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Personal message from Mr. Liam Cosgrave, T.D. to
the Rt. Hon. Edward Heath, M.P. :

Thank you for your message of today's date.

The date - December 6th - is acceptable.

I note what you say about sponsorship, and agree that the parties
in Northern Ireland can simply be notified of the date and venue. This can
be done by both of us.

On the question of chairmanship I feel you will appreciate an
reflection that, in the context of the history of these islands, a
settlement reached both on British soil and also under British chairmanship
would on that account be likely to give rise to more criticisms and
controversy than either of us would desire.

Quite apart from the fact that this Conference is clearly
qui generis - designed, hopefully, to produce an evolutionary solution
to the Northern Ireland problem more than fifty years after the last
such negotiation, and attended by the three power-sharing parties in
Northern Ireland as well as by the two sovereign Governments of these
islands - our action a month ago in raising the questions of sponsorship
and chairmanship at the same time as we reacted positively to the
suggestion of a location in Britain, made it clear that we did not feel
that the host country could provide the chairmanship on this occasion.
Had there been any question of linking the two, our view of the venue
would have been different.

We propose that a European statesman from the Community of
which we are both members be invited to chair this meeting. We suggest
Gaston Thorn, Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, whose qualities are known
to both of us, and who we would hope might accept this invitation.

28th November, 1973.