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**Reference Code:** 2004/15/25

**Title:** Copy letter from Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave to Prime Minister Edward Heath, regarding arrangements for the negotiations at Sunningdale, and the status of the governments of Ireland and Great Britain therein, and the chairmanship of the conference.

**Creation Date(s):** 25 November, 1973

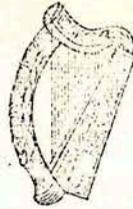
**Level of description:** Item

**Extent and medium:** 2 pages

**Creator(s):** Department of Foreign Affairs

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

Thank you for your letter. You can count on our determination also to press on to a solution of outstanding issues at the forthcoming Conference. I have yesterday authorised my officials to enter into preliminary discussions with yours on the financing and functions of the Council and policing and common law enforcement.

With regard to the Conference itself, our two Governments will, of course, participate in it on an equal footing, as the two sovereign Governments involved. I propose that the form of joint sponsorship be settled at the outset of these discussions at official level. We have, of course, agreed that the location of the Conference be in Great Britain, preferably near to London.

On the question of Chairmanship, several options are open. We had hoped that a Northern Ireland Chairman acceptable to all three parties there might have been found, to whose nomination we could readily have consented, but I gather this is now improbable. Our preferred alternative would be an EEC statesman, who would, of course, need to have special qualities of alertness and sensitivity to grapple with issues and personalities unfamiliar to him. We would be happy to discuss names with you. Should it prove impossible to find



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such a person free to take on this commitment, another alternative would be that each of us would nominate a suitable person, the two to serve as alternating joint Chairmen.

You will, I know, appreciate the great urgency of settling this issue, on which we have been awaiting reactions from London for some time past. I understand from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would not be free to discuss this with him until next Friday, a few days only before the probable opening date of the Conference, which would clearly be much too late. Perhaps you could let me know your reactions as soon as possible so that we may agree a name or names early this week.

25th November, 1973