

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

21 February 1984

John Selwyn Gummer Esq MP  
Party Chairman  
Conservative Central Office  
32 Smith Square  
London SW1

*8*  
*21/2*

*Dear Chairman,*

I attach a checklist on European elections which Sir Geoffrey Howe asked me to prepare and to send you. I hope it is helpful. I am copying this letter and enclosure to Stephen Sherbourne.

*Yours sincerely*  
*John Houston*

J Houston  
Special Adviser

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS PREPARATIONS

1. This note seeks to draw together the issues involved in planning for the elections, to outline what seems necessary, and to indicate where action is in hand or outstanding.

2. Political Strategy

Need: a paper which provides an agreed basis for our approach to the elections so that there is guidance for members of the Cabinet, MPs, MEPs and party organizers on the line to take in speeches, publicity and media appearances.

Action: Agreed on 16 February that Foreign Secretary and Party Chairman will prepare a joint paper rapidly. Drafting in hand.

Further Action: Approval of paper (by Howe Group on 23 February? by PM?). Desirable to have imprimatur of Sir Henry Plumb to avoid awkwardness later with EDG.

3. Manifesto

Need: to have basic draft ready for updating after Brussels Summit and publication by mid-May.

Action: Drafting in hand. First draft to be discussed at Howe Group meeting 23 February.

Further Action: Consultations with Ministers over next few weeks. Rifkind Sub-Committee meeting immediately after Brussels Summit. Howe Group meeting first week of April to discuss second draft. Further consultations with Ministers (and EDG spokesmen?). Copies to those concerned (?) over Easter. Finalize by 30 April. PM to see when? Officials to see when (Williamson exercise)?

4. Information Campaign

Need: to be compatible with political strategy and HMG's negotiating timetable.

Action: Agreed 16 February that Foreign Secretary must approve all publicity material. Mr Kellett-Bowman informed.

Further Action: J Houston to keep in close touch with EDG Director of Information and Saatchi & Saatchi. Foreign Secretary to write to Mr Kellett-Bowman asking to see all material so far produced, or in preparation.

5. New Policies:

Need: to do more in manifesto than simply package existing policy, so that Labour do not make all the running.

/Action:

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Action: Agreed 16 February that Ministers should look at departmental work with a view to identifying policy initiatives with electoral appeal (whether domestic or European) which could be timed for announcement during the campaign, or for incorporation in the manifesto.

Further Action: to ensure Ministers follow up (brief Special Advisers? Letters from Foreign Secretary).

6. Questions of Policy Committee

Need: to produce large quantity of guidance notes for candidates and workers.

Action: Agreed that Lord Whitelaw should chair. Sir Fred Warner to be member.

Further Action: Establish membership and staffing. Set work in hand to spot the issues and see if any 1983 notes can be re-issued. Begin production of notes well before start of campaign to avoid excessive workload during campaign, and give candidates time to brief themselves.

7. Co-ordination

Need: to ensure EDG activities, party preparations and Government timetable are co-ordinated and to watch for banana-skins which may influence the elections.

Action: Lord Whitelaw alerted. Chairman on liaison group. Foreign Secretary's staff following EDG activities.

Further Action: Possible need for liaison group to strengthen personnel on European side (Christopher Prout? Malcolm Rifkind? Adam Ridley? John Houston?). Or conduct separate European exercise?

8. Costing Policies

Need: Ministers and Special Advisers to monitor Opposition proposals in all fields and have costings/analyses done.

Action: Chancellor has offered to do costings.

Further Action: Brief Special Advisers (or approach Ministers when no Special Adviser?)

9. Mobilizing Ministers and MPs

Need: to ensure that key Ministers are increasingly plugged in to the electoral issues involved, to provide policy guidance for them and for MPs, who will need to be mobilized if constituency workers are really to come out in force.

/Action:

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Action: Policy strategy in preparation. Ministers being invited to speak at Conferences, etc. 1922 Executive discussion with Foreign Secretary. European Affairs Backbench Committee meeting with Mr Rifkind. Party Chairman announced intention of talking individually to MPs in marginal seats.

Further Action: Presentation to full 1922 Committee before recess (by Chairman?) Chief Whip to assist in mobilizing MPs?

10. European Handbook

Need: Publication in acceptable form by Candidates' Conference 7/9 March or as soon as possible thereafter.

Action: All relevant Departments (and many Ministers) have seen. At proof stage.

11. Ministers' Diaries

Need: For Ministers to know what will be required of them in speeches, press conferences, etc.

Action: Framework proposal prepared by Party Chairman and letter to Ministers asking them to offer dates.

Further Action: Ministers other than PM and Foreign Secretary to be informed of what has been proposed for them and pressed to early agreement.

JH 21/2/84