

Prime Minister

Content for Lord Carrington to propose  
that the European Council should continue  
after lunch on the second day?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

WR  
15/10

London SW1A 2AH

13 October 1981



Dear Willie,

European Council: 26/27 November 1981

Although the dates of 26/27 November have long been written into the diaries of members of the European Council, they will probably be planning on the basis that this means the usual pattern of an afternoon session on 26 November and the morning of 27 November. Lord Carrington believes that this may well not allow enough time, given that there will be other items on the agenda (including the standard and time-consuming 'economic and social situation in the Community'), for discussion of the 30 May Mandate, by far the most important item on the agenda from both our Presidency and our national points of view. He would like the Prime Minister's agreement, therefore, to put his colleagues in the Foreign Affairs Council on notice that the UK Presidency envisage a rather longer European Council than normal. It would begin as usual at lunch time on the first day, but would probably extend into the afternoon of the second day.

Lord Carrington proposes that the first item on the European Council's agenda should be a first tour de table on the Mandate. This would be taken after lunch (which is being given by the Queen at Buckingham Palace) on 26 November and should produce enough of a steer to enable officials to spend the evening working on the text of the Mandate part of the communique while the European Council gets on with other items on the agenda. The second day discussions may continue into the afternoon.

The idea of the European Council running on into the afternoon of the second day is not new and has happened on previous occasions when there have been difficult items on the agenda. In order to be sure that the other Heads of Government are ready for this, it would be wise to warn them soon. If the Prime Minister agrees that it is desirable, it could be put to our partners by the Secretary of State at the next meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 26/27 October. He could say that the Presidency expected that the European Council would have a lot of ground to cover and thought it would be wise to cater for the possibility that its meeting might have to continue after lunch on the Friday until the business was concluded. We would be making arrangements to permit this and hoped that the other Heads of Government would also allow for it in their programmes.

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)  
Private Secretary

Willie Rickett Esq  
10 Downing St

*Willie*  
*in PM's diary but better*  
*check with her. lunch is*  
*available but I*  
*hope it will not be*  
*needed.*  
*agreed with*  
*President Dillenkofer that*  
*we should by not-*

*are needed unless decision*  
*stick to this*  
*not.*

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