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DESK OFFICER	PA	ADMIN
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 September 1988

Ed (1)  
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Mr. Williams  
Mr. [unclear]

Dear Charles,

Draft Minister's speech in Bruges

You wrote on 30 August asking for some background information on the hall in which the Prime Minister will speak and on the College of Europe itself. I enclose two booklets.

(i) The Market Hall

The old Market Hall dates from the 13th century, when Bruges was becoming one of the great merchant cities of Europe, and a leading emporium for the Hanseatic League. In addition to serving as a covered market the halls were public meeting places. Up to 1769 all the city byelaws were announced to the people from the balcony overlooking the internal courtyard and these became known as "hall-commandments".

Stairs lead from the hall up inside the belfry tower. The belfry houses the famous Bruges carillon - a set of 47 fixed chromatically tuned bells sounded by hammers controlled from a keyboard - and the tower is some 260 feet in height.

(ii) The College of Europe

The College was founded in 1949 and is the first of the modern institutes of European Studies. In the style of its curricula and the composition of its student body and professional staff the College resembles a medieval university. Modest financial support is provided by some EC member states, by Switzerland and by the Commission. The UK's annual contribution is £2,500 at present. Representatives of contributing states sit on the College's administrative council.

In 1988-89 there will be 207 students; the overwhelming majority from EC member states. Graduates from the College gain a diploma of advanced European Studies and many find employment in the Commission. This year the College has seven UK citizens among its students; France by comparison has 43 and Spain 36.

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The current draft of the Prime Minister's speech already contains a reference to the Hall. A reference to the College might be inserted as a new paragraph 3, on the following lines:

"It is a particular pleasure to speak today at the College of Europe, under the distinguished leadership of its Rector Professor Lukaszewski. The College's creative harnessing of the wide variety of the academic traditions we have in Europe, its focus on European policy of the future while preserving the structure of a medieval university, are lessons to us all about the cultural richness and diversity we Europeans share".

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10/12/87

L Parker

(L Parker)  
Private Secretary

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