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Prime Minister²

John

Prime Minister

EUROPEAN COUNCIL: DUBLIN - DRUGS

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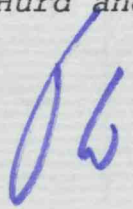
I was very interested to read John Major's recent note to you about action by Customs and Excise to follow up the European Council.

2 The Customs' role in drugs enforcement is, of course, substantial and they have achieved many successes. The police have also committed increased resources to drugs enforcement and are undertaking more and more international investigations, often in co-operation with HM Customs. The recent visit by officials to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary to which John Major referred also explored ways of strengthening practical police co-operation. As you know, we have just signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Czechs on co-operation against drug trafficking and other serious crime. The USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia are expected to join Interpol this year and so open up new channels for practical police co-operation.

3 However, an essential feature of our drugs enforcement strategy is the need for full and effective co-operation between police and Customs. We have achieved a very good degree of co-operation at all levels. Other countries have not been so successful and I understand John Major's concern that we should encourage closer co-operation in those other countries where Customs have an important part to play in drugs enforcement. For that reason, I agree that it is important that the Customs role in drugs enforcement is properly understood in TREVI discussions.

4 There is already a working group of Home Office and Customs officials to discuss EC developments of mutual interest, particularly in TREVI and MAG 92. For a number of years, Customs have been directly involved in the preparations for and follow up to meetings of TREVI Working Group III which deals with drug trafficking as well as serious crime generally. I believe that these arrangements have worked well and we need to be careful not to undermine the nature of TREVI by broadening its remit too far. However, I should be happy for officials to discuss whether the co-ordination arrangements could usefully be developed further by including a Customs representative in the United Kingdom delegation to TREVI.

5 I am copying this minute to Douglas Hurd and John Major.



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