

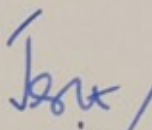
Ref. A09511

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet: Foreign Affairs and Community Affairs

The Foreign Affairs item is, as you know, normally included on all Cabinet agendas in order to give the Foreign Secretary an opportunity of keeping his colleagues up to date with important developments. This is essentially a "for information" item and I will not normally provide you with a brief for it. If the Foreign Secretary is seeking decisions he will normally circulate a paper either to the Cabinet or to the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee.

2. The same principle ought to apply to the Community Affairs item, i.e. it is a "for information" item. Ministers other than the Foreign Secretary are however involved with European matters and there is always the risk that some Minister will try to bounce through a decision on something which has not been properly discussed with the Foreign Secretary and on which the Cabinet has no paper before them. I am sure you will want to resist any such tendency. We normally provide you with a short brief on the Community Affairs item so that you may have some idea of what is likely to come up.


(John Hunt)

9th May, 1979

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PRIME MINISTER

Community Affairs

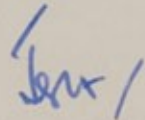
The Foreign Affairs and Agriculture Councils met on 8th May; the United Kingdom was not represented at Ministerial level for obvious practical reasons. The Foreign Affairs Council was mainly concerned to settle the outstanding elements in the Community's line for the 24th-25th May final negotiating conference on the renewal of the Lome Convention. Despite progress on some questions in the Council a number of issues still remain to be resolved, including United Kingdom reserves on minerals and Stabex products. It is hoped to clear these questions interdepartmentally without collective Ministerial discussion. The Agriculture Council took no decisions which merit the attention of Cabinet.

2. The following events will take place before next week's Cabinet:-
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|---------------|--|
| 10th-12th May | Visit of Chancellor Schmidt and other German Ministers |
| 12th-13th May | Informal Foreign Ministers Meeting (mainly devoted to political co-operation questions, but may touch on the new European Development Fund for the renewed Lome Convention). |
| 14th May | Finance Council (at which the Chancellor will start pressing the case for a reduction in our net contribution to the Community budget). |
| 14th-15th May | Informal Agriculture Ministers meeting (which will discuss the 1979-80 price fixing arrangements). |
| 15th May | Social Affairs Council |
| 17th May | Energy Council |

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3. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary might be invited to report on the approach he proposes to adopt at next week's informal Foreign Ministers meeting, which will provide the first opportunity for him to bring home to his colleagues both Britain's commitment to the Community and our determination to pursue our convergence and CAP objectives.

4. Similarly the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of Agriculture might be invited to outline their approaches to, respectively, next week's Finance Council and informal Agriculture Ministers meeting, though I have explained in a separate note why this is not a suitable item for taking substantive decisions where papers are required.


John Hunt

9th May 1979