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EU Set to Send Police to Secure Aid in Albania

By Marlise Simons
New York Times Service

AMSTERDAM — The European Union is expected to send a small military police contingent to Albania to provide security for the delivery of food, medicine and other aid, according to officials of the Dutch government.

The decision may come as early as Monday when the foreign ministers of the 15-nation Union will discuss the issue in Brussels, the officials said. Envoys of the Albanian government are also expected at the Brussels talks.

The plan is to send "hundreds but not thousands" of West European military policemen or troops with police tasks, the officials said, to see to it that badly needed food and medical supplies get into the right hands rather than risk pilfering by the many armed gangs.

Under the plan, apparently worked out with President Sali Berisha of Albania, the contingent would also reorganize the Albanian police, who often behave as criminals, foreign diplomats say.

The Dutch foreign minister, Hans van Mierlo, has already pledged the participation of the

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Netherlands in such a police action. He said Friday that he had reason to believe the plan would be approved. The minister is acting as EU spokesman because the Netherlands currently holds the six-month rotating presidency of the Union.

If approved, the police action would replace an earlier proposal to send European peacekeeping troops, which was rejected at a meeting in the Netherlands last week. Several countries, including France, apparently favored sending troops to Albania to restore order and stem the flood of refugees. But Britain and Germany were adamantly opposed.

Part of the European plan to be discussed Monday involves naming a special European coordinator who will be based in Tirana, the Albanian capital, to oversee the various aid and police actions and to avoid duplication of tasks. Some Euro-

pean groups intend to send observers to elections scheduled for June while the Council of Europe is to advise Albania in changing and updating its legislation.

Mr. van Mierlo, in a briefing in the Dutch Parliament, declined to say who he was proposing as chief coordinator. But he said he preferred someone from a country that is rather removed from the Albanian conflict.

The minister said, however, that the military police force might well be placed under the command of Italy, a country with a larger aid and business presence in Albania than most.

The problems posed were underlined this week by a European fact-finding commission that visited Albania. The Dutch diplomat who led the mission, Jan de Marchant et d'Ansembourg, said that food and medicine were running out in some areas, but that restocking would be difficult as long as parts of the country remained unsafe.