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Annual E.e.c.-central American Economic Cooperation Meeting: Summary Of Developments

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Feb. 24-25, foreign ministers from the 12 European Economic Community (EEC) member-nations, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, participated in an annual EEC-Central America cooperation meeting in Lisbon, Portugal. Foreign ministers from Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela also attended. EEC member-nations are France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and Ireland. EEC aid programs for Central America approved during the ministerial meeting are summarized below. * Four-year assistance program, with an annual budget of 1.5 million ECUs (US\$2 million), aimed at providing legal and technical assistance for Central Americans victimized by human rights abuses. * Technical assistance project designed to upgrade telecommunications infrastructure in Central America. The EEC will contribute 13.8 million ECUs (US\$18 million). * Support program for small businesses in El Salvador to receive 7 million ECUs (US\$9 million). Program objectives are stimulating economic activity and job creation in former conflict zones. * Participants approved a rural development project for Huehuetenango department, Guatemala. The 12 million ECU (US\$15.6 million) program was not formally signed due to the absence of Guatemala's foreign minister. EEC spokespersons said they hoped the program would help facilitate resettlement of Guatemalan refugees who voluntarily choose repatriation from Mexico. Next year's EEC-Central American cooperation meeting will take place in San Salvador. (Basic data from Deutsche Press Agentur, Notimex, Associated Press, 02/25/92; Agence France- Presse, 02/20/92, 02/25/92, 02/29/92)

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