



MINISTER  
FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

01 276 5040

My ref:

Your ref:

Paul Gray Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

*RA - Issue resolved in connection  
between CDP and Portillo's  
trip.*

*RACG  
17/2*

2 February 1989

*Dear Paul*

I enclose a copy of a letter I have today sent to Stephen Wall concerning Mr Portillo's proposed trip to France from 26th to 28th February.

Since the Prime Minister will be in Paris for the Anglo-French Summit at the same time as Mr Portillo's visit, I thought it important that you should be aware of his proposed trip.

I would be very grateful if you could confirm that you see no difficulties with this.

*Yours sincerely  
Steve.*

STEPHEN BRAMALL  
Private Secretary



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My ref:

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Stephen Wall Esq  
Private Secretary to  
the Secretary of State for  
Foreign and Commonwealth  
Affairs  
Foreign Office  
Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AL

*Just* February 1989

*Dear Stephen*

I am writing to let you know that, subject to your Secretary of State's approval, Mr Portillo proposes to visit France from the evening of 26th February to the afternoon of 28th February to hold discussions with the French railways on the development of their TGV trains.

At present, the programme includes a trip on a TGV from Lyon to Paris on the morning of Monday 27th February followed by meetings with the French railways that afternoon. On Tuesday 28th February Mr Portillo plans to visit the Channel Tunnel site at Sangatte before returning to London that evening.

The TGV is of some significance to us at present in the light of BR's proposals to build a new high speed rail line through Kent from the Channel Tunnel to London. As you may know, this is causing considerable concern in Kent given the potential environmental impact of a new line, and comparisons with the French TGV are being made both from the noise impact of their high speed trains and the measures taken by the French to minimise the environmental impact.

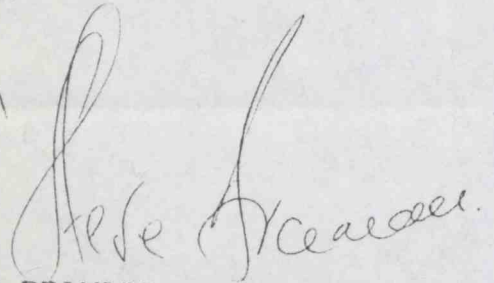
BR plan to announce their preferred route corridor for their high speed line early in March, and Mr Portillo feels that, before then, it is very important for him to have first hand experience and knowledge of the TGV for himself so that he can respond to the debate on the whole issue from an informed position.



Mr Portillo is aware that Monsieur Delebarre, the French Minister of Transport, will be unable to host the visit himself given other commitments. He is also aware that the Prime Minister will be in Paris at the same time, for the Anglo-French Summit, and that the Embassy in Paris will not be able to provide him with their usual level of hospitality. He is, nonetheless, content to proceed with the visit given the importance of the issues concerned, and the need to have experienced the TGV prior to BR's announcement in March.

I am writing in similar terms to Paul Gray at No.10 and to Murdo MacLean in the Chief Whips Office, and would be very grateful for an early indication that your Secretary of State is content for Mr Portillo's visit to proceed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Bramall".

STEPHEN BRAMALL  
Private Secretary