

010/7

1.

Prime Minister.



When this subject came up on the way back from Luxembourg, Foreign and Commonwealth Office you were not prepared to say more than that you would consider going to the European Parliament to report on the next European Council.

London SW1A 2AH

The Foreign Secretary is likely to be troubled about this later this week. If he is, may he speak on the lines of x1 below?

3 July 1981

Dear Sir
HML 6vii

I would rather not be totally committed because
① my first duty is to the HMC - I report there.
② I inform the European Parliament. I do not report. I can not see what more will be said over the next summer.
not

European Parliament: Attendance by President of the European Council

You will recall that there was a brief discussion at the European Council in Luxembourg on 29/30 June about the proposal in the report of the Three Wise Men that the President of the European Council should go to the next meeting of the European Parliament to report on what had happened at the Council. There is a long history about this, summed up in the attached note.

Hitherto the fact that President Giscard d'Estaing felt that, as the French President did not appear before his national Parliament, he should not address the European Parliament, prevented the proposal being agreed. President Mitterrand has now said that he has no objection to appearing. Lord Carrington understands the Prime Minister is considering whether to attend the Parliament in December this year after the November European Council, and he would not normally have wished to urge a decision at this stage. Unfortunately, however, the matter has been publicised by the outgoing Presidency and it is therefore very likely that we shall be asked to say where we stand.

The Dutch Prime Minister, at his Presidency Press Conference, announced that the way was now clear for the European Council President to appear before the Parliament, that unfortunately the Parliament was not in session or he would have done it immediately and that therefore "this happy prospect now fell to the British Presidency". The Dutch Foreign Minister said to a Chatham House audience on 1 July that the European Council had decided that the President in office would in future report to the Parliament. As you know, Lord Carrington will be in Strasbourg next week and is certain to be approached by the President of the European Parliament, who has already raised the matter with Mr Hurd. If Lord Carrington is not able to say what our attitude will be, we would expect this to give rise to some unhelpful speculation and criticism.

/Now



Now that the French opposition has disappeared, we would be alone in standing out against the idea; and it will be recalled that in earlier discussions we had indicated that we could agree if that were the general view. (Lord Carrington's undated minute to the Prime Minister and Michael Alexander's letter of 3 April 1980 to Paul Lever enclosed for ease of reference). There is the additional consideration that we expect during our Presidency, and indeed thereafter, a period of difficult relations between the Council and the Parliament as the latter try to extend their influence over a wide range of Community affairs. We want to limit the danger of our Presidency being marred by a row with the Parliament; a report on the European Council from the President is something which the Parliament would unquestionably welcome and which, inconvenient though it is for the Prime Minister, could take place without increasing the powers of the Parliament in any way. For the Prime Minister to be the first to make such a report should make a considerable impression on the Parliament, and indeed on a wider audience on the Continent and at home.

X | Parliament will no doubt be flexible about the arrangements for a visit by the Prime Minister which will be some time after the Prime Minister has reported to the House of Commons. I therefore hope that Lord Carrington might be able to tell Madame Veil, if the matter is raised when he sees her next week, that the Prime Minister will attend the December session of Parliament and report on the November European Council.

Yours ever,

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

C Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street



European Parliament: Attendance by President of
European Council

In their report on Community institutions which they submitted to the European Council in November 1979, the Three Wise Men recommended that the European Council President should attend the European Parliament to give an account of discussion in the European Council. The aim would be to show the European Council was taking the Parliament seriously and, in turn, to set up at least an informal relationship between the Parliament and European Council since the latter has become the main source of political guidance and decisions for the Community.

During discussion of the recommendation, the UK took the line that we could agree with the consensus. President Giscard D'Estaing, however, refused to agree on the grounds that since he did not appear before the French National Assembly he could not appear before the European Parliament and argued that if he could not appear, none of his colleagues should.

When the President of the European Parliament called on the Prime Minister on 6 November 1980, Mme Veil said that the European Council was now de facto a Community institution where decisions were taken and there must, therefore, be a dialogue between the President of the European Council and the European Parliament. The Prime Minister, after pointing to the difficulties put in the way of the proposal by President Giscard, said that she hoped something could be worked out; she did not wish to have a disagreement with the French Government on this issue.

In the last session of the European Council in Luxembourg on 30 June there was some discussion of the relationship between the Council and the European Parliament. There was a general feeling that relations were unnecessarily bad. M. Mitterrand said that the French President spoke to the press and to the people and there was no reason why he should not speak to the European Parliament. He therefore withdrew the French objection to the recommendation in the Three Wise Men's report that the President of the European Council should give an account of the Council meetings to the Parliament. Mr van Agt welcomed this. If the European Parliament had been in session now he would have liked to have been the first to so report.

/Before



Before there could be any considered discussion of action to take with the Parliament, the Dutch Prime Minister announced at his Press Conference that there was no longer any objection to the European Council President appearing before the European Parliament and that the first President to do so would be during the British Presidency.

cc Euro PA: MW 79
Call on PM by 3 Wise Men

Euro
Pd

Mr Whitmore
Can we have
a word.
cf. 117

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Note for the Record

Copied to:

- Private Secretary
- PS/Lord Privy Seal
- PS/Mr Hurd
- PS/PUS
- Lord Bridges
- Mr Franklin - Cabinet Office
- Mr C Whitmore - 10 Downing Street ✓
- Sir M Butler - UKREP Brussels
- ECD(I)
- ECD(E)
- Presidency Secretariat

Amf

1. Miss Stephens
2. Mr ~~Stephens~~ (OK).

To note.

The Prime Minister
agreed the form of words in
paragraph 2 below on the
very last from Luxembourg
today.

ML
30/6

EUROPEAN COUNCIL: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1. In the last session of the European Council in Luxembourg on 30 June there was some discussion of the relationship between the Council and the European Parliament. There was a general feeling that relations were unnecessarily bad. M. Mitterrand said that the French President spoke to the press and to the people and there was no reason why he should not speak to the European Parliament. He therefore withdrew the French objection to the recommendation in the Three Wise Men's report that the President of the European Council should give an account of the Council meetings to the Parliament. Mr van Agt welcomed this. If the European Parliament had been in session now he would have like to have been the first to so report.

2. The Prime Minister has agreed that she will consider doing this after the November European Council.

D H A Hannay

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30 June 1981

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