

Ref. A01913

PRIME MINISTER

Handwritten initials: "Handwritten" and "MS"

Handwritten note: "The article is not quite as bad as I had been led to expect. But it is distinctly unhelpful."

Handwritten initials: "K. Runt"

2

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As you know, an interview with President Giscard is included in today's issue of Le Figaro.

2. I should report that Monsieur Wahl, the Secretary General at the Elysee, rang up yesterday afternoon, expressly to tell me that this interview was about to appear. He stressed that in it the President was emphasising that the problems of the British Budget contribution and other Community problems were not to be seen as an Anglo-French confrontation but as problems to be solved within the Community and in accordance with Community principles. No doubt this call was made on instructions from the President, and I report it to you accordingly.

Handwritten initials: "RA"

(Robert Armstrong)

11th April, 1980



1965

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

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TELEGRAM NUMBER 356 OF 11 APRIL 1980.

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PRESIDENT GISCARD'S FIGARO INTERVIEW

FOLLOWING IS FULL TRANSLATION OF AN INTERVIEW ON EUROPEAN QUESTIONS PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S FIGARO:

FIRST QUESTION. THE QUESTION OF THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY BUDGET DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE MADE ANY PROGRESS SINCE THE DUBLIN MEETING. POSITIONS ON ALL SIDES EVEN SEEM TO HAVE HARDENED. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IS IT STILL POSSIBLE TO HOPE THAT AN AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED AT THE NEXT EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING AT LUXEMBOURG?

ANSWER

FRANCE IS DEFENDING EUROPE.

THERE HAS BEEN TENDENCY TO PRESENT THE DEBATE AS IF IT WERE A FRANCO-BRITISH QUARREL, IN WHICH FRANCE SEEKS TO PROTECT HER INTERESTS IN FACE OF A DEMAND FROM BRITAIN EXPRESSED IN THE SIMPLE TERMS OF: "GIVE US OUR MONEY BACK".

THE FACTS ARE DIFFERENT. IN THIS AFFAIR FRANCE IS NOT DEFENDING ANY FINANCIAL INTERESTS. LET ME REMIND YOU THAT HER BUDGETARY ACCOUNT WITH THE COMMUNITY IS NEGATIVE OR VIRTUALLY IN BALANCE, AND CONSEQUENTLY SHE IS NOT CONCERNED BY THE DEBATE ON THE REPAYMENT OF A SURPLUS.

SOME EXPLANATION IS REQUIRED ON THIS SUBJECT THAT IS SO COMPLICATED THAT ONLY A FULLY QUALIFIED UNDERSTANDING IT

SOME EXPLANATION IS REQUIRED ON THIS SUBJECT THAT IS SO COMPLICATED THAT ONLY A FEW INITIATES UNDERSTAND IT.

THE TREATY OF ROME PROVIDED FOR THE FINANCING OF COMMUNITY EXPENDITURE THROUGH ITS "OWN RESOURCES", THAT IS TO SAY BY THE DIRECT ATTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES NOT CONTROLLED BY GOVERNMENTS AND PAID DIRECTLY TO THE COMMUNITY. THESE RESOURCES ARE MADE UP OF THE RECEIPTS FROM CUSTOMS DUTIES, LEVIES COLLECTED AT THE FRONTIERS, AND A PROPORTION OF VAT OF UP TO ONE PER CENT. THIS SYSTEM HAS BEEN WORKING SINCE 1971, AND IT WAS IN FORCE AT THE TIME BRITAIN JOINED.

IN SUCH A SYSTEM, IT IS CLEARLY NOT POSSIBLE TO ENSURE AN EXACT EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN THE RESOURCES DERIVING FROM EACH COUNTRY AND THE EXPENDITURE BY THE COMMUNITY IN THAT COUNTRY. NO MORE THAN IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC EXPENDITURE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF SEINE-MARITIME OR DOUCHES-DU-RHONE WAS EQUAL TO THE CUSTOMS DUTIES COLLECTED AT LE HAVRE OR MARSEILLE.

THIS MECHANISM IS THE EXPRESSION OF THE FINANCIAL SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN STATES.

WHEN BRITAIN JOINED THE COMMUNITY, SHE ACCEPTED THE APPLICATION OF THIS SYSTEM. SHE MERELY ASKED FOR, AND OBTAINED, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD SO AS TO AVOID A TOO RAPID INCREASE IN HER BUDGETARY CONTRIBUTION DURING THE FIRST FEW YEARS. BECAUSE BRITAIN BUYS MORE OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY THAN WITHIN IT, AND BECAUSE SHE DRAWS LITTLE BENEFIT FROM THE EXPENDITURE DEVOTED TO THE AGRICULTURAL POLICY, THE AMOUNT OF OWN RESOURCES COLLECTED IN BRITAIN IS CONSIDERABLY GREATER THAN THE EXPENDITURE THERE BY THE COMMUNITY.

THIS SITUATION IS NO SURPRISE. IT WAS KNOWN TO BRITAIN WHEN SHE JOINED THE COMMUNITY. YET IN 1975 BRITAIN ASKED FOR AND OBTAINED A CORRECTIVE MECHANISM. DESPITE THE EXISTENCE OF THIS MECHANISM, THE CONTRIBUTION COMING FROM BRITAIN WILL INCREASE THIS YEAR.

BRITAIN IS AGAIN ASKING HER PARTNERS TO LIGHTEN HER CONTRIBUTION, AND TO TAKE ON PART OF HER SUBSCRIPTION. IT IS AT THIS POINT THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO CLARIFY THE AIM OF THE BRITISH REQUEST.

IS IT A REQUEST DESIGNED TO LIGHTEN BRITAIN'S CONTRIBUTION FOR A LIMITED PERIOD? THAT IS WHAT WE WERE ORIGINALLY TOLD. AT STRASBOURG LAST JUNE WE AGREED TO LOOK AT THE BRITISH PRIME

STRASBOURG LAST JUNE WE AGREED TO LOOK AT THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST WHEN SHE EXPLAINED: "BECAUSE OF THE END OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, OUR CONTRIBUTION IS GOING TO INCREASE A GREAT DEAL IN 1980. IS IT POSSIBLE TO AVOID OR LIMIT THIS INCREASE?" WE REPLIED POSITIVELY TO MRS THATCHER'S REQUEST. IT IS INDEED NORMAL THAT COMMUNITY COUNTRIES SHOULD HELP EACH OTHER IN COPING WITH A TEMPORARY DIFFICULTY. IF THIS IS INDEED WHAT IS REQUESTED, IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIND A SOLUTION FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME, AND FOR AN AMOUNT COMPATIBLE WITH COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

OR, ON THE CONTRARY, IS IT A REQUEST DESIGNED TO OBTAIN WHAT IS CALLED THE "JUSTE RETOUR" (A FAIR RETURN) ? OR A CLAIM THAT BRITAIN'S NET BUDGETARY DEFICIT WITH THE COMMUNITY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED WITHIN NARROW LIMITS? THE REQUEST MEANS, IN THAT CASE, THAT EACH COUNTRY IN THE COMMUNITY SHOULD OBTAIN AN AMOUNT OF COMMUNITY EXPENDITURE APPROXIMATELY EQUAL TO THE RESOURCES IT CONTRIBUTES.

THIS REQUEST POSES A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF PRINCIPLE, SINCE IT CALLS INTO QUESTION THE OWN RESOURCES SYSTEM, IN THAT IT REGARDS THE PAYMENTS MADE BY A STATE AS A NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION, TO BE COMPENSATED BY EQUIVALENT COMMUNITY EXPENDITURE.

ONE CAN CONCEIVE OF SUCH A SOLUTION, EVEN THOUGH IT DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO FRANCE'S CONCEPTION OF THE WAY THE COMMUNITY SHOULD BE BUILT. BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IT CANNOT BE APPLIED TO ONE COUNTRY ALONE, AND THAT IT SHOULD, IF ADOPTED, BECOME THE RULE FOR ALL.

LET ME BE QUITE CLEAR ON THIS POINT.

IF OUR PARTNERS AS A WHOLE WERE TO COME DOWN IN FAVOUR OF THE RULE OF THE "JUSTE RETOUR", OR OF A RULE THAT ESTABLISHED A CEILING FOR ALL ON THE SURPLUS OR DEFICIT OF THEIR PAYMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY, THEN IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR THE APPLICATION OF THIS RULE TO BE THE SUBJECT OF A PROPOSAL BY THE COMMISSION AND FOR IT THEN TO BE EXAMINED AND DISCUSSED.

IT WOULD CLEARLY BE A NEW RULE, DIFFERENT FROM THAT ESTABLISHED BY THE TREATY OF ROME. IT CAN BE ENVISAGED. IT WOULD NOT INVOLVE ANY FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR FRANCE. IT WOULD INVOLVE CHANGING THE TREATY, AND WOULD REQUIRE PARLIAMENTARY RATIFICATION, SINCE IT IS FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN IN THE TREATY.

PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN IN THE TREATY.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT THIS IS NOT MERELY A QUARREL ABOUT MONEY. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE COMMUNITY IS GOING TO MODIFY, AT BRITAIN'S REQUEST, THE PRINCIPLES THAT GOVERN ITS FINANCIAL ORGANISATION.

SUCH A MODIFICATION WOULD HAVE NO PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR FRANCE. IT WOULD CERTAINLY AFFECT THOSE COUNTRIES IN THE COMMUNITY THAT ARE CURRENTLY NET BENEFICIARIES. THAT IS WHY FRANCE IS NOT DEFENDING HER OWN INTERESTS. SHE IS DEFENDING EUROPE.

TO SUM UP: IF WE ARE TALKING ABOUT COPING WITH A LIMITED AND TEMPORARY DIFFICULTY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIND AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION. IF, ON THE CONTRARY, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A PERMANENT CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY'S FINANCIAL SYSTEM, THE MATTER CONCERNS ALL THE MEMBER STATES, AND THEY MUST STATE CLEARLY WHETHER OR NOT THEY ACCEPT THIS CHANGE.

SECOND QUESTION

FRANCE IS ASKING THAT THE OTHER OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS (AGRICULTURAL PRICE FIXING, ORGANISATION OF THE SHEEPMEAT MARKET, FISHERIES REGIME) SHOULD BE SOLVED AT THE SAME TIME. DOES SUCH A POSITION NOT RUN THE RISK OF ISOLATING OUR COUNTRY AND MAKING THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION MORE DIFFICULT?

ANSWER

IT IS A SIMPLE QUESTION OF COMMON SENSE. WHEN WE ARE ASKED TO MODIFY THE APPLICATION OF AN AGREEMENT ACCEPTED BY GREAT BRITAIN WHEN SHE JOINED, AND TO MAKE THE TAXPAYERS IN THE OTHER MEMBER STATES OF THE COMMUNITY BEAR THE BURDEN OF THIS MODIFICATION IT IS NOT CONCEIVABLE THAT QUESTIONS LINKED WITH THE COMMUNITY'S DAILY LIFE, SUCH AS THE AGRICULTURAL PRICE FIXING, SHOULD BE LEFT IN SUSPENSE.

WHAT ARGUMENTS COULD THE GOVERNMENT GIVE TO A FARMER WHO WAS WAITING INDEFINITELY FOR PRICES TO BE FIXED FOR HIS PRODUCE, AS SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE THE MAINTENANCE OF HIS INCOME, WHEN WE EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT WE WERE AGREEING TO A FINANCIAL TRANSFER, NOT PROVIDED FOR IN THE TEXTS, TO BENEFIT ANOTHER MEMBER STATE?

FOR IN THE TEXTS, TO BENEFIT ANOTHER MEMBER STATE?

IT IS CLEAR THAT IF ONE WANTS TO GET SOMEWHERE, ALL THE PROBLEMS MUST BE SETTLED TOGETHER. THERE CAN BE NO AMBIGUITY ON THIS POINT.

THE SHEEPMEAT QUESTION, WHICH HAS OFTEN BEEN ARBITRARILY PRESENTED, IS THE FOLLOWING: THE MARKETS FOR ALL THE MAJOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY ARE ORGANISED, WITH PRICE AND INTERVENTION MECHANISMS. THIS IS SO FOR BEEF, CEREALS, MILK AND NOW FOR WINE. WHY SHOULD ONE REFUSE TO ESTABLISH A COMMON POLICY FOR SHEEPMEAT? ON WHAT GROUNDS CAN ONE REFUSE FOR SHEEPMEAT, WHAT HAS BEEN JUDGED RIGHT FOR BEEF OR FOR PIGMEAT? IT WOULD DOUBTLESS HAVE BEEN BETTER TO SETTLE THIS PROBLEM WHEN BRITAIN JOINED IN 1972, AND IT IS ASTONISHING THAT THAT WAS NOT DONE. TODAY, FRANCE ACCEPTS THE APPLICATION OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY TO SHEEPMEAT, BUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 43 (3) OF THE TREATY OF ROME WHICH IS QUITE UNAMBIGUOUS. IT LAYS DOWN IN EFFECT THAT QUOTE THE REPLACEMENT OF A NATIONAL MARKET ORGANISATION BY A COMMON ORGANISATION MUST OFFER EQUIVALENT SAFEGUARDS FOR THE EMPLOYMENT AND STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE PRODUCERS CONCERNED. UNQUOTE

WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR FORMAL PROPOSALS FROM THE COMMISSION. WE KNOW THAT THE MAJORITY OF OUR PARTNERS ARE IN FAVOUR OF THIS COMMON ORGANISATION OF MARKETS. THEREFORE THE MEANING OF GREAT BRITAIN'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT IT IS WORRYING. IS IT A REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE VERY PRINCIPAL OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AS FORMULATED BY THE TREATY?

THIRD QUESTION

WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO MEET THE COSTS INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECTORAL POLICIES AND THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY WITHOUT INCREASING COMMUNITY RESOURCES WHILE ALSO KEEPING THE LIMIT FOR THE VAT CONTRIBUTION AT 1%? TO FREE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES, IS ONE NOT HEADING TOWARDS A QUESTIONING OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY?

ANSWER

WE MUST NOT ALLOW THE COMMUNITY'S EXPENDITURE TO GET OUT OF CONTROL AND WE MUST OPERATE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY'S OWN RESOURCES AS THEY ARE NOW CONSTITUTED -- I.E. THE CUSTOMS DUTIES, COMMUNITY LEVIES, AND THE 1% MAXIMUM VAT CONTRIBUTION. I NOTE THAT ON THIS POINT THE POSITIONS OF FRANCE, THE FRG AND GREAT BRITAIN ARE IDENTICAL AND CATEGORIC.

IDENTICAL AND CATEGORIC.

MOREOVER, AT THE PRESENT TIME ALL OUR COUNTRIES ARE SUFFERING FROM BUDGETARY OVER-SPENDING AND SEEKING TO LIMIT THE SIZE OF THEIR DEFICITS. IT IS NOT THE TIME TO PROVIDE FOR A NEW BURST OF EXPENDITURE.

THIS IS WHY THE TRANSFER OF RESOURCES TO GREAT BRITAIN CAN ONLY HAVE A LIMITED EXTENT. FOR THE COMMUNITY, THIS TRANSFER APPEARS AS AN EXPENDITURE SINCE THE OTHER MEMBER STATES WOULD BE AGREEING TO "PAY" PART OF THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION. THIS EXPENDITURE SHOULD REMAIN WITHIN A FINANCIAL LIMIT COMPATIBLE WITH THE EVOLUTION OF RESOURCES FOR THIS YEAR AND THE NEXT.

AS FOR THE BUDGETARY COST OF THE CAP, FROM WHICH I RECALL THAT FRANCE IS NOT A NET BENEFICIARY, WE ARE IN FAVOUR OF AN EFFORT TO LIMIT THE BUDGETARY COSTS. BUT INSTEAD OF APPROACHING THE PROBLEM FROM A THEORETICAL POINT OF VIEW AND THEN REFUSING ANY PRACTICAL DECISION, WHILE PROPOSING UNREALISTIC MEASURES LIKE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OBLIGATORY CEILING FOR AGRICULTURAL EXPENDITURE AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE COMMUNITY BUDGET, I NOTE THAT FRANCE IS ONE OF THE RARE COUNTRIES TO HAVE PROPOSED CONCRETE MEASURES: ON CEREALS, SUGAR AND MILK, WE HAVE MADE PROPOSALS IN BRUSSELS. OUR PROPOSALS NATURALLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FAMILY ENTERPRISES WHOSE INCOME MUST BE GUARANTEED: THERE IS NO NEED TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES WHICH BORDER ON INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AND USE IMPORTED RAW MATERIALS TO A LARGE EXTENT. IN THIS RESPECT, WE HAVE OFTEN DRAWN ATTENTION TO CERTAIN SERIOUS ABUSES OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF COMMUNITY PREFERENCE AND HAVE PROPOSED REMEDIAL MEASURES. WE NOTE THAT IT HAS SO FAR BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN ANY POSITIVE DECISIONS ON THESE MEASURES.

WE MUST, THEREFORE, AVOID MERE APPEARANCES CONSISTING OF RHETORICAL SPEECHES ON LIMITING COMMUNITY EXPENDITURE AND CONSIDER INSTEAD, ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS, WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE VARIOUS MARKETS TO BRING ABOUT ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE.

FOURTH QUESTION

IF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN LUXEMBOURG ENDS IN FAILURE, WHAT WOULD BE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR FRANCE AND FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY?

ANSWER

ANSWER

I NOTE THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IS MOVING FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY FROM ITS REAL PURPOSE.

FROM MY POINT OF VIEW, AND IT WAS I WHO PROPOSED ITS CREATION, IT WAS INTENDED ABOVE ALL TO BE A COORDINATING FORUM, WHICH WOULD PERMIT EUROPE'S PRINCIPAL LEADERS TO ANALYSE THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AS SEEN FROM EUROPE AND TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY STIMULUS FOR ACTION BY COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS. THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL'S ROLE IS NOT TO SUBSTITUTE ITSELF FOR THE OTHER COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR NORMAL TASKS.

I NOTE WITH CONCERN THE RECENT FAILURES OF SOME COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS.

IT IS NOT REASONABLE TO IMAGINE THAT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE, IN A FEW HOURS, TO FIX THIS SEASON'S AGRICULTURAL PRICES, ORGANISE THE SHEEPMEAT MARKET, SETTLE THE FISHERIES PROBLEM AND DETERMINE LEVELS OF BUDGETARY CONTRIBUTIONS UNLESS ALL THIS HAS BEEN CAREFULLY PREPARED EXCLAMATION MARK.

WHEN WE WERE IN DUBLIN ON 29 NOVEMBER, WE ALREADY HAD THE SAME PROBLEMS IN FRONT OF US. THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION PRESENTED IN THE MEETING, ON HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY, THE SKETCH OF A SOLUTION. AS IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO EXAMINE IT UNPREPARED, WE ASKED THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS STUDY AND REFINE THE PROPOSAL BEFORE WE MET AGAIN. SOME OF OUR PARTNERS (THE BRITISH AND THE ITALIANS) WHO WANTED SWIFT DECISIONS EVEN IMAGINED THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL COULD BE BROUGHT FORWARD AND THIS SUGGESTION WAS REFLECTED IN THE PRESS.

I NOTE TODAY THAT NO OVERALL PROPOSAL HAS YET BEEN FORMULATED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE A THOROUGH EXAMINATION OF SOLUTIONS AND THAT THERE IS A RISK THAT WE MAY IN A FEW DAY'S TIME BE IN A SITUATION SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN DUBLIN. THAT IS ASSUREDLY NOT EVIDENCE OF THE GOOD FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS. I HOPE THAT IN THE TIME WHICH IS LEFT THE PRESIDENCY CURRENTLY HELD BY OUR ITALIAN FRIENDS, SUCCEEDS IN MAKING PROGRESS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE SUBJECTS AND ORGANISES THE NECESSARY MEETINGS.

IN THIS SITUATION THE COMMUNITY IS NOT IN DANGER. THE COMMUNITY INDEED HAS RULES OF PROCEDURE ACCEPTED BY THE MEMBER STATES, PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN BY THE TREATY OF ROME AND IT CAN

STATES, PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN BY THE TREATY OF ROME AND IT CAN THEREFORE CONTINUE TO FUNCTION. FOR MY PART, I WISH A FAIR SOLUTION TO BE FOUND TO ATTENUATE BRITAIN'S TEMPORARY DIFFICULTIES. IF BRITAIN DID NOT JUDGE THE SOLUTION TO BE SATISFACTORY, WE SHOULD BE FACED WITH A SIMPLE SITUATION: THAT OF THE APPLICATION OF THE RULES AT PRESENT IN FORCE.

IN THIS DEBATE, FRANCE IS DEFENDING EUROPE, ITS PRINCIPLES AND ITS SOLIDARITY. SHE HAS NO FINANCIAL INTERESTS DIRECTLY INVOLVED. SHE IS QUITE PREPARED TO SHOW A SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY PROVIDED THAT THE DEMANDS PRESENTED DO NOT HAVE AS THEIR OBJECTIVE THE CALLING INTO QUESTION OF FUNDAMENTAL COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES.

IF THE WISH IS TO QUESTION THESE PRINCIPLES, THE REQUEST IS NOT ONE FOR FRANCE BUT FOR ALL OUR PARTNERS. THEY MUST DECIDE. IF NEW RULES WERE TO BE DEFINED, IT WOULD THEN BE A DIFFERENT COMMUNITY.

ONE MIGHT ASK WHETHER THIS IS A GOOD MOMENT TO CALL INTO QUESTION AN ORGANISATION WHICH HAS WORKED FOR 21 YEARS, WHICH HAS ASSURED THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE INTER-PENETRATION OF TRADE AMONG ITS MEMBER STATES, AND WHICH HAS ENABLED THEM TO FACE, WITHOUT CLAMOUR NOR EXCESSIVE TROUBLE, THE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS THROUGH WHICH VARIOUS MEMBERS HAVE PASSED OVER THE YEARS.

IN THE FACE OF THE TURMOIL OF THE WORLD, SHOULD EUROPE MAKE AN EXHIBITION OF ITS DIVISIONS OVER SUBJECTS WHICH ARE NOT COMMENSURATE WITH THE HISTORICAL STAKES FOR WHICH EUROPE IS PLAYING? SHOULD EUROPE NOT, METHODICALLY AND IN AN EQUITABLE SPIRIT, SEEK SOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD ALLOW PASSING DIFFICULTIES TO BE OVERCOME?

FRANCE IS DEFENDING EUROPE. A FOUNDER MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY, SHE IS PLAYING HER NATURAL ROLE. SHE WILL DO IT WITH THE CONVICTION AND THE DETERMINATION WHICH SHE BRINGS TO ALL THINGS.

FCO PLEASE PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES

HIBBERT

NNNN