



cc *WJR*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

26 May 1983

WJR *21/5*

A. J. C. 27/5

Dear John,

British Property in Greece

Thank you for your letter of 19 May. Since I last wrote on 11 May we have kept up the pressure on the Greeks. When Mr Pattie raised the matter with Mr Kapsis, the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister, on 16 May, Mr Kapsis said that the Greek Government were working on 'concrete measures' to deal with the situation. We are pressing for more details.

I am afraid that it is too early to put forward any particular solution which we could press on the Greek Government. On the EC front we are finding out more about what the Commission is prepared to do. But it is not yet clear to what extent this would offer a solution. We suspect that it will be of help to only a few of the British owners. As to the rest, we have asked Frank Giles' Association of Foreign Property Owners in Greek Frontier Areas to provide us with a dossier on the various cases which it knows about and in particular those which already involve legal proceedings in the Greek courts. I attach a copy of Mr Synnott's letter of 19 May to Mr Giles. When we have this information we intend to sit down with the Association and its legal advisers to discuss possible ways and means of dealing with the problem. I will keep you in touch with developments.

Yours on
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

RECEIVED
20 MAY 1983

Telephone 01-

Frank Giles Esq
Association of Foreign Property Owners
in Greek Frontier Areas
42 Blomfield Road
London W9

Your reference

Our reference

Date 19 May 1983

Dear Mr. Giles,

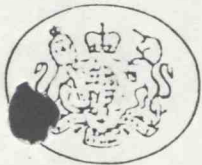
As you know from Lord Belstead's letter of 5 May, we are currently considering the possible implications of the judgment of the Greek Supreme Court in the Rothschild case and looking particularly at what might be done within the European Community. We have asked the European Commission to explore the possibility that some owners may be able to take advantage of the non-discrimination provisions of EC law in cases where economic activity may be involved. So far we have only had preliminary and informal views from certain parts of the Commission and I cannot give you any details which would be of any value. In the meantime, however, we are trying to build up a dossier on properties which might be affected by the judgment and, in doing so, we are very much reliant on information from those who are, or might be, affected. I should very much welcome the assistance of your Association in this task since I presume the members will by now have pooled a certain amount of information.

The first question is whether any other legal action over title is currently being taken against British owners in the Greek courts, or whether any such action is known to be imminent.

It would also be particularly useful to have individual case histories of the ownership of property in Greek frontier areas. These should ideally include dates of purchase and the exact manner in which the purchase was effected (eg by means of a Greek nominee with a lease to the British owner, or by the establishment of a Greek company). If a Greek company was formed we should like to know the present number of shareholders, their nationality and the size of their respective shareholdings (and in what respects these details differ from those at the time of purchase), the price paid and an estimate of present market value, including all improvements. In each case it would also be helpful to have a copy of all advice given by English or Greek lawyers and/or Greek officials at the time the property was purchased. We have already seen the Special Feature on Corfu published by the National Tourist Organisation on 1 July 1969.

I hope that the Association would be willing to provide such information on an informal basis in this way. (You may perhaps wish to include these questions in a questionnaire to the members of the Association.) The information would naturally be treated in confidence. You will,

/however



however, understand that this request in no way implies any commitment by the British Government to take up cases on behalf of the individuals concerned if action is taken against them in the Greek courts. But the information would greatly help us in considering further to what extent other owners may be affected by the Supreme Court judgment and give us a better idea of how their problems might best be handled.

Yours sincerely

Hilary S.

H N H Synnott
Southern European Department

bcc Chancery Athens
UKRep Brussels
ECD(I)
Legal Advisers

26 MAY 1983

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