



SUBJECT
cc Master
Ops

MFJ

cc: Fro
PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE

10 DOWNING STREET SERIAL No. T59A/85

THE PRIME MINISTER

2 April 1985

Dear Prime Minister,

I wrote to you in November in response to the kind invitation in your letter of 19 October to the inauguration ceremonies on 21 June of Athens as European City of Culture.

Unfortunately I shall not be able to come to Athens on 21 June. My Government will therefore be represented by Lord Gowrie, a member of my Cabinet and the United Kingdom representative at meetings of Community Ministers of Culture.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Mr Andreas Papandreou

059

CCPC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 April 1985

Dear Charles,

European City of Culture: Athens 1985

You will recall that the Prime Minister sent a holding reply in November to an invitation from Mr Papandreou to the inauguration ceremonies on 21 June of Athens as European City of Culture. Holding replies also went to Ms Melina Mercouri, the Greek Culture Minister, who had sent invitations to Sir Geoffrey Howe, Lord Gowrie and Mr Rifkind. At that stage the idea of European City of Culture had not been formally agreed, and we had not had the opportunity to discover our partners' intentions on attendance at Athens.

EC Culture Ministers agreed on 22 November to nominate a European City of Culture each year, with Athens the first in 1985. Bilateral soundings of our partners reveal the following intentions for attendance in Athens on 21 June:

Culture Minister or equivalent	FRG, Ireland, Denmark
Culture Minister and junior Foreign Minister	Italy (the Presidency)
Head of State or Government	France (we heard on 22 February that President Mitterrand had accepted), Luxembourg (Prime Minister Werner had apparently accepted, but may change his mind in view of the proximity to the European Council)

FCO Ministers and Lord Gowrie feel that it is right that Lord Gowrie should go to this cultural event. As I said in my letter of 7 November, we would not wish to set an undesirable precedent which would make it difficult to decline subsequent requests from other partners; and there may in addition be a further risk of a de facto "cultural presidency" developing out of such high level gatherings, which quite apart from increased calls on Ministerial time and travel could open the way to considerable confusion or duplication within the Community.

/Now



Now that President Mitterrand has accepted, there is a danger that our partners might revise their intentions unless another Member State decides quickly to be represented by a Culture Minister. The Greeks should not interpret our sending Lord Gowrie as a rebuff; indeed their invitation to other Ministers may stem from a desire to maximise the domestic political benefits.

/ We therefore recommend that the Prime Minister should decline the invitation, while reminding Mr Papandreou that she will meet him a week later at the European Council. I enclose a draft.

I am copying this letter to Paul Thomas (Office of Arts and Libraries).

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

Greece May 1980
Kerakoy



DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:
Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT: TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Mr Andreas Papandreou
Prime Minister of the Hellenic
Republic

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

I wrote to you in November in response to the kind invitation in your letter of 19 October to the inauguration ceremonies on 21 June of Athens as European City of Culture. ~~I understand that preparations for this prestigious festival are going well.~~

Unfortunately I shall not be able to come to Athens on 21 June. My Government will therefore be represented by ^{Lord}~~Grey~~ Gowrie, a member of my Cabinet and the United Kingdom representative at meetings of Community Ministers of Culture. I ^{shall}~~look~~ forward, however, to seeing you a few days later at the European Council in Milan.

GP

Enclosures—flag(s).....

GREECE

May 80

Relativy



01 APR 1985