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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Ronnie Minister

Content that Lord Carrington
should outline the agenda in
these terms -

9 November 1981

Paul
Yes not

Dear Michael,

European Council: 26/27 November

Lord Carrington will need, at the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 16/17 November, to give his colleagues some idea of how we propose to handle discussion at the European Council. There is of course no formal agenda but it is customary for the Presidency to give an indication of the subjects to be discussed at the preceding Foreign Affairs Council.

The main subject for discussion on this occasion will of course be the Mandate and we shall want to make sure there is adequate time for it. It is too soon to say exactly how the discussion should be handled; it may well, for example, be necessary to set up a working group of officials in the course of the Council to work on texts. This points to having a first discussion of this subject as the first substantive item to be taken. But final decisions on the ordering of the items can be left until we have more idea what the Mandate discussion is likely to involve. (As the Prime Minister will be aware, the Mandate Group are currently working on draft conclusions covering 3 main chapters of the Commission's report and much will depend on the extent of agreement they can achieve on each.)

There are two other subjects which are traditionally discussed at European Councils, the economic and social situation and progress towards European union. On the first of these, it is likely that the Commission will produce a paper and that several of the participants, including Chancellor Schmidt, will wish to have a discussion. Although this is normally the first item on the agenda, there is a link with the Mandate and I believe that it will be acceptable to take the Mandate first, as long as we make it clear that we are allowing adequate time, possibly on the second morning, for the economic item.

/As for

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As for European union, there will be an agreed Council report and a Commission paper. These are not normally discussed but given that Herr Genscher has plans to address the European Parliament on this subject, the Germans at the Council are very likely to want to make a statement, and the Italians may also wish to do so. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would not propose to take any initiative to arrange for such a discussion but rather leave the Germans and Italians themselves to make the running. The London report on strengthening political cooperation should also be presented to the European Council under this item.

The only other Community subject is enlargement. This is not likely to require substantive discussion by the European Council but we are currently considering with our partners a text to be endorsed by them which is aimed to provide a political boost to the two applicant countries.

I would expect Political Cooperation subjects to require less time than usual, but the European Council will have to discuss the Middle East (the Sinai MFO may still be an issue and the Arab summit in Fez - which will have before it Fahd's 8 points - will be in mid session). In addition, Foreign Ministers have agreed to take stock of the position at the CSCE review.

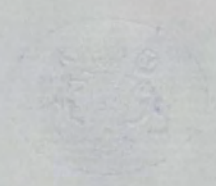
Mr Papandreou is very likely to make some statement about the new Greek Government's policy towards the Community, but this will probably be in general terms and not require others to react.

If the Prime Minister agrees, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will indicate to our Community partners at the 16/17 November Foreign Affairs Council that we expect the discussion to be on these lines. Lord Carrington has already told them that it may be necessary to continue the discussion into the afternoon of 27 November in order to complete the work on the Mandate. And he has also conveyed the Prime Minister's view that there should only be Presidency or agreed conclusions on subjects where decisive progress is being registered.

There may be pressure from some Member States for North/South to be discussed. There are no new decisions to be taken on North/South at this stage, and we shall therefore resist its inclusion. In Coreper on 5 November, when this was raised, no delegation intervened to call for its inclusion.

Yours ever

F N Richards
F N Richards
Private Secretary



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