

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE
POWERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

I was invited, privately, by Federal Trust to be in London last Saturday for a small meeting they held with Mr Garrett Fitzgerald, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ireland, to discuss possible increased in the powers of the European Parliament.

Mr Fitzgerald said that he wished to take an initiative in the Council of Ministers, together with Mr Thorn of Luxembourg and Mr van der Stoep, the Netherlands Foreign Minister, aimed at increasing the powers of the Parliament. His basic suggestion was similar to that set out in the memorandum of the Working Group submitted to Mr Berkhouter, but it is even more ambitious and it is interesting in this respect since it originates with a Member of the Council. Mr Fitzgerald considers that all proposals of the Commission⁽¹⁾ should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Parliament for its opinion, before being sent on to the Council. Proposals of the Commission would then arrive at the Council with, hopefully, the amendments proposed by the Parliament, or at any rate the views of the Parliament appended. This would strengthen not only the position of the Council, but, of course, that of the Commission as well, since its proposals would have the added force of the Parliament's approval before reaching the Council.

Mr Fitzgerald also considered that there should be a "second reading" procedure (similar to that envisaged in the Memorandum of the Working Party addressed to the President).

(1) or at least all proposals involving expenditure.

In cases where the Council accepted proposals made to it by the Commission and the Parliament there would clearly be no need for a second reading procedure.

Mr Fitzgerald was hoping to discuss these ideas in Luxembourg this week with Mr Thorn and Mr van der Stoep. He fully realised that in order to get his ideas through the Council, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (even if they were to agree between themselves) would also need the backing of one large country. Here unfortunately the situation did not seem very bright to Mr Fitzgerald, with Britain unprepared to take such an initiative at present, the French Government bound by its well-known traditional views, the German Government primarily concerned by its Eastern policy and the Italian Government concerned only with trying to hold on in Italy. Nonetheless, it is an interesting sign that one or more of the Foreign Ministers are prepared to think in terms of the Parliament playing a more vital role in the Communities' decision-making procedure.



Michael Palmer

26 June 1973

c.c. Mr van den Eede
Mr Neunreither
Mr Vinci
Mr Cointat