



Prime Minister

A. & C. 16

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

A J Coles Esq  
PS/Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

1 think it is ridiculous  
to allow them time  
to go ahead  
before the election.  
A gross misuse of  
money

13 April 1984

Dear Mr Coles

VISIT BY MEPs

You may wish to be aware of a visit by a group of 8 or so MEPs to the UK to see how our 1982 Budget refunds are being spent.

At the end of 1982, an invitation was issued to a small group of MEPs - including the Chairmen of the relevant Parliamentary Committees - to see how our Budget refunds were being spent. A formal, written invitation was issued last September. The MEPs replied at the time that a visit was not convenient. But they have now written suggesting that they come on 10 and 11 May.

The Economic Secretary has discussed this visit with the Minister of State at the FCO (Mr Rifkind). They are aware that the visit could possibly lead to some political embarrassment. It would take place at the beginning of the European Election Campaign, and the Government could be open to criticism for organising such a trip, partly at public expense, when our 1983 refunds were being blocked (though strictly the visit would be to see how our 1982 refunds were being spent). Nevertheless, the invitation to the MEPs was issued in good faith, and they have accepted it in good faith. In the circumstances, both Ministers agree that the visit should go ahead.

The Economic Secretary has not yet replied to the MEPs since he is currently awaiting comments from the Secretaries of State for Energy and Transport (for example on possible projects to be visited). But he intends to write back in the next few days.

A copy of this letter goes to Mr Cary (Private Secretary to Mr Rifkind).

Yours sincerely,  
A M Ellis

A M ELLIS  
Private Secretary





16 APR 1994

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*File 888*

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

17 April 1984

Visit by MEPs

Thank you for your letter of 13 April to John Coles about the proposed visit by a group of MEPs to the UK to study the way in which our budget refunds are being spent.

The Prime Minister feels strongly that this visit should not go ahead before the European elections, since it would be seen as a substantial extravagance at the expense of the taxpayer.

I am sending copy of this letter to Mr Lampert in Malcolm Rifkind's office.

(David Barclay)

A M Ellis Esq  
Economic Secretary's Office

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