

7/8/99 FRANCE: PARIS PICKS "EURO-GAULLIST", DELORS AIDE FOR EU.

PARIS, July 8 (Reuters) - France proposed "European Gaullist" Michel Barnier and former Jacques Delors aide Pascal Lamy on Thursday as its candidates for the new European Commission.

President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin said in a joint statement that they had put forward the two names in agreement with incoming Commission president Romano Prodi, who had asked for candidates from both government and opposition ranks.

The choice also reflects France's "cohabitation" power-sharing. Barnier is a senator for Chirac's RPR party while Lamy is a member of Jospin's Socialist Party. The statement did not indicate which posts the two men would take up, saying: "Their nomination will not be definitive until the commission is approved by the European Parliament."

Barnier, 48, has been a senator for the Savoie region since 1997 and was European affairs minister in France's last conservative government from 1995 to 1997. He stands out as one of the most pro-European figures in the RPR, whose Euro-sceptic wing under Charles Pasqua broke ranks for last month's European Parliament election and scored better than the mainstream RPR.

Lamy, a 52-year-old Socialist, was Delors' chief of staff from 1985 to 1994, when he became a member of the executive committee of the state-owned Credit Lyonnais bank. His career has been one of the classic French technocrat, starting with diplomas from the top business and political science institutes in Paris as well as the elite Ecole Nationale d'Administration.

He was a top aide to Delors at the Finance Ministry and then deputy chief of staff for Socialist Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy in the early 1980s before going to Brussels to head Delors' office in 1985.

Barnier and Lamy were France's clear front-runners after former Culture Minister Jack Lang, currently head of the parliament's foreign affairs committee, reportedly dropped out of the race.

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