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PAYMASTER GENERAL

EC: Employment Initiative

1. Thank you for your letter of 17 October. You have done very well to get such widespread support for our employment initiative. In particular, your idea of associating the Italians and Irish with our paper was an excellent one since it made it much less susceptible to criticism from others, including the Commission.

2. We now need to ensure that our initiative is not eroded by the Commission and others. I therefore agree with you that we need to continue the slightly unorthodox approach. I support your idea of

associating the Danes with our resolution, for all the reasons you mention. At the same time, we want to keep the initiative as our own and really make something of it at the London European Council. If the Danes alone table^{the}/resolution there is a risk that our ability to push it forward in the way we think best would be impaired. I believe too that, if the resolution is tabled by the Danes alone, other member states will think that we have lost faith in it. I seriously doubt if they will see the Danes (whose reputation is not high in the Community) as a good substitute for the UK.

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3. We have succeeded thus far by dint of your skill and energy in pushing the initiative and by working in partnership with two other member states who are not generally assumed to see eye to eye with us on Community issues. I would therefore suggest, as a slight variant of your idea, that you think of tabling our draft resolution if possible with the Irish, Italians and Danes as co-sponsors. Since the resolution is modelled very closely on your original paper, it should be possible to secure Italian and Irish support and still table the resolution early in November. I believe this will be more effective than having it appear with Danish parentage alone.

4. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, Nigel Lawson, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir David Hannay.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
23 October 1986

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