

~~H.R.~~ **CONFIDENTIAL**

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● Euro PD, April 80, Proposals for Common Format...

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PRIME MINISTER

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

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Euro PD,  
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Euro Passports

The attached letter from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary reverts to the question of a common format for the passport of Community Member States. Lord Carrington agrees with you about the domestic sensitivity of this issue. His letter proposes a way of preventing the matter coming to a head for several months. However, his proposal assumes - though this is not very clear from the letter - that we would give some indication in principle of a willingness to accept a common format in due course.

I think this problem needs to be seen against the general background of our relations with the European Community in the next few months. We have just emerged from a prolonged period of difficulty. We will probably be entering a further period of argument in the autumn, first over the Common Fisheries Policy and then over the re-structuring of the Budget, and of the C.A.P. There would therefore, in my view, be much to be said in favour of H.M.G. striking as "European" a posture as possible in the pursuit of our interests in the next few months. It would be helpful to our efforts to get our way on the major economic issues if we can show, elsewhere, that we are interested in seeing the Community develop. *It would be a major instant benefit, only accepted if people can have a drink and a European*

One way of doing this would be to appear reasonably forth-*coming* coming on the passport issue and to combine it with one or two other proposals which would be demonstrably "European" and designed to make Europe rather more attractive to the ordinary voter. The sort of ideas that have been mentioned in this connection are, for instance, cheaper air fares (in any case a UK interest) and the simplification of formalities for getting medical attention in other Member States.

An alternative idea (not relevant to the public image of the Community) would be for us to pursue proposals aimed at integrating Political Cooperation activities more closely with those activities which fall directly under the Treaties. *The French would not much like this.*

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If the thoughts set out above seem to you to have any validity, you might care to mention them at the European Council briefing meeting on Monday afternoon. If they seemed worth pursuing they could be worked out more fully in time for you to mention them, formally or informally, to your colleagues in Venice.

And

6 June 1980

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