

EDG



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

27th February, 1990

Dear Christopher,

Many thanks for your letter to the Prime Minister of 22nd February, which she did read carefully before her meeting with Mr Andreotti. In the event, there was no opportunity to discuss relations between the EDG and the Italian Christian Democrats, but it was good of you to let us have your note.

I believe our secretaries have finally managed to identify a convenient date for lunch and so I will look forward to seeing you then-if not before.

Yours,
John

JOHN WHITTINGDALE
Political Secretary

Sir Christopher Prout MEP



The Chairman
The European Democratic Group

Mr. Whittingdale
Not discussed
Ch. 14/1

European Parliament Office
2 Queen Anne's Gate
SW1H 9AA
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22nd February, 1990

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, FRS, MP
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Your Meeting with Mr. Andreotti - 23rd February 1990

I understand that you are meeting Mr. Andreotti in London tomorrow. I thought I would set out briefly how things now stand between the European Democratic Group and the Italian Christian Democrat Party just in case you get an opportunity to raise the matter (or if he raises it) during your discussions.

You may recall that in the course of my attempts last June and July to negotiate membership of the European People's Party Parliamentary Group, I had a meeting with Mr. Malfatti, a former President of the European Commission and Italian Foreign Minister, and now Chef de Cabinet of Mr. Forlani, the Secretary General of the Christian Democrat Party. We had an opportunity, early in August at No. 10, to discuss the outcome of that meeting and the reasons why Mr. Malfatti, on behalf of Mr. Forlani, refused to give us his support.

1 You will be aware that if we can change the attitude of the Italian Christian Democrats to our application, then the opposition from the Belgian and Dutch Christian Democrat parties is unlikely to be sufficiently strong to keep us out. Accordingly, since the summer I have had regular meetings with Commissioner Pandolfi - an Anglophile - with the intention, broadly speaking, of achieving 3 objectives. First, to gain as accurate a picture as possible as to what exactly is going on in the Italian Christian Democrat Party - no easy task; second to use Pandolfi as a channel of communication with Forlani - they are extremely good friends; and third, to develop with Pandolfi a strategy which will convince Forlani that the advantages of

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having us as members of the Parliamentary Group of the European People's Party outweigh the disadvantages.

These meetings with Pandolfi have already borne some fruit. I met Mr. Forlani on 24th January, together with Amedee Turner and Patricia Rawlings. Mr. Forlani spent two hours with us and we formed the view that he was ready to give active consideration to closer relations with the longer term objective of our joining the EPP Parliamentary Group. Our sense that the meeting was a positive one was confirmed when a few days later we received an invitation to lunch in Strasbourg from the Italian Ambassador to the Council of Europe to meet Mr. Forlani during the February Strasbourg session. Unfortunately, the recent crisis in the Christian Democrat Party caused him, at the last moment, to cancel his journey, but I am certain that the invitation will be renewed as soon as possible.

I know that one swallow doesn't make a summer, but I do think Forlani's interest is real and I would like to suggest two possible reasons for this. The first is that the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe is bound to have an adverse effect on the Italian Communist Party which has regularly polled between 25 and 30% of the electorate in recent general elections. It is possible that the consequential realignment of forces in Italian politics could lead to the breakdown of the alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists and the emergence of a more Centre Left/Centre Right system. He showed, for example, great interest in our electoral system and in the way in which we had as a Party successfully gained the support of many former Socialist voters in three successive elections.

Secondly, although Forlani, unlike Andreotti, has been a consistent supporter since November of a combination of German unification and European integration, there is no doubt that he sees a leading role for Britain in whatever new security and political arrangements emerge this year in Europe as being crucial to Italy's national interest.

Andreotti has been, as usual, so absorbed in managing his complex coalition, that he has devoted little time to Party matters and may well be unfamiliar with the above-mentioned events.

*With best wishes,
Yours ever,
Christopher*

CHRISTOPHER PROUT