



CONFIDENTIAL

cc [unclear] ①

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-276 3000

My ref:

Your ref:

The Rt Hon John Major MP
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

Ripa Di Meana
Would you be prepared
to go along 28 July 1989
with a small agency
with a tightly-defined
role?
attached
CD 3/17

At the Economic Summit,
we proposed that the OD(E)
should do it (already the
OD(E) collects data). Surely we
don't need
two bodies.
John
16

As suggested at the 14 June meeting of OD(E) I am circulating our views on the Commission's proposal for a European Environment Agency.

David

First, it should be said that we are strongly in favour of the Commission developing a sound data base to support Community environment policy. However, we want to see any new arrangements that are put in place firmly pointed at information provision and not at enforcement questions or policy initiatives.

At the Informal Environment Council in May, Malcolm Caithness raised a number of questions about the detail of the agency proposal and later wrote to Commissioner Ripa Di Meana asking for clarifications. It is clear that the Commission have taken some of his points into account in the latest draft of the proposed Council Regulation (COM(89)303) but the objectives as stated still need to be narrowed down. Other outstanding issues concern the burden of work on member countries, the arrangements for managing the agency, its legal position and powers, the participation of non-Community countries and the details of funding. A copy of the draft regulation is at Annex A and a more detailed description of the issues involved is at Annex B.

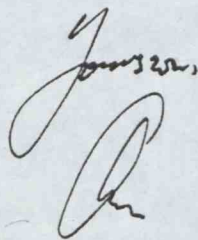
We believe the idea of a small co-ordinating agency is well worth exploring. Nicholas Ridley expressed his support for the establishment of a body with the role of collecting and co-ordinating a statistical data base to provide an authoritative source of environmental data for the Community, at a meeting with Commissioner Ripa Di Meana on 13 July. All other Community countries have welcomed the idea in principle and the adoption of a positive line at this stage will enable us to influence the shape of the proposal still further. In addition we see parallels between this notion and the need to strengthen arrangements within the UK for

CONFIDENTIAL

providing factual information about the environment, in a way that takes it out of political dispute.

Brice Lalonde, the French Environment Minister, made it clear, when he came to see Malcolm on 18 July, that the Agency proposal will be high on the agenda as far as the Presidency is concerned. It will be discussed at the September Council and they hope for adoption at the November meeting. In general our line is to avoid isolation and concentrate on the important task of ensuring that the appropriate clauses are written into any final draft regulation.

Copies of this letter go to other members of OD(E), Sir Robin Butler and Charles Powell.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Chris Patten', with a stylized flourish below the name.

CHRIS PATTEN