



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 December 1988

Dear Charles,

Rhodes European Council: Offer to Prime Minister
of Honorary Citizenship of Greek Island

The Greeks plan to give each Head of Government attending the European Council honorary citizenship of an island in the Dodecanese. This is equivalent to freedom of a city in this country. We have no knowledge of a previous case of a British subject being given this honour. This is the local Greek Commissioner's idea.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs are anxious to avoid disrupting the programme for the European Council by having to accommodate large public ceremonies. They have suggested that mayoral delegations call separately on Heads of Government at their hotels or elsewhere.

It is not known how other Heads of Government will respond to the idea, but we have not heard of any resistance. The Embassy in Athens understand Mitterrand is expected to accept and possibly in a more public place than his hotel.

The island of Halki wishes to make the Prime Minister an honorary citizen. It is the only island with a woman mayor, which is presumably the reason for this allocation.

Halki is similar in size (12sq miles) and population (400) to Sark. Our Embassy say the inhabitants have a strong tradition of affection for Britain and very pleased to welcome Mrs Thatcher as a citizen. Their mayor, Mrs Stamatia Vassiloyeoryi, is a member of Papandreou's socialist PASOK party and served as a merchant mariner before becoming Halki's mayor in 1986. She speaks some English.

If the Prime Minister agrees in principle, the Embassy recommend that if ten minutes can be found in the programme the Prime Minister should agree to receive the mayoral party herself. If not, the Ambassador (or presumably his Number 2 if he is still ill) would accept the honour on the Prime Minister's behalf. You may wish to take a final decision on the spot in Rhodes.

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq.
PS/No 10 Downing Street



PS/Prime Minister

PRIME MINISTER - HONORARY CITIZEN OF HALKI

1. The Greek MFA have asked whether and when the Prime Minister will accept the Honorary Citizenship of the island of Halki. A ceremony involving all the Heads of Government is not envisaged.
2. We have told them that if the Prime Minister is unable to accept in person, I will do so on her behalf.
3. We have also suggested that the best time for any formal ceremony involving the Prime Minister might be before 9.45 am on Saturday 3 December in the Rodos Palace Hotel. The Mayoress of Halki, Mrs Stamatia Vassiloyeoryi, would make the presentation. The ceremony need last no more than 5 minutes and could take place in Mr Ingham's suite. Depending on the venue and time available, we would have to tell the Greeks how many (if any) Greek and British journalists might attend. The Mayoress might also wish to bring some officials with her. She speaks a little English, but our Greek Liaison Officer, Mr Papadopoulos, would interpret.

J B DONNELLY
Counsellor
British Embassy, Athens

1 December 1988

cc; Mr B Ingham
Chief Press Secretary



Charles
You were going
to get the photo
personalise a
photo in connection
with this. DA 2/12

PS/Prime Minister

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Eric Donnelly

J B DONNELLY
Counsellor
British Embassy, Athens

1 December 1988

cc; Mr B Ingham
Chief Press Secretary



PS/Prime Minister

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LOCAL CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER - SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER

Honorary Citizenship of Halki

1. You said that the Prime Minister might receive the Mayor of Halki for 5 minutes at 9 am tomorrow. If other business gets in the way, I will receive her instead. We have passed this on.

✓ 2. I suggest that if she is available, the Prime Minister receive the Mayor in her suite. Unless we tell her otherwise, the Mayor will be accompanied by a local councillor, a local photo/journalist and our Honorary Consul, Mr Demetriades. I will also attend. The Mayor will make a short speech and hand over the freedom of the island. I understand the Prime Minister could hand over a signed photograph.

/ 3. I attach a background note on the Mayor and the island.

New Democracy Ladies' Section

✓ 4. Mrs Maroulitsa Venetoclis, President of the local branch of the New Democracy Ladies Section (NDLS) has asked for 5 minutes of the Prime Minister's time to hand over a specialty prepared silver object. Mrs Venetoclis says that she wishes to honour the Prime Minister both as a lady and as leader of a traditional conservative party with ideals corresponding to those of the NDLS. The NDLS is a national movement set up in opposition to the socialist union of Greek Women run by Mr Papandreou's estranged wife. It has a large membership but not a high political profile.

| 5. If the Prime Minister is prepared to see her as well, we could tell Mrs Venetoclis to come immediately after the Mayor of Halki. She would be accompanied by 1-2 colleagues, but no journalists.

Brian Donnelly

J B DONNELLY
Counsellor, British Embassy

2 December 1988

cc; Mr Ingham



PRIME MINISTER; HONORARY CITIZEN OF HALKI

1. On the initiative of the Nomarch (equivalent to the French prefet), the leaders present at the Rhodes Council are to become honorary citizens of individual islands in the Dodecannese. The Prime Minister has been allocated Halki, the only one to have a woman Mayor.
2. There appears to be no special reason for allocation of the islands except that, as Head of State, M Mitterrand gets Rhodes; Halki has a woman Mayor; and Mr Papandreou takes the smallest island (and the most vulnerable to Turkey).
3. The inhabitants of Halki are very pleased to welcome Mrs Thatcher as a citizen. They have a strong tradition of affection for Britain, heightened by the Second World War which saw a number of SBS commanders in Halki.

The Island

4. Halki is one of the smaller Dodecannese, immediately to the west of Rhodes. Halki made its first mark on recorded history in pre-classical times. A Castle of the Knights (of St John) incorporates much of the ancient Greek acropolis. The island is barren and hilly but with sandy beaches. Until tourism arrived, the main occupations of the islanders had been fishing and diving for sponges. Its population of 3,500 in 1912, when the Italians took over from the Turks, had fallen to 450 by the end of the war. There is now a permanent population of 400, rising to 1,000 plus (excluding tourists) in the summer months. The British make up the bulk of foreign holidaymakers (5,500 nights in 1987) and tend to be less down-market than elsewhere.

The Mayor

5. Mrs Stamatia Vassiloyeoryi was elected Mayor in 1986. She is a socialist (PASOK). Born in 1945, both she and her husband were merchant mariners. He is still a serving captain but she has retired as a radio operator. She has necessarily travelled widely, including to Britain on many occasions. She speaks some English but not well. She has two children; a girl (20) working in the MOD in Athens; and a boy (17).