

There are Special Relations Agreements for industrial free trade with six members namely Austria, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

The institutional framework of the EC consists basically of the Commission, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice; there are a number of other specialist Community institutions.

The Commission has 17 members, two each from France, Italy, Spain, West Germany and the UK, and one from each of the other countries. They are supposed to be independent of their national governments. The Commission initiates Community action and has certain executive powers within the framework of agreed Community policy.

The Council of Ministers directly represents the members' governments. Which ministers of the national governments sit on the Council depends on the subject under discussion but the foreign ministers have a paramount position. The Council makes the final policy decision on the proposals presented by the Commission. Each member state is represented by one minister, but voting rights are as follows: West Germany ten, France ten, Italy ten, the UK ten, Spain eight, Belgium five, the Netherlands five, Portugal five, Greece five, Denmark three, Ireland three and Luxembourg two.

A **qualified majority** requires 54 votes out of 76. The Single European Act extended majority voting to encompass most aspects of the Commission's programme to complete the internal market by 1992, the main exception being taxation.

The European Parliament was directly elected for the first time between June 7 and 10, 1979. There are 518 members. It has no powers to initiate legislation, but under the new cooperation procedure of the Single European Act, it can amend various categories of legislation, especially those

associated with the completion of the single market by 1992; if supported by the Commission its amendments can only be overturned by unanimous vote in the Council.

The Court of Justice consists of 13 judges, one from each member country and one other, who decide whether Acts of the Commission, the Council, member governments and other bodies are compatible with the treaties.