

Mr Coles ~~was~~ 13/12

For information,
I do not intend to
get involved in such
representations!



Prof. Sir Alan Walters
10 Downing Street
London SW1

AW
13/12/83

Consumers in the European
Community Group (UK)
24 Tufton Street
London SW1P 3RB
Telephone 01-222 2662

21 November 1983

Dear Sir Alan,

Sir Fred Catherwood, MEP, suggested that I write following his recent conversation with you.

He suggested that you might be willing to help us to arrange for some of our members to meet the Prime Minister, to emphasise British consumer support for Government's resistance to any increase in European Community resources without CAP reform.

Such a meeting could help to underline publicly the Government's commitment, and its objections which we share to the Commission's recent proposals for the CAP. A public show of support from UK consumers in this way could assist the Prime Minister in the current negotiations.

Consumers in the European Community Group co-ordinates the representation of the views of its 25 member organisations, which include the Consumers' Association and the National Consumer Council, on EEC policies affecting UK consumers. It is funded by the Department of Trade and Industry. A leaflet about CECG is enclosed.

Also enclosed is a copy of a recent letter from my Chairman to the Prime Minister about the CAP negotiations.

We would very much welcome your advice on the possibility of such a meeting, and I would be pleased to meet you to discuss this if you felt it would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Crampton
Secretary

Chairman Jill Moore
Secretary Stephen Crampton



Consumers in the European
Community Group (UK)

24 Tufon Street
London SW1P 3RB
Telephone 01-222 2662

15 November 1983

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister & First Lord of the Treasury
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Consumers in the European Community Group represents the views of its 25 member organisations on EEC issues affecting the interests of consumers in the United Kingdom.

We are shortly meeting the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Food to discuss the European Commission's proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy. These proposals have serious implications for the cost of living, and we hope therefore that you will also wish to be aware of our views. A paper is enclosed.

CECG welcomes Government insistence on reform of the CAP as a pre-condition for any agreement on extra Community resources. We also welcome Government opposition to many of the Commission's recent proposals for the CAP, which would penalise consumers for excessive CAP support which consumers have long opposed.

We deplore the proposed oils and fats tax as a back-door way of increasing Community revenue at the expense of consumers. It is quite wrong that the Community should seek to penalise consumers, by imposing a tax on the competing product, for not eating as much butter as the Community's farmers wish to produce.

The proposal for a "super levy" on efficient milk producers also causes us concern. This would if adopted guarantee a surplus of at least 20% a year while maintaining a support price which bears no relation to the laws of supply and demand. CECG welcomes the Government's support for a straightforward cut in the support price of milk, but we are very concerned from our discussions with Commission officials and others that there is a clear assumption that the United Kingdom will give in on this issue.

.... /

Chairman Jill Moore
Secretary Stephen Crampton

Consumers in the European Community Group welcomes Government support for the retention of the lamb and beef premium schemes, and the UK butter subsidy. The Commission fails to take into account adequately the extra costs that would be involved in disposing of the additional surplus butter that would result from a further decline in UK butter consumption.

We deplore the proposal that more surplus butter be disposed of by increasing the fat content of milk. This would interfere with consumer choice and the wishes of many people to reduce their fat consumption.

The proposals to restrict still further imports, particularly of cereal substitutes and lamb, would also affect UK consumers and reduce competition. Further protectionism would also jeopardise the UK's trade relations and the markets for our successful, competitive, non-subsidised industries.

We very much hope that your Government will continue to stand firm on its declared policies on the Commission's recent CAP proposals. The Community's financial crisis presents a unique opportunity to achieve at least a measure of sensible reform. The Community cannot be allowed to continue paying money it hasn't got to encourage the production of more food that Europe doesn't need at prices consumers are increasingly unwilling to pay.

Jill Moore
Chairman