



FILE  
DA.

## 10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

MR. WILSON  
CABINET OFFICE

### FRG/WHO CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Cabinet Office do not appear to have seen the attached letter or the draft European Charter on Environment and Health which is being considered at this Conference. Department of Health have raised two issues:

- (i) Should the UK be represented at the Conference?
- (ii) Should the UK argue for adoption of the document as it stands, or seek to negotiate further changes with the risk that it could get worse rather than better?

Department of Health propose sending Mr. Freeman with instructions to argue for adopting the document as it stands.

I have not yet shown this to the Prime Minister. For the most part the document is a statement of the obvious which can mean everything or nothing. By listing virtually every course of action the effect is that nothing is a priority. One could therefore argue that it is a harmless piece of nonsense.

Nevertheless there are a couple of points which I think might concern the Prime Minister and you may spot others. Principle 11 is a rather bald statement of the "polluter pays". This is something we endorse as a general principle but stated in this way it does not take account of any of the usual caveats. For example there is no mention of the need to ensure that international competitiveness is not distorted - see paragraph 9(c) of the DOE paper for MISC 141; nor does it acknowledge any of the other constraints referred to in paragraph 8 of the Treasury's paper. Stated in this way it could be quoted back at the UK Government by those at home or abroad who wish it to accept certain costs.

Secondly, in the Way Forward, WHO Regional Office for Europe is invited to "examine the desirability and feasibility of establishing a European Centre for the Environment and Health". This is inconsistent with the line the Prime Minister has taken in numerous international meetings that the proliferation of institutions should be avoided. This Centre looks thoroughly avoidable to me. On this issue I would recommend the Prime Minister to seek some redrafting to achieve much less of a

da

presumption that such a Centre is necessary. The minimum would be to substitute "case for" in place of "desirability of".

Could we have a word on Friday before I put this to the Prime Minister.

I am copying this minute to John Gieve as the Treasury seem also to have been bypassed.

AT

(ANDREW TURNBULL)

30 November 1989