

Confidential Filing

Election of the President of the European Parliament; President Giscard's nominee, Madame Simone Veil.

EUROPEAN POLICY

JUNE 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
19.6.79							
11.7.79							
13.11.84							
21.1.84							
PREM 19/747							

Cabinet / Cabinet Committee Document

The following document, which was enclosed on this file, has been removed and destroyed. Such documents are the responsibility of the Cabinet Office. When released they are available in the appropriate CAB (CABINET OFFICE) CLASSES.

Reference: CC(82) 2nd Conclusions, Minute 3

Date: 21 November 1982

Signed Wayland Date 28 August 2012

PREM Records Team

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File



Euro Pl 285

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 November 1981

Dear Francis,

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 10 November. She considers that the line you are at present taking with the press is a little on the cold side. She would prefer it if the line taken were as follows:

"Although the election of the President of the European Parliament is an internal affair for the Parliament, the British Government would welcome the election of a British candidate. This would be a suitable recognition of the major contribution British MEPs have made to the workings of the institution."

Yours ever

Michael Alexander

Francis Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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285



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

10 November 1981

*Prime Minister
Apex?*

Ans - 10/11/81

Dear Mr. Mac,

President of the European Parliament

Sir James Scott-Hopkins has announced his candidacy for the job of President of the European Parliament to succeed Mme Veil, whose term of office expires at the end of this year.

Lord Carrington believes that, while we should welcome the election of a British President, it would be against the interests of the Government and indeed of Sir James himself, if we were seen actively to be lending support to his cause. The Parliament is increasingly jealous of its independence and sensitive to what it would regard as interference from the Community's Member States.

Lord Carrington therefore hopes that the Prime Minister will agree that, while we should say that we would be pleased if the Parliament chose a British President, we should confine ourselves to that and make quite clear our view that the election of the President is a matter for MEPs alone. I enclose a copy of a line which we are taking with the press to that effect.

*Yours ever
F N*

(I should welcome the guidance to use just 2 sentences. The

last 2 words and don't say we (F N Richards)
Private Secretary

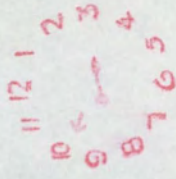
M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

*don't say Sir James!
not.*

PRESIDENCY OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The British Government would welcome a British President of the European Parliament. This would be a suitable recognition of the major contribution British MEPs have made to the workings of the institution. (But election of the President is an internal affair for the Parliament. It is not a position which is in the gift of the Member States and it must be left to the MEPs themselves to decide.)

11 NOV 1981



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2

GRS 340

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FM LUXEMBOURG 111000Z JULY 79

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 153 OF 11 JULY

INFO PRIORITY UKREP BRUSSELS, PARIS, BONN

ROUTINE THE HAGUE, ROME, DUBLIN, COPENHAGEN, BRUSSELS, UKDEL
STRASBOURG

Prime Minister PM sec

6/11
137

MY TELNO 151: LUXEMBOURG POLITICAL SITUATION

1. I SPOKE TO M THORN AT DINNER LAST NIGHT SHORTLY AFTER HIS DEFEAT FOR THE LIBERAL GROUP CANDIDACY FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. HE WAS CLEARLY VERY DISAPPOINTED, AND SPOKE WITH SOME BITTERNESS ABOUT THE SUPPORT WHICH THE GERMAN LIBERALS HAD GIVEN TO MME VEIL, IN SPITE OF CONTRARY ASSURANCES WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED ON 8 JULY FROM HERR GENSCHER.

2. M THORN HAD NOT HAD TIME TO CONSIDER WHAT HE SHOULD NOW DO, AND TOLD ME THAT HE WAS ANXIOUS NOT TO ACT HASTILY. HE SAID THAT HE WAS UNDER NO PARTICULAR PRESSURE FROM M WERNER TO MAKE UP HIS MIND QUICKLY, AND THAT M WERNER'S DECISION (WHICH HAD JUST BEEN CONVEYED TO HIM) TO ATTEND THE OPENING SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON 17 JULY AS AN ELECTED MEMBER MEANT THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT NOW BE FORMED UNTIL 18 JULY AT THE EARLIEST.

+. I HAVE TODAY BEEN TOLD IN CONFIDENCE BY A SOURCE VERY CLOSE TO M THORN THAT THE ASSURANCES WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED FROM HERR GENSCHER HAD MADE HIM CONFIDENT OF OBTAINING THE LIBERAL GROUP CANDIDACY, AND THAT IT WAS THIS WHICH HAD PERSUADED HIM TO DECLARE HIS OWN FIRM INTEREST IN THE PRESIDENCY. HIS RESENTMENT HAS BEEN GREATLY INCREASED ON HEARING INDIRECTLY FROM MME VEIL THAT THE GERMAN LIBERALS HAD GONE TO PARIS THREE WEEKS AGO AND HAD PROMISED THEIR SUPPORT FOR HER (APPARENTLY IN RETURN FOR FRENCH SUPPORT FOR HERR BANGEMANN'S CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE LIBERAL GROUP). M THORN EVIDENTLY FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT HERR GENSCHER DID NOT KNOW OF THIS, AND HIS FEELING OF BETRAYAL

/15

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IS LIKELY TO MAKE HIS OWN RELATIONS WITH HIS FRENCH AND GERMAN COLLEAGUES DIFFICULT FOR SOME TIME. THE REVERSE WHICH HE HAS SUFFERED, AND THE WAY IN WHICH IT HAS HAPPENED, WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO DECIDE WHETHER TO STAY IN GOVERNMENT AS FOREIGN MINISTER, OR TO DEVOTE HIMSELF TO BOTH NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY LIFE, WITH THE POSSIBLE ADDITION MEANWHILE OF OTHER POSTS (EG THE PRESIDENCY OF RADIO LUXEMBOURG) AND THE HOPE OF AN IMPORTANT POST IN THE EEC OR NATO LATER.

WRIGHT

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

DEPARTMENTAL DIST:

WED

EID

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PRIME MINISTER

Madame Simone Veil

I spoke earlier today to M. Wahl in President Giscard's office to convey to him your response to the President's approach seeking your support for the election of Madame Veil to the Presidency of the European Assembly. I told him that you had already met Madame Veil, that you were well aware of her qualities and that there was no need for her to come over to see you again. You were very ready ^{in principle} to support her candidacy for the Presidency but publicly the decision whether to support Madame Veil was for the Conservative Members of the Assembly and not for you. If you appeared to be trying to impose your own view, this might possibly be counter-productive. Nonetheless, you would make known your support for her privately to the Conservative Members.

M. Wahl said that this was very good news. He would tell the President of your response and he was sure that he would appreciate it. M. Wahl said that he was well aware that this was a matter for the group of Conservative European Members to decide, and he was encouraged by the fact that Mr. Scott-Hopkins was shortly to see one of Madame Veil's leading colleagues in her group of French European Members.

Your response will clearly put some credit in the bank with President Giscard which you may be able to draw upon at the European Council.

Ans.

JMS.

19 June 1979



Mr. Whitby ^{16 vi}
to the same.

PRIME MINISTER

MONSIEUR JEAN-FRANCOIS DENIAU

10:30 AM, to whom Lord
Soames conveyed all his
orally yesterday. ^{16/6}

Monsieur Jean-Francois Deniau rang me from Paris yesterday evening to say that Monsieur Francois-Poncet had already spoken to the Foreign Secretary of the French Government's desire that Madame Simone Weil should be elected as President of the European Assembly. President Giscard has told Monsieur Deniau to ring me to ask if I would tell you of his desire that the Conservative Group should support the good lady. I replied that I would be seeing you the next day; but one thing I wanted to say to him was that I had noticed that the question of National Contributions to the Community Budget was not on the Agenda for the European Council. He said he would speak to Giscard.

He rang me again this morning and said that a discussion on contributions was due to take place on the Friday of the Council. Giscard saw this as a discussion on how the matter should be proceeded with; with a view to it being resolved at the Dublin European Council.

I am copying this to the Foreign Secretary.

S.

SOAMES

15 June 1979

PRIME MINISTER

Jacques Wahl telephoned me this morning at President Giscard's request.

The President seeks your support in securing the election of Madame Veil to the Presidency of the European Assembly. She herself is described, by M. Wahl, as a "Liberal-Conservative", but she has great symbolic significance as a survivor of Auschwitz. The President believes that many of the Christian Democrat members of the Assembly, including the Germans, will vote for her as, of course, will the French. If they can rally the support of others, including the Conservatives, this would give her a majority. Hence President Giscard's message to you: he hopes that you would feel able to commit the United Kingdom Conservatives in the European Assembly to support Madame Veil. Without their support he thinks there is a real risk of the Socialists securing the Presidency - and he thinks you would not welcome that anymore than he would! Although she is not a Christian Democrat, in terms, he believes that the German Christian Democrats would vote for her because of her significance as a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation.

If you are sympathetic to this approach, President Giscard would be willing to arrange for Madame Veil to come over to see you and he would obviously like to do that.

I undertook to report this to you and to ring back M. Wahl as soon as possible.

Two comments on this:

- a. This is an interesting and encouraging use of the direct link between the President's office in the Elysee and No. 10, and is to be welcomed on that ground.
- b. You will need to assess this proposition also in terms of UK-FRG relationships, including possible reaction from Helmut Schmidt - it would be sensible to get Lord Carrington's advice both on the substance and on the handling of the matter.

/You may also

You may also want to bring Lord Thorneycroft into consultation. There is no desperate urgency about this in that the Assembly does not meet until 17 July when the election of the President is first business - but obviously the lobbying and negotiation will have been completed well before then.

KRS.

I should be very happy to report.
But we must consult. Tim Scott-Hopkins
and Tim Spicer as well. There is no need
for Madame Vail to fly over - I have
met her and remember the interview well
OK.

11 June 1979

