

MEMORANDUM

To: The Rt. Hon. Sir Ian Gilmour, MP
 From: James Scott-Hopkins

Date: 26 June, 1979

Future Title of our Group in the European Parliament

As you know, this question was discussed at the meeting of the new and old members last week, and I have no doubt that it will come up again at our pre-session meeting in Luxembourg.

I know that there are many new members who would like the Group to have a new and more appropriate name, and they have my support. It seems to me that the choice rests between "European Democratic Group" and "European Democratic Alliance", and I hope that we settle on one of these. In each case they have the merit of similarity with the name of the European Democratic Union which links us with parties in and outside the Community.

I would like to stress three points. First, the adoption of a more appropriate name by the Group will not stop us from continuing to call ourselves Conservatives in the British (and Danish) domestic context. There are already parallels for this practice in the Christian Democrat parties, which belong to the European People's Party in the European Parliament, but retain their party names individually.

Secondly, I think that this proposal by the Group would facilitate closer links with the Christian Democrats in the European People's Party, some of whom are chary of the word "Conservative". In my experience this has indeed proved a big stumbling block to close cooperation. There is also the possibility now that some new members who have at present signalled their intention of remaining non-attached to any political group would join us. And in the future we look forward to the possibility that parties from the applicant states may wish to join our Group. In both cases, a change of name would make us more attractive.

Thirdly, I would like to emphasise that a large number of our candidates during the European elections have pointed out to me that Conservative supporters found it hard to understand why we were not working more closely with other centre-right political parties in the European Community (the Christian Democrats were the most frequently mentioned) while the Socialists could invoke European alliances in every member state. Clearly, this

Jim Scott-Hopkins
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cc 24/6
 Lord Pym's Seal
 a. PS
 PS Her Minute
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was not a worry reflected in the voting, but it does, I think, show that our supporters will understand why we are doing this, and will applaud our efforts to form closer and stronger political alliances in Europe.

J&RPH

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E.D.G.

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RT HON MARGARET THATCHER MP PRIME MINISTER



DOWNINGSTREET
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LHS 130

THE EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVE GROUP - COMPRISING 60 BRITISH
CONSERVATIVES, 2 DANISH CONSERVATIVES 1 DANISH CENTRE DEMOCRAT
AND 1 ULSTER UNIONIST - RESOLVED AT A MEETING IN LUXEMBOURG
TODAY TO FORM A NEW UMBRELLA GROUP IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
CALLED THE EUROPEAN

COL 60 2 1 1

1540 PGE 2/22

Richard

DEMOCRATIC GROUP. VOTING AT THE END OF A 1 1/2 HOUR DEBATE WAS

48 IN FAVOUR AND 10 AGAINST

JIM SCOTT HOPKINS

They must call themselves
Conservative here if they
want to keep the local
a valued support of our
people. not.

COL 1 1/2 48 10