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RHODES EUROPEAN COUNCIL: BELGIAN VIEWS

SUMMARY

1. BELGIAN OFFICIALS HAD EXPECTED AN UNCONTROVERSIAL SUMMIT WITH CENTRAL ISSUES BEING THE SINGLE MARKET REPORT AND SOCIAL SPACE. MARTENS' INSTINCT FOR A LOW PROFILE WILL BE ACCENTUATED BY FEAR OF WHAT MAY BE IN STORE FOR HIM OVER THE RYAN CASE.

DETAIL

SINGLE MARKET

2. PRIME MINISTER MARTENS WILL URGE THE COUNCIL NOT TO LET THE PROPOSALS IN THE FIELD OF FISCAL HARMONISATION AND CITIZEN'S EUROPE LAG FURTHER BEHIND. BUT THE BELGIANS SEE NO VALUE IN FURTHER DISCUSSION OF VAT HARMONISATION UNTIL THE NEW COMMISSION HAS DECIDED WHETHER TO PRODUCE A MODIFIED PROPOSAL ON THE BASIS OF COCKFIELD'S BILATERALS. THEY HOPE THAT DELORS' INTENTION TO CREATE A SEPARATE COMMISSION PORTFOLIO FOR FISCAL AFFAIRS WILL STIMULATE PROGRESS ON THE DOSSIER.

3. EUROPEAN COMPANY STATUTE AND FIFTH COMPANY LAW DIRECTIVE. THE BELGIANS BELIEVE DELORS WOULD LIKE A GREEN LIGHT AT RHODES TO PROCEED WITH DRAFTING ECS PROPOSALS. THEY COULD ACCEPT THIS. THEY DO NOT WANT TO BECOME EMBROILED IN A DEBATE ON WORKER-PARTICIPATION IF THE GERMANS RAISE THEIR NEW COMPROMISE PROPOSAL IN RELATION TO THE FIFTH COMPANY LAW DIRECTIVE. THE BELGIANS DO NOT LIKE THE GERMAN PROPOSAL WHICH THEY REGARD AS GIVING MEMBER-STATES LICENCE TO DO WHATEVER THEY WANT.

4. CTMO. THE BELGIANS WANT A QUICK DECISION, BUT AT IMC NOT SUMMIT LEVEL.

SOCIAL DIMENSION

5. THE BELGIANS FIRMLY BELIEVE IN THE NEED FOR SOCIAL MEASURES IN ORDER TO 'SELL' THE SINGLE MARKET TO EUROPEAN WORKERS AND CITIZENS, BUT ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED TO BE PRAGMATIC ABOUT THE WAY

FORWARD. MARTENS WILL NOT, THEREFORE, BE LOOKING AT RHODES FOR IDEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION OR NEW PROJECTS. RATHER HE WILL SEEK TO HIGHLIGHT THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF MEASURES ALREADY PASSED IN OTHER FIELDS (EG MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS, LIMITS ON DRIVING TIME FOR LORRY DRIVERS, STRUCTURAL FUNDS ETC) AND TO FOCUS ON THOSE AREAS OF SOCIAL LEGISLATION WHERE CONCRETE PROGRESS IS ALREADY IN SIGHT (EG HEALTH AND SAFETY DIRECTIVE).

THE COMMUNITY'S GLOBAL ROLE.

6. THE BELGIANS HAVE NO PARTICULAR PROBLEMS WITH THE PROPOSED DECLARATION. THEY HOPE IT WILL HELP ALLAY 'FORTRESS EUROPE' PARANOIA AMONGST OUR MAIN TRADING PARTNERS.

ENVIRONMENT

7. THEY AGREE WITH THE UK IN OPPOSING THE IDEA OF A HIGH LEVEL GROUP OF EXPERTS AND IN THE NEED TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF THE WORK OF THE ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL AND UNEP.

AUDIOVISUAL

8. THE BELGIANS EXPECT NOTHING SUBSTANTIVE ON THIS AND REGARD IT SIMPLY AS A CHANCE FOR MITTERRAND TO CONFIRM HIS COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS IN THIS FIELD.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

9. MARTENS IS CONTEMPLATING A JOINT INTERVENTION WITH DUTCH PRIME MINISTER, LUBBERS, ON THE NEW GERMAN LORRY TAX.

EPC

10. EAST/WEST. THE BELGIANS ARE KEEN TO KEEP THE IANINA EXERCISE GOING (WHICH TINDEMANS TOUTS AS A PERSONAL SUCCESS FOR HIMSELF) AND TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER REFLECTION ON THE EC'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE USSR IN THE LIGHT OF GORBACHEV'S REFORMS. THEY ARE HAPPY WITH THE EPC PAPER AGREED AT THE FAC BUT REGRET THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO PARALLELISM BETWEEN THIS AND THE COMMISSION PAPER ON ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE. THEY ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT THE UK IS OPPOSED TO THE COORDINATION OF CREDIT POLICY TOWARDS THE EAST WHICH THEY SEE AS IMPORTANT TO AVOID COMPETITION BETWEEN THE TWELVE.

11. THE BELGIANS WILL BE PUSHING THEIR INITIATIVE THAT THE TWELVE USE THE CSCE CLOSING CEREMONY AS A FORUM FOR DELIVERING A EUROPEAN VIEW ON THE FUTURE OF RELATIONS WITH THE EAST. THEY MAY ALSO PROPOSE A MEETING OF THE TWELVE FOREIGN MINISTERS WITH SHEVARDNADZE.

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12. ON ARAB/ISRAEL, THE BELGIANS ARE VERY UNHAPPY WITH THE AMERICAN DECISION TO EXCLUDE ARAFAT AND WILL BE TAKING SERIOUSLY THE SPANISH COREU CALLING FOR A JOINT DEMARCHE. THE BELGIANS HAVE PROPOSED A STATEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA/ANGOLA BUT HAVE SO FAR HAD NO REACTIONS.

COMMENT

13. AT TIMES OF DOMESTIC DIFFICULTY, MARTENS HAS BEEN KNOWN TO TAKE A VERY LOW PROFILE AT EUROPEAN SUMMITS. HOW MUCH OF HIS AGENDA HE WILL ACTUALLY PURSUE IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT EVENTS MUST BE OPEN TO QUESTION.

PETRIE

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