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Prime Minister

This is the press release concocted
by Christopher, Edward Llewellyn
and myself.

JFW
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Wednesday, 24th January 1990

STATEMENT BY SIR CHRISTOPHER PROUT QC, MEP,
LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Conservative Members of the European Parliament tonight met the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Chairman of the Conservative Party, and the Government Chief Whip at No. 10 Downing Street. The meeting, arranged at our request, was constructive and valuable.

These are historic times for Europe. Our continent stands on the threshold of a new era as the peoples of Eastern Europe throw off the shackles of Socialism. The Conservative Party has a major role to play in shaping the new and greater Europe. It is, therefore, appropriate that the Prime Minister should discuss with Conservative MEPs how best to meet the challenges that face us and our Party in Europe.

I am delighted to say that we have had a very useful and stimulating exchange of views in a friendly atmosphere. The issue of Eastern Europe was at the top of our agenda. In particular, we discussed how the West can help the fledgling democracies now struggling to establish themselves. The Prime Minister sought and listened keenly to the views of Members who have recently visited East Germany and Czechoslovakia. We examined ways of assisting fellow centre right parties. If democracy is to take root in the forthcoming elections throughout Eastern Europe, these new Parties must be able to mount effective campaigns for their elections to be fair.

On 1992 we agreed to keep up the momentum to create a real Single Market by the deadline the Community has set itself - a major undertaking. Britain's record in implementing the measures agreed is an excellent one. We must ensure that it is matched throughout the Community.

The question of economic and monetary union is a field of great complexity, but also vitally important. We emphasised our concern that Britain must play a major role in shaping its development. We were delighted to hear the Prime Minister reiterate her determination that Britain should play a full part in the forthcoming discussions.

The Prime Minister emphasised the important role of Conservative MEPs in shaping the European Community of the future. Of course we do not see eye to eye on everything. But the extent of common ground far outstrips those areas where we see things differently. Ministers and MEPs already hold regular meetings but we agreed to build on these arrangements in the coming months. As Members of the same Party we share the same basic philosophies and aims. We have a mutual determination to fight for and promote Britain's interest in Europe.
