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## The European Community: The Eighth Summiteer

Leaders of the world's seven largest industrialized nations--the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and Italy--have held a Summit meeting each year since the mid-1970's to discuss ways of tackling their mutual economic problems and other policy concerns. However, throughout most of the history of the Summit of Industrialized Nations, there has been an eighth summiteer whose presence and role is often little understood: the European Community.

### **Why does the Community participate in Summits?**

Four of the ten countries that make up the European Community (EC)--France, Germany, Italy and the UK--have taken part in Western Summit meetings since the first such meeting took place in Rambouillet, France in 1975. As members of the EC, these four and their six smaller partners have agreed to relinquish to the Community as a whole their autonomy in external trade and a portion of their autonomy in economics and finance. The Ten now share or are in the process of developing common policies governing trade with non-EC countries, agriculture, fisheries, industry, energy, economic and monetary matters and other important sectors. Because of their membership in the Community, the interests of the six Member States that do not send their own delegations to the Summits are in many ways linked to those of Europe's four regular Summit participants. Thus, it was decided that the Community itself should be represented at the Summit of Industrialized Nations.

### **Has this always been the case?**

No. The EC did not attend the first two Summits--Rambouillet in 1975 and San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1976. The Community took part in its first Summit in London in 1977 at the invitation of the UK, the host government. Later that year,

EC Foreign Ministers agreed that the Community, as such, should be a regular participant and take part in debates on all issues within the Community's "competence."

### **How is the Community represented?**

The Community is represented by the two institutions that make up its dual executive and principal legislative bodies: the EC Commission and the EC Council of Ministers. The EC delegation includes the President of the 14-member Commission and the Head of State and/or Government and Foreign Minister of the country occupying the Presidency of the Council of Ministers at the time of the Summit. The Council Presidency rotates among the EC member states at six-month intervals. Should the Presidency at the time of the Summit be occupied by one of the EC's big four countries, that country's delegation acts both on its own behalf and as representative of the EC Council of Ministers.

During the 1982 Versailles Summit, when the Council Presidency was occupied by Belgium, the EC's delegation included Belgium's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister as the representatives of the Council of Ministers.

During the Williamsburg Summit, the EC will be represented jointly by Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany (FR), the country that presently holds the Presidency, and by EC Commission President Gaston Thorn.

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