

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC GROUP

MEMORANDUM

To: The Prime Minister

Date: 23 January 1990

From: Amedee Turner, Chief Whip, EDG

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

1. Christopher Prout has been keeping in touch about the state of our negotiations with the European People's Party (EPP). These are continuing behind the scenes and some progress is being made with the Italian Christian Democrats, who, as you know have been the hardest nut to crack.
2. The most important development over the last two or three months has been the impact of events in Eastern Europe.

The European People's Party (EPP) and the European Union of Christian Democrats (practically co-terminous in political effect) are now openly expansionist, and through their organisations, together with their constituent national parties, they have very considerable resources for cross-frontier activities which quite overshadow UK Conservative Party efforts.

3. They have identified and declared support for Christian Democrat parties or others in Eastern Europe for the forthcoming elections. Supporting them remains their prime concern. They are now giving practical support to 13 parties in five countries which they hope will fuse or ally nationally after their respective elections, and in this form will be admitted to the EPP. The EPP Group's activities in Eastern Europe are funded through a special trust set up in Luxembourg.
4. Most help is given by national CD parties adopting different Eastern European countries and providing instruction in campaigning methods.

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5. These events have also produced notably warmer relations between the European Democratic Group and those in the EPP (the Italian Christian Democrats and a minority of more left-inclined Belgian and Dutch Christian Democrats) who have hitherto been cool.
6. EDG relations with the German members of the EPP have always been extremely good, but have been enhanced by recent events in East Germany. These events have also brought renewed interest from non-German EPP members concerned over the importance of Britain's long-term position in the European balance of power.
7. I have had informal preliminary talks with Dutch, Belgian and Irish EPP national party representatives and probably there would be no difficulties to closer cooperation if Italian opposition were withdrawn.
8. With the Italians, to be effective contacts have to be based on the national party in Rome rather than the European Parliament. We still need to familiarise them with the Conservative Party and its views.
9. We attended the European Union of Christian Democrats conference in Malta in November. The question of relations with the Conservatives was discussed freely from the platform. We have had discussions with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the international extra-parliamentary organisation of the EPP. The former has agreed to fund and run a conference for us and the Italian CDs in Italy under their (German) auspices. The latter has agreed to run a series of seminars with us.
10. The EDG held a conference on currency in Brussels in November to which EPP members came. Tindemans and Herman (EPP) spoke. We held joint sessions with the EPP Group in Berlin, January 1990, to meet East German opposition parties. We hope to discuss Italian national politics with the EPP Group in Rome in March. At the normal monthly Group Meetings we hold regular joint working parties on taxation, frontier security and currency. We are holding joint Study Day sessions in April.

Four regular coordinating meetings take place each month to concert votes for the plenary. Alignment of whips is routine in the plenary and the degree of common voting has greatly increased. In most committees effective coordination takes place on a day-to-day basis.

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11. We are trying to pool some Group Secretariat back-up to save work.
12. The Chairman and I and the Secretary General hold regular meetings with Mr Klepsch (EPP Chairman) and their Secretary General. I meet their parliamentary coordinator and a senior member of their Bureau, with the two Groups' Deputy Secretaries General regularly to negotiate "intensifying" our relationship, as requested by the EPP when we made the approach to the EPP last June. The next objective is to agree terms for regular joint working with their four policy working groups.
13. Because of the impact of the above activities on the EPP their Bureau has recently decided to review our relations with them in July.