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European Council: Second Session

(The following is a transcription of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's notes of the morning session of the European Council on Friday 7 July)

Monetary Matters

- 1. The Prime Minister introduced the discussion. Mr Callaghan said he would not like the text on monetary matters to be too specific. He had thought over the idea of attaching the Schulman/Clappier text as an annex to the Presidency's conclusions and had to ask that this should not be done. Signor Andreotti said that the text read like preliminary approval. We needed more analysis. It read as though everyone was agreed. It ignored the delicate technical and political issues.
- 2. The <u>Netherlands Prime Minister</u> asked whether the introduction did not create the appearance of a commitment here and now. He put this in the form of a question. If there was a commitment the Dutch would also have to make a reservation about the manner in which the funds were to be gathered together. There was an objection to pooling national currencies, which meant creating liquidity to a considerable extent.
- 3. The Luxembourg Prime Minister said that he did not want to imply that if the new system started on 1 January 1979 the snake would stop. There should be no break. They needed to keep open the snake. M. Thorn could accept the Franco/German proposal. But he thought we should find a form of wording which was acceptable to the Italian and British Prime Ministers.
- 4. The <u>Danish Prime Minister</u> said that he could accept the Franco/ German formulation. He doubted whether amendments could be found



to meet the objections to too specific a commitment.

- 5. The <u>Belgian Prime Minister</u> said that the issue was delicate and difficult. He was nevertheless surprised that the text under discussion was causing difficulties. He did not think the text was accentuated. M. Tindemans pleaded in favour of the text. He also made clear that the Belgian Government associated itself firmly with the Franco/German proposal.
- 6. The <u>Irish Prime Minister</u> agreed that there should be a fairly firm commitment that what was in the annex would form the basis for decisions. The annex would become public.
- 7. The Federal Chancellor said that the Finance Council paper had not been introduced formally. In any case it did not take us very far. It was a very global encyclopoedia of generalities and could not form the basis for conclusions. Nobody wanted to take binding decisions in this area today. There would be no binding decisions until December. President Giscard said that the essential thing was what we intended to do. He could say that the text under discussion was a correct expression of the outcome, as he had not had a hand in the drafting. People could make counter proposals.
- 8. The <u>Prime Minister</u> said that he had no objection to publication of the annex. The key issue was its status. <u>Chancellor Schmidt</u> suggested that we should agree to differ, and spell out the differences.
- 9. President Giscard quoted Napoleon to the effect that as to paternity we could only work on the basis of hypothesis. The President of the Commission said that with the backing of massive funds there was an opportunity for success. There was a need for /sharply



sharply focussed work.

- 10. The <u>Prime Minister</u> said that monetary proposals without the essential transfer of resources would promote not convergence but divergence. There was no point in doing all this if it was a mechanism just for one country or more rejoining the snake.
- 11. Chancellor Schmidt said that the scheme under consideration was a way of taking account of all the demands for his country to reflate without damaging his country (ie through inflation).

 Herr Schmidt appeared to say that he accepted therefore that the Federal Republic would be "forced by this scheme" to make decisions to help other countries. The scheme was more realistic than the Werner plan.
- 12. Signor Andreotti said that the Prime Minister's draft text was fine for him.
- The eventual The Secretary of State's notes end at this point. outcome is recorded in the Presidency's conclusions. Dr Owen commented afterwards that the Session had been marked by very slow and deliberate chairmanship by Herr Schmidt. The Federal Chancellor had declined to fudge the monetary issue (for example "Do you accept that this will be the focus of the next Finance Council?" The Prime Minister had come under very heavy pressure and the going had been rather rough at times. Herr Schmidt had taken the lead in pressing the Prime Minister and Dr Owen suspected that the Germans and French had agreed this tactic, with President Giscard deliberately relegated to the back seat. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister had established that there were no commitments until December, as well as the right of amendment to the annex by the Finance Council, and the clear understanding that in UK eyes the /present





present arrangement was not effective and durable, but that it could become so with adaptation and amendment. Dr Owen commented that our allies were the Italians and to a lesser extent the Irish with the Dutch dissatisfied on some aspects. If the French were to shift, they would have to reckon with President Giscard, who was for some reason Dr Owen could not fathom totally committed to an early agreement.

11 July 1978