



FCS/85/40

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

FLD(1)
Mr. PS Airfield
Mr. Smith
to Shepherd (RDE)
Planning Staff
Mr. A. Ferguson
Mr. Williamson
(Cabinet Office)
Mr. Goulden
(UKrep Brussels)

Cooperation with the Dutch on the Internal Market

1. During my recent talks with Mr van den Broek we discussed the possibility of joint Anglo-Dutch efforts during our respective Presidencies in 1986 to achieve tangible progress on the completion of the internal market. I said that in principle this seemed a good idea. I think it could be of great help to us in achieving our internal market objectives if we could agree with the Dutch on priorities to be tackled during 1986, and could cooperate on a work programme covering the whole year.

2. If you agree that this idea is worth pursuing, I suggest that European Secretariat of the Cabinet Office should be asked to convene an early meeting of officials from interested departments to discuss how best to carry this forward. In my view they should look at the extent to which we are likely to agree with the Dutch on our objectives; what practical arrangements for cooperation would be needed; and whether we should also seek help from Luxembourg (the preceding Presidency). Theoretically we might think in terms of a UK/Benelux joint enterprise, since the Belgian Presidency follows our own. I think however that it may be better, in order to concentrate minds as much as possible on the need for early action, to make the end of 1986 the target date for achievement of our objectives. The Belgian Presidency could then be treated as extra time, to be used only where necessary.

3. I think the Dutch are likely already to be putting their heads together with the Luxembourgers to coordinate a joint approach during their Presidencies ie for the year from 1 July 1985. If we are to influence these discussions,

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we will need to involve ourselves quickly. I shall therefore be asking our Embassy in The Hague to ask the Dutch for more details of what they have in mind, while making it clear that we are still considering our own position. My officials will also be in touch with yours to discuss the possibility of drawing up a detailed action programme on the internal market as a basis for discussion with the Dutch and others.

4. I am sending copies of this minute to other members of OD(E), Sir Robert Armstrong and David Williamson.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

27 February, 1985