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From: D A HADLEY
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Mr Powell, No 10

SOCIAL CHARTER

The Prime Minister asked for a UK draft of a Social Charter which we could use in Strasbourg with the press to show what sort of text we could have accepted.

A clean version of the text attached to my minute of 17 November is included in the Prime Minister's background brief for Strasbourg. (Brief 2D, reference F). This text was designed as a possible basis for negotiation: there is now no prospect of this.

* The brief (para 3) therefore refers to a summary text, which might be more useful with the press. I attach this (it has been agreed between the Departments concerned). You will however have noted that the brief advised that it might be best to release no text, and treat the Charter as yesterday's story. A final judgement on this will depend on what actually happens in Strasbourg.

I am copying this minute to Graham Reid (D/Employment) and John Kerr (FCO).

D.H.

D A HADLEY

DECLARATION ON JOBS, PROSPERITY AND INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

We, the Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the European Communities meeting within the European Council

Declaring that the Single Market, by promoting efficiency and economic expansion, offers the best prospect of continuing growth in jobs and prosperity for the benefit of all Community citizens;

Convinced that they must aim to improve living and working conditions through action which sustains economic and employment growth, maintains competitiveness and combats unemployment;

Recognising the need to respect the diversity of practice and legal tradition among Member States;

Resolved to uphold the respective competences of the Community and of Member States, and stressing that in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity action should only be taken at Community level when the objective cannot be achieved through action at the level of individual Member States;

Reaffirming that the Community's top priority in the social field is to create jobs;

DECLARE our commitment to promote job growth, prosperity and individual opportunity by:

- ensuring that our employment policies help to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of our firms and industries, and so secure a firm basis for job growth and lower unemployment;

- promoting the development of more flexible ways of working, such as part-time and temporary work, which improve efficiency and provide workers with new opportunities and the freedom to organise their working lives as they wish;

- reducing unnecessary restrictions on business and enterprise and avoiding new restrictions;

- helping young people to prepare for work;

- taking action to help unemployed people, particularly the longer-term unemployed, into jobs;

- promoting enterprise, encouraging self-employment and recognising the potential in small and medium-sized businesses for creating jobs.

REAFFIRM our commitment, through action at Community level or within each country as appropriate to promote:

- equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in matters of employment, pay and access to training;

- the right to look for work or take a job in any Community country;

- the right to set up in business or provide services in any Community country;

- recognition throughout the Community of professional and vocational qualifications recognised in each individual Member State;

- freedom for the individual to pursue the occupation or job or his or her choice;

- satisfactory standards for health and safety at work;

- access to continuing vocational training;

- measures to help those with disabilities to join in working life;

FURTHER REAFFIRM our shared commitment to promote within our own countries, in accordance with national custom and practice:

- adequate social protection for every citizen;
- adequate resources for the elderly in their retirement;
- freedom for employers and workers to form and to join any professional or trade union organisation of their choice; and freedom not to join such organisations;
- freedom for employers and workers, or their representatives, to negotiate and to reach agreements if both wish to do so;
- the involvement of employees in the success of the companies they work for, for example through share ownership schemes and profit-related pay;
- employment protection rights for workers, according to conditions laid down by each country, including unfair dismissal, redundancy and maternity absence;
- the education and development of children and young people, and their health and safety at work.

WE CONFIRM our determination to promote these rights and freedoms in accordance with Community law and with national laws, practices and traditions.