

23rd September, 1980

Thank you so much for your letter of 18th September, with which you enclosed a copy of the excellent article which you wrote for The Times on Monday of last week.

I will, of course, look out for you at the Conference, although it is always very hectic there.

Could you let me know dates when you are next going to be in London, in the hope that I would be able to get you to lunch or dine with me?

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18th September 1980

Dear Ian

I enclose a copy of an article I wrote on Europe which recently appeared in The Times. I thought that perhaps some of the ideas in it might appeal to the Prime Minister and could be taken up either in speeches she might make about Europe or in references to Europe in more general speeches.

I hope we can meet again soon. I shall be at the Party Conference, arriving on Wednesday and hopefully staying until the end, and perhaps we could fix up something then.

With best wishes

*Yours ever
Christopher*

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How to be a good European

The most difficult point to get across to British public opinion about the European Community is that to be a good European one must first be a good patriot.

One can only give what one is. If an individual is to make a worthwhile contribution, it must grow out of and be a part of the nation from which he comes. Countries, too, must be proud of their history, aware of their particular genius and confident in themselves in order to play a distinctive and useful role in the community.

A European loyalty should not be expected to take the place of national loyalties that have grown up over the centuries. At this stage only the nation state is able to command loyalty and obedience. To me and many others the building of the European Community is an inspiring task. But it is one that can and must co-exist with national loyalties.

I see the European Community as providing the framework within which the governments and peoples of the member states, helped by the Community institutions, will create something entirely new that is greater than the sum of its parts. I see it as an estuary into which great rivers flow. Each maintaining its own individuality and character, while combining to form something which is simultaneously distinct yet could not exist without them.

What should be the purpose of this operation? We have only to look at Europe's past and at most of the rest of the world today to find answers. Throughout our European history neighbouring countries have generally either been on bad terms with each other or under the domination of the most powerful state of the moment. In most of the rest of the world the same holds true today. Just as in the Europe of the past, this is a major obstacle to economic and social progress and a frequent cause of international tension, sometimes leading to war.

Close cooperation to overcome common problems and to present a united front to the rest of the world is the most unusual relationship of all between neighbouring states. As a rule it has occurred only as a result of war or external threat

and lapsed once the danger was removed.

Close cooperation over a wide range of internal and external matters on the basis of equal rights and obligations, having the force of law and backed by institutions dedicated to the common interest, is an altogether remarkable phenomenon. Throughout most of Europe's history it would have been regarded as utopian to suggest it. In most of the rest of the world it still would be. Yet that is what the Community has achieved.

Of course continuous hard-headed negotiations and much prosaic technical work are required to make the system function. It is difficult to agree on the policies and rules. Sometimes, as in domestic politics, there are deep divisions and efforts are made to prevent agreement. Sometimes the law is flouted.

The system does not work perfectly nor even as well as it could. But when one looks at history and at the rest of the world we have come a long way.

The success of the Community should not be judged solely by the number of its common policies, the detail they enter into, nor the size of the Community budget, important as all these are. It is the quality of the relationship and its enterprises that matter, not the size of the statute book.

The Community's progress should be judged by the degree to which its members are prepared to identify their individual interest with that of the whole, by the manner in which they solve their differences, by the priority they attach to helping each other and by their success in securing common objectives.

We shall always be more conscious of the problems and failings than of the progress and achievements. That is of the nature of politics. But taken as a whole and over the long haul these are some of the criteria by which the Community should be judged.

In practice this means the member states and the Community institutions must be prepared to work together in whatever manner is appropriate to each of the particular

problems concerning them. Some will best be tackled by common policies commonly financed, and for others co-ordinated but not necessarily identical national policies will be more appropriate. In the fields of foreign policy and economic affairs it will sometimes be best for all to do the same thing at the same time, and on other occasions to adopt different roles on the basis of a co-ordinated game plan.

The important point is that within the context of their treaty obligations the governments, the Commission and the European Parliament should on each occasion be prepared to back whichever option they believe most likely to secure the common objective. They should decide which has the best chance of success and support it. This should be their main consideration, rather than a reluctance by governments to surrender power or a desire by Community institutions to extend their authority. When that point has been reached the Community will truly have come of age.

The importance of the initiative represented by the Community is very great. In many respects Europe's history is glorious and some of its finest achievements have been motivated by patriotism. In other respects, however, it is a catalogue of national rivalries, wars and persecutions for which chauvinism—patriotism's close relation—must bear much of the responsibility.

We must not believe that the present interdependence of European countries, nor the extent to which we cross each other's frontiers in pursuit of business or pleasure means that good relations between our governments or peoples can now be taken for granted. We must not make the historic error of supposing that we have been inoculated against the terrible viruses of the past.

As the 20th century shows, the cruelty, intolerance and violence spawned by chauvinism and unrestrained national rivalries can break out swiftly and in unexpected places. The contemporary disease of terrorism for political and nationalistic ends which afflicts so many European countries shows

what horrors still lurk beneath the surface of our modern society.

"The closer relations between the member states" and "the ever closer union among the peoples of Europe" (an important distinction) enjoined by the Treaty of Rome, are part of our defence against the recrudescence of chauvinism and its attendant horrors in Europe.

Our aim should be to use the opportunity thus provided to create a way of life that can act as a beacon of hope to the rest of the world. All our societies are based on the values of liberal, plural democracy. These values are under seige in many parts of the world. Greece, Portugal and Spain are among the few examples of countries that have recently exchanged dictatorship for democracy and it is significant that as soon as they did they applied to join the European Community.

We must show that the values on which our societies are based can fulfil their promise. We must show that in material terms they can provide our citizens with a wide range of opportunities to develop and use their talents and to lead comfortable and prosperous lives. We must show that in freedom and tolerance men and women can best develop their full potential as human beings and the more generous aspects of the human character. We must show, finally, that within our society there is the best chance for most people to enjoy peace of mind and happiness.

If the nuts and bolts of the European Community do not work, it will come apart, whatever hopes and aspirations it carries with it. If, on the other hand we attend only to the minutiae, and never raise our eyes to what has been achieved and could yet be achieved, this great initiative—the most hopeful and ambitious to have occurred in Europe for a very long time—will never fulfil its potential. It is in the interests of all of us that it should.

Christopher Tugendhat

The author is EEC Commissioner for the budget.