



cc
cc Mr Littler

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

FOREIGN SECRETARY

NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

I agree with the preference in your minute of 14 March for Davignon, compared with Christophersen.

2. I had wondered whether there might be more to gain from supporting a really good French or German candidate, if one were put forward. But as far as a French possibility is concerned, I suppose this might be ruled out by the still comparatively recent Presidency of Ortoli. And it does not look as if there will be a satisfactory German candidate.

3. I am therefore inclined to suggest that we ought to consider letting the Belgians know that we would support Davignon, and doing so quite soon. This might influence the Belgian Government in their own selection, as you suggest. It might also gain us a little credit, both with them and with Davignon himself, who is increasingly playing a central, and on balance constructive, role in the budget negotiations.

4. It happens that I shall be seeing De Clercq, the Belgian Finance Minister and your successor as Chairman of the Interim Committee, in Washington on Thursday this week. If you and others agree that we could now indicate support without waiting any longer to learn of other possible candidates, it might be helpful for me to have a word with De Clercq in parallel with the approaches you would yourself want to make.

5. Copies of this minute go to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Norman Tebbit and Peter Walker.

N.L.

N.L.

9 April 1984

Evks Rd: Appr of Pres. Pt 2

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 April, 1984

NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The Prime Minister has seen the Minute of 9 April by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on this subject. She discussed it with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary today. The conclusion was reached that it would be premature for us to decide to support the candidature of M. Davignon and to make this known. One factor which weighed with the Prime Minister was Chancellor's Kohl's earlier statement to her that he intends to put forward a German candidate. Although there is no such candidate in sight, the Prime Minister feels that we should wait a little longer in case one does emerge.

I am copying this letter to Roger Bone (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Callum McCarthy (Department of Trade and Industry) and to Michael Reidy (Department of Energy).

A. J. COLES

D. Peretz, Esq.,
HM Treasury