



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-270 3000

FOREIGN SECRETARY

PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

I mentioned to you at the OECD meeting in Paris that I had been approached by Martin Bangemann, who was most concerned that the Foreign Office had declared themselves to be in favour of Delors and against him for the Presidency of the European Commission. I was somewhat surprised to hear this, since I was not aware that we had an established line on whom we favoured for the Presidency. You told me that you did indeed favour Delors, partly because he was the most able candidate and partly because it was clear that he would be successful, and it did our cause no good to back a loser against him.

I take both these points, but it does not seem to me that there is any case for us adopting a high profile on this. In particular, it seems most undesirable for us to upset Bangemann and the German Government, when Bangemann will undoubtedly occupy a powerful position within the new Commission. I feel our public position should instead be one of neutrality between these two candidates.

I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Minister of Agriculture.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'N.L.'.

[N.L.]

24 May 1988