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The Visegrad Summit - London 28 October 1992 :

UK Prime minister John Major hosted a summit meeting of the Visegrad countries in London today. President of the European Commission Jacques Delors and Vice-President Henning Christophersen represented the Commission. Poland's representative was Hanna Suchocka, the Prime Minister, Hungary was represented by Dr. Jozsef Antall, Prime Minister; Czech and Slovak Fed. Republic by Deputy Prime Minister Antonin Baudys, Vaclav Klaus (Prime Minister of the Czech lands), and Judr Meciar, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic.

Two statements were issued afterwards : one by Major and Delors demonstrating support for all the newly democratic countries of Eastern and Central Europe; the second a Joint Declaration agreeing to pursue and deepen political and economic relationships (sent by separate mail).

At the press conference afterwards Major remarked that this was a meeting that would have been wholly inconceivable four years ago. It was a demonstration of EC support for the new democracies and symbolic of the strong relationship that had already grown up, boosted by the Europe agreements. For the Eastern and Central European countries these agreements were the cornerstone symbolising the restoration of their place in Europe. The Visegrad countries had also been making their case for early accession to the Community. Help in preparing them for full membership was being given impetus by the success of the Europe Agreements.

On a personal note, Major said the EC had been going through a turbulent period in the run-up to the French Referendum and since. The Birmingham Declaration and the Danish initiatives to overcome their problems had helped stabilise the situation. He believed the EC was now back on track for a better future and Major said he hoped this would be consolidated by the time of the Edinburgh summit in December.

Much of the questioning was perhaps naturally concentrated on the Prime Minister's own difficulties within his party and with his chances of winning a crucial vote on the Maastricht Treaty in the House of Commons.

Main points : Slovak insistence on building a dam on the Danube which is opposed by the Hungarians - the meeting of experts from the two countries last night in the London office of the Commission under the chairmanship of the Commission had helped clarify the problem. Major hoped the parties would reach an agreement soon. The summit had helped.

On enlargement : some time had been spent discussing the problems. The Europe agreements were a stepping stone to full membership of the EC. He could not promise any precise time-table. The Commission would make a report to the Edinburgh summit which might help make more precise the criteria for membership.

The Danish paper : Major said he had seen a draft of what the Danish government wanted to see concerning Maastricht. They were not rept. not asking for renegotiation. They were asking for additional clarifications. There was a great will among the Member States to reach agreement which would enable the Danes to put the question again to their voters and to ratify the Treaty. He insisted that ratification was a necessary precursor to enlargement which was a priority for UK foreign policy. Quite a bit of progress had been made on defining subsidiarity which would be agreed in Edinburgh.

Asked whether he would resign as Prime Minister and call a general election in the UK if he lost the vote in Parliament next week, Major said he was not rept not going to lose. He regretted that too many people had concentrated only on the negative parts of the Treaty. There were many positive sides to the Treaty.

President Delors expressed his full support for the enlargement of the Community to include the Eastern and Central Europeans. The Commission, he said, was of service to the Community and not the contrary. The UK Presidency had asked the Commission for a report on enlargement. "Personally I am very much in favour of enlargement". Delors added. "There's no doubt about that".

Amitiés,


Bruno Dethomas.