Netherlands calls for Twelve to speak as one

STRASBOURG – The European Community needs to speak with one voice to play an effective role in brokering a peaceful solution to the crisis in Yugoslavia, the Dutch Foreign Minister, Hans van den Broek, warned yesterday, *writes Sarah Lambert*.

The Netherlands, which played a crucial role in negotiating the peace pact in Brioni at the weekend, has been privately dismayed at the outspokenness of Germany, in particular, in recommending that the EC recognise the independence of Slovenia and Croatia.

"There is a clear-cut position of the Twelve and all parties should restrain from unilateral actions," Mr van den Broek said in the European Parliament yesterday. "Given the circumstances, speculation as to what stance the Twelve should take in a future situation is not particularly useful or helpful."

With Jacques Delors, President of the EC Commission, warning that the Yugoslav federation "is finished in its present form and any attempt to keep it going will serve only to whip up further antagonism", Mr van den Broek warned that it would be wrong to be over-optimistic that a solution could be easily achieved.