

CONFIDENTIAL FILINGS

Confusion over Britain's use of the terms "European Parliament" and "European Assembly."

EUROPEAN
POLICY

JULY 1983

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
1.8.83							
8.8.83							
29.8.84							

PREM 19/1232

CF7



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

29 August 1984

From The Minister of State

Robin Maxwell-Hyslop Esq MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

NBDM

PDP
35/2

Dear Robin,

will request if required

Thank you for your letter of 3 August about the use of the term European 'Parliament' or 'Assembly.'

Use of the term European 'Parliament' is in full accordance with Government practice as the Prime Minister has explained to Parliament on two occasions. The first was on 23 July 1979 in answer to a Parliamentary Question, and the second on 28 June 1982, also in answer to a PQ. I enclose copies of the relevant extracts from Hansard.

The Government follows the accepted Community practice of using the term European 'Parliament' except in legal texts, or where it is necessary to distinguish it from the Westminster Parliament, when we continue to use 'Assembly.'

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours sincerely,
Malcolm Rifkind

Malcolm Rifkind

Euro Pa: Parliament/Assombly Confusion

July 83

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29 AUG 1984



FIVE
DJJ
cc: FCO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

8 August, 1983

Jean Nicholas

Thank you for your letter of 21 July about the use of the term European 'Parliament' or 'Assembly'. There has been no change in the practice which the Government has followed since it took office. We follow the accepted Community practice of using the term European Parliament, except in legal texts or where it is necessary to distinguish it from the Westminster Parliament, where we shall continue to use 'Assembly'.

In my reply to Robin Maxwell-Hyslop on 19 July, I was simply stating the legal position under the Treaties, and I was not signalling any change in the Government's practice.

I do not understand your antipathy to being an elected Member of a Treaty Assembly.

Yours ever

Margaret

The Lord Bethell, M.E.P.

SA



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 August 1983

*psc type
for PMS signature
DH*

Dear John,

As requested in your letter of 26 July, I enclose a draft reply which the Prime Minister might like to send to Lord Bethell in response to his letter of 21 July about Government policy regarding the use of the term European 'Parliament' or 'Assembly'.

When the present Government took office it decided to follow the accepted Community practice of using the term 'Parliament', except in legal texts where it is necessary to distinguish the institution from the Westminster Parliament, where 'Assembly' would be used. This practice was announced by the Prime Minister in a written answer on 23 July 1979 and has been reaffirmed on a number of occasions, most recently by the Prime Minister herself in a written answer on 28 June 1982.

It is clear that whether the institution is called a 'Parliament' or an 'Assembly' will not affect its status or powers. These will remain as laid down in the Community Treaties. A reversion to the Labour Government's practice of insisting on the use of the term 'Assembly' would, however be seen as a deliberate shift in our practice. It would irritate most of our Community partners and the Parliament itself, whose goodwill could be of some importance to us this autumn and beyond. We would therefore recommend against any change in the present practice.

*Your ever
John Helmes*

(J E Helmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing St

Euro Pol: Europⁿ Parliament / Assembly
Confusion

July 83



DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

The Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Lord Bethell MEP
73 Sussex Square
London W2 2SS

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 21 July about the use of the term European 'Parliament' or 'Assembly'. There has been no change in the practice which the Government has followed since it took office. We follow the accepted Community practice of using the term European Parliament, except in legal texts or where it is necessary to distinguish it from the Westminster Parliament, where we shall continue to use 'Assembly'.

CAVEAT.....

In my reply to Mr Maxwell-Hyslop on 19 July, I was simply stating the legal position under the Treaties, and I was not signalling any change in the Government's practice.

Enclosures—flag(s).....



054711 - 11/11/1969
FROM:

DEPARTMENT:

1 AUG 1969

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TYPE OF
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SUBJECT

TO: [Faint text]
FROM: [Faint text]
SUBJECT: [Faint text]



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

26 July 1983

European Assembly/Parliament

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from Lord Bethell about the correct description of the European Assembly/Parliament.

I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft reply for signature by the Prime Minister, by 1 August.

ASK

R.B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RW



FROM
NICHOLAS
BETHELL

TELEPHONE
01-402-6877

73 SUSSEX SQUARE
LONDON W2 2SS

The Rt. Hon. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON S.W.1.

21st July 1983

Dear Margaret,

It was very kind of you to see Mrs Avital Sharansky again last Friday morning. Her visit to Number Ten provoked some helpful publicity and I know that she felt greatly encouraged by what you told her.

I would like, if I may, to turn to a subject which has cropped up several times during the past four years, the confusion over Britain's use of the terms "European Parliament" and "European Assembly".

attached... This ought to be a matter of small importance. A name is only a name. But, as I wrote to Janet Young on March 2nd, this distinction is becoming a touchstone of British parliamentary attitude to the new European elected body.

The term "European Assembly" is insisted upon by parliamentarians such as Robin Maxwell-Hyslop who dislike the European Parliament's ambitions and believe in limiting its powers.

This is why I wrote to Christopher Soames in September 1979 and to Janet Young in March 1983, in their capacity as heads of the Civil Service Department. Both Christopher and Janet replied, as you will see from the enclosed letters, that guidance has been issued to departments to use the term "European Parliament" except in legal instruments.

I am concerned that the reply that you gave to Robin Maxwell-Hyslop in Question Time on July 19th may now lead to the matter becoming less clear. I fear also that the distinction between "parliament" and "assembly", petty though it may seem, will be used by anti-marketeers during the European election campaign next year.

I do hope that you will find a moment to look at the enclosed correspondence and to clarify the point with the Civil Service Department, so that ministers take a consistent line.

Next year's European elections may well be treated by our opponents as a vote of no confidence in the Government's second term of office. I am sure that they will fail, but it would be a pity, I think, if this small inconsistency were available to Labour and Alliance candidates as an anti-Conservative pinprick.

Yours ever

Nicholas

SOVIET UNION: Soviet Jewry

June 79





Management and Personnel Office

Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ

Telephone 01-273 } 4400
GTN 273 }

24 March 1983

The Lord Bethell MEP
73 Sussex Square
London W2 2SS

Dear Nicholas,

Thank you for your letter of 2 March referring to the use by Government spokesmen of the term 'European Parliament'.

I can assure you that there has been no change in the Government line on this; the guidance which was issued in 1979 shortly after you wrote to Christopher Soames on this point has not been amended or superseded.

Government departments were advised then that, except in legal instruments, where the term 'Assembly' is the correct use, or where it is necessary to distinguish it from the parliament at Westminster, the term 'European Parliament' should commonly be used when referring to that institution. All those who handle matters concerned with the United Kingdom membership of the European Parliament are made aware of this guidance. There is at present no intention to reissue the guidance, but if you find that the problem persists please let me know and I will take the necessary steps to see that it is brought to the attention of those concerned.

Yours ever

Baroness

BARONESS YOUNG



FROM
NICHOLAS
BETHELL

TELEPHONE
01-402-6877

73 SUSSEX SQUARE
LONDON W2 2SS

The Baroness Young,
House of Lords,
LONDON S.W.1.

2nd March 1983

Dear Janet,

As you will see from the enclosed correspondence, I wrote to Christopher Soames some three years ago about the vexed question whether we ought to be called "European Parliament" or "European Assembly".

I explained to the then Lord Privy Seal that, although the British act establishing direct elections refers to us as "European Assembly", this is from the European Parliament's point of view a misnomer, reflecting as it did the then Labour government's equivocal attitude to direct elections.

Christopher Soames replied to me with a very satisfactory letter saying that instructions had been given to Government departments to refer to us in future as the "European Parliament".

I gathered from Christopher's letter that the Government had accepted the arguments set out in my letter to him and that this was the end of the matter. However, in recent weeks the term "European Assembly" has been creeping back into usage and has been used frequently in parliamentary debate, occasionally even by ministers.

I am wondering therefore whether you are able to assure me that the instructions issued to the civil service on this point by the then Lord Privy Seal are still valid. I appreciate that one cannot regulate what individuals say in the House of Commons or the House of Lords, but I hope that you will also be able to assure me that ministers are aware of this instruction, if it still stands, and that they are also aware that the term "European Assembly" is used most frequently in a perjorative sense by those who wish it ill.

In fact, I am sorry to say that this semantic distinction is becoming a touchstone of individual attitudes towards the European Community and its elected parliament. I very much hope that you will be able to assure me that, whatever individuals may say, the Government as a whole is under the same instruction as that issued three years ago, i.e. to refer to us by the same name that we call ourselves.

Yours ever

Nicholas





T/R/B
M Ma
CJ 14.9.79

Civil Service Department
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ
01-273 4400

14 September 1979

Lord Bethell
Centre Européen
Plateau du Kirchberg
Boîte Postale 1601
LUXEMBOURG

Dear Nicholas -

Thank you for your letter referring to the use by government spokesmen (in particular, David Trefgarne) of the phrase "European Assembly" when referring to the European Parliament. I do agree with the point you make.

I have spoken to ~~Sir~~ Ian Gilmour about this and we both agree that new instructions should be issued to departments. Officials will shortly be circulating new instructions on preparing briefs for UK members of the European Parliament. This would be a convenient opportunity to advertise your point.

I am copying this letter to David Trefgarne and to ~~Sir~~ Ian Gilmour.

Yours

Christopher

SOAMES



De Europæiske Fællesskaber
EUROPA-PARLAMENTET

Europäische Gemeinschaften
EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT

European Communities
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Communautés Européennes
PARLEMENT EUROPEEN

Comunità Europee
PARLAMENTO EUROPEO

Europese Gemeenschappen
EUROPEES PARLEMENT

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Soames,
GCMG, GCVO, CBE,
House of Lords,
London S.W.1

September 1979

Dear Christopher,

At Question Time on July 5th I noticed that David Trefigarne, speaking for the Government, twice referred to the "European Assembly" in answers relating to the European Parliament.

I appreciate that the Parliament is, for some bizarre reason, referred to as the "Assembly" in the English-language version of the 1972 Treaty of Accession. I believe this to be a mistranslation of the French word "assemblée", which is really the equivalent of the English "parliament". And I realise that the previous government, because of their equivocal attitude to the European Parliament, instructed government departments at all times to refer to the "European Assembly". I have no doubt that David Trefigarne, when he chose to use the word "assembly", was simply following a departmental brief, rather than expressing this government's considered view.

As I am sure you remember, the European Parliament decided on its present name, which with small orthographical differences is the same in all Community languages, as the heading of this letter shows, as far back as 1962. And the Conservative party has always respected this decision, as is evidenced by the cover of our 1979 European manifesto.

Could this government therefore not reverse the previous government's edict and instruct ministries to refer to us by the name by which we refer to ourselves?

I have sent copies of this letter to David Trefigarne and to Ian Gilmour.

Yours ever,
Nicholas

Lord Bethell



SOVIET UNION : Soviet Army

June '79

