

TELEGRAPHIC MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO  
CHANCELLOR KOHL

Dear Helmut

Many congratulations on your excellent results in the elections for the European Parliament. This bodes well for the federal election in the Autumn.

I wanted briefly to raise with you a more specific European matter.

The question of British beef exports to Germany has attracted a great deal of public attention in both of our countries. I have not raised it with you before because it is, above all, a matter for experts, and ideally might be left to them. However, I understand that you are being pressed to take some political decisions which would override agreements made within the European Community.

As you would expect, we have been very careful over the cattle disease BSE. On scientific advice, we have taken stringent measures to protect consumers and prevent the spread of the disease. As a result, the number of suspected cases of infected cattle is declining markedly.

Our actions have been agreed by the European Community and endorsed by the World Health Organisation and its veterinary equivalent (Office International des Epizooties). As recently as last week, the Scientific Veterinary Committee of the European Commission reviewed the scientific evidence and approved our existing controls. The meeting was chaired by a German scientist, and other German scientists attended. The Committee will be keeping the subject under

As the European Community has taken careful and correct action, I hope that Germany will not consider any unilateral steps which would run counter to Treaty obligations and to free trade within the Community. I am sure that the right course, for both of our Governments, is to continue to ensure that the European Community and its experts keep this question under close review and offer the necessary reassurance to the public, in the face of alarmist and unjustified reporting in the press.

I am sorry that this technical problem has now become one for Heads of Government. I am keen to do whatever I can to prevent it from taking on larger political dimensions.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,

John