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27 November 1980

EUROPEAN COUNCIL, LUXEMBOURG

1/2 DECEMBER 1980

NEW COMMISSION

Brief by Foreign and Commonwealth Office

INTRODUCTION

1. This subject is unlikely to come up in the meeting itself but could arise at one of the meals or at bilateral contacts in the corridors.

POINTS TO MAKE

2. TUGENDHAT will be UK vice-President; he wishes to retain present responsibilities for Budget. We support.

3. RICHARD has expressed an interest in the Development, Industrial Affairs and Social Affairs portfolios. We hope he will get one of these.

BACKGROUND

References:

A Table of Commissioners'/Member States'
intentions

4. All the Member States are expected to have put forward their nominations for the new Commission at or before the European Council, though the French may hold back their nominees to the last minute.

5. On 15 December, the Foreign Affairs Council will take a 'suspended decision' on the Commission's appointment which will be confirmed by written procedure on 1 January to allow Greece to participate. The new Commission will take office on 6 January 1981.

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/Portfolios

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Portfolios

6. A tentative table of Member States' and Commissioners' intentions is attached. The position is that portfolios are decided by the new Commission itself under M Thorn's presidency, but there is likely to be some informal discussion at or in the margins of the 1-2 December meeting.

7. It is in the UK's interest for Mr Tugendhat to keep his responsibilities for the Budget, strengthened if possible to ensure he coordinates the Commission's work on restructuring; as he is the incumbent he is in a strong position.

8. Mr Richards's own priorities are:

- (i) Development
- (ii) Industrial Affairs
- (iii) Social Affairs

Development has been in French hands for the last 20 years and they will fight hard to keep it. If they re-nominate Cheysson we shall have little chance of wresting this portfolio from him. Industrial Affairs may likewise be beyond our reach, since the Germans have made clear that they want to keep Energy and Davignon may thus stay where he is. The Social Affairs post is being vacated by the departure of Vredeling and the only known rival is O'Kennedy.

9. If it would help to gain Italian support for our objectives we could lend our backing to their wish to add the Southern Mediterranean - at present part of the Development portfolio - to the Enlargement portfolio. But their other wish - to give the Regional Policy Commissioner oversight over all structural programmes - would be contrary to our interests, since it would undermine Mr Tugendhat's budgetary responsibilities and erode Mr Richard's position if he got the Social Affairs portfolio.

/Vice-Presidencies

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Vice-Presidencies

10. There are five vice-Presidencies. The larger Member States will expect one each, leaving one for the rest. An informal agreement of December 1976 divided the smaller Member States into two groupings of Netherlands with Belgium and Luxembourg, and Denmark with Ireland for rotating vice-Presidencies.

11. With a Luxembourg President it may be argued that the fifth vice-Presidency should go to the Netherlands/Belgium group. But if he stays, Mr Gundelach is unlikely to want to give up his vice-Presidency.

12. This is a small Member State issue. The UK's interest, if the subject comes up, is to keep our heads down but to maintain a solid front with the other three large Member States that we expect a vice-Presidency each, and leave the question of the fifth to be fought out between the smalls.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

27 November 1980

COMMISSION PORTFOLIOS - 1981

Member State	Present Incumbent(s)	Portfolio	Prospects	Member State's Preferred Portfolios
FRANCE	Ortoli (vice-President)	Economic and Financial	Leaving	Retain Economic and Financial
	Cheyssou	Development Aid	Still unclear	Retain Development
FRG	Haferkamp (vice-President)	External	Staying	Keep External Affairs
	Brunner	Energy, Research and Science, Education	Leaving to Bundestag	Keep energy
Italy	Natali (vice-President)	Environment nuclear safety, enlargement	Staying	Keep enlargement; add S. Mediterranean
	Giolitti	Regional policy, Coordination of Community funds	Staying	Keep. Want to extend to cover oversight of all structural instruments.
BELGIUM	Davignon	Industrial and internal market	Staying; would probably like Energy or External Affairs but settle for retention of industry	No information
LUXEMBOURG	Vouel	Competition	Leaving	Thorn President
NETHERLANDS	Vredeling	Employment and Social	Leaving; to be replaced by Andriessen	Would like Competition, Development or a financial portfolio
DENMARK	Gundelach (vice-President)	Agriculture and Fisheries	Intends to stay if fit; probably retain Agriculture	Agriculture, Finance or Competition or External Affairs
IRELAND	Burke	Taxation, Transport and Consumer	Leaving; likely replacement O'Kennedy	Social Affairs or Regional Policy
GREECE	-	-	New Commissioner: Kontogeorgis	Probably Transport (because of shipping interests)

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