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FRAME ECONOMIC

EUROPEAN COUNCIL MADRID : GERMAN VIEWS ON SOCIAL DIMENSION

SUMMARY

1. KOHL'S PURPOSE IN DISCUSSION OF SOCIAL DIMENSION AT MADRID WILL BE TO SATISFY DOMESTIC OPINION THAT THE SOCIAL ASPECT IN BUILDING EUROPE IS BEING PURSUED SERIOUSLY. HE IS LIKELY TO SUPPORT THE IDEA OF A NON-BINDING SOCIAL CHARTER PROVIDED THAT THERE IS A CLEAR PROSPECT THAT A FEW SELECTED ELEMENTS FROM THE CHARTER WILL LATER BE ENSHRINED IN BINDING DIRECTIVES.

DETAIL

2. GERMAN MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS DO NOT HIDE THAT KOHL'S PURPOSE IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL DIMENSION, AT MADRID AND GENERALLY, IS DOMESTIC: HE WANTS TO DEMONSTRATE TO PUBLIC OPINION AND ESPECIAALY THE TRADES UNIONS THAT THE COMMUNITY IS NOT MERELY AN ECONOMIC UNDERTAKING BUT ALSO WILL BRING BENEFITS ON THE SOCIAL SIDE. OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT MANY ORDINARY GERMANS HAVE THE FALSE IMPRESSION THAT NATIONAL SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL LAPSE ON COMPLETION OF THE SINGLE MARKET. OFFICIALS ALSO DO NOT DENY THAT THE GERMAN POSITION IS ILLOGICAL, IN THAT WHATEVER MEASURES ARE ADOPTED AT COMMUNITY LEVEL, WILL NOT ADD TO THE GENEROUS SOCIAL PROVISION AVAILABLE IN GERMANY.

3. KOHL HAS BEEN ADVISED NOT TO TAKE THE LEAD IN DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED SOCIAL CHARTER AT MADRID. BUT HE INTENDS TO SUPPORT THE IDEA IN PRINCIPLE. THE REASON IS THAT HE FEELS HE CANNOT OPPOSE IT, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE ELEMENTS IN THE COMMISSION DRAFT WHICH THE GERMANS DO NOT LIKE. THEY ALSO HAVE WIDER RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE WHOLE IDEA OF A NON-BINDING DECLARATION WHICH COULD BE EXPLOITED BY THE COMMISSION AS A LICENSE FOR FUTURE INTERFERENCE IN MANY AREAS OF SOCIAL POLICY. KOHL AT MADRID WILL ALSO WANT A CLEAR INDICATION THAT SPECIFIC ELEMENTS WITHIN THE GENERAL CHARTER, TO BE SELECTED LATER, WILL IN DUE COURSE BE EMBODIED IN BINDING DIRECTIVES. THESE WOULD COVER MATTERS, SUCH AS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OR EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG

PERSONS, WHICH ARE WELL SHORT OF EXISTING PRACTICE IN NEARLY ALL COMMUNITY COUNTRIES. ONE GERMAN MOTIVE IS THAT SELECTION OF A FEW ITEMS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIVES MAY LIMIT THE SCOPE FOR THE COMMISSION TO GO FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF DIRECTIVES. OFFICIALS CLAIM ALSO TO FEAR THAT, UNLESS SOME PROGRESS IS MADE ON THE BASIS OF UNANIMITY IN THE COMMUNITY, THERE WILL BEFORE LONG BE A STRONG MOVE, FOR INSTANCE FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, FOR MAJORITY DECISIONS.

4. THIELE (FEDERAL CHANCELLERY) SUGGESTED TO KERR AND ME TODAY THAT THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE MADRID EUROPEAN COUNCIL MIGHT COMPRISE THREE POINTS: THAT THE SOCIAL COUNCIL BE CHARGED WITH IMPROVING THE COMMISSION'S DRAFT DECLARATION AND WITH PREPARING FOR BINDING DIRECTIVES ON SELECTED MATTERS: THAT THE COMMISSION BE GIVEN A SIMILAR REMIT, CONSULTING EMPLOYERS' AND EMPLOYEES' ORGANISATIONS: AND THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL SHOULD RETURN LATER TO THESE MATTERS, INCLUDING THE GENERAL CHARTER.

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