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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary
of State for Industry

Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Secretary of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
LONDON SW1A 2AL

cc Members of:
OD(E) Committee
L Committee
Sir Robert Armstrong

Mr G Milward MM4
(with papers)

8 May 1984

A.F.C. 9/5

f.c.

Dear Geoffrey,

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENT RECOMMENDED FOR DEBATE

On 11 April 1984, the House of Commons Select Committee on European Legislation & C considered a proposal concerning a Community Directive on containers of liquids for human consumption, usually referred to as the beverage containers Directive (official text not yet received). This proposal was found to be politically important and was recommended for debate.

The considerations affecting the debate on this document are as follows:

Timetable

It is likely that the Council will be asked to take a decision on the proposal on 28 June and a debate should be held at least two weeks in advance if possible.

Location

The Scrutiny Committee made no recommendation on where the debate should be held. In view of the concern already expressed by industry and trade bodies about this proposal and the likely widespread interest in it, a debate on the Floor of the House would seem to be appropriate. It does not, however, merit prime time.



Form of Motion

I suggest an expanded take-note motion along the following lines:

"That this House takes note of the European Community document (official text not yet received) proposing a Council Directive on containers of liquids for human consumption, and supports the Government's intention to improve the environment and conserve resources without imposing unnecessary legislative burdens on industry."

Proposed line in Debate

We will take the line that, while we support the intentions behind the proposed Directive, namely to improve the environment and to save energy and raw materials, we are still unconvinced of the need for binding Community legislation and believe a Recommendation would suffice. This line has been followed by UK officials in Brussels during the Working Party discussions which have taken place over the last 18 months.

I propose to handle the debate.

I am sending copies of this letter to Members and Secretaries of OD(E) and L Committees and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,
David

DAVID TRIPPIER

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