



PRIME MINISTER

You asked about the cost of administering EC legislation, FCO cannot readily answer. Do you want to commission an estimate, even if imperfect, as at x?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 April 1980

A very convenient reply! I will have a go at the European Council.

Dear Tim,

MAP 21/4

You asked me by telephone yesterday if we could provide details of Community legislation in force in the United Kingdom and of how many civil servants were required to administer it.

Legislation

Not over the F.O.?

No centralised list of Community legislation in force in the UK exists. To produce one would be a major exercise involving a trawl of all Government Departments.

For 1978 alone, the Official Journal Index lists over 3000 Regulations (which are binding on the UK) and over 1000 Directives, Decisions, etc (which are binding if addressed to us). These instruments vary greatly in importance, scope and duration, e.g. from weekly cereal levies to a permanent common market organisation for milk.

Implementation

Again, no centralised record is kept of numbers of civil servants required to implement Community legislation. The CSD have maintained in Parliament that it is not feasible to record this information and that, even if it were, the cost of doing so would be excessive.

X | It might be practicable to carry out an interdepartmental trawl to estimate the proportion of total civil servants' time in each Department which is spent on Community work. But the /result

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result would almost certainly be misleading since, in many cases, Community legislation has replaced our own (e.g. in the field of agricultural support), and thus the dividing lines between Community work (both policy and administrative) and domestic can be hazy.

The methods of implementation (and therefore the manpower implementation costs) vary widely: some legislation is directly applicable, some requires a Statutory Instrument (normally Order in Council or Regulation), and some is enforced by simple administrative action.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright in the Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely,
Myles A. Wisstead

pp M J Richardson
PS/Lord Privy Seal