

Brussels, 22 April 1994

6500/94

RESTREINT

CK.4 38

COPY OF LETTER

from : the Italian and the United Kingdom delegations

dated: 20 April 1994

to : K.4 Committee

Subject: Relations with the Associate countries of Central and
Eastern Europe

- Proposals for deepening Eastern European links

JOINT LETTER TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED UNDER
ARTICLE K4 OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

Following the statements we made at the meeting of the K4 Committee at Vouliagmeni last week, we are writing to set out our proposals for developing co-operation with the six countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in the area of justice and home affairs. These proposals are to be understood as a further step in the process of developing Central European links that was initiated by the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Italy and the United Kingdom in the Council on 20 December 1993.

There are manifestly shared areas of concern between the countries of the European Union and the CEE in justice and home affairs issues, but already the European Union is engaged in a complex and far-reaching work programme impelled by its own priorities. We believe, therefore that the first phase of developing CEE links should be to institutionalise a dialogue, to stabilise and co-ordinate the flow of information. On the basis of that first phase it should be possible to proceed to a second phase of discussion of substantive policy issues, as identified through the institutional arrangements that we now suggest.

We accordingly propose that there should as soon as possible be established a routine session, at least at the end of each Presidency, at which the CEE countries are informed of developments

under Title VI of the Treaty on European Union and there is an opportunity for discussion of the implications. At this stage, we suggest that such meetings could most usefully be conducted at the level of the K4 Committee, though in due course meetings at the level of Ministers may well be found desirable for the discussion of particular topics that are identified as being of special priority. We envisage that routine meetings at the K4 level would best be conducted by the Troika on behalf of the European Union.

It does not seem to us that in general it would be helpful to set up new institutional arrangements regarding the CEE countries at the working levels below the K4 Committee. We do, however, suggest that there is a special case for developing a CEE dimension in the work of CIREA and CIREFI and we suggest that Steering Group I should be requested to consider how the relationship of the CEE countries with those two bodies would be best managed.

Finally, we recall that the United States and Canada submitted proposals last year for improved liaison with the institutions of Title VI. We, for our part, believe that the proposal of those two countries to establish a standing liaison committee would contribute a helpful piece of machinery that ought to be welcomed, though we believe that contact should be managed and authorised at the K4 level, rather than being made direct with the Steering Groups. We do not, however, see a case for the direct participation of such non-European countries in substantive meetings of the Title VI institutions.

We hope that the Presidency will feel able to call heavily on these proposals in drawing up the comprehensive paper on arrangements with third countries under Title VI that it now has in preparation.

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