



Boe

cc FCO
OAK (McC. line)
(with enc.)

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

13 March 1986

Dear Tom,

I am most grateful to you and your staff for all the work which went into the preparations for the Anglo/Italian Summit in Florence yesterday. It was a useful meeting and, I thought, a successful occasion. I was particularly pleased to have a chance to see Florence itself. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned.

As you predicted, the Mayor raised with me the question of attendance by a British Minister at a major event during Florence's year as the cultural capital of Europe, as well as the possible loan of a major British work of art - he mentioned a Gainsborough or a Reynolds - for display in Florence this summer. I enclose a copy of a letter which I have written to the Mayor and hope that you will follow up his requests, both with him and with departments here. I shall ensure that the Foreign Secretary and the Minister for the Arts are aware of the request and my hope that we can respond favourably.

With best wishes,

Yours ever
Margaret

His Excellency The Lord Bridges, K.C.M.G.

Boe



BM

cc file
(all below)

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

13 March 1986

My dear Mayor.

I very much enjoyed my brief but memorable visit to Florence yesterday and would like to thank you most warmly for your personal hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made for me by the City authorities. The walk through the Vasari Corridor with its diversions into the Uffizi Gallery and into your own magnificent office was an unforgettable experience. I hope one day to be able to see them again at greater leisure.

I shall follow up your requests for attendance by a British Minister at a major function in Florence later this year, and for the possible loan of a work of art from one of our great galleries. I shall ask our Ambassador in Rome to be in touch with you about this.

With warm good wishes,

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Dott. Massimo Bogianckino

BM



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 April 1986

CPC

Dear Charles,

I don't have
no alternative
yet

Prime Minister:

Are you
convinced with this
negative reply?

Anglo/Italian Summit: Prime Minister's Meeting
with the Mayor of Florence

W
25/4

You will recall that when the Prime Minister met the Mayor of Florence on 12 March, he asked her if a major British work of art could be lent for the city's 'European City of Culture' celebrations. She agreed to pass on this request; and in writing to Lord Bridges on 13 March she expressed the hope that we would be able to respond favourably.

On investigation, this has proved problematic. Though aware of the Prime Minister's position, the British Council have already turned down a similar request, as they have serious doubts about the security and temperature of Italian galleries. Edinburgh City Council, which is twinned with Florence, has also refused, for the same reason. We have investigated other possible sources, but without any success: another major problem is that the British Council's policy decision means that there would be no Treasury indemnity, and expensive insurance would be necessary. And the case is further weakened by recent reports that the festival organisation is still chaotic.

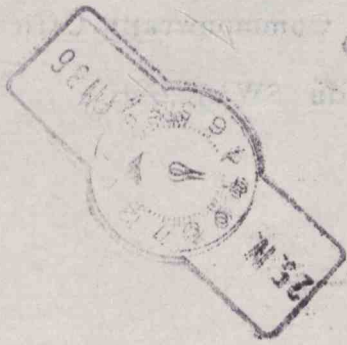
There is another new factor: the Mayor of Florence has recently been excluded from any participation in the organisation, which is now being handed over to a Commission of 'Twelve Wise Men'. That being so we propose, provided the Prime Minister has no objection, to send a message via our Ambassador in Rome that it has unfortunately proved impossible to provide a major painting of suitable quality at such short notice, and pointing out that the UK will in any event be represented by the exhibitions being organised by the British Council of English caricature and Ruskin deguerrotypes.

I am copying this letter to Paul Thomas in Mr Luce's office. His colleagues have also considered this issue carefully, and agree with the views expressed above.

Yours ever,
Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street



PM. Tours : Anglo -
Italian. May 1985



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 April 1986

**ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH
THE MAYOR OF FLORENCE**

Thank you for your letter of 25 April expatiating on the difficulties of meeting the Mayor of Florence's request for a major British work of art to be lent for the city's 'European City of Culture' exhibition. In view of the British Council's decision, the Prime Minister sees no alternative but to turn the request down.

Charles Powell

Colin Budd Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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CCPE
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PPS
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From the Minister for the Arts

Mark Addison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Prime Minister
CDP
7/4

4 April 1986

Dear Mark,

Thank you for sending my Minister a copy of the Prime Minister's letter of 13 March to Lord Bridges about the plans for Florence's year as European City of Culture.

Mr Luce will be happy to consider any invitation to Florence very seriously, although I should add that the reports we have so far received about the preparatory work for this event are not encouraging.

There are also some difficulties over the Mayor's request for the loan of a major painting, but we are looking further into this. The Prime Minister may wish to know that a number of British events are planned for Florence during the period, including two exhibitions and a Shakespeare production by a British company.

Yours,
Paul Thomas

PAUL THOMAS
Private Secretary

PM. Tours:

Anglo Italian

May '85

