



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 May 1983

Dear Vivian,

You wrote to me on 21 April about the Commission for Racial Equality's draft Code of Practice.

You will know following your recent talk with Norman Tebbit that we have been far from happy with this Code and indeed the Code-making procedures under both the Race Relations and Sex Discrimination Acts. However, I think it is important to recognise that the Code which has been presented to Parliament has been the product of a lengthy process of consultation, which led to many changes in the original draft, some of which were influenced by the unanimous report of the select committee on Employment on the Code which Norman Tebbit received last May and which he specifically invited the CRE to take into account. There is no doubt that these changes lessen the burden on industry and on small firms in particular. For instance, the Code now states that it may not be reasonable to expect small firms to have the resources and administrative systems to carry out some of the detailed recommendations.

On the question of Code-making arrangements, it was made clear when the Party was in Opposition that we did not think the

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procedure right when the Race Relations Bill was in Committee. We believe the choice given to the Secretary of State for Employment is too restricted in circumstances where a draft Code may - as we believe is the case with the current draft - contain much that is commendable and generally acceptable. I can therefore confirm that the Government is intending to amend the Code-making procedures to enable the Secretary of State for Employment to amend future Codes sent to him before presenting them to Parliament for approval.

You asked about Douglas Hurd's recent meeting with Mr. Kaddoumi of the PLO. I can well understand your concern. Douglas Hurd has, however, met Mr. Kaddoumi before, though on that occasion he was a member of an Arab League. At the latest meeting the opportunity was taken to convey our view that in their negative response to the Reagan plan the PLO had missed a major opportunity to bring peace nearer. I can assure you that it remains our policy that neither I nor my Cabinet Ministers have meetings with the PLO.

Y. Kaddoumi
Reagan

Vivian W.H. Bendall, Esq, M.P.