Closer Political Co-operation

sion to observe minimum prices for some of their agricultural exports to the Community, obviating import levies. Since January 1972, Romania has benefited from its generalized preference system. State-trading countries have come under the Community's common commercial policy since January 1975, which means that they must negotiate agreements with the Commission acting for all member states.

Eastern Europe's Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) has approached the Community about developing closer co-operation, and in 1974 a Commission delegation visited COMECON in Moscow for talks.

All Community member states have established diplomatic relations with China, and Chinese spokesmen have long indicated support for the Community's aims. In 1975 the Chinese Government established diplomatic relations with the Community.

The European Community's long-term aim has always been a politically united Europe, and its institutions are now preparing plans for the attainment of "European Union."

Political co-operation, which is outside the scope of the Community treaties, is conducted primarily on an intergovernmental basis. Besides the European Council meetings of heads of government, there are regular meetings of the foreign ministers of the Nine to concert their views on major questions of foreign policy. One of the best-known results of these political consultations is the resolution on the Middle East adopted on November 6, 1973 — the first time that the Community's nine member states had publicly taken a joint stand on a major foreign-policy issue.

Other issues handled in the political co-operation framework include the dialogue between European and Arab states, debates in the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, and political developments in Portugal, Greece and Cyprus.

The Chinese Ambassador presents his credentials to the President of the Commission of the European Communities. More than 100 countries have accredited ambassadors to the Community.