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Prime Minister

EL/sd

24th January 1992

The EDG attach enormous importance to your making a pitch to Bruton. I am afraid I have also promised them that you will be extra nice to Martens in New York next week.

Dear ~~Stephen~~,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH JOHN BRUTON (LEADER, FINE GAEL)
MONDAY 27TH JANUARY 1992, 1615 - 1645: EDG/EPP ASPECTS

1. The Prime Minister is seeing Mr Bruton (Leader, Fine Gael) on Monday afternoon. One of the subjects he wishes to touch on briefly is the European Democratic Group's application to the European Peoples' Party. The Party Chairman will sit in on the meeting.
2. The Prime Minister last saw Mr Bruton on 10th April last year. The aim at this meeting should be to secure Bruton's continued support for the EDG's application to the EPP at the meeting of EPP Leaders in Brussels on 14th February. I attach a list of points to make.
3. **The EDG/EPP application - current state of play.** The EDG - EPP merger is the first item on the agenda of the EPP Leaders' meeting on 14th February, although the meeting has been called primarily to discuss the EPP's relations with centre-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe and EFTA. All the EPP Party Leaders - Kohl, Andreotti, Martens (who is also EPP President) as well as Bruton himself - will be there.

3. The EPP Leaders agreed in principle at their meeting on 13th April last year that the EDG and EPP should form a joint group by 1st April 1992 (this is known as the Val Duchesse agreement). The Group would be along the lines of the CDU/CSU caucus in the German Bundestag - ie voting and sitting as a single group, but retaining their distinct identities. The EPP MEPs last week elected Mr Leo Tindemans (a former Belgian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister) as its Chairman, following the election of Mr Egon Klepsch as EP President. Apparently Mr Tindemans is well disposed towards the EDG's application, as was Mr Klepsch before him.
4. In theory, because the EPP Leaders gave the green light at their meeting on 13th April last year and only asked to be kept informed thereafter, their 14th February meeting should not seek to reopen the whole question. However, the EPP MEPs in the European Parliament are due to vote on the merger by the end of March. Any signal - for or against - sent by the Party Leaders' meeting on the 14th February could prove decisive.
5. Since Maastricht, opponents of the EDG/EPP merger in the EPP, notably the Dutch and the Belgians, (although not Martens) have been campaigning hard to stop it. They are particularly upset at the outcome on the social chapter. In their view this justified the reservations they had expressed about accepting British Conservatives in the first place.
6. The EPP Group has, however, recently accepted Giscard d'Estaing and four of his fellow Liberal MEPs as members of their Group. If they refuse to accept the EDG, it would look as if they were discriminating against the British.

7. The Fine Gael position. Fine Gael has four MEPs in the EPP - Mary Banotti, Mr Pat Cooney, John Cushnahan and Mr Joe McCartin. Of those, only Joe McCartin is strongly in favour of the EDG merger, but he is closest to John Bruton. The other three are against. John Bruton himself is broadly in favour, but is extremely anxious about it provoking adverse publicity in Ireland.
8. I attach a note of 'points to make' which the Prime Minister might like to draw on. I am copying this letter to the Party Chairman, the Chief Whip, Judith Chaplin and to Maurice Fraser and Edward Bickham at the FCO.

Yours ever,

Edward -

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(Head of Foreign Affairs Section)

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