg last week, gave the go-ahead to an Inter-governmental Conference (IGC) to discuss economic and monetary union (EMU) which will open at the end of 1990 under Italy's chairmanship. Although the UK objected to the setting of the date for the IGC, it agreed to take a full part. But on the question of the Social Charter, approval was given by eleven to one. The Summit was really dominated by the revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe and the prospects for German reunification. A joint declaration endorsed the concept of Germany unity through free self determination. The meeting of EC leaders was also addressed by Commission President Jacques Delors who urged the Twelve Member States to speed progress towards the single market and gave them two years in which to adopt 110 more Directives. The timing of the IGC is now clear in broad outline. Preparatory work will continue next year. By April the Commission will produce a report that will assess the benefits of EMU and take into account any alternative plans for EMU such as that tabled by the UK. The Dublin Summit (Ireland takes over the Presidency of the Council of Ministers for six months starting 1 January 1990) of late June 1990 will take stock, mainly of the Community's readiness to start a first stage move to closer co-operation on 1 July. Then the IGC will open at the very end of 1990 under the Presidency of Italy. The next landmark will probably be the late 1991 Summit hosted by the Dutch, at which EC leaders would review progress on both EMU and the working of the Delors plan's first stage of closer monetary co-operation. President Francois Mitterrand said he hoped everything would be finished by the end of 1992 (when the single market is due to be completed), but the time needed to get a treaty ratified by 12 national Parliaments means that a closing date nearer the 1994 European parliament elections may look more realistic as suggested by the Federal Chancellor. On the Social Charter the UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was the sole dissenter on the grounds that the concept went beyond Community competence. The Charter's 30 articles calls for workers to receive "equitable" wages, "adequate" social security, improved living and working conditions, and to be assured the rights to join trades unions and to take jobs anywhere in the Community. The Charter, which was adopted as "a solemn declaration" has no legal backing. However, the main fight over social policy will be the action programme proposed by the Commission. By contrast to the Social Charter, this will involve Member States introducing legislation.

Commission President Jacques Delors told EC leaders that by the end of the year about 60% of the 279 measures outlined in the Single Market White Paper would have been adopted, but warned that the implementation of the measures by Member States was not good enough. Of the 88 measures which should by now have been implemented only 14 had been adopted by all EC States, he said. He praised Denmark for adopting 73 measures and the UK which has implemented 69. The worst laggards were Italy (35) and Portugal (33). President Delors noted the good work of the Commission in bringing forward the Directives to the Council, which has drafted Directives on 274 of the 279 areas.

In the traditional Summit-opening address by the President of the European parliament, Enrique Baron requested the "closest participation" of Parliamentarians in the IGC. The Spanish President demanded new powers for the European Parliament over, or alongside, other community institutions as part of any new Treaty establishing EMU. The Parliamentary President also suggested that the Commission share with the Strasbourg assembly its monopoly power (outlined in the 1957 Rome Treaty) to initiate legislation.

Furthermore, he called for "a decisive role in the investiture of a new Commission" and making Council of Ministers debates as public as parliamentary sessions. The Summit leaders also endorsed the setting up of a Development Bank to help the emergent democracies in Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, Foreign Ministers of the 24 industrialised nations in the PHARE Group met in Brussels yesterday (Wednesday) to finalise details of immediate financial aid to Poland and Hungary.

Delors calls for EC Constitutional Conference. Addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Tuesday on the outcome of the Summit, Commission President Jacques Delors said the role of the European Parliament should be extended which would require changes to the Treaty of Rome. He said: "I am a partisan of the idea of two Inter-governmental Conferences, one dealing with economic and monetary union and related institutional reform by the end of 1991, and another which deals with European political union, one or two years later or even at the same time. I believe that if we deal with both of these subjects in one such conference we risk over-loading the boat". The President said that in the short run MEPs should be given greater powers to hold the EC executive responsible if national governments transferred powers to Brussels.

US seeks to strengthen links with EC. In a speech on Tuesday to the Berlin Press Club, US Secretary of State James Baker who is in Europe for the annual NATO Foreign Ministers Conference, underlined US commitment to Western Europe in emphatic terms. He said America's security remained linked to that of Europe, politically, unilaterally and economically, adding that the changes which were taking place in Europe demanded a "new architecture" for Western co-operation. Baker's proposals for a strengthening of the institutional and consultative links between the US and the EC reflects US recognition of the EC as an equal economic and, increasingly, political partner. The Secretary of State urged a new NATO whose most important task would be to work out the new political and economic relationship with the East, including the fostering of East-West trade and investment and the promotion of democratic institutions and practices in Eastern Europe. All this would be done under the umbrella of the Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe.

1990 : European Year of Tourism. The European Year of Tourism (EYT) received its official send-off in Strasbourg last Monday, in the presence of Antonio Cardoso e Cunha, EC Tourism Commissioner, the twelve Tourism Ministers of the EC Member States and representatives from the six EFTA countries. Major national and pan-European programmes and events are planned which will highlight the economic and social importance of tourism, its value in promoting a people's Europe, the opportunities for co-operative ventures between countries and the problems faced by European tourism in the global market.

Women in Europe Prize. The European Woman of the Year for 1989 is Rosanna Benzi. Although she has lived for 28 of her 41 years in an iron lung, she has campaigned for social equality and aid to the third world. The third Women in Europe Prize was presented by the Mayor of Strasbourg, Mme Catherine Trautmann, at an official ceremony in the Alsatian capital on 9 December.

Environmental Policy and 1992. This Report with a foreword by UK Environment Secretary Chris Patten was commissioned by the DOE from Nigel Haigh and David Baldock of the Institute for European Environmental Policy. It explores what "1992" can mean and surveys the wide range of possible effects it may have on environmental policy. Report available from Institute for European Environmental Policy, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC12H 0DD. Tel: 01-388 2117.

Diary Dates

ECO/FIN Council	18 December	Brussels
General Affairs Council	19 December	Brussels
ECO/SOC Plenary Session	19/20 December	Brussels
Internal Market Council	21 December	Brussels

Our next briefing will be on Thursday, 21 December at 11.30 am.