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PRIVATE SECRETARY TO  
PAUL MURPHY, MP  
MINISTER OF STATE

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FROM: PS/Paul Murphy  
DFP  
DATE: 5<sup>th</sup> August 1997

cc: PS/Secretary of State (B&L)  
PS/Mr Murphy (B&L)  
PS/Mr Ingram (DED, B&L)  
PS/Mr Worthington (DENI, DHSS&L)  
PS/Lord Dubs (DOE, DANI&L)  
PS/PUS (B&L)  
PS/Sir David Fell  
NI Permanent Secretaries  
Mr Stephens  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Layberry  
Ms Jones

TO: Linda Wilson  
European Division

**UK PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: NORTHERN IRELAND  
DIMENSION**

The Minister has seen your submission and is content for you to explore the possibility of inviting President Santer to Northern Ireland in the early months of 1998 in connection with the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

**LIAM BARR**  
PS/Paul Murphy  
Minister of State

LB-1304



**DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE & PERSONNEL**

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cc. PS/Secretary of State (L&B) ✓  
PS/Mr Ingram (DED, B&L) ✓  
PS/Mr Worthington (DENI, DHSS&L) ✓  
PS/Lord Dubs (DOE, DANI&L) ✓  
PS/PUS (L&B) ✓  
PS/Sir David Fell  
NI Permanent Secretaries  
Mr Stephens  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Layberry ✓  
Ms Jones

**From: Linda Wilson, European Division**

**Date: / August 1997**

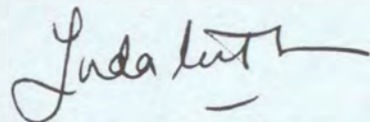
**PS/Mr Murphy (DFP, B&L) ✓**

**UK PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: NORTHERN IRELAND  
DIMENSION**

1. The Presidency of the European Union will be held by the UK for the first half of 1998 and although it is not proposed that Northern Ireland would host an official Presidency event, we would wish to take advantage of the interest generated by the Presidency to present a positive message in Northern Ireland about United Kingdom membership of the EU and also to raise Northern Ireland's profile in Europe. The purpose of this submission is to draw the Minister's attention to a proposed publicity event in early 1998 in Northern Ireland which could be linked to the UK Presidency.
2. In order to ensure that Northern Ireland is in a position to derive maximum benefit from the Presidency we have been considering whether or not there are any major events which could be held in 1998 to which a Presidency label could be attached at little extra cost. With this in mind, we have been considering the possibility of inviting President Santer (and perhaps other Commissioners) to Northern Ireland in the early months of 1998 in connection with the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (the Peace Programme).



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3. When the Peace Programme was agreed in July 1995, the Programme was intended to cover the years 1995-99 although funding was agreed only for the years 1995-97. Discussions on the second tranche of the Programme are currently underway with decisions on the funding expected towards the end of the year. We would expect, therefore, to be in a position to relaunch the Programme in the early part of 1998.
  4. Against that background, it would be desirable if President Santer could visit Northern Ireland to launch the second round of funding under the Peace Programme. This would not only provide a suitable opportunity for Government and the Commission to underline the importance of the Programme to the peace process, but would also serve as an excellent vehicle for publicising the UK Presidency within Northern Ireland and demonstrating how the region is contributing to its success.
  5. We have been discussing this possible event with UKRep and the NIO and, if the Minister is content, we will explore the matter further in September.



**L S WILSON (MISS)**