

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

ROME

25 MARCH 1977

NOTE OF THE FIRST SESSION AT 1520

1520 B.S.

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Heads of State and Government and Foreign Ministers entered progressively. Journalists ~~at a distance then~~ closed in when most delegations were seated. Lights dimmed and jostling journalists slowly edged out of the room. The Danish delegation arrived at 1532. The Prime Minister opened the meeting.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Prime Minister said he had already spoken informally to most of his colleagues about the day's business. He suggested that they should aim to conclude the first session at 7.30, unless there were need to prolong it. This was agreed.

REPORT OF MEETING WITH ETUC

The Prime Minister said it was customary for the President of the Council to start by giving an account of his meeting with the European Trades Union Congress (ETUC). The ETUC President and delegation had called on him that morning in Rome and given him a Memorandum, of which the other members of the Council already had copies. The ETUC were concerned at the economic situation of the Community and in particular that the targets set at the last Tripartite Conference had not been met. In fact they considered that no progress had been made towards them and that concrete and tangible progress was now needed. They were preparing for a new Tripartite Conference in June. They had emphasised that in the

/eyes

eyes of many of their members it had not been easy to start on a path of institutionalised cooperation with Government and management and they must have some progress to show for it. They considered economic growth to be the key. They had specified the problem of unemployment among school leavers. They considered that current unemployment problems were partly structural and needed special treatment. ^{The Prime Minister} ~~Mr Callaghan~~ had replied that the Community Governments did not intend to use unemployment as a road out of recession and would not be content to live with unemployment as a permanent feature. This seemed to be the main point the ETUC wanted to hear.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION AT DOWNING ST. SUMMIT

The Prime Minister then referred to the Agenda, for which the Presidency had circulated an annotated list of suggestions. Before discussing this, however, he recognised that some members would wish to refer to matters connected with the summit conference to be held at Downing Street in May. There were questions of substance but also of the participation of the Commission. He would like to propose that the Council should agree that they would take a decision about the Commission's participation before the end of their meeting in Rome; but that, in order that they should not give the press occasion to say that the whole afternoon had been spent on discussion and possibly disagreement about this, they should have a brief opportunity to register comments now and return to the question in private discussion after dinner.

/1540 Mr

