

# Stern EC warning over Brioni agreement

By Ronald van de Krol in The Hague and David Buchan in Strasbourg

THE EC yesterday warned that it might halt its efforts if all sides in the Yugoslav crisis did not comply with "the letter and spirit" of the Brioni agreement, which was reached on Monday. "Full compliance is essential for the European Community and its member states to continue their current efforts of assistance in overcoming the Yugoslav crisis," Community foreign ministers said in a joint statement.

They have finalised plans to send dozens of observers to

Yugoslavia to monitor the ceasefire between the federal authorities and the republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Up to 50 unarmed observers will go to Slovenia, and possibly to Croatia, as soon as possible, according to Mr Hans van den Broek, the Dutch foreign minister.

Diplomats said the ministers had also discussed sending observers to Serbia, Yugoslavia's largest republic, to monitor whether federal troops were returning to their barracks as called for in the cease-

fire agreement. Any extension of the observer group to Serbia would require a separate agreement with authorities in the republic, which was not a party to the Brioni agreement.

The observer mission, which will consist of civilians and unarmed military experts from all member states, will last for an initial three months. This coincides roughly with the period during which Slovenia and Croatia have agreed to suspend implementation of their independence declarations.

Yugoslav diplomats warned yesterday that the EC had to maintain a united stance towards Yugoslavia in order to avoid disaster both for itself and what remains of the Balkan federation. If fighting resumed, and if the 12 EC states then split on the issue of recognising Slovene and Croatian independence, "the worst scenario" might come to pass, said one diplomat.

While the Twelve as a whole might abandon their diplomatic involvement in Yugo-

slavia and simply try to contain any conflict to the Balkans, large EC states would be unlikely to remain passive.

Germany, along with Austria, might back Slovenia and Croatia, trying to bring them into a Teutonic zone of influence, as Mr Roland Dumas, the French foreign minister, warned last week. France, for its part, might side with Serbia, as it did during the First World War. Such a turn of events would tear the EC apart.