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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 February 1986

BRITISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EC: ORGANISATION OF THE
LONDON EUROPEAN COUNCIL

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Thank you for your letter of 17 February about the organisation of the London European Council next December. Before putting this to the Prime Minister, it would be helpful to have guidance on the following points:

- (i) are we reasonably confident that we shall be able to fit discussion into the afternoon of 5 December and the morning of 6 December, and that we shall not need the morning of 5 December?
- (ii) Has consideration been given to possible alternative sites to No. 10 Downing Street for the Heads of Government Dinner? The Prime Minister might want to consider options.
- (iii) Might it not be more realistic to budget for three hours of discussion on the afternoon of 5 December (1530-1830), inviting Heads of Government for 1945, with dinner at 2015 and informal discussion over and after dinner?
- (iv) Where would the 'family photograph' on 6 December be? If it were to be somewhere more photogenic than the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, has enough time been allowed?

CHARLES POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 February 1986

Dear Charles,

British Presidency of the EC : Organisation
of the London European Council

Our objectives and general strategy during our Presidency of the Community in the second half of the year will be discussed in OD(E) on 26 February. The Foreign Secretary will be sending a minute to the Prime Minister following that discussion. Meanwhile we have been giving thought to the organisation of the European Council to be held during our Presidency on 5-6 December.

The Prime Minister will recall that we were able last year to get Mr Lubbers to put forward proposals for reform which we had concerted beforehand with the Dutch (copies of the Prime Minister's exchange of messages with Mr Lubbers are attached). The changes agreed with the Dutch were :

- (a) the reduction in the number of European Councils to two per annum (though it would remain possible to organise a special meeting if circumstances required);
- (b) participants should not be permitted to raise new topics or distribute new documents or declarations after the President has finalised the annotated agenda for the Council. The discussion would be based on the Presidency document and thus avoid time-consuming discussion of papers circulated at the last minute by the Commission or others which heads of government had barely had time to read;
- (c) the conclusions drawn by the Presidency at the end of the session should be based on the agenda and relate solely to matters discussed by the heads of government. The purpose is to ensure that the discussion is focused on the substantive issues and not dominated by textual points on elaborate draft conclusions.

/In addition



In addition we propose that :

- (a) we should avoid a cumbersome set piece discussion on the economic and social situation, selecting instead themes on which to focus the discussion against the background of the Commission's customary economic report. A main focus of the European Council should be a review of the progress achieved throughout the year on the internal market; and a key objective should be to give a further impetus to that work which will need to be carried forward under the Belgian Presidency;
- (b) on political co-operation subjects, there should be prior discussion by the Foreign Ministers of any texts which the Political Directors have prepared. We should limit any declaration to the one or two really important issues of the day on which the European Council has something useful to say and ensure that any statement is brief and to the point.

/ I attach an outline of the programme we propose. The proceedings should end with a short informal lunch at the Conference Centre hosted by the Prime Minister, followed by press conferences and departures. This would ensure that the Prime Minister was free of all engagements by 1630 (your letter of 4 February).

The Foreign Secretary will wish to discuss the arrangements with the Prime Minister in greater detail nearer the time. Meanwhile it would be helpful to know if we can proceed with planning on the basis proposed.

*Yours ever,
Colin Budd*

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
No.10 Downing Street

OUTLINE PROGRAMME FOR LONDON EUROPEAN COUNCIL

5 December

a.m.	Arrival of delegations
1.00 -3.00 p.m.	Luncheon given by HM The Queen
3.00-3.30 p.m.	Arrival of delegations at Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre
3.30-6.00 p.m.	First session of European Council
7.30-8.30 p.m.	Heads of State/Government informal discussion over drinks at 10 Downing Street
7.30-8.30 p.m.	Foreign Ministers Political Co-Operation meeting over drinks (venue to be decided)
8.30-10.00 p.m.	Heads of State/Government Dinner at 10 Downing Street
8.30-10.00 p.m.	Foreign Ministers' Dinner (venue to be decided)

(The Heads of State and Government informal discussion could be after dinner if the Prime Minister preferred)

6 December

9.30 a.m.	Family photograph
9.45-12.30 p.m.	Second session of European Council, ending with short Presidency conclusions
1.00-2.15 p.m.	Lunch at Conference Centre
2.30 p.m.	Presidency Press Conference Followed by National Press Conferences and Departures

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ORGANISATION OF EUROPEAN COUNCILS

1. LUBBERS HAS SENT THE PRIME MINISTER A COPY OF A LETTER HE HAS WRITTEN TO THE LUXEMBOURG PRIME MINISTER WITH PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE ORGANISATION OF EUROPEAN COUNCILS. TEXT IS AS FOLLOWS (TRANSLATION BY DUTCH EMBASSY):

QUOTE I AM WRITING THIS LETTER IN THE HOPE THAT, DURING THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING IN LUXEMBOURG ON 3 AND 4 DECEMBER 1985, THE COUNCIL WILL BE ABLE TO AGREE ON THE NUMBER OF SESSIONS IT SHOULD HOLD. AS OUR MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAVE FOUND, THERE IS A LARGE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT ON THE DESIRABILITY OF REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SESSIONS FROM THREE TO TWO EACH YEAR, IE ONE PER PRESIDENCY. THIS WOULD ALSO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DOOGE REPORT. NATURALLY IT WOULD REMAIN POSSIBLE, JUST AS IT IS NOW, TO ORGANISE A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IF CIRCUMSTANCES SO REQUIRED. I AM VERY KEEN TO SEE A DECISION ALONG THESE LINES MADE DURING

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THE FORTHCOMING EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING, SO THAT THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS CAN ENTER INTO FORCE AT THE BEGINNING OF 1986. I SHOULD LIKE TO EMPHASISE THAT MY WISH TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF SESSIONS IS NOT MOTIVATED BY ANY DESIRE TO LESSEN THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL. ON THE CONTRARY, THIS STEP IS INTENDED TO ENHANCE THE COUNCIL'S ROLE. SINCE THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL WAS FORMALISED DURING THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT IN DECEMBER 1974 IN PARIS, IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT THE COUNCIL CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN INITIATING AND DIRECTING THE GROWTH OF EUROPEAN UNITY AND IN TAKING ACTION TO RECONCILE AND MEDIATE WHEN DECISION-MAKING IN THE ORGANS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IS IN DANGER OF COMING TO A HALT. NONETHELESS, THE EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF SESSIONS HAS RESULTED IN A CERTAIN EROSION OF THE COUNCIL'S ABILITY TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY WHICH WE WILL HAVE IN LUXEMBOURG TO IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL BY EFFECTING PREPARATIONS IN A MORE ORGANISED FASHION. I SHOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO RAISE NEW TOPICS OR DISTRIBUTE NEW DOCUMENTS OR DECLARATIONS AFTER THE PRESIDENT HAS FINALISED THE ANNOTATED AGENDA FOR THE COUNCIL. THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN BY THE PRESIDENT AT THE END OF THE SESSION SHOULD ALSO AS A RULE BE BASED ON THE AGENDA AND SHOULD RELATE SOLELY TO MATTERS DISCUSSED BY THE HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENT.

LASTLY, WE MIGHT PERHAPS DEVOTE SOME ATTENTION TO THE SIZE OF DELEGATIONS. NOW THAT A LARGER NUMBER OF MEMBER STATES WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THESE SESSIONS, THERE IS ALL THE MORE REASON TO REDUCE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THEM. I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS A LARGE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL WITH REGARD TO THE VIEW THAT THE SIZE OF CIVIL SERVICE DELEGATIONS COULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED WITHOUT DAMAGE.

I HAVE FORWARDED THE TEXT OF THIS LETTER ALSO TO THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL. UNQUOTE

2. PLEASE PASS URGENTLY THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY AS IN MIPT.

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INFO SAVING OTHER EUROPEAN COMMUNITY POSTS, LISBON, MADRID

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MIPT: ORGANISATION OF EUROPEAN COUNCILS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO MR LUBBERS.
BEGINS

THANK YOU FOR SENDING ME A COPY OF YOUR LETTER TO JACQUES SANTER ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING EUROPEAN COUNCIL. I WARMLY WELCOME YOUR PROPOSAL THAT THE NUMBER OF EUROPEAN COUNCILS HELD EACH YEAR SHOULD BE REDUCED FROM THREE TO TWO. AS YOU KNOW, WE TOO HAVE BEEN IN FAVOUR OF THIS AND SEE IT AS A USEFUL CHANGE WHICH, LIKE YOU, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE INTRODUCED EARLY NEXT YEAR. I ALSO AGREE WITH THE OTHER PROCEDURAL SUGGESTIONS IN YOUR LETTER FOR IMPROVING PREPARATION FOR, AND CONDUCT OF, BUSINESS AT FUTURE EUROPEAN COUNCILS AND WILL BE HAPPY TO GIVE SUPPORT IN DISCUSSION NEXT WEEK. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN LUXEMBOURG.
ENDS

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