



PM/83/18

PRIME MINISTERGenscher/Colombo Proposals

1. Your Private Secretary's letter of 22 February asked whether the European Council could not simply adopt, rather than sign, the final text of the Genscher/Colombo proposals.
2. I should explain first of all that the question of signature does not alter the legal status of the document. It is agreed by all that it is not a legal instrument and signature would not change this.
3. When the question of signature was discussed at the ad hoc group meeting on 8 February, the Germans and Italians made clear that their Foreign Ministers attached great importance to signature by Heads of Government. Other delegations which spoke indicated that signature was not likely to cause difficulty to their Prime Ministers. The Danes, who have been the most negative member state all through this negotiation, said that if their Ministers decided to agree to the substance, which was not certain, they would not object to signature. I believe we might well find we were alone in resisting signature. The Ministerial meeting which will discuss this on 1 March is to be held in Bonn only a few days before the German election on 6 March. There may well be strong German press interest and a British statement that you were unwilling to sign a document which Dr Kohl has said is important would quickly become known and interpreted as a personal rebuff to him and to Genscher.

Prime Minister:

The Foreign Secretary argues that we should sign rather than adopt the proposals for Community and domestic reasons. Agree?

TJ Yes
28/2 mt



4. There is also a domestic point. The appearance of the document will doubtless prompt some discussion but I do not think we should have much trouble in demonstrating that it has little real content. If, on the other hand, we were to refuse to sign, we would in my judgement run the risk of appearing to attach more credibility to the document than it either warrants or deserves.

5. For all these reasons I believe it would be better for us in domestic as well as in Community terms not to object to signature.

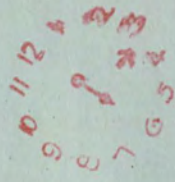
7. I am copying this minute to other members of OD and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

(FRANCIS PYM)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
28 February 1983

Europe Pol,
May (61)
Political Cooperation
as discussed at Venlo.

28 FFA 1983



CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 March 1983

Dear John,

GENSCHER/COLOMBO PROPOSALS

The Prime Minister has seen the minute of 28 February by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary in which Mr. Pym recommends that we should not object to signature, rather than adoption, of the Genscher/Colombo proposals.

As I told you on the telephone this morning, the Prime Minister accepts this recommendation. You undertook to convey this to Mr. Douglas Hurd in Brussels, together with my cautionary advice that the Prime Minister's decision was at this stage a technical rather than a substantive one, i.e. Mrs. Thatcher agrees to follow the procedure of signature rather than adoption, though at this stage, when the final text of the proposals is not available, she has not taken a definitive decision on whether or not to sign.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to other members of OD, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

John
John

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.