

PREM 19/2671

NEW FILE COVER

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Proposals for a common format for the  
passports of European Community Member States

EUROPEAN POLICY

Abolition of frontier formalities within the  
European Community

April 1980

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<del>11.2.87.</del>							
<del>26.7.88</del>							
23.3.89							
<p>PREM 19 / 2671</p>							





Thank you -  
we must NOT  
lose this one

10 DOWNING STREET

Rice Minister

us

Ken will want

to see this  
OD(E) (87) 3

paper for OD(E)

in Frontier Controls

in the Community.

We are making some

ground with other

member states. But

at the end of the

road - and still a

long way off - in the

Spectre of a  
European Court

Judgment against m.

I sometimes think

this may turn

out to be the

first issue occasion on

which we have to

disobey an ECT

judgment.

CDP  
23/3



Who  
Log  
AKD

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

26 July 1988

PASSPORT OFFICES

Thank you for your letter of 25 July about the computerisation of passports and interim measures about the backlog. The Prime Minister has seen this.

DOMINIC MORRIS

Nick Sanderson, Esq.,  
Home Office.

KK

cc/pu

010



Prime Minister <sup>2</sup>

HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

You might like to glance  
at this report on computerisation  
of passports & interim measures to cut  
the backlog.

25 July 1988

Dear Dominic,

Jul 25/7

PASSPORT OFFICES

The Prime Minister will be aware of the problems which there have been this year in some of the Passport Offices. At their worst during the height of the passport application season in June, it was taking up to 12 weeks for passports to be issued in London unless the application was urgent. As a result of emergency measures things have improved, and turn around times are now more of the order of a month. The Home Secretary asked me to let you know what we have been doing to overcome these problems, and of our plans for computerisation.

For many years there has been a steady increase in the number of applications for passports, largely because of easier and cheaper foreign travel. Demand tends to peak in the spring and early summer as people begin to make summer holiday plans and temporary staff have to be taken on at these times. Applications this year are up a quarter on the same period last year, and we expect to have issued 2.5 million passports in the year 1988/89.

The present passport is produced with clerical systems which have changed little since it was introduced in the 1920s. When the Home Office took over responsibility for passports from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in April 1984 it had already been recognised, following a Rayner Scrutiny in 1982, that there was an urgent need to establish a more modern approach. We gave priority to the plan to computerise the issue of passports and the first will be issued from Glasgow in August this year. The other offices will be phased in over the next 18 months. This major computerisation has been achieved from a standing start in a little over four years. The target is to reduce the time for processing applications to five days, although it would be optimistic to assume that this will be achieved at once. A computerisation programme of this size is bound to be vulnerable, not least to industrial action. I attach an Annex explaining in more detail how the computer system will work.

Until the computerisation plan is complete, we will have to rely, albeit to a decreasing extent, on the existing manual systems. This is a particular problem in London - where we have had the most difficulty over the past few months - because of the high proportion of personal callers which we always get at the London office, and because of the difficulty in recruiting clerical staff in London, of which the London office employs several hundred.

We have responded to the difficulties with a variety of emergency measures, the most important of which are an increase in temporary staff (250 since January), the use of overtime, the transfer of work between the six Passport Offices, extending the validity of expired passports, and persuading certain overseas countries to accept expired ten year passports or British Visitors Passports, which are available from main post offices. The improvements in turn around times which have been achieved are shown in the following table, where the significant drop in London times is largely due to the transfer of postal work elsewhere.

Passport Office	Average time between receipt of non-urgent passport application and despatch of passport (working days)	
	17 July 1988	19 June 1988
London	24	61
Glasgow	11	39
Peterborough	29	35
Newport	20	22
Liverpool	12	14
Belfast	3	3

(These figures are for ordinary passport applications. Urgent applications and certain kinds of application lodged in person, through travel agencies or through businesses are dealt with very much more quickly).

#### Restricting the Travel of Football Hooligans

At the Prime Minister's meeting on 29 June the Home Secretary undertook to circulate a factual note about the use of the computerised passport system as a means of enforcing any prohibitions which might be made by the courts on overseas travel by convicted football hooligans. Work has been commissioned on this, which amongst other things will consider the costs and feasibility of abolishing the BVP entirely, and the political and industrial relations implications of doing so. The BVP is a popular document because of the ease with which it can be obtained from a local post office, and limiting the issue of travel documents to the six Passport Offices could put a powerful weapon in the hands of the unions. Another approach which will be considered is linking post offices to a central data base. The Home Secretary intends to circulate a paper dealing with these questions after the holiday period.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Lord President, the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Chief Secretary, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Minister for Sport, and Sir Robin Butler.

*Yours truly*  
*Nick*

N C SANDERSON



## COMPUTERISATION OF PASSPORT ISSUING

1. The decision to computerise was taken shortly after the Home Office became responsible for the Passport Department precisely because it was realised that a manual system could not indefinitely cope with projected increases in demand. This was especially so when agreement on a new EC machine readable common format passport meant radical changes to the specification of the passport.
2. The operational requirement for the passport issuing and management information system (PIMIS) was issued in January 1986, and we have now reached the point where the computer system is undergoing final trials in the Glasgow Passport Office. Blank machine-readable passports are being produced from a new assembly line by HMSO, new and simplified application forms are ready for distribution, and staff in Glasgow are being trained for the "go live" date of 15 August. Later in the year all postal applications made to London will be issued from the Glasgow office in the new format, leaving London to concentrate on personal callers, who make up 50% of its customers.
3. Liverpool will follow at the turn of the year. The smallest office, Belfast, will be linked to Liverpool in April. Installation at Peterborough and Newport will follow in July and October. London, the last of the six offices to operate under PIMIS, will convert from the existing manual system in December 1989 for its remaining personal callers. The computerised passport issuing system is therefore planned to have bedded down and be running smoothly throughout the UK by mid-1990.
4. PIMIS will eventually be capable of meeting routine passport applications within a period of five days. It will also provide a better management information system so that delayed or difficult applications can be traced quickly in response to enquiries. Some information leaflets issued to staff, which describe the new system, are attached.

### British Visitor's Passport

5. PIMIS could have implications in the long run for the future of the British Visitor's Passport (BVP). Although of limited validity it is a very popular document: 2.2 million were issued in the last financial year from over 1,500 Crown Post Offices as compared to 2.1 million full passports. The BVP can be obtained over the counter on the day of application without the need for complicated paperwork and, though PIMIS aims to deliver full passports within five days of receipt of application, it will not match the popular BVP even if the latter's acceptability is fairly restricted.

6. While PIMIS itself has not been designed to replace the BVP as opposed to the manual full passport system, the computer supplier was specifically asked to provide a capability for future expansion to allow for an increase in demand should the BVP be discontinued. Further work is being done on the costs and feasibility of different approaches to the BVP in the context of controlling the movement of football hooligans. This will include consideration of the risk that restricting public service to only six outlets would lead to the system as a whole being vulnerable to industrial action.



PASSPORT DEPARTMENT

# PIMIS

## What is PIMIS ?

PIMIS is the Passport Issuing and Management Information System.

This System will be computer based and is intended to:—

- enable the new British Passport, which will be in the format and colour adopted by all members of the EEC, to be produced in a machine readable form;
- improve both the efficiency of the Passport issuing operation and the quality of the work performed in Passport Offices;
- cope with the expected growth in the demand for passports.



Leaflet 1



## THE NEW EEC FORMAT PASSPORT

### Will new issues be EEC Passports ?

Although the new passports will be in the format adopted by member states of the EEC and will include the heading 'European Community' on the front cover, they will still be British passports and will continue to bear the Royal Coat of Arms and the title 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'.

### What will happen to old 'Blue' passports following computerisation ?

The issue of 'blue' passports will cease once PIMIS has been implemented in a Passport Office but 'blue' passports already in issue will be valid for the remainder of their life. Requests for amendments to existing 'blue' passports will continue to be received and resulting entries will be made in manuscript, as at present. However, the computer system will be used to account for any fee paid and to track the whereabouts of the passport in its progress through the office.

### Will the Application forms stay the same ?

In parallel with work on the new passport books it has been necessary to review the existing Forms of Application. This work is not yet complete but the basic aim is to produce a shorter and simpler Form of Application, which will be easier to complete from the public point of view and easier to process when received in the Passport Office.



Leaflet 2



PASSPORT  
DEPARTMENT



# MACHINE READABLE PASSPORTS

## What is a Machine Readable Passport ?

Although described as a 'machine readable' passport (MRP), only two lines of computer-printed information will be scanned by special reading equipment.

The attached example from a specimen MRP contains the personal details of the holder of the passport. This will appear on the inside of the back cover. The computer-printed entries are in a special font, or type face, called OCR B. This font has the advantage of being readable by both the human eye and a machine.

The layout of the personalised page conforms to an international standard established through the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). ICAO took the lead in promoting this standard MRP because, with the rapid growth in air travel and the increased capacity of modern aircraft, it saw the need to speed up the movement of passengers through airports. The Passport Department was represented on the panel of experts which produced the detailed specification.

## What are the benefits of a Machine Readable Passport ?

The MRP offers immigration authorities world-wide the opportunity of allowing bona fide travellers to pass quickly through airport terminals whilst maintaining the effectiveness of immigration controls. Since British citizens already pass speedily through our controls, and it is not intended to read their passports by machine routinely, holders of British MRPs will benefit most when they pass through foreign controls where passport reading equipment is used. Where machine reading is not in operation the standard format of the MRP and the inclusion of all personal details on a single page should also mean a significant reduction in the time taken for visual inspection.

As the benefits of machine readability cannot be realised unless a passport relates to a single individual, the family passport, which currently includes the particulars of the wife or husband of the holder, will cease to be available. However, it will still be possible to include details of accompanying children, though not on the machine readable page.



Leaflet 3



# THE COMPUTER

## Who is producing the Computer System ?

A special team, the PIMIS Project Team, was set up and a Project Manager appointed to oversee the development and implementation of the system.

Some members of the team are responsible for issues affecting users of the system (especially the functions to be performed and the procedures to be followed under computerisation); others are computer specialists; and the remainder have a support or monitoring function.

In common with other government departments which face the problem of a scarcity of computer specialists, the Home Office elected to turn to the commercial sector for the supply of the computer system.

Software Sciences Limited (SSL) of Farnborough in Hampshire have contracted to supply the system, including provision of the computer and development of the programs required to perform specific functions within the passport issuing process.

The progress of SSL is being closely monitored by the PIMIS team which has the responsibility throughout the stages of development and implementation for ensuring that all defined user and technical requirements are being met. But above all the team has the responsibility for ensuring that the system is capable of being understood and used by Passport Office staff after a short period of training and that it is delivered to time and to budget.

## Where will the computer be sited ?

With one exception, there will be a free-standing computer installed in each Passport Office. The exception is the Belfast Office which will be connected to Liverpool via a British Telecom link.

The computer and its associated storage devices (magnetic discs and tapes) will be sited in a specially prepared room. A number of terminal systems, or workstations, which will be linked by cables to the central computer, will be sited in operational areas within each office. Although smaller, the operational area in the Belfast Office will have the same equipment as all other offices.

The basic components of a workstation will be a keyboard, (similar to that on a typewriter but with additional keys for specific functions), a visual display unit (similar to a television screen) to display information already held in the computer system or recently keyed by the operator and a bar code reader to identify individual applications.

Additional devices (receipt printers, passport printers and passport readers) will be added to specific terminal systems in the cashiering section and the issue room.

## Who will look after the Computer System ?

A System Manager will be appointed in each office. He or she will be responsible for routine matters such as ensuring that all elements are switched on and in working order. He or she will also deal with local queries about the system or its operation.

If a technical problem arises which the Systems Manager cannot deal with, assistance or advice will be sought from a PIMIS specialist in ED5 (known as the Configuration Manager).

Problems which cannot be resolved by the Configuration Manager will be referred on to the supplier of the computer system, Software Sciences Limited (SSL). SSL are under contract to maintain the system in full working order throughout its life.

Leaflet 4



# THE PASSPORT ISSUING PROCESS

## What will be the effect of computerisation ?

Most, though not all, of the PIMIS functions will call for access to the computer through connected workstations. Workstations will be used in different ways and to a greater or lesser extent according to the functions to be performed.

The most noticeable and beneficial effects will be found in the ability to uniquely identify and track an application and in the Issue Room process.

## Identification and tracking of applications

With the dual aim of providing a better service to the public and of drastically reducing the time consuming task of searching for papers within the Passport Office, it is planned to uniquely identify each application. This will be done by attaching to each form, as it is received, a self-adhesive bar code label similar to that which now appears on most pre-packed consumer products. This pre-printed label, which will be coded differently for every application, will be read by a special light pen at each stage of processing in order to record the physical whereabouts (e.g. batch within section) of a particular application. This, combined with the ability to search for records on the computer by surname, forename or initial and date of birth, will enable a positive response to be given to any enquirer and, if necessary, for the application in question to be quickly retrieved.

## Passport production and issue

In the case of the Issue Room process, the standard workstation will be supplemented by special printing and reading equipment.

The printer will be used, in combination with the VDU and keyboard, to print inside the back cover of the passport, the personal details of the holder and two lines of machine readable information. Details of any children to be included or any observations or comments will also be printed at this stage, but on a separate page or pages from that containing the personal particulars. This will mean that the existing need to make manuscript entries in new passports will have been eliminated.

After printing, the process of inserting the applicant's photograph and, subsequently, of lamination can be effected. These too will show an improvement over the current method and the requirement for embossing will be withdrawn. The removal of a protective strip in the book will expose an adhesive patch for the attachment of the photograph. The inclusion of a laminate of page size at the stage of assembly of the Passport Book by HMSO will mean that the printed book (with the photograph inserted) only needs to be fed through a small and unsophisticated heat-producing machine to complete the production process.

To ensure that the final product will be capable of being machine-read when in the possession of the passport holder, a new process will be added but this will only involve the operator in feeding the machine readable portion (the last two lines of the page containing personal details of the holder) into a slot in the special reading device. The computer will then confirm readability or indicate any imperfection to be brought to the supervisor's attention.

The process of physically issuing the completed passport books and associated documents will also be made easier through the availability in each case of a computer-printed adhesive label for attachment to the envelope.

## Other main functions

The other main functions in the overall process of handling passport applications are commented on in turn from the point of view of the impact of computerisation.

Leaflet 5





## Post Opening

There is no scope for linking this essentially manual task to the computer system and the existing method will continue.

## Cashiering

It is at this stage for postal applications that the bar code label will be attached and the computer terminal and light pen will first be used to create a record on the computer. In addition details of individual payments and of the service required will be entered through a simple process and payments will be automatically fed into the underlying accounting system.

## Recording Personal Details

This function is included in PIMIS in order to extract from the form of application the information which will be required later to print the new passport and to create an address label for the despatch of the completed book. It will also capture the details to be held in the Passport Department's Main Index of passport holders. Here again the record will be identified through its unique bar code. The basic information (or data) will be entered through a keyboard and the associated visual display unit (VDU) will be pre-formatted to facilitate the process of entering the separate items of data. The new forms of application will be designed to ensure that the data appears in a logical order.

This process will also include an automatic check against the SF (Stop File), which will be incorporated into PIMIS and no longer remain as a separate system. Any resulting match on the applicant or a child addition will be highlighted for referral to the SF Section for decision.

## Examination

The basic function of determining entitlement and authorising issue will be carried out according to existing rules and procedures. However, each examiner will have a computer terminal (VDU and Keyboard with light pen) to enable him or her to call up and inspect the personal details entered at the previous stage and to make any necessary amendment to those details. This in turn may automatically trigger a further check of the Stop File.

An examiner will also be able to record a refund decision; to add observation or endorsement detail to the applicant's record and, if required, to construct a letter from standard paragraphs, which will be held in a computer file and be available for perusal.

## Registry

Registry sections will continue to be responsible for the issue of letters to applicants, to hold outstanding forms of application and to deal with enquiries but they will be helped in these tasks under PIMIS. As stated above letters will be constructed at the examining stage; it will only remain therefore for Registry to print and issue letters as a matter of routine and to store the application which can still be identified and traced through its unique bar code.

## Counter Applications

Counter operations will follow the current pattern in relation to the determination of entitlement and authorisation for issue but a bar code label will be attached to all applications presented. The bar code will be subsequently read by the cashier who in so doing will create the base computer record and enter details of the payment and service required. For counter cases a printed receipt will be produced by a printer associated with the cashier's terminal and given to the applicant.

As the process of entering personal details will follow examination by counter staff there will be no opportunity for the examiner to check the data which has been entered. To ensure that this has been done correctly it will be subjected to a process of verification within the recording section.

Leaflet 5



## TRAINING

### When will I learn how to use the computer ?

When the computer system has been installed in a Passport Office and before live work is handled by the system, there will be a period of two weeks dedicated to training and education. During this period the office concerned will only be expected to handle the most urgent items of work. This will enable members of staff to concentrate on learning their new roles.

Tutors will be available to instruct and guide staff in these new tasks and specially prepared workbooks will be issued to provide set exercises and practice material.

The workbook will continue to be available when the initial training has been completed and will be used then to train not only existing members of staff to perform other roles within PIMIS but also newcomers to the Passport Department.

### Will all new procedures be covered during computer training ?

The workbook mentioned above will be used specifically to cover computer related tasks, all of which will be new. However, not all of the procedures necessary for the operation of the overall process of passport authorisation and issue will be new and where practicable and possible the system has been designed to mirror the present manual system.

All procedures whether new or existing, whether manual or computer related, will be set down in one document. This is the Procedures Manual, which will serve as the basic reference document throughout the life of the PIMIS system. The Procedures Manual will be amended whenever a procedural change is required.



Leaflet 6



## THE WORKLOAD

### Will the workload decrease as a result of computerisation ?

Although computerisation will bring with it the benefits of speedier passport issue and improvements in efficiency and the quality of work performed, the numbers required overall to operate the passport issuing system are unlikely to diminish. This is partly because the demand for passports has been increasing steadily over the past few years but withdrawal of the family passport when computerisation is introduced will mean that it will be further increased. The need to issue a replacement passport whenever an amendment is made to the personal details page will also have the effect of inflating the figure for passports issued. Estimates show that the number of passports issued could rise from the current level of 2.1 million to 3 million per annum when the computerisation programme has been completed.

The number of applications dealt with in the London Office, however, will drop with the phased transfer of postal work to Glasgow but this will result in a corresponding increase in the work of the Glasgow Office. Details of the plans for dispersal were included in Home Office Notice 39/1987.

### What will happen if estimates are wrong and the workload falls ?

There is unlikely to be a reduction in the present level of staffing in the Passport Department as a result of the implementation of PIMIS and the TUS have been assured that redundancies will not arise in Glasgow, nor be a problem in London or at Hayes where alternative jobs in the London area have been assured. Elsewhere in the Passport Department no compulsory redundancies will occur as a result of implementing PIMIS; if any reduction in numbers should prove necessary, surplus staff would be offered posts in another Home Office establishment in the same area, or if that were not possible the Department would rely on natural wastage to reduce numbers to the authorised level.

The concern of members of staff about the security of their employment is well understood by senior management. The assurances given are intended to allay fears that any staff might lose their jobs as a consequence of the Passport Department's computerisation plans.



Leaflet 7



## TIMETABLE

### When will the computer system be introduced ?

PIMIS will be phased in over a period of eighteen months. The currently agreed programme is as follows:—

Glasgow	—	July 1988
Liverpool	—	December 1988
Belfast	—	April 1989
Peterborough	—	July 1989
Newport	—	September 1989
London	—	December 1989



Leaflet 8





hla  
JW  
bcpc  
10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

11 February 1987

**COMPUTERISATION OF PASSPORT OFFICES  
AND INTRODUCTION OF COMMON EC FORMAT  
MACHINE READABLE PASSPORTS**

The Prime Minister has noted the Home Secretary's minute of 10 February about the computerisation of UK passport offices and introduction of the EC format machine readable passport. She very much agrees that we should not attempt to produce a limited number of the passports in 1987.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of OD(E) and members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

(C. D. POWELL)

Stephen Boys Smith, Esq.,  
Home Office.



CPPC ②

Prime Minister

It must surely be right NOT to issue any passports in 1987. It would only cause an unnecessary & pointless row.

Prime Minister

Agreed m/s

COMPUTERISATION OF PASSPORT OFFICES AND INTRODUCTION OF COMMON EC FORMAT MACHINE READABLE PASSPORTS

CDP 1072-

This note is intended to bring you and other colleagues up to date on the computerisation of UK Passport Offices and introduction of the EC format machine readable passport.

The aim which you and other colleagues agreed and which Leon Brittan announced to Parliament in July 1984 was to achieve computerisation and begin issuing the new passports by 1987. We have made good progress with the planning and a firm contract was let in December. Mid-1988 however is now the earliest date we can achieve for computerisation of the first of our offices, Glasgow. The programme will be phased so that all 6 offices are computerised by late 1989.

I have considered with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary whether we might arrange to produce specially a limited number of the passports in 1987 for the sake of our reputation in Europe. (Some 6,000 could be produced as a symbolic gesture for issue to Members of the Government, other Parliamentarians, officials working in the Community and (a relatively small number) to members of the public). It would involve us in a good deal of work leading to a Parliamentary announcement in mid-July. It would also expose us to some domestic risk of ridicule or resentment. We are agreed therefore that we should not pursue the idea especially since the Netherlands and West Germany who, like the UK, intend to produce a machine readable document, are unlikely to introduce their passports until 1988. We shall concentrate our efforts, instead, on ensuring we meet our own target date of mid-1988. The Foreign Secretary makes the point that if there were any slippage we might need to reconsider a special issue but I am reasonably confident that this will not arise.

/You will

... You will wish to see the enclosed prototypes of two passports - the EC format and the look-alike - which we propose to issue. The EC format document which is essentially the same as the one that you and other colleagues have already seen will be issued to those defined as UK nationals for EC purposes; the look-alike will be issued to other British nationals. The latter is a more straightforward document because it does not need to observe requirements of the EC Resolution governing format.

You should be aware that when the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration examined officials last summer on immigration and passport matters they asked to see the latest prototypes. They have renewed their interest in this general area and I have approved a memorandum which will now go forward giving sight of the prototype and reporting that 1988 is now the target date for introduction. I have arranged to answer a Parliamentary Question on computerisation and the new passport in as low key a manner as possible and putting the UK, West Germany and the Netherlands in the same boat in not issuing the machine readable passport until 1988.

Copies of this note with enclosures go to the Foreign Secretary, other members of OD(E), to members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Douglas Hurd.

10 February 1987

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

UNITED KINGDOM OF  
GREAT BRITAIN  
AND NORTHERN IRELAND



PASSPORT



Modification to be made to  
CFP and look-alike prototypes.

CFP

1. Greek text to be changed to non italicised type face with correction to spelling of Kingdom on page 1 and substitution of correct word for Notes on page 3.
2. Accent (´) for deliverance on last page.

Look-alike

1. Remove index on page 4 as unnecessary.
2. Accent (´) for deliverance on last page.

SPECIMEN



*Her Britannic Majesty's  
Secretary of State  
Requests and requires  
in the Name of Her Majesty  
all those whom it may concern  
to allow the bearer to pass freely  
without let or hindrance,  
and to afford the bearer  
such assistance and protection  
as may be necessary.*

**European  
Community**

Det Europæiske Fællesskab  
Europäische Gemeinschaft  
H Euzerriaren Batzarre  
Comunidad Europea  
Communauté Européenne  
An Comhpháil Eorpach  
Comunità Europea  
European Gemeenschap  
Comunidade Europeia

**United  
Kingdom of  
Great Britain  
and Northern  
Ireland**

Det Forenede Kongerige  
Storbritannien og Nordirland  
Verenigtes Kongerike  
Grossbritannien und Nordirland  
Hespeden Baniadon yn Meyddas  
Begerennet yw Boganus Ighardias  
Reino Unido de Gran Bretaña e  
Irlanda del Norte  
Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne  
et d'Irlande du Nord  
Bleath Aontaithe na Breataine  
Móire agus Éireann  
Regno Unito di Gran Bretagna e  
Irlanda del Nord  
Veniged Koninkrijk van Groot-  
Britannië en Noord-Ierland  
Reino Unido da Grã-Bretanha e da  
Irlanda do Norte

**PASSPORT**

Pas - Reisepass - Διαβατήριο  
Pasaporto - Passeport - Pas  
Passaporto - Paspoort - Passaport

Name:  
Age:  
Sex:  
Date of birth:  
Date of issue:  
Serial No.:

Given name:  
Surname:

Date of birth:  
Date of issue: (4) Sex: (5)



**Bemærkninger - Hinweise - Escobalar - Observaciones  
Avis - Nitsai - Avisos - Opmerkingen - Anotaciones**

**1. Validity** - A passport is valid for ten years, unless otherwise stated. If issued to a child under sixteen years of age it is normally valid for five years in the first instance but may be extended for a further five years without further charge. A passport which is ten years old or has no further space for visas must be replaced by a new one.

**2. Citizenship and National Status** - British citizens have the right of abode in the United Kingdom. No right of abode in the United Kingdom derives from the status, as British nationals, of British Dependent Territories citizens, British Nationals (Overseas), British Overseas citizens, British protected persons and British subjects.

**3. Immigration and Visa Requirements** - The possession of a passport does not exempt the holder from compliance with any immigration regulations in force in any territory or from the necessity of obtaining a visa or permit where required. It should be noted in this connection that the majority of British territories overseas have immigration restrictions applicable to British nationals as well as aliens.

**4. Children** - Children who have reached the age of sixteen years require separate passports.

**5. Registration Overseas** - British nationals resident overseas who are entitled to the protection of the United Kingdom authorities should contact the nearest British High Commission, Embassy or Consulate to enquire about any arrangements for registration of their names and addresses. Failure to do so may in an emergency result in difficulty or delay in securing them assistance and protection.

**6. Dual Nationality** - British nationals who are also nationals of another country cannot be protected by Her Majesty's Representatives against the authorities of that country. If, under the law of that country, they are liable for any obligation (such as military service), the fact that they are British nationals does not exempt them from it. A person having some connection with a Commonwealth or foreign country (eg by birth, by descent through either parent, by marriage or by residence) may be a national of that country, in addition to being a British national. Acquisition of British nationality or citizenship by a foreigner does not necessarily cause the loss of nationality of origin.

**7. Caution** - This passport remains the property of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and may be withdrawn at any time. It should not be tampered with or passed to an unauthorised person. Any case of loss or destruction should be immediately reported to the local police and to the nearest British passport issuing authority (eg Passport Office, London; British Consulate; British High Commission or Colonial authorities); only after exhaustive enquiries can a replacement be issued in such circumstances. The passport of a deceased person should be submitted for cancellation to the nearest such passport authority; it will be returned on request.

- 1 Surname / Efternavn / Name / Επώνυμο / Apellido / Nom /  
Skoone / Cognome / Naam / Apelido
- 2 Given names / Fornavne / Vornamen / Ονόματα /  
Nombres de pila / Prénoms /  
Rāmbainm (inacha) / Prenoms / Voornamen / Nomes próprios
- 3 Nationality / Nationalitet / Staatsangehörigkeit / Ιθαγένεια /  
Nacionalidad / Nationalité / Nationalität / Cidadania /  
Nationaliteit / Nacionalidade
- 4 Date of birth / Fødselsdato / Geburtsdatum /  
Ημερομηνία γεννήσεως / Fecha de nacimiento /  
Date de naissance / Dem breithe /  
Data di nascita / Geboortedatum / Data do nascimento
- 5 Sex / Køn / Geschlecht / φύλο / Sexo / Gênero / Sesso /  
Geschlecht / Sexo
- 6 Place of birth / Fødested / Geburtsort / Τόπος γεννήσεως /  
Lugar de nacimiento / Lieu de naissance / Áit breithe /  
Lugar de nascença / Geboorteplaats / Lugar do nascimento
- 7 Date of issue / Udstedelsesdato / Ausstellungsdatum /  
Ημερομηνία εκδόσεως / Fecha de expedición /  
Date de délivrance / Data emisiunii / Data di rilascio /  
Datum van afgifte / Data da emissão
- 8 Date of expiry / Gyldigt indtil / Gültig bis / Αρχειοθρα /  
Fecha de vencimiento / Ce passeport expire le / As feidhan /  
Data di scadenza / De geldigheidsduur van dit paspoort  
eindigt op / Este passaporte é válido até
- 9 Authority / Passdstedende myndighed / Behörde / Αρχή /  
Autoridad / Autorité / Óðars / Autorità / Instançe / Autoridade
- 10 Holder's signature / Indehaverens underskrift /  
Unterschrift des Passinhabers / Υπογραφή του κατόχου /  
Firma del titular / Signature du titulaire /  
Sínid an tsealbhoira / Firma del titolare /  
Handtekening van de houder / Assinatura do titular
- 11 Children / Barn / Kinder / Παιδιά / Hijos / Enfants / Izanai /  
Figli / Kinderen / Filhos

































## Emergencies

The holder should insert below particulars of two relatives or friends who may be contacted in the event of accident.

*Any amendments should be made on a slip of paper which the holder should affix over this space.*

Name/Νομ.

Name/Νομ.

Address/Αδρεσε

Address/Αδρεσε

Telephone/Τηλέφωνο

Τηλεφωνο/Τυλόφωνο

This passport contains 32 (numbered) pages

Δετέ πασ βεσντ 32 (αυμμεριετέδε) σιδε

Dieser Pass enthält 32 (numerierte) Seiten

Το βεσπορτέριε αυτέ περιέχει 32 (αριθμημένες) σελίδες

Este pasaporte contiene 32 páginas (numeradas)

Ce pasaport conține 32 pagini (numerate)

Τα 32 βελιανάχ αυμμεριετέδε σα φλας τεο

Il presente passaporto contiene 32 pagine (numerate)

Dit paspoort bevat 32 (genummerde) bladzijden

Este pasaporte contém 32 páginas (numeradas)

Holder's signature/Signature du titulaire (10)

## United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Passport Passeport

Type/Type Country code/Codes de pays

Passport No./Passeport n<sup>o</sup>

Surname/Νομ.

Given name/Πρώτο όνομα (1)

Sex/Σέξ/Matrimonial (3)

Date of birth/Ημερ. γεννησίνος (4)

Sex/Σέξ (5) Place of birth/Lieu de naissance (6)

Date of issue/Date de délivrance (7)

Authority/Αρμόδιος (8)

Date of expiry/Date d'expiration expirée (9)





EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

UNITED KINGDOM OF  
GREAT BRITAIN  
AND NORTHERN IRELAND



PASSPORT

SPECIMEN



*Her Britannic Majesty's  
Secretary of State  
Requests and requires  
in the Name of Her Majesty  
all those whom it may concern  
to allow the bearer to pass freely  
without let or hindrance,  
and to afford the bearer  
such assistance and protection  
as may be necessary.*

United Kingdom of  
Great Britain  
and Northern  
Ireland

Royaume-Uni  
de Grande-  
Bretagne  
et d'Irlande  
du Nord

SPECIMEN

PASSPORT

Passeport

Supplement  
No. 1  
Children/Infants



Green names/  
Passeports

Date of birth/  
Date de naissance

Sex/  
Sexe

## NOTES

- 1 Validity** A passport is valid for ten years, unless otherwise stated. If issued to a child under sixteen years of age it is normally valid for five years in the first instance, but may be extended for a further five years without further charge. A passport which is ten years old or has no further space for visas must be replaced by a new one.
- 2 Citizenship and National Status** British citizens have the right of abode in the United Kingdom. No right of abode in the United Kingdom derives from the status of British national, or British Dependent Territories citizen, British Nationals (Overseas), British Overseas citizens, British protected persons and British subjects.
- 3 Immigration and Visa Requirements** The possession of a passport does not exempt the holder from compliance with any immigration regulations in force in any territory or from the necessity of obtaining a visa or permit where required. It should be noted in this connection that the majority of British territories overseas have immigration restrictions applicable to British nationals as well as aliens.
- 4 Children** Children who have reached the age of sixteen years require separate passports.
- 5 Registrations Overseas** British nationals who are overseas and are entitled to the protection of the United Kingdom authorities should contact the nearest British High Commission, Embassy or Consulate to enquire about any arrangements for registration of their names and addresses. Failure to do so may in an emergency result in difficulty or delay in securing their assistance and protection.
- 6 Dual Nationality** British nationals who are also nationals of another country cannot be prosecuted by Her Majesty's Representatives against the authorities of that country. If under the law of that country, they are liable for any obligation (such as military service), the fact that they are British nationals does not exempt them from it. A person having some connection with a Commonwealth or foreign country (eg by birth, by descent through either parent, by marriage or by residence) may be a national of that country, in addition to being a British national. Acquisition of British nationality or citizenship by a foreigner does not necessarily cause the loss of nationality of origin.
- 7 Caution** This passport remains the property of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and may be withdrawn at any time. It should not be tampered with or passed to an unauthorised person. Any case of loss or destruction should be immediately reported to the local police and to the nearest British passport issuing authority (eg Passport Office, London; British Consulate; British High Commission or Colonial authority); only after exhaustive enquiries can a replacement be issued in such circumstances. The passport of a deceased person should be submitted for cancellation to the nearest such passport authority; it will be returned on request.

- 1 Surname / Nom
  - 2 Given names / Prénoms
  - 3 Nationality / Nationalité
  - 4 Date of birth / Date de naissance
  - 5 Sex / Sexe
  - 6 Place of birth / Lieu de naissance
  - 7 Date of issue / Date de délivrance
  - 8 Date of Expiry / Ce passeport expire le
  - 9 Authority / Autorité
  - 10 Holder's signature / Signature du titulaire
- II Children / Enfants

































## Emergencies

The holder should insert below particulars of two relative friends who may be contacted in the event of accident:

*(Any amendment should be made on a slip of paper which the holder should affix over this space)*

Name/Nom

Name/Nom

Address/Adresse

Address/Adresse

Telephone/Téléphone

Telephone/Téléphone

This passport contains 32 (numbered) pages  
Ce passeport contient 32 pages (numérotées)

SPECIMEN

Holder's signature/ Signature du titulaire (10)

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
Passport  
Passeport

Type/Type - Désignation du passeport (1)

Surname/Nom (2)

Date of birth/Date de naissance (3)

Nationality/Nationalité (4)

Date of birth/Date de naissance (5)

Sex/Sexe (6) Place of birth/Lieu de naissance (6)

Date of issue/Date de délivrance (7)

Authority/Autorité (8)

Passport No./Passeport n°

Date of expiry/Date d'expiration (9)





RESTRICTED

*CPK*



*NBIM*  
*CDP 26/3*

PRIME MINISTER

FRONTIER FORMALITIES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

I have seen a copy of Leon Brittan's minute to you of 11 March. ✓

2. My main concern is of course the Northern Ireland border. As Leon's paper points out we do not exercise immigration controls as such, at this border. However, there is still a clear need to exercise strict security controls. Republican terrorist groups often carry out attacks from the Republic, and recently this pattern of activity has assumed increasing importance as the security forces have succeeded in curbing terrorist activity within the Province. Moreover, the bulk of arms and explosives for terrorist groups still operating within Northern Ireland are smuggled across the border.

3. Preventing the movement of terrorists and ammunitions is a matter for the security forces. The measures which they use vary along the 300 miles of the border because of varying circumstances, such as changes in the nature of the terrain, the nature of the threat and the sympathies of the local population. For example in some areas many of the small roads which criss-cross the border, and which are not approved for Customs purposes, have been physically closed. On some of the open roads the security forces operate fixed check points whereas on others they operate a system of random mobile checks. On the whole these selective measures are effective in apprehending and deterring terrorist activity in border areas whilst limiting disruption of normal life in the community to the minimum.

4. However, there may be occasions, when faced with a specific threat, the security forces have to introduce much stricter control measures which disrupt life in local border communities to a considerable degree. Such measures are not used frequently, but it is important that any future improvement of harmonisation of

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controls/....

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controls should not inhibit our ability to introduce such defensive measures. Providing that that can be achieved, I would see much advantage in moves towards freer movement between Community countries.

5. I would hope that officials in the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will keep closely in touch with mine on developments in this field.

6. I am copying this minute to members of OD(E) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Neil Wand  
Private Secretary  
for D H

25 March 1985

(Approved by the Secretary of State  
but signed in his absence overseas)

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②  
cc PC

cfw  
HMT  
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MAFF  
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HOS  
CO

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

12 March 1985

FRONTIER FORMALITIES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The Prime Minister has considered the Home Secretary's minute of 11 March about the limited possibility of further relaxing frontier formalities within the European Community. She agrees with the line which the Home Secretary and the Foreign Secretary recommend.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to Members of OD(E) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C D POWELL

Hugh Taylor Esq  
Home Office

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①



Prime Minister

Prime Minister

Yes

Content with the line which it is proposed to take?

FRONTIER FORMALITIES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

CDP 11/3

Last summer the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary minuted me about the possibility of further relaxing frontier formalities within the European Community following the agreement between President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl on simplified arrangements for EC nationals for crossing the Franco German land frontier. You commented that officials should be asked to consider the issue to see whether more could be done without putting at risk security and other essential requirements; and in my absence David Waddington explained our position (in a letter of 20 August to Geoffrey Howe) and undertook that officials would prepare a paper summarising the progress already made, the pros and cons of further possibilities, and discuss it with FCO officials.

...

I now attach papers by both the Home Office and Customs and Excise, which have been discussed with the Cabinet Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. A note on immigration procedures in other Member States prepared by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is annexed to the Home Office paper. I am sorry that this process has taken longer than we originally intended, but the papers provide a useful explanation of the nature of our controls and the reasons for them; and have assisted the Departments concerned to reach a broad measure of agreement on a line to take in discussions in the European Community.

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The central issue is whether, as the European Commission have proposed in a new draft directive basing themselves on the conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council meeting at Fontainebleau, EC nationals crossing Community borders should be subject to only limited spot checks or to individual examination however brief. The Commission regard the reduction of frontier controls as an important element in the drive, to which they like us give priority, to complete the internal market.

From the standpoint of customs control of persons entering the UK and the goods which they bring with them, including their personal motor vehicles, selective examination procedures are both possible and acceptable. Indeed for some years control at all major UK ports and airports has been based on the red and green channel system, the essential feature of which is that travellers who have no need to see a Custom officer are subject only to spot checks. These arrangements are consistent in principle with the People's Europe proposals, although there are some differences of view about the intensity of controls to be applied.

As the Customs' Note points out, proposals for further relaxation in the present level of control over this traffic would have to be weighed against known public concern over, for instance, continuing increases in drug trafficking and the possible introduction of rabies into this country. Furthermore, increased opportunities for widespread evasion of excise duties which is currently giving problems on cross-Channel routes could not be ignored.

Abolition of individual checks would present us with much more difficulty on the immigration front. Our system of immigration control, unlike that of our mainland Community partners, is based very largely on examination at the ports. We examine the passport (or identity card) of every passenger entering the country including all British citizens. For the vast majority of EC nationals the only formalities are this passport check and a reference to the "Suspect Index" (a book containing 8-9,000 names of serious criminals, serious immigration offenders and those of interest to the Security Service). In the case of EC nationals the time spent at the control averages only about 12 seconds. In my view there is no substitute for this brief but important examination at the port. I am strongly opposed to the Commission's proposal that, subject only to spot checks, EC nationals should be allowed to pass through the immigration controls showing only unopened EC passports. If such spot checks were introduced we could hardly retain comprehensive checks on British citizens. In my opinion we should then have made a serious breach in both our immigration control and our defences against terrorists, not just in relation to EC nationals and British passport holders subject to control but much more generally because our ability to identify a non-EC foreign national or Commonwealth citizen attempting to pass through the EC or British control would be enormously reduced.

Geoffrey Howe strongly agrees on the need to ensure that nothing is allowed to weaken our defence against illegal immigration, terrorism and drug smuggling. He points out, however, that the problem of illegal immigration, which is the

main justification for our present system of frontier controls, does not arise from within the European Community. The existence of the common travel area with the Republic of Ireland is also a factor. I accept Geoffrey's view that in these circumstances it is difficult to convince our European partners that we could never contemplate reducing frontier controls with some other Member States (eg France, Germany and the Benelux countries which are moving increasingly away from systematic controls towards spot checks and which intend to sign an agreement by the end of April) when there are no immigration checks at the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland whence comes the greatest security threat to the United Kingdom, and we are prepared to rely on the Irish immigration authorities to act on our behalf. Geoffrey accepts that Italy and Greece are another matter. They have inadequate controls at their own frontiers from both the security and immigration viewpoint. This is why the Franco-German arrangements are being extended only to the Benelux.

A common travel area for Europe which permitted free circulation within Europe with checks at external frontiers is a theoretical possibility, but I have to say that I cannot see it becoming a realistic one in the foreseeable future. The Irish system of immigration control is virtually the same as ours and the authorities there check every foreign passenger arriving in the Republic against our Suspect Index. There is no way that continental European countries, which cannot effectively control movement across their (land) borders could operate a control on non-EC nationals that we could regard as

satisfactory. Some of the difficulties are indeed already emerging in the discussions which are taking place between the French, German and Benelux police and immigration authorities. Nevertheless it is clear that there is a strong political will in these countries to make progress.

So far in the discussions on a People's Europe our representative has successfully encouraged the Committee to draw a distinction between land borders and sea and airports. This is very helpful. But we need to be prepared for further pressure either in that forum or in discussion of the Commission's new draft directive.

The following line which I have agreed with Geoffrey should ensure we are able to resist pressure to change our present procedures, while sounding positive to our partners:

- (a) ✓ We are in favour of doing everything possible to facilitate the movement of people, as well as goods across intra-Community frontiers. We have a good record on this. The system of separate EC channels which is in use at our major ports and airports enables Community nationals to pass through very quickly. We are constantly searching for new and improved ways of clearing Community nationals through the immigration control when arriving and departing from the UK. Recent work at Dover, the major sea entry port, represents a

considerable improvement. We are looking also at the possibility of reducing embarkation controls. (I have agreed with Geoffrey that the search for improvements will continue and that we will look into the possibility of relaxing embarkation controls without waiting for pressure from Brussels. We already do not require EC nationals to complete embarkation cards.)

- (b) We are prepared to study ways in which frontier controls might be harmonised and improved in the Community without weakening defences against illegal immigration, terrorism and drug smuggling. More effective controls at the Communities' external frontiers must be a pre-condition for any reduction of controls at internal frontiers of the Community. But any moves in this direction will have to be considered carefully. There is no question of abandoning existing controls without their replacement with something equally effective.


If you and other colleagues are content with this line we shall instruct our representatives in Brussels accordingly.

I am copying this minute to Members of OD(E) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

L. B.

11 March 1985

**A** The National Archives

DEPARTMENT/SERIES ..... <i>PREM. 19</i> ..... PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>2671</i> ..... (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details:  <i>Ad Hoc Committee on 'A People's Europe'</i> <i>Note by the Home Office</i> <i>Attached to letter to PM dated 11 March 1985</i>	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION .....	
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IMMIGRATION CONTROL IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY  
THE SITUATION IN OTHER MEMBER STATES

FRANCE

- (i) Control on Entry: Right to refuse entry hardly ever applied to European Community Nationals (ECNs).
- (ii) Post-entry control: Residence card but no action to ensure ECN's apply. Last resort is deportation of ECNs who fail to find work within 3 months; ECNs have right of appeal.
- (iii) Recipients of services receive card valid for duration of services, extendable as necessary. Thereafter they should leave, but no initiative to ensure they do.
- (iv) Length of stay: EC workers initially receive five year residence permit, withdrawable only on public order grounds.
- (v) Permanent settlement only achievable under provisions of regulation 1251/70 or general provisions applicable to all aliens.
- (vi) Internal Identity Cards issued.

GERMANY

- (i) Control on Entry: Generally there is a right to refuse entry, though with right of appeal. ECN workers, those seeking work or training, self-employed persons intending to pursue their livelihood, suppliers or receivers of services, or returning residents are allowed unrestricted entry.
- (ii) Post-entry control: Residence permits which authorities attempt to ensure ECNs apply for, but no sanction if fail to do so. Deportation with right of appeal for ECN work-seekers failing to find work within 3 months and becoming charge on public funds, unless resident for considerable time (say 5 to 7 years). All

residents required to register with Local Residents' Registration Office within one week of moving to new address.

(iii) Recipients of services should leave country on termination of services; in practice very difficult to enforce.

(iv) Permanent settlement achievable on same basis as non-EC workers, or under Regulation 1251/70.

(v) Internal Identity Cards issued.

#### ITALY

(i) Control on Entry: Same as for Italian nationals.

(ii) Post-entry Control: Registration with local Questera within 24 hours. In practice control is lax. Residence permits required for more than brief tourist visits. ECNs failing to find work within 3 months must show adequate means of support (other than social security) otherwise invited to leave. Last resort deportation, but carries right of appeal. Lack of residence permit for worker normally considered serious matter, but lenient view taken of ECNS in breach of this requirement.

(iii) Permanent settlement: No alternative method to Regulation 1251/70.

(iv) Internal Identity Cards issued.

#### LUXEMBOURG

(i) Control on Entry: Free entry.

(ii) Post-entry control: ECN's can obtain special identity card which records fact of residence. Destitute ECNs encouraged to return to home country but not in practice deported.

(iii) Recipients of services - no information.

(iv) Permanent residence: EC worker may remain indefinitely provided is in employment or self-sufficient.

(v) Internal Identity Cards issued.

#### IRELAND

(i) All ECN's allowed to enter freely and reside indefinitely regardless of purpose of stay subject to adequate means of support and usual public health and public order grounds (NB: travellers transitting UK to Ireland are subject to UK Immigration Controls when entering Common Travel Area).

(ii) No Identity Card requirement.

#### GREECE

(Under Transitional Arrangements in Treaty of Accession, free movement rights will not apply until 1 January 1988.)

(i) Control on Entry: Right to refuse entry. Great importance attached to frontier controls.

(ii) Post-entry control includes checks at places of work etc and right to arrest and deport illegal residents.

(iii) Internal Identity Cards issued.

#### DENMARK

(i) Control on Entry: ECNs free to enter and stay in Denmark for up to 3 months from date of entry. ECNs taking employment must obtain residence permit.

(ii) Post-entry control: Police check on length of stay. Work

seeking ECNs failing to find work within 3 months are denied grant of residence permit and ordered to leave within 15 days, subject to right of appeal.

(iii) Recipients of services will be granted residence permits for the period of services. Control exercised to ensure recipients leave on expiry of permit if no request for extension made.

(iv) Permanent residence: residence permit valid for 5 years is, as normal rule, issued with view to permanent residence. Outside the provisions of Regulation 1251/70, ECNs would have to meet general requirement of Aliens Act.

(v) No Identity Card requirement.

#### NETHERLANDS

(i) Control on Entry: ECN's falling within scope of Community provisions allowed free access; other ECN's subject to normal controls.

(ii) Post-Entry Control: Residence permit which authorities attempt to ensure ECN's apply for. Deportation with right of appeal for ECN work-seekers failing to find work within 3 months or who become charge on public funds unless long-term employee who loses job in which case can remain one year seeking employment before deportation. All immigrants required to register with police within 8 days and subsequently notify changes of address.

(iii) Recipients of services may be asked to produce evidence of sufficient funds. Permits issued for services expiration date of which registered with police who will check if departure not notified.

(iv) Permanent settlement achievable for ECN worker under

national law provided has held job for 5 years and in employment for further 12 months. ECN's can then apply for Settlement Permit.

(v) Internal Identity Cards issued.

BELGIUM

(i) No information available yet.

## A PEOPLE'S EUROPE - PASSENGER CONTROLS

Note by HM Customs and Excise

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the year ended 31 March 1984, 38 1/2 million passengers and over 2 million accompanied private vehicles passed through customs controls at UK ports and airports. The proportion of EC nationals or of other nationals arriving from within the EC, is irrelevant for customs purposes as the relevant legal provisions have to be applied to all travellers alike.

### INTRA-COMMUNITY PASSENGERS

2. Passengers arriving from other member states present risks in a number of areas. Drugs in substantial quantities are seized at London Airports, Dover and other ferry ports and it is known that international drug traffickers are using Continental routes to import hard drugs into the UK. The extensive land boundaries of many member states are far more difficult to police than our predominantly sea barrier, and Amsterdam maintains its reputation as the drugs capital of Europe. Pornographic material in quantity and firearms are also seized from intra-Community passengers, and constant vigilance has to be maintained against the possibility of rabies being introduced from the Continent where the disease is prevalent. These factors demonstrate the impracticability of relying on any form of "ring-fence" system as *quid pro quo* for removing controls at the Community's internal frontiers.

3. Passengers arriving in the UK from other member states also present revenue risks. They have access to duty free goods, such as tobacco products and liquor, which are available on ships or aircraft or at airport duty free shops. No such facilities exist at land frontier crossings. This important difference must be taken into consideration when control procedures at ports and airports are compared with those at border crossings.

4. Duty free goods apart, risk to the UK revenue arises from trafficking in goods on which the excise duties in other member states are substantially lower than those in the UK. Large scale smuggling of hand rolling tobacco from Belgium, for instance, is currently of particular concern.

5. Unless and until duty free supplies are discontinued in intra-Community traffic and excise duties and VAT are effectively harmonised within the EC, control for revenue purposes will be essential over travellers arriving in the UK from other member states.

#### DOVER

6. As the port of Dover plays a particularly prominent role in handling passengers from other member states a detailed study of the customs arrangements there has been carried out.

7. During the year ending 31 March 1984 7,195,373 passengers, 853,859 accompanied motor vehicles and 56,720 coaches arrived at Dover - virtually all from ports within the EC. Detections of offences during that year resulted in 4,896 seizures being made. The goods involved included 3,990 kg of tobacco, 937,862 cigarettes, 42,174 cigars and 6,398 litres of spirits. Enforcement of prohibitions and restrictions resulted in 107 seizures of drugs, 94 of pornography, 22 of firearms and 11 of animals.

8. Controls at Dover as at all major ports and airports, are based on the red and green channel system for the clearance of all this traffic. Terminal buildings are mainly of modern design and the facilities have been enhanced by a recently completed complex for the reception and clearance of passengers, including those travelling by coach.

9. Customs examination procedures are highly selective and also flexible to adapt to traffic fluctuations, particularly at peak travel periods when the scale of selection for spot checks in the green channel for foot passengers is no more than 1%. Challenge of vehicles in the green lane is also very selective though up to about 50% may be required to halt briefly to enable officers to detect the presence of, eg any animals being carried in the

vehicles. Where it is necessary to avoid excessive delays steps are taken by Customs to direct vehicles via a by-pass lane around the green channel. Nevertheless some congestion and delay may arise when a number of fully laden ferries arrive within a short period. This problem of "peaking" is unavoidable at ferry ports but generally speaking does not arise at land frontiers.

#### COACH PASSENGERS

10. The general policy at Dover and elsewhere is that passengers arriving by coach are required to disembark at the control point and make their Customs declaration by passing, with all their baggage, through the red or green channel in the same way as all other passengers. There is no convincing reason why they should be treated differently.

Seizures of dutiable, prohibited or restricted goods are regularly made from coach passengers or from concealments on the coaches themselves. Coaches cannot be searched satisfactorily with passengers and baggage still on board.

11. Nevertheless our officers can and do exercise discretion in requiring the unloading of baggage from coaches where the passengers are elderly, infirm or very young. At Dover this relaxation is extended to other coach parties at times of pressure in order to maintain a steady flow of coaches through the controls. Occasionally, with the cooperation of HM Immigration, clearance may be completed on board the coach in special cases. Coaches of EC nationals have preference over returning British passengers when relaxations are applied. The newly completed passenger terminal at Dover provides much better facilities for processing coaches and should resolve most of the practical difficulties which have bedevilled this traffic for a long time. In particular the installation of a carousel system for the baggage of coach passengers means that they are being treated in a similar way to airline passengers.



## THE FRANCO-GERMAN AGREEMENT

12. The French-German agreement on frontier crossings between the two states, which came into operation in August 1984, provides that, at certain frontier posts, vehicles may proceed across the border at reduced speed if they are displaying a green sticker indicating that the occupants have valid EC passports, have no goods in excess of the duty free allowances, and are complying with French exchange controls. However, spot checks are still made and it must be remembered that the agreement deals only with a land border. As we have found by experience of the Northern Ireland - Republic of Ireland land boundary, effective Customs control is largely impracticable over extensive internal frontiers due to geographical factors and the comparative ease with which goods and people can be moved across unapproved crossing points. Supplementary control measures applicable in defined areas behind the frontiers, within which persons and goods can be stopped and checked, are a normal and necessary feature of land boundary control on the Continent and in Northern Ireland. We doubt whether it would be acceptable to impose similar controls in areas surrounding the Channel ports.

13. The non-availability of duty free facilities for travellers on cross-border routes and the absence of, eg anti-rabies controls tend to diminish the importance of Customs formalities at border crossings as compared with those at other points of entry. It is noteworthy that the Agreement does not extend to ports and airports - probably for the same underlying reasons as we have put forward for maintaining our control system at such places. It is significant also that in order to develop the main thrust of the Agreement measures will have to be worked out to harmonise certain laws and regulations applicable in the two countries. Such harmonisation within the EC as a whole might enable us to take a more relaxed view of our control requirements viz a viz EC nationals, but early progress seems unlikely.

### CONCLUSIONS

14. The system of Customs control in operation at UK ports and airports is already highly selective and for the vast majority of travellers causes little real inconvenience. Our control systems are normally

flexible enough to maintain a steady progression of passengers and vehicles. At the Channel ports the degree to which our control requirements can be modified is taken into account by local management in the deployment of control staff. The incidence of examinations or spot checks reflects the assessed level of risk from that traffic, based on the scale of irregularities being detected. Any further relaxations below present levels of checks could have extremely serious consequences, particularly where controls are imposed for health, social and environmental reasons.

Subject is on  
Euro Yol  
Budget Pt. 27

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10 DOWNING STREET

OD(E)

FCO MAFF A.Gen. CO  
HMT LPS DTI NIO

*From the Private Secretary*

24 September, 1984

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY: AD HOC COMMITTEES  
ON INSTITUTIONS AND "A PEOPLE'S EUROPE"

The Prime Minister has considered the Foreign Secretary's minute of 21 September on this subject. She notes that there may be some delay in recommendations about further movements towards abolition of frontier formalities.

The Prime Minister is curious about the statement in paragraph 5 of the Foreign Secretary's minute that Ministers found the tone of the paper prepared by officials on "A People's Europe" rather negative. If the paper dealt with some of the suggestions for symbolic contributions towards a European identity which were mentioned at Fontainebleau, the Prime Minister thinks that officials were quite right to be negative. She would like to be left fully informed of the position which it is proposed to adopt on such suggestions.

The Prime Minister has also commented that as the United Kingdom is the only country which makes available supplementary benefit on a national scale, we should make every effort to restrict this help to British nationals. While this is not a matter likely to come up in either of the two committees, the Prime Minister would nevertheless like it to be pursued. I should be grateful for a note.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of OD(E), and to Hugh Taylor (Home Office), John Ballard (Department of the Environment), Mrs. Barber (Solicitor General's Office), Steve Nicklen (Department of Trade), Dinah Nicols (Department of Transport) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(C.D. Powell)

C. Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RESTRICTED

Subject is on  
EURO Vol:  
Budget pt. 27

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CCFC



Prime Minister

PM/84/151

PRIME MINISTER

Please see para. 5 over the page. Officials were rather negative - rightly in my view - on symbols like European flags, antennas, football teams & so on. David Williamson & I

Future Development of the Community: Ad Hoc Committees on Institutions and "A People's Europe"

1. There was a useful discussion in OD(E) on 12 September about the line which our representatives, Malcolm Rifkind and David Williamson, should take in the two ad hoc committees set up by the Fontainebleau European Council. Both committees are expected to meet before the end of the month.

Thought that this would be your view, in the light of your remarks. Some of your colleagues

2. There are one or two points arising from the minutes on which I should like to comment.

appeared more enthusiastic. Agree

Frontier Formalities

3. Mr Powell recorded in his letter of 6 August to my Private Secretary your request for recommendations in early September on how the United Kingdom could respond to moves in the Community towards the abolition of frontier formalities. For reasons which David Waddington set out in his letter of 20 August, this gives the Home Office considerable difficulties and OD(E) were able to have only a preliminary discussion of this question. Ministers will have to come back to it when we have had time to consider the paper Home Office officials are now working on. This means, I am afraid, some delay in making recommendations to you.

to ask that any conclusions from OD(E) be submitted to you? / CDD

Yes - I think officials took the right line.

4. When we do consider the question of frontier formalities, we must bear in mind Norman Tebbit's point (his letter to me of 12 September) that, in the eyes of our partners, there is a connection between free movement of people and attempts to open up the internal market. We are agreed that we should concentrate

104 - we are the only country with suppl. which we must make effort to reduce which helps our own relations

/on

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on the internal market and particularly liberalisation of air transport and services; we have already put forward a number of ideas, and more are being worked up. I think it important however to recognise that progress over the internal market, and in bringing home its benefits to the citizens of the Community, will be considerably facilitated if further progress can be made in reducing frontier formalities.

"A People's Europe"

5. OD(E) noted that the tone of the paper prepared by officials was rather negative on some points. We shall need to present our case in a positive manner when the committee gets under way.

6. I am copying this minute to members of OD(E), and to Leon Brittan, Patrick Jenkin, Patrick Mayhew, Paul Channon, David Mitchell and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe', written in a cursive style.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
21 September 1984



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP  
Secretary of State  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

30<sup>th</sup> August 1984

*See Geoffrey.*

I have seen a copy of your minute to Leon Brittan about frontier formalities within the Community.

I have noted David Waddington's reservation about the need for a study but thought I should confirm that Customs will of course be ready to participate if it takes place and will be particularly concerned about the implications for rabies control and drug smuggling.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, to members of OD(E) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*John*  
*Barney*

BARNEY HAYHOE

CCF  
Await FCS  
reply  
ODP  
31/8

600 P1 April 80

Absolute of Frontier  
Formalities



31 AUG 1994



HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

20 AUG 1984

CP: to see w/

Pl b/u w/er

FCS replies

CPM

*Geoffrey Howe*

ABOLITION OF FRONTIER FORMALITIES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Leon Brittan has asked me to thank you for your minute of 3rd August. We discussed our response before he went on holiday and he asked me to reply to your minute.

We were rather surprised that you felt that, so far as immigration control is concerned, we might need to consider some further measures in the light of the Franco-German moves and the Fontainebleau document. We start from a very different position from many of our Community partners in that our immigration control rests on checks at the ports of entry without subsequent internal checking systems through identity cards. Moreover, the arrangements which the French and Germans are establishing are of course at three of their land crossing points. We, as you rightly point out, have never had immigration control at our land frontier between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and to that extent, therefore, have already gone further than the French and Germans are planning to go. Since they do not propose to extend their spot check system to air and sea ports, we see no need to feel defensive about being prepared to resist new pressures should they emerge in the ad hoc committee set up after the Fontainebleau European Council.

We do not rely solely on the fact that we are an island and our system is different. We have already made substantial progress in our arrangements for handling travel within the European Community. The adoption of Resolution 7324/84, despite the difficulties which it caused us, together with our special EC channel arrangements at major ports (arrangements not replicated through the Community) already go a very long way to assure passengers as speedy a passage as practicable through the control.

We believe therefore that we have done a good deal, but also that examination by the immigration officer of the passport or identity card of arriving EC passengers remains a necessary requirement for both immigration and security reasons. You will recall that the Commission's original draft of what became Resolution 7324 would have required Member States to operate spot checks only and would have allowed EC nationals to enter Member States merely on the presentation of an (unopened) Common Format Passport. This draft was considered by the House of Lords Select Committee under Lord Scarman's chairmanship; the report of which was very critical of the proposal. The Government's arguments against spot checks were cogently put by Baroness Trumpington in the debate on Lord Scarman's report in November 1983. I see no reason to think that Parliament would react any more favourably now to the proposals in paragraph 7 of your note which are essentially the same as those originally put forward by the Commission.

/Cont...

The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe Q.C. M.P.



As this ground has been so thoroughly and recently worked over we do not believe there is any need for a Cabinet Office led study to be set up in order to formulate a position to take in the ad hoc group, so far as the operation of the immigration control is concerned. We suggest instead that Home Office officials should now prepare a paper summarising the progress already made and the pro and cons of further possibilities; that this paper should be discussed with FCO officials, and that thereafter it should be put forward to you and the Home Secretary for consideration.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to other members of OD(E), and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours ever*  
*David*

(DAVID WADDINGTON)



Euro for April 20  
Passports

FCO  
HMT  
MAFF  
LPS  
AG

DTI  
CO  
NIO

RESTRICTED



cc PC  
cc Miguel Ponthing  
(H. office)

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

6 August 1984

Abolition of Frontier Formalities within the European  
Community

The Prime Minister has noted the Foreign Secretary's minute FCS/84/225 of 3 August to the Home Secretary on the abolition of frontier formalities within the European Community.

The Prime Minister agrees that officials should be asked to meet quickly to consider whether there is more which the United Kingdom could do without putting at risk security and other essential requirements. She looks forward to seeing recommendations in early September.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries of Members of OD(E) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C D Powell

Colin Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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ECU



FCS/84/225

HOME SECRETARY

Abolition of Frontier Formalities within the European Community

1. At the Rambouillet Summit in May President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl agreed radically to simplify frontier formalities for the movement of citizens of the European Community across the Franco-German border. I enclose a copy of the communique issued by the two governments which gives an outline of the agreement, as well as a copy of the agreement itself. An extension of these arrangements to the Benelux countries is under consideration.

2. The key features of the new system are:

- (a) individuals may cross the frontier freely subject only to spot checks;
- (b) vehicles may cross freely at reduced speed subject only to spot checks, for which they will be directed into a special lane so that moving traffic is not obstructed;
- (c) joint frontier posts are being set up at three major crossing points;
- (d) these arrangements do not apply to ports or airports, though this may come later;
- (e) arrangements have not yet been made for goods traffic, but this is on the agenda.

The new system has already been put into operation, though some of the practical arrangements still have to be ironed out. Those practical difficulties will be considerable. But President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl have taken a political decision. It seems quite likely that over the

/next

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CCPC

Prime Minister

These will be important decisions. There is a risk of a visible two-speed Europe: and implications for our aims on the internal market.

Agree that officials should

meet & make recommendations?

C.D.P.  
3/P

Yes  
no



next few years France, Germany and the Benelux countries will abolish most of the systematic controls on the frontiers between them.

3. The immediate question raised by the Franco-German agreement will be its implications for the rest of the Community. The Fontainebleau European Council set up an ad hoc Committee to consider a variety of questions, one of which will be the possibility of abolishing police and customs formalities for people who cross intra-Community frontiers. We need to decide what line we will take in these discussions.

4. We of course face particular problems. Our only land frontier with another EC country is that between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland where there is already no passport control. We could only therefore follow the Franco-German agreement by instituting arrangements at ports and airports, which would pose difficulties, as the French and Germans have had to recognise.

5. We have taken some significant steps already. As you know, in May of this year the Council of Ministers agreed a Resolution enjoining Member States to take measures to speed up the progress of EC nationals through frontier controls. We had already taken an important step in this direction by the provision of special channels for EC passport holders at certain points of entry. But I believe we should consider whether it would be practical to take further steps in this direction. The idea of simplifying frontier formalities has some appeal, and developments in Europe are likely to arouse further public interest in Britain.

6. An additional point which we need to take into account is the Community's work on the internal market. I note that

/the



the French and Germans intend to work towards agreement on tax and other questions which hinder the movement of goods. This is an important aspect of the completion of the internal market, and a major priority for us. It would be hard for us to pursue our negotiating objectives on these important questions in isolation from the general question of simplifying frontier procedures. In this connection I am in touch separately with Nigel Lawson about my concern that when the new arrangements for VAT on imports come into effect on 1 October, they should not lead to substantial delays at ports of entry. We must seek to avoid extensive delays at British ports at the moment when we are pressing for greater freedom of movement for goods traffic within the Community.

7. The kind of questions I would like to see examined are:
- (a) the pros and cons of replacing systematic controls with spot checks only on EC passport holders who arrive at UK airports and pass through the EC channel;
  - (b) the institution of a comparable procedure at seaports, with spot checks only on EC arrivals. Vehicles to be checked would be diverted into a special lane so as not to obstruct the free flow of traffic. In practice this is more or less what already happens at peak holiday periods.
8. Whether or not it turns out that there is more we could do without prejudice to our security and other essential requirements, I think these questions should be looked at, and that we should consider the issues raised by the Franco-German agreement. I suggest that the first step would be for officials to meet, perhaps under Cabinet Office auspices, to identify what opportunities there are for us in this development,

/on



on the basis I have proposed, as well as the substantive problems which would need to be tackled. If you agree with this approach, I would suggest that work should start with a view to recommendations being made to us early in September. The ad hoc committee on A People's Europe could meet in that month and we shall wish to know what the scope for action is by then.

9. I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister, to other members of OD(E), and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe', written in a cursive style.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

3 August 1984

by the Select Committee and others — the business sponsorship incentive scheme. I am not sure whether that scheme has yet had the national attention that it should receive because essentially it depends upon being widely known. We must take steps to ensure that it is made fully known to those who want to use it.

Two principal themes have run through the debate. One concerns the nature of the arm's length principle and what we are to make of it. Will we go in the longer term, as some argue about university funding to a more democratically accountable system? Should we maintain, as I believe we should, the tension between democratically elected authorities at the local level and bodies that recognise something that is separate from the democratic process—the function of the artist as pure artist?

I believe that the tension between them is the best system.

**Mr. Freud** rose in his place and claimed to move. That the Question be now put.

Question put. That the Question be now put:—  
The House divided: Ayes 2, Noes 1.

Division No. 371]

[10.00

AYES

Carlisle, Alexander (Montg'y)

Kirkwood, Archy

Tellers for the Ayes:

Mr. Clement Freud and

Mr. D. E. Thomas.

NOES

Rathbone, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:

Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones and

Mr. Douglas Hogg.

**Mr. Speaker:** As it appears that fewer than 40 Members took part in the Division, the Question is not decided in the affirmative.

### SCOTTISH ESTIMATES

*Ordered.*

That, during the proceedings on the Scottish Estimates, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 67 (Meetings of standing committees) the Scottish Grand Committee shall have leave, at their sitting in Edinburgh on Monday 25th June, to sit until half-past Three o'clock; and that that sitting shall constitute consideration on two days for the purposes of Standing Order No. 73 (Scottish estimates)—[*Mr. Neubert.*]

### European Community (Passport)

*Motion made, and Question proposed.* That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr. Neubert.*]

10.10 pm

**Mr. David Maclean** (Penrith and The Border): I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for selecting this subject for debate on the Adjournment of the House. I do not intend to show the discourtesy that has been shown to the House in today's debate, with its lengthy speeches. I intend to keep my speech reasonably brief.

It is appropriate, on a day when Members are being elected to the European Parliament, that I should raise in the House of Commons the issue of a common format passport. The proposal surfaced first in 1974, that member States of the European Community should issue passports to their nationals in an identical format, demonstrating their connection with the Community as well as showing the national status of the holder.

What has happened since 1974 when the then Prime Minister, now Lord Wilson of Rievaulf, reported that the United Kingdom was party to a communique to set up a working party on a common format passport? Progress seems to have been painfully slow. The House of Lords Select Committee reported in 1979 on the Commission's consultative document of 1975 and the subject was debated in the other place in 1979.

The Select Committee supported the proposal as a modest symbol of the Community's identity, provided that passports retained their national character, and strongly urged Her Majesty's Government to take a constructive part in any discussions. On 23 January 1981 the Foreign Affairs council meeting in Paris agreed to the following resolution:

"Recalling that the Heads of Government meeting in Paris in December 1974 requested that the possibility of creating a Passport Union and, in advance, the introduction of a uniform passport, be examined, agreed to introduce a passport of uniform design. Anxious, to promote any measures which might strengthen the feeling among nationals of the Member States that they belong to the same Community; Considering that the establishment of such a passport is likely to facilitate the movement of nationals of the Member States, Have drawn up a passport of uniform format and scope, Have resolved that the Member States will endeavour to issue the passport by 1 January 1985 at the latest."

In a written answer of 8 April 1981 the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour), who was the Lord Privy Seal at that time, told the House that it was the Government's intention to implement the common format passport by 1 January 1985. So far we have heard a lot of good intentions, but there has been no reasoned statement by the Government about whether they are on target for translating all those good intentions into action, or even if they still have the same intentions as they had formerly.

As one who believes that, within Europe, we should do all that we possibly can to develop a sense of community, I believe that a common format passport will help to give citizens a clear sense of identity within the Community. Furthermore, I think that it can provide positive and practical benefits. What is most important of all, it can do both of these things without at any point diminishing our status as Britons.

I understand that there are proposals afoot to ease frontier formalities for citizens of member states and that presentation of the common format passport, when it is



[Mr. David Maclean]

available, could help our citizens travel through Europe with the absolute minimum of fuss and delay. I am not thinking solely of people on holiday. Last year, United Kingdom business men made about 3 million business trips abroad, and nearly 2 million of them were to EEC countries. Surely to goodness, anything that will help their enterprise helps us all.

There will be those who wish to cling to the present passport as part of our national identity. I suggest, however, that the change of format is not an issue that should cause us any affront. The sooner the House and the public can see examples of the new documents proposed, the better. The present-day passport does not have a very long history at all. Before 1914 passports were not obligatory except for about half a dozen countries. It is only since the first world war that the passport has become a general requirement for travel.

As to form and content, in 1920 the Provisional Committee on Communications and Transport of the League of Nations convened a conference in Paris to study ways of facilitating international passenger traffic by rail, which was being hindered by passport and Customs formalities. The conference recommended an international format for passports which was generally accepted, and the present British passport that we hold so dear has its roots in that agreed common format.

I think that we were one of the first countries to introduce a passport that conformed to the League of Nations specifications. We should not fall behind other nations now in introducing a new European Community common format passport with a machine-readable capability. I perfectly well understand the view of the traditionalists, who want to preserve the present passport's appearance, but I venture to suggest that the present version needs to be brought up to date.

I would not attempt to argue that the present substantial document is not in itself dignified. It is, however, very bulky and does not fit easily into the pockets of modern dress. Moreover, the information that it contains about the holder is spread over four or five pages. If I were to make a cynical point—which I shall not do—I would finally say to those who have a mystical belief in the protection afforded by one of Her Majesty's passports wherever they may be in the world, that the value of a passport depends not on its colour, size and country of origin, but on the extent to which our beloved Foreign Office is prepared to stand up for British interests in the world. I quite understand that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister will probably not respond to that point.

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Waddington):** My hon. Friend never knows.

**Mr. Maclean:** What about the design of the proposed common format passport? Is it profoundly un-British? The answer is a resounding No. To quote again my right hon. Friend the former Lord Privy Seal:

"Passports in a common format will not be Community passports and their issue will remain a national prerogative. Their introduction will involve no change in the nationality or other entitlements of the holder."

That point cannot be stressed strongly enough. It should still be a British passport not an EEC one. It is merely that all national passports in the EEC will look the same and have more relevant information, in standard form, in the same place.

In that written answer, my right hon. Friend the former Lord Privy Seal continued:

"It would be misleading to describe the appearance of the new British passport too precisely at this stage, since some of the details have yet to be worked out. It has, however, been agreed that it will retain the main characteristics of our present passport, such as the name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Royal coat of arms and the rubric

"Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State requests and requires" and so on. It has also been agreed that the passport will have a burgandy-coloured cover, bearing the additional words "European Community". The first inside page of the passport will contain the words

"United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland".

the word "passport" and a reference to the European Community in all the official languages of the European Community."—

[Official Report, 8 April 1981; Vol. 2, c. 285-6.]

To us the Britishness of the passport will remain intact. Therefore, I believe that we can confidently adapt to a new arrangement. It will make us no less British but yet it will help us to identify with our Community partners and bring with it the prospect of easier travel across Europe.

Of course, we could have easier travel across Europe if we adopted the International Civil Aviation Organisation's recommendations for machine-readable passports. This development offers even greater benefit for travellers and for those whose job it is to promote travel or to cope with the large numbers flowing in and out through the ports. I should like to know more about the details of machine-readable passports, what information is to be recorded and in what form. The principle of a speedy and simplified checking of passports at the frontiers of countries around the world, without tiresome landing and embarkation cards is attractive.

I hope that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister can indicate the opportunities that this important initiative offers to our businessmen in developing the hardware and software that will be required. This country played a prominent part in the work which led to the ICAO recommendations on machine readability. I think that we were the first nation to read machine-readable passports when a prototype passport reader was installed at Heathrow and was used to read United States passports. If this places Britain ahead in the game, let us make sure that we take full advantage by promoting machine readability and the use of our technology in the process although we must reassure people that the information on the passport will not be used for any improper purpose.

I understand that the proposal is to incorporate a laminated page into passports with a machine-readable zone at the edge. All the information contained on that card would be visible to the naked eye and it would not contain any information that does not appear in the existing United Kingdom passport. The machine-readable passport also offers greater security since it is much more difficult to counterfeit or tamper with.

I hope my hon. and learned Friend will tell us what we are about to do, not what we may intend once the problems are solved. In that same written answer of 1981 the House was told that the precise appearance of the new British passport would depend on the outcome of the work then in hand to facilitate the machine-readable capability. Surely to goodness we have solved the technical problems by now, three years and a million queues at passport controls later.

If my hon. and learned Friend cannot be specific tonight, perhaps he can indicate when we may expect a

definitive Government announcement which will proclaim that we are still committed to a common form of passport and that we will introduce machine readability as soon as possible.

On this important day for democracy in Europe my hon. and learned Friend can do much to unite the free nations of Europe in a way in which no other regulation or harmonisation plan can. We owe it to future generations to adopt a common format passport which to us at the moment may be merely a symbol of unity but to them would be reality. I sincerely hope that the Minister will not disappoint us.

10.24 pm

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Waddington):** Except for the fact that I was hoping to go home for supper, my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean) has chosen the most appropriate day on which to raise this matter of the common format passport. He has said something about the background to the proposal and I shall not go over the history again. Suffice it to say that as long ago as 1974 the Labour Government of that day approved the setting up of a working party to study the possibility of introducing a passport in common form, in a common style, which it was felt would not only be a visible demonstration of the close links between the countries of the European Community, of the existence of Community, but be a real convenience to travellers. A conveniently sized, easily recognisable, easily checked passport would speed up frontier checks and be good for tourists and good for business.

In 1979 the House of Lords Select Committee expressed its support for the common format passport as a modest gesture to our Community identity and at the same time expected that practical benefits would follow. The Committee was aware of arrangements which the United Kingdom had already made to ease the movement through special EEC channels of EC nationals arriving at our ports. The expectation was that the common format passport would be the key to easier travel for our own citizens in Europe and a general easing of frontier formalities for all EC nationals in the Community. Recently I drew the attention of the House of Commons and House of Lords Select Committees to a draft Council resolution which, with the aim of reducing the time EC nationals have to wait at ports of entry says that member states may:

1. Set up special checkpoints for EC nationals;
2. Reduce the checking of documentation where possible;
3. Introduce local agreements for people living close to internal frontiers."

The resolution was unanimously approved by the Council of Ministers on 7 June.

The important word is "may", not "must". It does nothing to compel us to dismantle our present system of controls at the ports, but it does highlight the desire of Community members to make travel between the various countries in as trouble-free a way as possible. Member states implementing the resolution will to some extent be catching up with us, because as I have said, we already provide special facilities for EC nationals by our separate channels for them at major ports. The common format passport will be a further step forward and I have no doubt whatsoever that it will bring benefits to those two million or so people who make business trips to the EC each year.

So we are not talking about uniformity for uniformity's sake but for valid reasons of convenience to travellers. It is inaccurate to talk of uniformity. The common format passport is not a Community passport. Its issue will remain a national prerogative. It will be burgundy not dark blue, it will be a bit smaller, fitting easily into a hip pocket, and the cover will be durable but also somewhat flexible. But it will still be a British passport bearing the royal coat of arms, and inside will be those traditional words requiring passage and protection to the holder.

People obviously want to know when the common format passport will be introduced. In 1981 member states undertook to endeavour to implement the original agreement by January 1985. But it was always understood that implementation was bound to depend on a number of very practical considerations. On 23 March 1981 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said that we would not introduce the new passport

"until we are ready to implement the International Civil Aviation Organisation's recommendations for a passport . . . with machine-readable capability." — [*Official Report*, 23 March 1981; Vol. 1, c. 219.]

That obviously makes sense and, I am sure, will receive overwhelming support. The House of Lords Select Committee, to which I have already referred, supported not only the idea of the common format but also the principle of machine readability, identifying the use of the computer as the most obvious aid to speeding the traveller's passage through passport control. It recognised, however, that a great deal of detailed study would be required before machine readability could be introduced.

Later, in 1980, a panel of experts established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation published a standard specification for a machine-readable element in the passport. Very importantly, the panel—and its views accorded entirely with those of the Government—rejected any system that would mean that the passport holder himself could not read the information presented to the computer. That is one of the matters that my hon. Friend has raised, and I am sure that he will be content with the answer that I have given. There will be no information on the machine-readable passport which does not appear on our passports now, and it will all be visible to the holder.

Since then research, development, and operational use of machine-readable passports, and the equipment for reading them, show that they can be produced and that considerable benefits should ensue for passengers, carrying companies, and the authorities at the ports.

Figures produced by the International Civil Aviation Organisation suggest that there could be 650 million individual movements a year through passport controls at airports alone at the present time. Road, rail and sea transport might at least double the number. By introducing the machine-readable passport we could hope to reduce considerably the time taken on those checks. A lot of work could be cut out, because the provision and completion of landing cards could progressively be dispensed with.

Just as the common format passport will bring benefits to the British traveller, so will machine-readability, speeding up his passage through controls overseas. For passengers entering this country who are subject to immigration control, machine-readability will speed up any check that has to be made and also simplify the recording of passenger movement. I can assure my hon. Friend and the House that we have no plans to connect the

*[Mr. David Waddington]*

immigration and nationality department computers, reading and recording information from passports, with any other computers not directly related to the control of immigration. Fears about that possibility have been expressed in the House from time to time.

My hon. Friend is right to point out that we have been influential in determining within the International Civil Aviation Organisation the specification for the machine-readable passport and that we have been early, indeed first, to test prototype reading equipment at our ports. And we expect our business men to take advantage of the opportunities that these developments present. My hon. Friend mentioned their part in providing necessary hardware and software.

So we have two important developments — the obligation to introduce the common format passport and the ability before so long to introduce machine-readability — and it seems only sensible that the two should be linked. It really would not make much sense to introduce the common format passport and then later perhaps have to make alterations in its lay-out to make it machine-readable. This must, of course, affect a decision as to timing. I am not in a position to announce our conclusions today, but my right hon. Friend expects to be able to make

a statement about the Government's intentions before the House rises for the summer recess. I know that that will disappoint my hon. Friend.

I have said that considerable benefits can flow from the common format and from machine-readability, but there is a third important development on the way which, perhaps, I can be excused for mentioning. At present, some 2.2 million passports are issued each year, entirely on a manual system that employs more than 1,000 staff in six regional offices. The average time taken to deal with postal applications at peak issuing periods can be up to four weeks. Following examination of the passport department by the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs and a Rayner scrutiny, in 1982, a full study to identify how best to computerise the issue of passports is under way. We expect that, with computerisation, we shall be able in future to improve even further a service to the public. I hope that that is recognised as good news.

I thank my hon. Friend for taking an interest in this matter and for having raised the issue tonight. It is only recently that responsibility for the Passport Office has fallen to me, and it is a somewhat awesome responsibility. However, it is pleasant to stand at the Dispatch Box to explain some of the important developments that are taking place.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-four minutes to Eleven o'clock.*


Ref. A084/874

MR BUTLER

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At the Prime Minister's meeting on 6 March it was agreed that responsibility for the Passport Office and for passport policy should be transferred from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to the Home Secretary on 1 April. The arrangements for the transfer are all in hand and an announcement of the date can now be made, in accordance with the promise given by the Prime Minister in her answer to Peter Bruinvels on 23 February (copy attached).

2. The attached draft written Question and Answer has been prepared by the Foreign Office. The Question might appropriately be asked by the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee (Sir Anthony Kershaw) if he is willing to do so. The Answer explains the new split of Ministerial responsibilities and the joint exercise of the royal prerogative by the two Secretaries of State. The Queen has been informed of the change and has noted the position.



R P HATFIELD

19 March 1984

Wednesday 21 March 1984

(Answered by the Prime Minister on Wednesday 21 March 1984)

UNSTARRED Mr Michael Colvin:

NO. 174 To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to her reply to the hon Member for Leicester East on 23 February, whether she is now in a position to make a further announcement in regard to the transfer of responsibility for the Passport Office to the Home Secretary.

Responsibility for the Passport Office will be transferred from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on 1 April 1984. After that date passports will be issued in the United Kingdom by the Home Secretary, who will also assume responsibility for all passport policy matters. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will continue to issue passports in foreign and commonwealth countries. There will be no alteration in the arrangements under which passports are also issued by the Governors of British Dependent Territories and the Lieutenant Governors of the Islands.

The procedure for obtaining a British passport remains unchanged as do the addresses to which applications should be made.

The change in ministerial responsibilities will necessitate a revision of the Supply Estimates published on 13 March and Revised Estimates will therefore be published in due course.

MS.

Written Answers to  
Questions

Thursday 23 February 1984

PRIME MINISTER

Passport Office

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister whether she will consider transferring responsibility for the Passport Office to the Home Secretary.

The Prime Minister: I have decided to transfer responsibility for the Passport Office from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to the Home Secretary as proposed in a report by the House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs—HC 406—and the Rayner scrutiny of the Passport Office. The timing and detailed arrangements for the transfer have yet to be finalised. I shall make an announcement to the House in due course.

Engagements

Q4. Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q5. Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q6. Mr. Jim Callaghan asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q7. Mr. Farr asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q8. Mr. Strang asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q9. Mr. Bell asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q10. Mr. Haynes asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q11. Mr. Pendry asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q12. Mr. Boyes asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q13. Mr. Cowans asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q14. Mr. Tracey asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q15. Mr. Ron Davies asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q16. Mr. John Browne asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q17. Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q18. Mr. Flannery asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q19. Mr. Frank Cook asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q20. Dr. Marek asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q21. Mr. Terry Fields asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q22. Mr. Hanley asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q23. Mr. Nicholls asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q24. Mr. Dixon asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q25. Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q26. Mr. Lofthouse asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q27. Mr. Allen McKay asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q28. Mr. James Hamilton asked the Prime Minister whether she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q30. Mr. Ray Powell asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q31. Mr. Pawsey asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q32. Mr. Hirst asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q33. Mr. Colvin asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q34. Mr. Needham asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q35. Mr. Maxton asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q36. Mr. Skinner asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q37. Mr. Wareing asked the Prime Minister if she will list her public engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q38. Mr. Robert C. Brown asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

Q39. Mr. David Atkinson asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q40. Mr. Foulkes asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q41. Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 23 February.

Q42. Mr. Dicks asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for 23 February.

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01-405 7641 Ext. 3229

Communications on this subject should  
be addressed to

THE LEGAL SECRETARY  
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS,  
LAW OFFICERS' DEPARTMENT,  
ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE,  
LONDON, W.C.2.

Our Ref: EEC 84/12

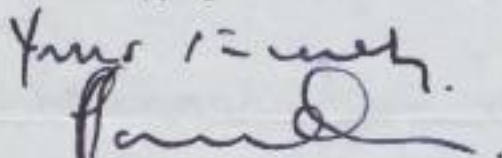
13 March, 1984

<sup>FRS</sup>  
Dear Butler,

PASSPORTS

You kindly sent to us a copy of your letter of 7 March to Fall, summarising the Prime Minister's meeting on 6 March. At the end of the first full paragraph on page 2 of that letter, you record the fact that "... since the target date of January 1985 was set by a non-binding Council Resolution there could be no question of legal action against the United Kingdom in the European Court". The Attorney General advised at the meeting that the Resolution in question is not a "Council Resolution" but a Resolution of the Member States and that this was a further reason why any delay in introducing the CFP could not be referred to the European Court. He has asked that this point be noted.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours faithfully,  


MICHAEL SAUNDERS

F E R Butler Esq  
Principal Private Secretary to  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

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Enno Pol  
April 80.

14 MAR 1984

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

8 March 1984

The Prime Minister held a meeting yesterday about the introduction of the European Community common format passport and the machine readable passport. The Lord President, the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Attorney General, the Chief Whip and Mr. Williamson (Cabinet Office) were present.

I need not trouble you with the substance of this matter, but I am enclosing a copy of the last paragraph of the record of the meeting which covered two management matters affecting the staff of the Passport Office. I am copying this letter, with this part of the record, to John Graham (Scottish Office) and Mike Corcoran (Minister of State's Office, H.M. Treasury).

E.E.B. BUTLER

Mrs. Mary Brown,  
Office of Arts and Libraries.

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

The meeting also reviewed progress on the transfer of the Passport Office from the Foreign Secretary to the Home Secretary on 1 April 1984. There were two outstanding problems which needed to be resolved before the transfer took place. The first was the handling of the recommendation by a Rayner Scrutiny that the £517 a year responsibility allowance paid to 200 clerical officers in the Passport Office should be withdrawn. Although Parliament had already been told that the Government accepted the recommendation in principle, there was strong trade union opposition to its withdrawal. In discussion it was pointed out that the withdrawal terms were very generous since all existing recipients of the allowance would retain it indefinitely, and only new appointees would not receive it. The second point concerned the dispersal of 49 Passport Office posts to East Kilbride which was part of the Foreign Office's residual commitment under the dispersal programme but which was no longer appropriate since the Home Office had no other staff in Scotland. Moreover it would require the existing Passport Office in Glasgow to be closed down and its staff also transferred to East Kilbride, which seemed both politically and practically very questionable. In previous discussions with the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Minister of State, Privy Council Office, and the Minister of State, Treasury, however, the Secretary of State for Scotland had argued that to drop the commitment would run counter to the general undertakings the Government had given to the implementation of the dispersal programme. It appeared that the Ministry of Defence were likely to exceed their commitment to disperse some 2,000 jobs, which would enable the residual passport commitment to be transferred to the Ministry of Defence. The Prime Minister, summing up this part of the discussion, said that present relations with the trade unions made it more sensible to defer a decision on the implementation of the Rayner recommendation on the withdrawal of the responsibility allowance until the autumn. The residual dispersal commitment should be dealt with in the way discussed at the previous meeting of Ministers; if this was not possible, the Secretary of State for Scotland should be given a further opportunity to express his views before any alternative decision were taken.

Subject:  
cc master

FILE



## 10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

7 March 1984

Dear Brian,

The Prime Minister held a meeting yesterday to consider a number of issues concerning the introduction of the European Community Common Format Passport (CFP) and a machine readable passport (MRP). Present were the Lord President of the Council, the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Attorney General, the Chief Whip and Mr. D.F. Williamson.

The Foreign Secretary said that the United Kingdom had been committed since 1981 to endeavour to implement by January 1985 the 1974 decision in principle that there should be a common format for the national passports of EC member states. The only changes to the existing passport required by this decision were a reduction in size and a change of colour from dark blue to burgundy. France, Germany, Ireland and Italy appeared likely to be able to meet the target date, while the Dutch implementation date was expected to be late 1985 and early 1986 in Belgium; Denmark and Greece had not made their position clear. The United Kingdom's position was that we did not intend to introduce British passports in the common format until we were ready to implement the International Civil Aviation Organisation's recommendations for a machine readable passport. This would require a further change to a soft cover. It was now clear, however, that an MRP could not be ready until 1987 at the earliest. The principal issue for consideration was therefore whether the United Kingdom should maintain the original plan for the simultaneous introduction of CFP/MRP, accepting that this would mean a delay in the introduction of the CFP until at least 1987, or whether we should introduce the CFP without machine readability in 1985 coupled with an announcement in principle that the MRP would be introduced at a later date. The introduction of the MRP was dependent upon the computerisation of the Passport Office, and before the full study on computerisation could begin three subsidiary policy decisions on the form of the MRP were also required: the abolition of the family passport including the spouse, since in practice the particulars of only one person could be incorporated in machine readable form; the abolition of the "jumbo" businessman's passport, because the extra number of pages could not be accommodated within a soft cover; the retention of child inclusions, which appeared to be feasible; and the future of the British Visitor's Passport.

In discussion of the introduction of a machine readable passport, it was argued that the introduction of a soft cover would be unwelcome

/ to domestic

DSG

to domestic and Parliamentary opinion, and that there would therefore be advantages in a hard cover MRP, if that were technically feasible. It was suggested, however, that because the machine readable page would have to be inserted in a passport reading machine at passport control, the best way to incorporate the machine readable page was to laminate it to one of the covers of the passport as the Americans were already doing and as the Australians and others planned to do. The hard cover passport could not at present be made with a machine readable page in the same way; even if the technical problems could be overcome, it would be £10 million - £25 million more expensive. It was proposed that one way of overcoming this difficulty would be to slip the soft cover MRP inside a hard sleeve of the same cover and format as the existing British passport. While this might cost more, it would do much to avoid the adverse political reaction to the CFP/MRP. The use of such a sleeve could be expected to diminish over time as people became accustomed to the soft cover, and it might therefore most conveniently be made available as an optional additional cover at an appropriate charge.

In discussion of the timing of the change to a CFP/MRP, it was pointed out that passports in the new form would only be issued when existing passports needed replacement; there would therefore be a period of up to ten years before all existing passports had been replaced. The computerisation of the Passport Office would need to go ahead now in order to permit the introduction of the MRP in 1987. While there would be some advantages for British industry in the earliest practicable introduction of the MRP in order to give the United Kingdom a leading role in the developing international market for MRP machinery (there had already been trials with British equipment at Heathrow and Dover which had proved satisfactory), it was recognised that there could be political disadvantages about introduction in 1987. If therefore there was subsequently slippage in the programme of computerisation, this might not turn out to be unwelcome but this matter should not be pre-judged now. Delay might attract some criticism from elsewhere in the Community, but since the target date of January 1985 was set by a non-binding Council resolution there could be no question of legal action against the United Kingdom in the European Court.

In discussion of the other changes associated with the introduction of the MRP, it was agreed to abolish the family passport but to retain child additions. The "jumbo" passport was popular with businessmen, 20,000 being in use, and it was agreed that, if it could not be retained, the question whether it was possible to have a passport which would last longer than the proposed 32-page format should be examined. It was also agreed that a decision on the future of the British Visitor's Passport should be taken after the introduction of the CFP/MRP.

In discussion of the public presentation of the introduction of the CFP/MRP, it was suggested that emphasis should be laid on the fact that it would bring the benefits of new technology and make frontier formalities quicker and easier for travellers. It would be desirable to put stress on the increasingly widespread introduction of the MRP by the Americans and others rather than the Community aspects. The public could also be assured that they could retain their existing passports and that, unless they wished to make the change earlier, the machine readable passport in the common format would only be issued when a new one was needed. It

was questioned whether in practice any explicit announcement of Ministers' decisions was required, since the Government was essentially reaffirming the policy announced in 1981. Some response would be required if other Community countries criticised the timing of the change in the United Kingdom, but this could be made as and when required. There was also the risk that to make an announcement by way of an Oral Statement would simply multiply the opportunities for criticism in the House. It was pointed out on the other hand that the Government were committed to a debate by the terms of the 1981 announcement and that there was a need to make public the proposed computerisation of the Passport Office. Moreover, there was a risk that the issue could gain publicity, either by featuring on the agenda of a Foreign Affairs Council or in the forthcoming European Parliamentary elections. It was therefore suggested that the best course was to proceed by a debate on a Private Members Motion or on the Adjournment which pressed the Government to say what it was doing to aid travellers within the Community; this would then enable the Government to give a reply in the reassuring terms which had been proposed. This might, if appropriate, be preceded by a low-key initial announcement in a written answer.

The Prime Minister, summing up the discussion, said that Ministers were agreed that the United Kingdom should maintain its policy for the simultaneous introduction of the CFP and MRP, which they recognised could not now be before 1987 and might well be later. The possibility of enclosing the soft cover passport within an optional hard blue sleeve should be examined. When the CFP/MRP was introduced, child inclusions should be retained, but the family passport should be abolished. The Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary would examine further whether there was any way other than the "jumbo" passport of meeting the needs of businessmen for a longer lasting passport. Ministers would consider the future of the British Visitor's Passport after the introduction of the CFP/MRP. The Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary were also invited to prepare a draft statement of what the Government needed to say publicly on the issue in a form which could be used in responding to a written Parliamentary Question or debate initiated by a Private Member; this should be circulated in draft to the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal and the Chief Whip.

The meeting also reviewed progress on the transfer of the Passport Office from the Foreign Secretary to the Home Secretary on 1 April 1984. There were two outstanding problems which needed to be resolved before the transfer took place. The first was the handling of the recommendation by a Rayner Scrutiny that the £517 a year responsibility allowance paid to 200 clerical officers in the Passport Office should be withdrawn. Although Parliament had already been told that the Government accepted the recommendation in principle, there was strong trade union opposition to its withdrawal. In discussion it was pointed out that the withdrawal terms were very generous since all existing recipients of the allowance would retain it indefinitely, and only new appointees would not receive it. The second point concerned the dispersal of 49 Passport Office posts to East Kilbride which was part of the Foreign Office's residual commitment under the dispersal programme but which was no longer appropriate since the Home Office had no other staff in Scotland. Moreover it would require the existing Passport Office in Glasgow to be closed down and its staff also transferred to East Kilbride, which seemed both politically and

/ practically

practically very questionable. In previous discussions with the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Minister of State, Privy Council Office, and the Minister of State, Treasury, however, the Secretary of State for Scotland had argued that to drop the commitment would run counter to the general undertakings the Government had given to the implementation of the dispersal programme. It appeared that the Ministry of Defence were likely to exceed their commitment to disperse some 2,000 jobs, which would enable the residual passport commitment to be transferred to the Ministry of Defence. The Prime Minister, summing up this part of the discussion, said that present relations with the trade unions made it more sensible to defer a decision on the implementation of the Rayner recommendation on the withdrawal of the responsibility allowance until the autumn. The residual dispersal commitment should be dealt with in the way discussed at the previous meeting of Ministers; if this was not possible, the Secretary of State for Scotland should be given a further opportunity to express his views before any alternative decision were taken.

I am copying this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office), David Heyhoe (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Callum McCarthy (Department of Trade and Industry), Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Henry Steele (Law Officers' Department), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and Sir Robert Armstrong. I have written separately to Mary Brown (Lord Gowrie's office), John Graham (Scottish Office) and Mike Corcoran (Mr. Hayhoe's office, Treasury) enclosing the last paragraph above.

Your ever,

Robin Butler

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Qz.03620

MR BUTLER

COMMON FORMAT PASSPORT AND MACHINE READABLE PASSPORT

--- I attach a draft record of the Prime Minister's meeting yesterday which you will wish to circulate, if you are content with it.

*D F Williamson*

D F WILLIAMSON

7 March 1984

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~~DRAFT~~

Letter to Brian Falk

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COMMON FORMAT PASSPORT

The Prime Minister held a meeting yesterday to consider a number of issues concerning the introduction of the European Community Common Format Passport (CFP) and a machine readable passport (MRP). Present were the Lord President of the Council, the Foreign ~~and Commonwealth~~ Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Attorney General, the <sup>Chief Whip</sup> ~~Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury,~~ and Mr D F Williamson.

The Foreign ~~and Commonwealth~~ Secretary said that the United Kingdom had been committed since 1981 to endeavour to implement by January 1985 the 1974 decision in principle that there should be a common format for the national passports of EC member states. The only changes to the existing passport required by this decision were a reduction in size and a change of colour from dark blue to burgundy. France, Germany, Ireland and Italy appeared likely to be able to meet the target date, while the Dutch implementation date was expected to be late 1985, and early 1986 in Belgium; Denmark and Greece had not made their position clear. The United Kingdom's position was that we did not intend to introduce British passports in the common format until we were ready to implement the International Civil Aviation Organisation's recommendations for a machine readable passport. This would require a further change to a soft cover. It was now clear, however, that an MRP could not be ready until 1987 at the earliest. The principal issue for consideration was therefore whether the United Kingdom should maintain the original plan for the simultaneous introduction of CFP/MRP, accepting that this would mean a delay in the introduction of the CFP until at least 1987, or whether we should introduce the CFP without machine readability in 1985 coupled with an announcement in principle that the MRP would be



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introduced at a later date. The introduction of the MRP was dependent upon the computerisation of the Passport Office, and before the full study on computerisation could begin three subsidiary policy decisions on the form of the MRP were also required: the abolition of the family passport including the spouse, since in practice the particulars of only one person could be incorporated in machine readable form; the abolition of the "jumbo" businessman's passport, because the extra number of pages could not be accommodated within a soft cover; the retention of child inclusions, which appeared to be feasible; and the future of the British Visitor's Passport.

In discussion of the introduction of a machine readable passport, it was argued that the introduction of a soft cover would be unwelcome to domestic and Parliamentary opinion, and that there would therefore be advantages in a hard cover MRP, if that were technically feasible. It was suggested, however, that because the machine readable page would have to be inserted in a passport reading machine at passport control, the best way to incorporate the machine readable page was to laminate it to one of the covers of the passport as the Americans were already doing and as the Australians and others planned to do. The hard cover passport could not at present be made with a machine readable page in the same way; even if the technical problems could be overcome, it would be £10 million-£25 million more expensive. It was proposed that one way of overcoming this difficulty would be to slip the soft cover MRP inside a hard sleeve of the same colour and format as the existing British passport. While this might cost more, it would do much to avoid the adverse political reaction to the CFP/MRP. The use of such a sleeve could be expected to diminish over time as people became accustomed to the soft cover, and it might therefore most conveniently be made available as an optional additional cover at an appropriate charge.

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In discussion of the timing of the change to a CFP/MRP, it was pointed out that passports in the new form would only be issued when existing passports needed replacement; there would therefore be a period of up to ten years before all existing passports had been replaced. The computerisation of the Passport Office would need to go ahead now in order to permit the introduction of the MRP in 1987, ~~but there was a distinct risk that the timetable might slip.~~ While there would be some advantages for British industry in the earliest practicable introduction of the MRP in order to give the United Kingdom a leading role in the developing international market for MRP machinery (there had already been trials with British equipment at Heathrow and Dover which had proved satisfactory), it was recognised that there could be political disadvantages about introduction in 1987. *If therefore there was subsequently slippage in the programme of computerisation, this might not turn out to be disadvantageous. Such a delay might attract unwelcome but this matter should not be pre-judged now. Delay might attract* some criticism from elsewhere in the Community, but since the target date of January 1985 was set by a non-binding Council resolution there could be no question of legal action against the United Kingdom in the European Court.

In discussion of the other changes associated with the introduction of the MRP, it was agreed to abolish the family passport but to retain child additions. The "jumbo" passport was popular with businessmen, 20,000 being in use, and it was agreed that, if it could not be retained, the question ~~was~~ whether it was possible to have a passport which would last longer than the proposed 32-page format <sup>should be examined.</sup> It was also agreed that a decision on the future of the British Visitor's Passport should be taken after the introduction of the CFP/MRP.

In discussion of the public presentation of the introduction of the CFP/MRP, it was suggested that emphasis should be laid on the fact that it would bring the benefits of new technology and make frontier formalities quicker and easier for travellers. It would be desirable to put stress on the increasingly widespread introduction of the MRP by the Americans and others,

*rather than the Community aspects*  
~~and to play down the Community aspects of the change.~~ The public could also be assured that they could retain their existing passports and that, unless they wished to make the change earlier, the machine readable passport in the common format would only be issued when a new one was needed. It was questioned whether in practice any explicit announcement of Ministers' decisions was required, since the Government was essentially reaffirming the policy announced in 1981. Some response would be required if other Community countries criticised the timing of the change in the United Kingdom, but this could be made as and when required. There was also the risk that to make an announcement by way of an Oral Statement would simply multiply the opportunities for criticism in the House. It was pointed out on the other hand that the Government were committed to a debate by the terms of the 1981 announcement and that there was a need to make public the proposed computerisation of the Passport Office. Moreover, there was a risk that the issue could gain publicity, either by featuring on the agenda of a Foreign Affairs Council or in the forthcoming European Parliamentary elections. It was therefore suggested that the best course was to proceed by a debate on a Private Members Motion or on the Adjournment which pressed the Government to say what it was doing to aid travellers within the Community; this would then enable the Government to give a reply in the reassuring terms which had been proposed. This might, if appropriate, be preceded by a low-key initial announcement in a written answer.

The Prime Minister, summing up the discussion, said that Ministers were agreed that the United Kingdom should maintain its policy for the simultaneous introduction of the CFP and MRP, which they recognised could not now be before 1987 and might well be later. The possibility of enclosing the soft cover passport within an optional hard blue sleeve should be examined. [REDACTED] When the CFP/MRP was introduced,

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child inclusions should be retained, but the family passport should be abolished. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary would examine further whether there was any way other than the "jumbo" passport of meeting the needs of businessmen for a longer lasting passport. Ministers would consider the future of the British Visitor's Passport after the introduction of the CPP/MRP. The Foreign ~~and Commonwealth~~ Secretary and the Home Secretary were also invited to prepare a draft statement of what the Government needed to say publicly on the issue in a form which could be used in responding to a written Parliamentary Question or debate initiated by a Private Member; this should be circulated in draft to the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal and the <sup>Chief Whip.</sup> ~~Parliamentary Secretary,~~ Treasury.

The meeting also reviewed progress on the transfer of the Passport Office from the Foreign ~~and Commonwealth~~ Secretary to the Home Secretary on 1 April 1984. There were two outstanding problems which needed to be resolved before the transfer took place. The first was the handling of the recommendation by a Rayner Scrutiny that <sup>the</sup> £517 a year responsibility allowance paid to 200 clerical officers in the Passport Office should be withdrawn. Although Parliament had already been told that the Government accepted the recommendation in principle, there was strong trade union opposition to its withdrawal. In discussion it was pointed out that the withdrawal terms were very generous since all existing recipients of the allowance would retain it indefinitely, and only new appointees would not receive it. The second point concerned the dispersal of 49 Passport Office posts to East Kilbride which was part of the Foreign Office's residual commitment under the dispersal programme but which was no longer appropriate since the Home Office had no other staff in Scotland. Moreover

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it would require the existing Passport Office in Glasgow to be closed down and its staff also transferred to East Kilbride, which seemed both politically and practically very questionable. In previous discussions with the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Minister of State, Privy Council Office, and the Minister of State, Treasury, however, the Secretary of State for Scotland had argued that to drop the commitment would run counter to the general undertakings the Government had given to the implementation of the dispersal programme. It appeared ~~that~~ that the Ministry of Defence were likely to exceed their commitment to disperse some 2,000 jobs, which would enable the residual passport commitment to be transferred to the Ministry of Defence. The Prime Minister, summing up this part of the discussion, said that present relations with the trade unions made it more sensible to defer a decision on the implementation of the Rayner recommendation on the withdrawal of the responsibility allowance until the autumn. The residual dispersal commitment should be dealt with in the way discussed at the previous meeting of Ministers; if this was not possible, the Secretary of State for Scotland should be given a further opportunity to express his views before any alternative decision were taken.

I am copying this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones  
 (Lord President's office),  
~~L. Brian Fall (Fco)~~, Hugh Taylor (Home Office), David Heyhoe  
 (Lord Privy Seal's office), Callum McCasky (DTI), Alex  
 Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's office),  
 Henry Steele (Law Officers' Department), Murdo Maclean  
 (Chief Whip's office) and ~~B~~ Sir Robert Armstrong.

I have written separately to John Graham (Scottish Office) and  
~~Mike Corcoran (Mr. Mayhew's office, Treasury)~~ ~~Mr. Mayhew's office, Treasury~~ ~~Mr. Mayhew's office, Treasury~~ ~~Mr. Mayhew's office, Treasury~~  
 (Mary Brown (Lord Gosnie's office)), enclosing the  
 last paragraph above.



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PRIME MINISTER

PASSPORTS

1. Unfortunately I have a longstanding and important chemical industry commitment tomorrow morning which I need to attend if I possibly can. As I do not believe I have any major contribution to make on the passport issue, I hope you will excuse my absence on this occasion.
  
2. There has been considerable progress with modernising the Passport Office following the 1982 Rayner scrutiny. Most important has been the decision to computerise the passport issuing process. This will lead to major efficiency improvements both in reduced costs and better service.
  
3. In efficiency terms, the difference between the two options now presented is that option 1, whereby EC common format and machine readability are introduced simultaneously, offers a once and for all cost advantage of £500,000 and £200,000 per annum for as long as the hard-backed passport is retained. In the circumstances if there should be strong political considerations the efficiency argument, although worthwhile, is unlikely to be overwhelming.
  
4. I am copying this to Sir Robert Armstrong.

ROBIN IBBS  
5 March 1984

CONFIDENTIAL

Qz.03617

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING OF MINISTERS: TUESDAY 6 MARCH AT 10 am

Common Format Passport and Machine Readable Passport

Introduction

FLAG A

1. The joint minute of 23 February by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary sets out a number of issues concerning passports on which decisions are needed. The Chief Secretary and the Lord Privy Seal have also minuted you on the main question, that is whether the introduction of the Common Format Passport should be delayed until it can be introduced in machine readable form. It is suggested that the ad hoc Ministerial meeting should have a discussion of all the issues in the joint minute and take stock of any other outstanding matters on the transfer of the Passport Office to the Home Office. The main issue may need to go to Cabinet for final decision. Decisions are necessary soon if the target date of 1987 for computerisation of the Passport Office and introduction of the machine readable passport is to be met.

Issues

2. You have already announced in Parliament (Annex A of the joint minute) that the Government intends to introduce the Common Format Passport (CFP) when it is ready to implement the International Civil Aviation Organisation's recommendations for a machine readable passport (MRP). The present problem has arisen because it is now clear that the MRP will not be ready until 1987 or possibly later, ie two years or more after the Community's 1985 deadline for introduction of the CFP. Meanwhile, criticism of the MRP, based on arguments of civil

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liberty, has been growing. The main issues for discussion are:

- (i) whether the Government should maintain its intention to introduce a machine readable passport;
- (ii) whether to stick to the plan for simultaneous introduction of the CFP and MRP (which would now mean that the CFP would be late) or whether to introduce the CFP in 1985 and aim for separate and subsequent introduction of the MRP;

linked with point (ii) is the question

- (iii) whether and when to introduce a soft cover for the passport. It is argued that a soft cover is in any event essential on technical grounds for the MRP.

3. Machine readability cannot be achieved before computerisation of the Passport Office. The latter was recommended by a Rayner scrutiny report, and has been accepted in principle by both Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office Ministers. Preparatory work has already begun. Before it can be completed, however, decisions are needed on three minor issues:

- (iv) whether the family and jumbo passports should be abolished;
- (v) whether child inclusions should be retained;
- (vi) the future of the British Visitor's Passport.

4. Finally, the meeting could ask for a progress report from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary on:

- (vii) transfer of the Passport Office, and in particular the two outstanding minor issues of the dispersal of some staff to East Kilbride and the withdrawal of certain allowances from other staff.

5. A further issue, the financial resources for computerisation (mentioned in paragraph 5 of the joint minute) has now been sorted out by Treasury and Home Office Ministers.



(i) Introduction of Machine Readable Passport

6. The joint minute assumes that the Government will maintain its intention to introduce a machine readable passport when this is technically feasible. But, given the recent criticism of the concept, the Home Secretary may seek his colleagues' view on whether this should still be the Government line, or whether the Government should delay taking a final decision, and leave open the possibility of putting off introduction of the MRP for the foreseeable future.

(ii) Timing and introduction of Common Format Passport

7. Paragraph 7 of the joint minute sets out two options:

- (i) simultaneous introduction of the common format and machine readable passport, ie not before 1987, with a decision to introduce a soft cover at the same time;
- (ii) decoupling the introduction of CFP and MRP, by introducing a hard cover CFP without machine readability in early 1985 (ie roughly by the agreed Community deadline), but announcing a decision in principle to change to a soft cover MRP as soon as this is feasible.

8. The advantages and disadvantages of the two options are set out in paragraphs 8 to 13 of the joint minute. There is no question about option (i) being better from the financial and technical point of view, and it has already received support from the Lord Privy Seal and the Chief Secretary. The questions which therefore need discussion relate to domestic and Parliamentary opinion and the reaction to delay within the Community. Several member states, as shown in Annex C of the joint minute, are unlikely to meet the January 1985 deadline for introduction of the CFP. But few, if any, are likely to delay as long as 1987. The target date was set by a non-binding Council resolution, so there can be no question of legal action against us. From the point of view of public and Parliamentary opinion, the arguments are finely balanced between introducing both unwelcome changes together (public opinion may tend to

associate the MRP and soft cover as well as the CFP with Community interference with British traditions), and taking the matter in two stages. An advantage of a two stage approach which the Home Secretary may wish to mention is that it will make it easier for the Government to put off taking a final decision on when to introduce the MRP.

(iii) Soft cover

9. The introduction of a soft cover is not necessary for the common format passport, but it is for the machine readable passport, at any rate in the present state of the technology. The joint minute proposes introducing the soft cover at the same time as the MRP, whether or not this takes place simultaneously with the CFP. The Home Secretary is unlikely to hold out much hope that the technology will advance sufficiently by 1987 to allow a machine readable hard-cover passport. For this reason, the joint minute proposes that the Government should announce at once its decision to go over to a soft cover, rather than putting off any decision. It would seem to make sense, however, to tie the introduction of the soft-cover firmly to that of the MRP, so that if Ministers decided in the longer term not to introduce the MRP, the introduction of the soft cover could also fall.

(iv) Family passports and jumbo passports

10. The joint minute (paragraph 6(a)) proposes the abolition of the family passport for husband and wife, as it is incompatible with machine readability. Abolition was also recommended by the Rayer scrutineers. The case is set out in more detail in Annex B of the joint minute. It is accepted that there would be some public criticism, but it seems unlikely to be great. Abolition of the "jumbo" 94-page passport would also, it is claimed, be necessary if a soft cover is introduced (paragraph 7 of the joint minute). The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry may wish to comment on the likely reaction from businessmen. If the MRP cannot be introduced without the abolition of both these different sorts of passports, then both these changes would have to be accepted as a consequence of the introduction of the MRP.

(v) Child inclusions

11. The joint minute (paragraph 6) recommends, despite a Rayner recommendation to the contrary, that the facility of putting children onto a parent's passport should be continued as it is compatible with machine readability. As is pointed out in Annex B, abolition of this facility would be unpopular, probably more so than the abolition of the family passport.

(vi) Future of the British Visitor's Passport (BVP)

12. The Rayner scrutineers recommended abolition of this easily obtainable one-year document once standard passports were easily available following computerisation of the Passport Office. The document is, however, popular with the public, and the joint minute (paragraph 6 and Annex B) recommends delaying a decision for the moment.

(vii) Transfer of the Passport Office

13. The meeting will provide an opportunity to take stock of progress on the transfer of the Passport Office from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to the Home Secretary on 1 April this year. There are two problems which the two Secretaries of State hope to resolve before the transfer:

(i) the dispersal of 49 Passport Office posts to East Kilbride which is part of the FCO's residual commitment under the dispersal programme, but which both the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary agree is no longer appropriate because the Home Office has no other staff in Scotland. But the Secretary of State for Scotland takes an opposing view on the grounds that to drop the commitment would run counter to the general undertakings the Government has given about the implementation of the dispersal programme. Discussions are going on to see whether the small numbers involved can be subsumed in the Ministry of Defence. If that cannot be done, Ministers will need to consider whether the commitment can be dropped or whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary or the Home Secretary or some other part of Government should seek to honour it;

FLAS B

(ii) the handling of the Rayner recommendations that a £517 pa responsibility allowance paid to 200 Clerical Officers in the Passport Office should be withdrawn. (The Prime Minister has a copy of the Foreign Secretary's minute to the Home Secretary of 2 March). There is strong trade union opposition to withdrawal and threat of industrial action. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has decided that, although Parliament has already been told that the Government accepts the recommendation in principle, present relations with the trade unions make it more sensible to defer a decision on implementation until the autumn. The Home Secretary disagrees. He would like the decision taken before the transfer. The question is whether it is better to risk industrial action now at the same time as the transfer to the Home Office or defer the risk until the immediate problems of transfer are better.

While it may be possible to sort out the differences on allowances at the meeting of Ministers, the dispersal question (in which the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of State at the Privy Council Office have an interest) will need to be settled separately.

## HANDLING

14. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will introduce the joint minute and the Home Secretary will also wish to speak in introduction. It is recommended that the meeting should then examine each issue in turn. The Lord Privy Seal and the Chief Whip can give an assessment of the likely Parliamentary reaction. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry may wish to draw attention to the advantages of early introduction of the MRP in giving the United Kingdom a leading role in the developing international market for MRP machinery, and can also be asked to comment on the "jumbo" businessman's passport.

CONCLUSIONS

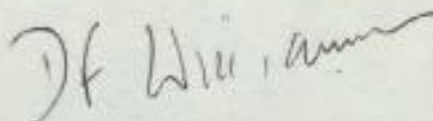
15. It should not be necessary to refer any outstanding issues arising from the transfer of the Passport Office to Cabinet, and you may be able to conclude that the responsible Ministers should now sort out any remaining differences.

16. The other issues are all likely to be of general interest to a large number of Ministers, and you may wish to refer them to Cabinet, perhaps on the basis of preliminary conclusions along the following lines:

(i) the Ministers directly involved consider that the Government should aim to stick by and publicly reconfirm its intention to introduce a machine readable passport;

(ii) this means that a choice now has to be made between simultaneous introduction in 1987 of the CFP and MRP and decoupling them to enable the Common Format Passport to be introduced by the Community deadline of 1985, with introduction of the MRP at a later date;

(iii) the balance of argument seems in favour of abolishing the family and jumbo passports but against abolishing child inclusions; a decision on whether to maintain the British Visitor's Passport can be delayed.



D F WILLIAMSON

5 March 1984



Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO  
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 March 1984

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO  
CABINET OFFICE

cc - Mr. Williamson  
Mr. Brearley  
Mrs. Flanagan  
Mr. Butler (No. 10)

CABINET OFFICE	
A	1660
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5 MAR 1984	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	.....

*My dear Robert,*

PASSPORTS

1. In your letter of 28 February you asked where matters stand on the transfer of responsibility for passport matters from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to the Home Secretary.
2. The Working Group set up to look into the modalities of the transfer reported towards the end of last year and their recommendations were accepted by Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Brittan. As you have noted, however, some problems remained to be settled before the Home Secretary felt able to accept the transfer on 1 April 1984. In particular he wished to be assured that after transfer adequate resources would be available to him to undertake the computerisation of the Passport Office. He has now obtained assurances from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury which he regards as satisfactory.
3. The background note provided to the Parliamentary Question from Mr Bruinvels noted that Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Brittan were corresponding about the date of implementation of a Rayner recommendation on the withdrawal of an allowance paid to some Passport Office staff. They are still discussing this point and correspondence rests with Sir Geoffrey Howe's minute of 2 March, copy attached. I also enclose a note which sets out the background to the problem.
4. You should also be aware, although again we do not see it as an issue which should hold up the transfer, that discussions are continuing about plans to disperse 49 Passport Office posts to East Kilbride to meet the FCO's residual commitment under the Government's dispersal policy. Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Brittan concluded that the best course would be to drop this commitment, and they discussed the problem with



Mr Younger, Lord Gowrie and Mr Hayhoe on 28 February. Lord Gowrie has agreed to ask Mr Heseltine whether the Ministry of Defence are likely to exceed their commitment to disperse some 2000 jobs. If so, the residual FCO commitment could be transferred to the Ministry of Defence. If this is not possible, Ministers will need to consider if the commitment can be dropped.

5. I am copying this letter to Brian Cubbon and Peter Middleton.

*Yours ever*

*Antony*

Antony Acland

Mr Skiffington - for urgent  
since post

c Mr Acton  
Mr Coffey  
Mr Hyde  
Miss Clayton  
Mr Gilchrist  
Mr Holden  
Mr L. H. H. H.

B

FCS/84/68

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT

Transfer of the Passport Office: Examiners' Allowance

1. When we met the other day we discussed the timing of the phasing-out of the Passport Examiners' Allowance. As you recall, I was reluctant to implement this decision in the immediate future, because of the likelihood, in the light of events at GCHQ, that the union reaction would be much sharper than it might otherwise have been. I have since been reflecting on your suggestion that the FCO should make clear to the Trade Union side before the agreed transfer date of 1 April that the allowance would be phased out, while leaving the date of implementation until the autumn.
  
2. I feel, on reflection, that this idea would not get us out of the immediate difficulties. The Unions will react to an announcement of our decision at the time it is made, and the fact that implementation is to be delayed is unlikely to temper that reaction. In the present general climate of industrial relations in the aftermath of Cheltenham, there may well be industrial protest action. It is difficult to assess accurately what the effect of this would be, but the seasonal increase in passport applications has now begun and a strike or go-slow would very quickly lead to a backlog in passport issues and deterioration in the service we could provide to the public. It could also very well have repercussions outside the Passport Office. I therefore think that my original suggestion that any further action should be deferred until the autumn remains best from both our points of view. As you and I

/noted





noted, although it is important as a matter of principle to phase the allowances out, the cost-saving involved is relatively small (only about £10,000 for a full financial year) and the savings would not begin until the decision is implemented. There is therefore nothing to be gained (in financial terms) by making the announcement now. Nor do I think that this issue should call into question the agreed transfer date of 1 April.

3. I therefore very much hope that you will agree to leave this decision until the autumn: From the point of view of staff relations, it would be highly desirable for the Passport Office to be under the same management from the moment at which the announcement is made to the point at which the decision is implemented. And it would be in neither of our interests for the decision to be taken in circumstances which would maximise the difficulties.

4. I am copying this to the Prime Minister.



(GEOFFREY HOWE)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

2 March 1984

## PASSPORT EXAMINERS' ALLOWANCE

1. A responsibility allowance currently of £517 pa is paid to 200 Clerical Officers who examine passports. The Diplomatic Service Inspectors have twice expressed doubt whether the allowance, paid since the 1930s, was justified and the 1982 Rayner Scrutiny of the Passport Office concluded that the allowance was unjustified and that steps should be taken in consultation with the Trade Union Side to phase it out.
2. Ministers decided that the Rayner recommendation should be accepted and the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) were informed that steps would be taken to implement the recommendation early in 1983, although there was strong Trade Union opposition. With Treasury agreement it was then proposed that the allowance should be phased out. Officers currently receiving it would continue to get it while they remained in the job but payment would not be made to newly appointed examiners. The Trade Union Side rejected this offer but after lengthy discussion agreed to a further review.
3. The outcome of the review, in which comparisons were made with the work in other Departments such as the DHSS and Inland Revenue which have "departmental grades" between Clerical Officer and Executive Officer, was that the examiner job was a good quality CO job, a little above the average for the grade, ie a responsibility allowance or higher grade pay was not justified. The Trade Union Side strongly disagreed, contending that the Inspector had undervalued the job. They called on Mr Whitney on 20 October 1983 to put forward an alternative plan for a departmental grade. The Trade Union Side critique and counter-proposal were exhaustively discussed with the FCO Administration who concluded that the allowance should nonetheless be phased out.
4. The TUS made further representations to Mr Whitney in which they reaffirmed their opposition and spoke of the possibility of industrial action if the allowance was phased out. After careful reflection Sir Geoffrey Howe concluded that a decision on

/implementation

implementation should be deferred until the Autumn. Mr Brittan would prefer it to be done before the transfer takes place.

PERSONNEL POLICY DEPARTMENT

5 March 1984

MR. BUTLER  
MR. COLES ✓  
MR. TURNBULL  
MR. FLESHER  
MR. BARCLAY  
MR. ALISON  
MR. SHERBOURNE

Mr 7/3

h-2

I have arranged the following meeting with the Prime Minister:-

Subject ..... PASSPORTS .....  
Date ..... 6/3/84 .....  
Time ..... 10.00 .....  
Venue ..... No 10 .....  
Person/people invited ..... all ministers .....  
..... mentioned in yr. letter attached .....  
Added Ministerial attendance .....

Briefing

a) I have commissioned briefing from .....

✓ b) Could you arrange briefing if necessary

Cabinet Office  
will provide.

Ad  $\frac{2}{3}$

CR

Caroline Ryder

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*file*

*BR*



*bc Caroline Lyder.*

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

1 March 1984

Passports

The Prime Minister has decided to hold an ad hoc Ministerial meeting to discuss the issues described in the joint minute of 23 February signed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary. The minutes by the Lord Privy Seal and the Chief Secretary, dated 29 February, are also relevant.

The Prime Minister would like the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Lord President, the Leader of the House, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Chief Whip, the Attorney General, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Sir Robin Ibbs to attend. A time will be arranged separately by our Diary Secretary.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Ministers concerned, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*E. J. COLES*

R.B. Bone, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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PM/84/31

*[Handwritten signature]*

PRIME MINISTER

PASSPORTS

1. As you know, we agreed with our Community partners in 1981 to introduce a Common Format Passport (CFP) by 1 January 1985, thus putting into effect the agreement in principle by the EC Heads of Government in 1974 that national passports should have a common format. At that time the Government decided (and you announced) that it would simultaneously introduce a machine readable passport (MRP) on the basis of agreed recommendations by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

2. When these decisions were originally taken it was envisaged that introduction of the Common Format Passport and of machine readability would be simultaneous; this for reasons of administrative efficiency, and in the belief that machine readability, which is expected to speed up passport control procedures, would help to

/mitigate

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mitigate any adverse public reaction to the CFP. It was also envisaged that there would be no significant delay in effecting these changes beyond the target date for introduction of CFP. But we warned our Community partners that there could be some delay, and they accepted that the 1 January 1985 date was a "best endeavours" target for us. Your statement of 23 March 1981 to the House (attached at annex A) sets out our public position.

3. It is necessary that we should now take stock of our position. The most important development is the proposed computerisation of the Passport Office. Computerisation was endorsed by the Rayner Review; it offers the prospect of staff savings and is essential for the introduction of machine readability on a cost effective basis. A study on computerisation has just been completed by a consultant from the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA). The consultant strongly advises in favour of early computerisation, linked with the introduction of a soft cover MRP. He confirms the Rayner team's conclusion that there are significant benefits to be gained from computerisation in terms both of reduced costs and of increased efficiency in the issuing of passports. On the basis of our best forecast of passport issues, computerisation would save some £6 million in cumulative net present cost by 1995-96, and require some 200 fewer staff by 1991-92

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/(compared



(compared in both cases with the cost and staffing levels of a non-computerised Passport Office; and assuming - see paragraph 6(c) below - that the British Visitor's Passport is retained.) Finally, he estimates that computerised issue of passports - and therefore MRP - could begin in late 1986, although he acknowledges that this is a challenging timetable. Phased introduction from 1987 onwards is perhaps more realistic.

4. The proposed computerisation timetable requires that a full feasibility study should begin in April at the latest; this exercise, which will involve expenditure of about £150,000, will be pointless unless it is based on a firm set of policy decisions. All of this, therefore, assumes that certain necessary policy decisions, some of which were also recommended by the Rayner team, are now taken without delay.

5. There is no disagreement that the consultant's plans present the most sensible and cost effective way forward in practical terms. They do however present us with political difficulties:

(a) Firstly, the time-table for computerisation and MRP will not permit us to meet the Community objective to introduce CFP by January 1985, unless we change our original and publicly stated intention of simultaneous introduction of CFP/MRP. We would





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miss the date by at least two years, as there is a distinct risk that the timetable suggested in the consultant's report might slip.

(b) Secondly, the computerisation plans require the necessary finance. Letters have been sent to the Chief Secretary seeking Treasury assurances about resources for computerisation which we hope will be forthcoming so that the matter can be resolved shortly.

(c) Thirdly, the plans also presume the introduction of a soft cover passport as the only practical option for machine readability. This is because the best way to incorporate the machine readable page is to laminate it to one of the covers of the passport, as the Americans are now doing and as the Australians and others plan to do. The cover is then inserted in a passport reading machine at passport control. The hard cover passport cannot be made with a machine readable page in the same way. Foreign Office Ministers who have had responsibility for overseeing discussions on the CFP, have had reservations about the adoption of a soft cover because of the likelihood of public and Parliamentary criticism of this further change in the appearance of our passport, coming on top of changes in size and colour to which we are already

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(committed)

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committed by our Community agreement on CFP. You will recall that the CFP, although it is to maintain certain traditional features such as the Royal coat of arms and the customary rubric (which may be displaced from the front cover) is to be smaller than the present passport and coloured burgundy red. On the other hand, politically as well as administratively it might be felt that if a change to a soft cover passport has to be made, it would help further to make it at the same time as the change in colour and size, rather than make two separate politically unattractive changes.

6. It will also be necessary to make or confirm a series of additional policy decisions on other changes to the passport, before the full study on computerisation can begin, and if the target date of 1987 for introduction of the MRP is to be met. Three of these subsidiary policy decisions have a political dimension. The others may be considered separately by officials once the main decisions have been taken. The three requiring policy decisions by Ministers (which are considered at greater length in Annex B) are:

(a) Abolition of the family passport. (ie inclusion of spouse). This follows from the introduction of MRP since the particulars of only one person can in practice be incorporated in

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machine readable form if ICAO recommendations are to be observed. Some of the ground for this change has been prepared by the introduction of a higher fee for a joint passport.

(b) Retention of child inclusions. Rayner recommended against this. However, the consultant believes that this facility can be retained under his proposed system, and we propose that it should be.

(c) Future of the British Visitor's Passport (valid for one year and only for certain countries). This is a popular document with the public because it is readily obtainable with minimum documentation from post offices (1.3m issued each year). It is however easily obtained fraudulently and the Rayner Scrutiny recommended its abolition once standard passports were available speedily following computerisation. For the reasons explained in Annex B we are not yet ready to take a decision on this issue.

## OPTIONS

7. We need therefore to consider the options before us. In our view there are two main options on the principal issue:

/s. To

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i. To stick to our original plan for simultaneous introduction of CFP/MRP, accepting, however, that this will now mean a delay in the introduction of CFP until at least 1987, and a decision to introduce a soft cover passport. Since we must also take the other necessary decisions contingent on computerisation, this option implies one single all embracing set of changes to the passport, or

ii. To decouple the introduction of CFP/MRP, by introducing a hard cover CFP without machine readability in 1985, but to combine this with an announced decision in principle to change to a soft cover when MRP is introduced at a later date.

8. The first option is without doubt the best choice on technical, resource, and practical grounds. It is in line with what you have already announced to Parliament. A single change would be administratively simpler and more resource effective. It could be presented as a more coherent strategy, combining all the changes to the passport which have already been agreed or which now need to be made. A soft cover passport is also the only technically feasible option for incorporating machine readability at the present time, and whatever advances are made, is likely to remain the best technical and most cost effective option. A clear early decision to introduce a soft cover MRP would also give our industry



the opportunity to take a leading role in the developing international market for MRP machinery. However, it should be noted that a soft cover precludes the continued issue of 94 page (jumbo) passports since it is unable to accommodate this number of pages. The facility has proved popular with businessmen and others who travel widely (20,000 issued each year).

9. There are other disadvantages in this course. We should miss the Community target for issue of CFP by two years at least, and this is certainly a longer delay than was inherent in our best endeavours agreement. Most of our Community partners expect to introduce CFP with no more than a few months delay into 1985 (a list of probable dates of introduction is at annex C) and do not at this stage expect the UK to be very much out of line. We should therefore have to cope with some criticisms in the Community. However, assuming that we make our intentions clear that we remain committed to introduction of CFP, and set a firm date for this in 1987, this should be containable. Slippage beyond 1987 would invite further criticism. There could also be adverse reactions from Parliament and the public to the decision to introduce a soft cover, which, taken with the reaction expected to other changes - including MRP which is now coming under fire from civil liberties groups - could cause considerable difficulties. Parliament does not have to approve the changes, which are covered by the

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Royal Prerogative, but it has been told that it will have an opportunity to debate the matter.

10. The second option would enable us to meet our Community commitment, thereby avoiding criticism from our partners. Retention of the hard cover, initially at any rate, would allow the CFP to be introduced while retaining one of the main features of the existing passport. Parliament and the public would have time to get used to the CFP changes before having to adapt to a soft cover MRP and all the other changes. The necessary planning for introduction of a soft cover MRP could start immediately, so that we could avoid at least some of the administrative and other disadvantages of abandoning the 'package' route, and also preserve the competitive advantages for industry.

11. The disadvantages of this option, apart from the fact that it would represent a change of approach from that which you announced on 23 March 1981, are that the Government would face two doses of public discontent which might be worse than one. Ministers would not be able to avoid informing Parliament that a soft cover passport will be introduced in due course, detracting from the advantages of announcing the introduction of a hard cover CFP. There would also be administrative and resource costs as the introduction of CFP would divert management resources for computerisation. The Passport



Office would be involved in two major changes involving extra expense, in a period of about two years. The cost of wastage resulting from two changes would be of the order of £½ million, and there would be continuing additional annual costs of perhaps £200,000 (including the cost of about 10 extra man years) for the duration of the hard cover CFP.

12. We have considered carefully whether any other options are now open to us. Certain options are ruled out. The CFP is a commitment from which we cannot withdraw. Nor would we wish to go back on our decision to introduce a MRP which brings with it significant advantages, not least for the traveller. But unless we are prepared to take a gamble on technology being developed to enable a hard cover being combined cost effectively with MRP this rules out the retention in the long-term of a hard cover. One aspect on which there has to be room for doubt is the time-table envisaged in the consultant's Report for introduction of computerisation/MRP. We have to accept that there may be delay beyond 1987, especially if there are Trade Union objections to be overcome. But the judgment which has to be made is basically the political one of domestic and Community reactions. We cannot avoid some domestic criticism of the changes. We have to find the best way to deal with this, and the possibility in addition of Community difficulties, in the light of all the practical considerations which we must now take into account.



13. A final, and important consideration, is that it is essential that we should have early clear decisions to put to Parliament, in order to follow up the Rayner recommendations; to avoid going back on our international commitment; and to avoid damaging domestic and international speculation as to our intentions once it becomes clear we are missing the January 1985 deadline. We are already beyond the stage at which we could introduce the CFP, in any form, to meet the exact target date of January 1985. It is important that officials and the industries concerned can gear up to the changes efficiently. We are in any event committed to offering a debate in Parliament before any changes in the passport are introduced. There is a good deal to be said for getting that over as soon as possible and early in the life of this Parliament.

14. We therefore recommend that:

i) A decision be taken rapidly on which of the two options in Para 7 should be adopted.

ii) A decision in principle be taken to abolish the family passport but to retain child additions. A final decision on the British Visitor's Passport should be taken after computerisation has been introduced.

/iii)



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iii) An announcement be made to Parliament covering all the proposed changes to the passport, as soon as possible. (A draft is attached at annex D)

15. We enclose samples of a soft cover Common Format Passport, with MRP, and of a hard cover Common Format Passport. Copies of this minute, without the enclosures, go to the Lord President, the Leader of the House, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Chief Whip, the Attorney General, and to Sir Robin Ibbs and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe'.

GEOFFREY HOWE

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'L. Brittan'.

LEON BRITTAN

23 February 1984

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EXTRACT FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OFFICIAL REPORT  
FOR Tuesday 23 March 1981

Volume 1 No 74 Column(s) 219-220

**PRIME MINISTER**

**Passports**

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Prime Minister if she will review the decision taken by heads of Government in 1974 to introduce a standard European community passport to replace the present United Kingdom passport.

The Prime Minister: No. The Heads of Government at the European council in December 1974 agreed in principle that there should be a common format for the national passports of EC member States. The passports in the common format will not be European Community passports and their issue will remain a national prerogative.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister if it is the view of Her Majesty's Government that the agreement at the Foreign Affairs Council of Ministers to introduce a Common Market passport by 1985 represents a binding commitment; or if she intends to provide Parliament with the opportunity of accepting or rejecting the introduction of such European Community passports.

The Prime Minister: The Foreign Affairs Council agreed on 16-17 March 1981 that member States would endeavour to implement by January 1985 the 1974 decision in principle that there should be a common format for the national passports of EC member States. But it was also understood that those member States which have not completed the revision of their laws or rules concerning nationality or the methods of producing the passport by the above date may issue the passport at a later date.

We have made it clear that we do not intend to introduce British passports in the common format until we

are ready to implement the International Civil Aviation Organisation's recommendations for a passport in a simplified standardised format with machine-readable capability. We are studying the technical problems involved and the changes will not be made for a number of years. There will be opportunities before then for Parliament to debate the matter.

Mr. Marlow asked the Prime Minister why it has been agreed to overprint future British passports with the words European Communities; and what consultation has taken place on the proposal.

The Prime Minister: Heads of Government at the European Council in December 1974 agreed in principle that there should be a common format for the national passports of EC member States and this was reported to Parliament by the right hon. Member for Huyton (Sir H. Wilson). Discussions have continued intermittently since then on the detailed implementation of that decision. The inclusion of a reference to the European Communities on the front cover of passports in a common format was agreed by the Foreign Affairs Council in November 1975. Ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council on 16-17 March 1981 agreed that the words "European Community" should be used.

Following the decision at the 1974 European Council, the Commission produced a consultative document which the House of Commons Scrutiny Committee considered in 1975. In February 1979, a House of Lords Select Committee reported on progress on the implementation of the ideas in the Commission's 1975 consultative document. The subject was debated in the House of Lords on 6 November 1979.



## ANNEX B

(a) Abolition of the family passport

The Rayner Scrutineers recommended that the family passport (ie including details of the spouse) should be discontinued immediately. FCO Ministers accepted this recommendation in principle and implementation was to be on the introduction of the machine readable passport (MRP). The Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) consultant in his report commented that the MRP format is not compatible with family passports. This would appear to be correct. We are informed that it would be technically difficult, if not impossible, to bind in one passport two machine readable pages. Nor would it accord with the spirit of the International Civil Aviation Organisation's recommendations on the introduction of the MRP.

It should be noted that the abolition of the family passport may lead to criticism both in Parliament and by the public. But the introduction of a differential fee (£22.50 against £15 for a standard passport) on 14 November 1983 may affect its popularity. We recommend acceptance of the conclusion contained in the CCTA report that the family passport should be abolished on introduction of MRP.

/(b)

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(b) Retention of child inclusions

The Rayner Scrutiny of the Passport Office recommended that a decision in principle be taken to withdraw the facility for child additions to passports once the passport issuing process had been computerised. FCO Ministers accepted this recommendation in principle. However, the CCTA consultant commented in his report that there would be no major advantage in separate passports for children. The Rayner Scrutineers saw some advantage in that it would allow simplification of passport application forms. But we understand that this simplification may now be achieved by other means. A decision to abolish this facility would be unpopular with both the public and Parliament. In the light of all this, we recommend that the facility is retained in line with the CCTA consultant's report.

(c) Future of the British Visitor's Passport (BVP)

The BVP is popular with the public (over 1 million issued each year) but is easily obtained in false names for improper purposes or by people not eligible on nationality grounds. If it were withdrawn, there would be an increase in the number of civil servants needed to issue standard passports, but cash savings on the amount currently paid to the Post Office to act as an agent. The maximum cash benefit from computerisation of the passport issuing process would be obtained if the BVP were withdrawn, but withdrawal is not essential to make

/computerisation

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computerisation worthwhile. The best course seems to be to delay a decision until the increased efficiency aimed for by computerisation has been achieved and could be used to justify withdrawal of the BVP because standard passports will be more readily available.

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## INTRODUCTION OF COMMON FORMAT PASSPORT (CFP)

## INTENTIONS OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Few Member States now plan to have the passport ready by January 1985 but most give the impression that they expect to issue it soon thereafter - for the most part in the course of 1985.

France: claims it is on target for January 1985.

Germany: private assessment is end 1985, public position January 1985.

Italy: thinks it will be able to introduce CFP before January 1985.

Ireland: same as Italy.

Netherlands: aims at January 1985, but more likely later in the year.

Belgium: doubts it will be ready before early 1986.

Luxembourg: will follow 'benelux'.

Denmark: has not revealed its hand.

Greece: same as Denmark.



ANNEX D

PASSPORTS: STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT

1. The House will be aware from earlier statements, including the Prime Minister's written answer of 23 March 1981, of the Government's agreement with our partners in the European Community to introduce a Common Format Passport by 1 January 1985. This would put into effect the agreement in principle by EC Heads of Government in 1974 that national passports in the Community should have a common format. The agreement means that the British passport is to share certain common features with the passports of our Community partners, notably colour, size, the words European Community on the cover, and information on the identification page in all the Community languages. However, traditional features such as the royal coat of arms will be retained, and the changes will in no way affect the status of the passport holder, as the passport will remain a British passport issued by the British Government.

2. When the Government agreed to this target date for introduction of the CFP it made it clear that it intended at the same time to implement the International Civil Aviation Organisation's recommendations for a machine readable passport.



3. Since then the Government has sought and received important new technical advice which will fundamentally affect the future issue of passports. The Government has decided to accept the recommendation of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs and of a subsequent Rayner Review of the Passport Office, that the issue of passports should be computerised. The Passport Office is due for modernisation. Computerisation should reduce costs and speed up the issue of passports to members of the public. The Government has therefore decided that the necessary steps will now be taken so that the issue of passports in the United Kingdom will be computerised. The earliest date by which this can be achieved however is 1987.

4. Computerisation is a complex operation which will entail fundamental changes in the technical organisation of passport issue. In particular it requires a simplified procedure for passport issue, and individual passports for adults. This means the withdrawal of the facility for including both husband and wife on the one passport, but child additions can and will be retained.

[Option 1]

5.(1) One advantage of computerisation in the issue of passports is that it makes possible, in a cost effective

/way,





way, the introduction of a machine readable passport to which as I have already said, the Government is also committed. We must now consider the real practical benefit of making early progress with machine readability. Machine readability, which has been introduced in the United States and is being planned by some other European countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada reduces the amount of time spent by travellers at passport control. It will be of greatest benefit to British travellers abroad, reducing the time taken to pass through overseas controls. The Government has therefore decided that, despite the inevitable delay, the considerations in favour of making all these changes at one time are compelling and that it still therefore makes sense to combine the introduction of machine readability with the other changes in the passport (including the Common Format Passport) which we will be making. This will involve adoption of a soft cover, which is the only practical and cost effective way the machine readable page can be incorporated. As well as the advantages for travellers, it will result in considerable opportunities for British industry in the manufacture of the relevant equipment, although it means that the issue of a 94 page (jumbo) passport will no longer be possible, since a soft cover cannot accommodate this number of pages.



6.(1). This approach to the changes will mean that the Common Format Passport will not be introduced until 1987. But we made it clear to our partners in the discussion of the 1 January 1985 target date that we intended to introduce the Common Format Passport when we were able to introduce machine readability as well and that this might prejudice our achievement of the target date. While we regret this delay we believe it is practical and cost effective to make a single change in the style of the passport, rather than to introduce a Common Format Passport in 1985 and to move to a different style passport designed to incorporate machine readability two years later.

{Option 2}

5.(2). Computerisation also has implications for the timing and form of our existing commitments to a Common Format Passport combined with machine readability. It is not possible to achieve computerisation and hence machine readability which is linked to computerisation - by 1985. We have also had to consider the advice that a hard cover passport would have to be abandoned if we are to issue passports that are economically adaptable to machine readability.

6.(2). We have decided that the best course is to decouple the introduction of a Common Format Passport from machine readability. The Government can only meet



its European commitment, albeit with a few months delay on the January 1985 target, by introduction of a Common Format Passport without machine readability, but with the retention of the hard cover. We shall therefore be introducing a hard cover Common Format Passport without machine readability in early 1985. This can be introduced without prejudice to the changes which will follow in 1987, and we shall be pressing ahead with the plans for introduction of machine readability, alongside computerisation at that time. We have decided that the machine readable passport will be introduced with a soft cover, since this is the only practical and cost effective method of producing the new document.

7. All these changes are designed to make travel easier for British passport holders. They are to the form only; the status and privileges of the passport holder are in no way affected by any of the changes which are proposed.

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Prime Minister

PASSPORTS

with ASC?

I have seen the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's and Home Secretary's minute to you of 23 February. Arguments in favour of delaying the introduction of the Common Format Passport until a machine readable version can be introduced seem to me to be overwhelming. I reach this conclusion not only on cost and efficiency grounds, but have also very much in mind that to make two changes in a short time can only increase the irritation which will inevitably be caused by the abandonment of the traditional, and distinctive, hard cover passport. I therefore favour Option (1) in Annex D to the minute under discussion.

I am here concerned, however, more with the Parliamentary presentation of the decision than with its substance. The matter is controversial, and reservations are as likely to be expressed by our own backbenchers as by those on the other side of the House. In view of this, and of the fact that we are already committed to a debate, I think that to announce the decision in an Oral Statement would simply multiply the opportunities for criticism on the Floor. I strongly advise, therefore, that the initial announcement be made in a Written Answer which could include a promise of an early debate.

I am copying this minute to the Lord President, to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Chief Whip, the Attorney General, Sir Robin Ibbs and Sir Robert Armstrong.

WJB

JOHN BIFFEN  
29 February 1984

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FROM: CHIEF SECRETARY  
DATE: 29 February 1984

PRIME MINISTER

PASSPORTS

*with ASC*  
Geoffrey Howe and Leon Brittan copied to me their joint minute to you of 23 February about the policy decisions which need to be taken for the future format of UK passports.

My particular concern is to ensure that the most cost-effective options are chosen. This seems to point clearly towards going for a simultaneous introduction of a machine-readable passport along with the change to the EC Common Format. It follows that I would also support a switch to a soft cover, and would be content to see the facilities of family and 'jumbo' size passports withdrawn. I would also urge early consideration of the costs and benefits of withdrawing the British Visitors' Passport once the basic decisions about computerising the Passport Office operation have been taken.

I am writing separately to Leon Brittan about the resources for computerisation which may be needed from 1985-86 onwards and I hope that this issue need not present a particular problem at this stage.

I am copying this to Geoffrey Howe and Leon Brittan, and to the other recipients of their minute.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "PR".

PETER REES

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A084/647

MR BUTLER

Th. Coles

Yes m/c  
with AJCPrime Minister.Agree to Ministerial meeting  
on the Chomsky issue?

A.S.C. 29/2

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary minuted the Prime Minister on 23 February about the planned introduction of a Common Format Passport (CFP) which would also be machine readable (MRP). There are difficulties about introducing the two changes simultaneously on the planned date of 1 January 1985, and the two Secretaries of State seek a decision between: sticking to simultaneous introduction but putting back the date to 1987, and introducing a CFP on target in 1985 without machine readability. The issue is complicated by the impending transfer of responsibility for passports from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to the Home Secretary, who will become responsible for the computerisation of the Passport Office which is essential for the cost-effective introduction of machine readability.

2. The issue crosses the boundaries of two Cabinet Committees. It is also one in which I think the Prime Minister and other Cabinet colleagues would probably want to be directly involved, given the political judgments required of domestic and European Community reactions. I suggest therefore that the issue should eventually come to the Cabinet. By way of preparation for that, the joint minute could be taken at an ad hoc Ministerial meeting under the Prime Minister's chairmanship, consisting of those Ministers directly concerned. These would be the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Lord President, the Leader of the House, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Chief Whip and the Attorney General. You might also want to invite the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Sir Robin Ibbs.
3. The ad hoc meeting would also provide an opportunity for the Prime Minister to take stock of any other outstanding issues on the transfer of the Passport Office to the Home Secretary, which should, on the plans agreed last year, take place on 1 April this year.

RIA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

28 February 1984

euro for Apri 50  
ec Passports

26 FEB 1984



COMPTON

*File 201*

GPS 788

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FRAME GENERAL

FM UKREP BRUSSELS 191955Z MAR 81

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 1833 OF 19 MARCH

AND TO SAVING BONN.

*Top copy with briefing  
annexes to Council. Feb  
Maubrecht: EC Policy*

COREPER (AMBASSADORS) 19 MARCH 1981

COMMON FORMAT PASSPORTS

SUMMARY

1. NO MOVE ON OUR OWN RESERVE ON NUMBERS ON THE ICAO CARD OR FRENCH RESERVE ON OPTIONAL CHARACTER OF EXTRA DATA. GENERAL SUSPICION OF OUR CLAIM THIS IS TECHNICAL POINT. WIDESPREAD WISH THAT EUROPEAN COUNCIL SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE NOTE OF AGREEMENT RATHER THAN PROGRESS. PRESIDENCY SAID IN CORRIDORS IF RESERVES CAN BE DROPPED THEY WILL SIMPLY ASK EUROPEAN COUNCIL TO NOTE COMPLETION OF WORK OPENING THE WAY TO ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION OF MEMBER STATES. BUT THEY HAD DECIDED THAT THEIR FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD OTHERWISE RAISE AS QUESTION OF SUBSTANCE.

DETAIL

2. I SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS ON THE ICAO CARD WAS PURELY TECHNICAL. ALTHOUGH IN THE LAST RESORT WE WOULD NOT ALLOW THE QUESTION TO HOLD UP AGREEMENT, WE WERE STRONGLY OF THE VIEW THAT DEPARTURE FROM OR ADDITION TO THE ICAO FORMAT WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE RESOLUTION AND SET AN UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT WHICH COULD UNDERMINE THE PURPOSE OF THE FORMAT. I SHOULD ALSO RECORD OUR WISH TO LEAVE OPEN THE QUESTION OF THE SIZE OF THE PASSPORT FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION BY PASSPORT EXPERTS.

3. DE NANTEUIL (FRANCE) SAID HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE UNCHANGED. IN VIEW OF OUR UNCO-OPERATIVE ATTITUDE THEY COULD NOT LIFT THEIR RESERVE. I INSISTED THAT DE NANTEUIL WAS MISREPRESENTING OUR ATTITUDE AND THAT OUR CONCERN WAS PURELY PRACTICAL. POENSGEN (GERMANY) SAID THAT IF IT WAS PURELY A TECHNICAL PROBLEM EXPERTS SHOULD BE ASKED WHETHER PRINTING OF THE NUMBERS WAS TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE. THE FRENCH SHOULD ALSO DROP THEIR RESERVE. DE NANTEUIL REPLIED THAT THE FRENCH HAD MADE ENOUGH CONCESSIONS ON THE QUESTION.

4. AFTER POSSIBLE COMPROMISES HAD BEEN FLOATED BY BELGIUM AND ITALY ON THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES THE PRESIDENCY SUGGESTED AN IMMEDIATE MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP. HE REPEATED THAT IT WAS QUITE INAPPROPRIATE THAT ANY SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF THESE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL. THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE PROGRESS MADE, OR OF AN OVERALL AGREEMENT IF ONE COULD BE REACHED.

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/5. DE NANTEUIL



5. DE NANTEUIL REITERATED THE FRENCH POSITION THAT THE MATTER SHOULD ONLY BE REFERRED TO EUROPEAN COUNCIL IF THERE WAS AN AGREEMENT TO NOTE.

6. THE WORKING GROUP THEN HELD A CONFUSED, PROLONGED AND ACRIMONIOUS MEETING. THE FOLLOWING POINTS OF SIGNIFICANCE WERE MADE:

(A) OVERALL SIZE. EARLIER DISPOSITION TO ACCEPT AMICABLY OUR POSITION THAT THIS SHOULD BE FURTHER EXAMINED BY TECHNICAL EXPERTS CAME INTO QUESTION. FRENCH ACCUSED US OF GOING BACK ON AGREEMENT OF 1975. COUNCIL DOCUMENT R/2717/1/75 (UP 2) REV 1 - PAGE 10 (REFERRED TO IN DOC 4680/81) RECORDS AGREEMENT ON THE POINT IN A DOSSIER OF WHICH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL TOOK NOTE, MANY OTHER ITEMS IN THIS ARE NOW ENTIRELY OVERTAKEN BY SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS. WE EXPLAINED PROBLEM OF POSSIBLE WISH TO FOLLOW AMERICAN SYSTEM OF INCORPORATING CARD, BUT ITALIANS CLAIMED A PASSPORT AS SMALL AS AN ICAO CARD WOULD BE UNREADABLE - PARTICULARLY PAGE CONTAINING TRANSLATIONS INTO ALL COMMUNITY LANGUAGES. OUR RESERVE ON SIZE WILL THEREFORE ACQUIRE SOME PROMINENCE - AND IT SEEMS TO US THAT POSSIBILITY OF OUR REDUCING SIZE WOULD HEIGHTEN DOMESTIC SUSPICION.

(B) ADDITIONAL PERSONAL DATA. FRANCE APPEARED TO STRENGTHEN IN THEIR INSISTENCE THAT THESE ITEMS MUST BE COMPULSORY FOR ALL. PRESSED BY ALL TO ACCEPT THERE WAS NO SECURITY ADVANTAGE AS REGARDS COUNTRIES INTRODUCING PLASTIC CARD, SHE REFUSED TO GIVE ANY INDICATION OF FLEXIBILITY.

(C) NUMBERS ON CARD. NO SYMPATHY WHATSOEVER FOR OUR POSITION. EVEN DANES WHO ARE NORMALLY MOST SYMPATHETIC ON TECHNICAL MATTERS FAILED TO UNDERSTAND OUR INSISTENCE. ALL REPEATED THERE WAS NO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY, THERE WAS NO LEGAL PROBLEM FROM THE TEXT OF THE ICAO RESOLUTION AND THE MATTER TO THEM WAS A QUESTION OF LINGUISTIC PARITY HAVING POLITICAL IMPORTANCE. SOME ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES WERE DISCUSSED BUT WITHOUT ANY RESULT WHICH MIGHT HAVE BROKEN THE DEADLOCK.

6. PRESIDENCY PREPARED DRAFT REPORT FOR FOREIGN MINISTERS WITH ANNEX SETTING OUT POINTS OF AGREEMENT - UPDATED VERSION OF ANNEX 1 TO 4680/81 - AND RECORDING THE THREE RESERVATIONS TO THIS ANNEX. THIS APPEARED AS DOCUMENT 5642/81 (COPY BY BAG TO ECD-1). DOCUMENT HIGHLIGHTS THE ISOLATION OF THE UK, AND WE TOLD THE DUTCH IN PRIVATE WE FOUND IT UNACCEPTABLE THAT AFTER THE UK POSITION HAD BEEN EXPLAINED AT LENGTH IN THE DOCUMENT THE QUESTION OF SIZE THEN APPEARED AS AN AGREED POINT IN THE ANNEX WITH NO REFERENCE TO OUR OWN RESERVE.

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7. WHEN COREPER RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT I SAID THAT IN VIEW OF THE STRONG FEELINGS EXPRESSED I WOULD TRY TO PERSUADE OUR EXPERTS TO RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION. THIS WAS NOT A POINT WHICH IN THE LAST RESORT WOULD HOLD UP AGREEMENT. THE FRENCH REPEATED THEY HAD NO NEW INSTRUCTIONS.

8. IN RESPONSE TO GERMAN WISH FOR ENDORSEMENT OF AN AGREEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, PRESIDENT AGREED THIS WOULD BE BEST OUTCOME, BUT IF THE UK AND FRANCE HAD NOT CHANGED POSITION, AMBASSADORS COULD DISCUSS IN CORRIDORS AT MAASTRICHT.

9. AFTER CONCLUSION OF THE DISCUSSION VIJVERBERG (PRESIDENCY) REVEALED IN CORRIDOR (THE WORKING GROUP REPRESENTATIVES OF FRANCE, GERMANY AND ITALY ALSO BEING PRESENT) THAT THE PRESIDENCY WOULD BRING THIS UP AS A SUBSTANTIVE POINT AT MAASTRICHT IF UK AND FRENCH RESERVES ON NUMBERS AND DATA OUTSTANDING. BUT IF AGREEMENT READY THE OBJECT WOULD BE ONLY TO TAKE NOTE OF THE COMPLETION OF WORK WHICH SHOULD BE FORMALISED AS A MEMBER STATES RESOLUTION.

FCO ADVANCE TO:-

FCO - P/S, PS/LPS, BRIDGES, HANNAY, SPRECKLEY, JONES

CAB - FRANKLIN, ELLIOTT

HOME OFFICE - WOODISS

FCO PASS SAVING BONN

BUTLER

[ADVANCED & REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

FRAME GENERAL

ECD (I)

NTD

*European  
Policy*

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PRIME MINISTER

Passports  
(OD(81) 17)

The purpose of the discussion under Item 2 of the OD agenda for 12th March is to decide how the United Kingdom should respond, at the 16th-17th March Foreign Affairs Council, to the proposal for a common format passport for Community member States.

BACKGROUND

2. You agreed that the joint paper by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary (OD(81) 17) should be discussed in OD, commenting that, while the launching of a European common format passport will cause difficulties in this country, it should be possible to defend the decision if the United Kingdom can await a convenient time for its introduction. The recommendation is that the Government should:-

*Int. Civil Aviation  
Authority*

- (i) announce now a decision in principle to adopt as soon as possible the ICAO recommendations on the standardisation of passports, making it clear that further work was needed before a date could be set for the change;
- (ii) agree in Brussels on a common format passport, but only on the condition that its introduction in the United Kingdom could be delayed until we were ready to change over to the ICAO format;
- (iii) emphasise, in presenting any decision in Brussels to Parliament and the media, that the new ICAO format passport would have practical advantages and that we would introduce the European Community (EC) common format passport only when we were ready for both.

3. We are committed in principle to the common format by a 1974 decision of Heads of Government. It has been under discussion in the Community since then. Discussions have now reached the point where we have the choice of accepting the agreed format (without an implementation

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date) or blocking it in isolation. The latter would be particularly unwelcome to Mr. Van Agt, who is hoping to reach agreement during the Dutch Presidency and preferably before the European Council in Maastricht. He has sought the Prime Minister's support.

4. Public attachment to the traditional passport is, however, strong. A change in format would need to bring manifest practical advantages to make it acceptable to public opinion. Such advantages would be procured by introducing the common format passport simultaneously with the ICAO recommendations on passport format, since the latter would enable passengers to be processed more quickly, offer greater security against counterfeiting or alteration and, if machine readability was introduced, have considerable advantages for immigration authorities. But we are not yet ready to implement the ICAO recommendations; hence the proposal (likely to be acceptable to our Community partners) that we should not agree to a time limit for introduction of the common format passport, and make it clear that for us its introduction will be linked to the Government's decision on the introduction of the new ICAO format (not likely for several years).

5. Paragraph 5 of OD(81) 17 makes it clear that a United Kingdom passport in the common format would look very much like the existing United Kingdom passport (apart from the colour which would be "burgundy" - chosen because it is not used for any of the existing national passports of member States). But we shall need to ensure that the details are acceptable to us.

6. If the proposals in OD(81) 17 are agreed, it would be prudent, as suggested by Lord Carrington, to inform Parliament, if possible in advance of agreement in Brussels, that Member States were now close to agreement on the implementation of the 1974 decision.

HANDLING

7. You might invite the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to introduce the paper and the Home Secretary to comment.

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8. You might then focus discussion on the three points in the Conclusion (paragraph 6):-

- (a) Announcement of decision of principle to adopt as soon as possible the ICAO recommendations.
- (b) Agreement in Brussels on a common format passport on condition that no firm date was attached to its introduction in the United Kingdom.
- (c) Presentation of the decision to Parliament and the media. Is it agreed that, if the United Kingdom can await a convenient time for the introduction of the new format, it should be possible to defend the decision as simply implementing something which the previous Government agreed to in 1974?

9. You might then seek agreement that Parliament should be informed in advance of agreement in Brussels (paragraph 6 above).

10. Since Mr. Van Agt has placed a good deal of importance on this, you might like to send him a message, telling him of the decision before it is announced in Parliament.

CONCLUSIONS

11. Subject to the discussion, you may be able to sum up that:-

- (i) the proposals in OD(81) 17 are agreed;
- (ii) Parliament should be informed, if possible, in advance of agreement in Brussels.



(Robert Armstrong)

11th March 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

Rth



Ewa PA

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

9 March, 1981

Passports

The Prime Minister has seen the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute to her of 6 March on this subject. The Prime Minister continues to believe that the launching of a European common format passport will cause difficulties in this country. But she agrees that if the UK can await a convenient time for the introduction of the new format, it should be possible to defend the decision.

The Prime Minister therefore agrees that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's paper should be circulated to OD and the subject put on the agenda for the meeting of OD on 12 March.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

CS

G G H Walden, Esq, CMG  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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(I now attach 2 further, Cabinet Office, minutes.)

①

Premier Minister

This is the advice for which you asked on the van Agt's request.

PM/81/9

PRIME MINISTER

2. I also attach an account of a discussion in COREPER 2 Annexes which will give you an idea of the conditions involved in this subject: see

Yes - then with leave would be in Brussels but no work as we can wait - I am sure we can wait -

Passports Renato Ruggiero in para 4. - of para 3. After line 2 para 3 below. Annex

1. You will recall that work is in progress in Brussels on the implementation of the decision taken at the European Summit at the end of 1974 that the passports of EC Member States should have a common format. I last minuted to you about this on 15 April 1980.

2. Since then, substantial progress has been made in Brussels and most of the technical difficulties have been resolved. In particular, it should now be possible to reach agreement that we need not make the change to the European format until we are ready to move to the new ICAO recommended format which permits machine reading. This means that we could decide in our own time when to introduce the new passport. The subject will be on the agenda of the Foreign Affairs Council on 17 March.

3. I have discussed the issues with Willie Whitelaw and I attach a short paper with which he agrees, which suggests how we might now proceed. The key point in our proposals is that we would not accept any firm date for introduction of the common format passport; its timing would be linked to the timing of the introduction of the new ICAO format and this will depend on the studies now in progress. As I have said, I believe this will be acceptable to other Member States, though

/they will



they will probably wish to insert a "target" date of 1985 in the resolution which will not however be binding on us. We shall also need to get satisfaction on such remaining problems as the relative size of the lettering used to list the United Kingdom and the European Community on the cover of the passport.

4. I am conscious that the British attachment to the traditional passport could lead to criticism of such a decision. But we shall be able to point out:

- (a) that a change will anyway be needed in due course for good practical reasons;
- (b) that we have not accepted any date for the change; and
- (c) that the decision of principle was in any case taken by our predecessors in 1974.

5. You will be aware that the Dutch Prime Minister would like to launch the new passport formally at the European Council, but only if prior agreement had been reached at the Foreign Affairs Council. We should therefore be able to avoid any substantive discussion at the European Council.

6. If you agree with the line we suggest, we might circulate our paper to OD colleagues. There is also the question of informing Parliament. From a formal point of view, this is a matter for the Member States rather than the Community as such; any agreement would be embodied in a

/resolution





resolution of Member States, so the ordinary scrutiny procedures would not apply. Nevertheless, I think it would be prudent to inform Parliament, if possible in advance of agreement in Brussels, that Member States were now close to agreement on the implementation of the 1974 decision.

7. I am sending copies of this minute to Willie Whitelaw and Robert Armstrong.

C

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

6 March 1981

Ref No: A04408

MR ALEXANDER

Passports

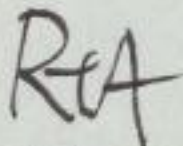
The Prime Minister will be receiving a minute from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary setting out the advice he has agreed with the Home Secretary on handling the proposal for a common format passport for Community member states. His detailed proposals are explained in a draft paper which, subject to the Prime Minister's own views, he would propose to put to OD. In brief the recommendation made by Mr Whitelaw and Lord Carrington is that the Government should:

- i. announce now a decision in principle to adopt as soon as possible the ICAO recommendations on the standardisation of passports, making it clear that further work was needed before a date could be set for the change;
  - ii. agree in Brussels on a common format passport but only on the condition that its introduction in the United Kingdom could be delayed until we were ready to change over to the ICAO format;
  - iii. emphasise, in presenting any decision in Brussels to Parliament and the media, that the new ICAO format passport would have practical advantages and that we would introduce the European Community (EC) common format passport only when we were ready for both.
2. These proposals take account of the Prime Minister's view last year (your letter of 16 April to Mr Lever) that the common format was a sensitive domestic issue but that the ICAO scheme for machine readable passports was a good idea which should be pursued.
3. We are committed in principle to the common format by a 1974 decision of Heads of Government. Public attachment to the traditional passport is, however, strong and any different format would have to bring positive

practical advantages to make it acceptable to public opinion. Such advantages would be procured by introducing the common format passport simultaneously with the ICAO recommendations on passport format, since the latter would enable passengers to be processed more quickly, offer greater security against counterfeiting or alteration and, if machine readability itself was introduced, have considerable advantages for immigration authorities. The difficulty is that we are not yet ready to implement the ICAO recommendations; hence the proposal that we should not agree to a time limit for introduction of the common format passport but make it clear that its introduction would be linked to the timing of the introduction of the new ICAO format for which we cannot fix a date. This seems likely to be acceptable to our Community partners.

4. Paragraph 5 of the draft OD paper makes it clear that a United Kingdom passport in the common format would look very much like the existing United Kingdom passport apart from the colour which would be "burgundy". This has been chosen because it is not used on any of the existing national passports of member states. But we shall need to ensure that the details are acceptable to us.

5. The common format has been under discussion in the Community since 1974. Discussions have now reached the point where we have the choice of accepting the agreed format (without an implementation date) or blocking it in isolation. This would be particularly unwelcome to Mr van Agt who is hoping to reach agreement during the Dutch Presidency, and preferably at or before the European Council in Maastricht. As reported in separate minutes on 25 February and 6 March he has made a particular point of seeking the Prime Minister's support. The subject is on the agenda for the Foreign Affairs Council on 16 March. If the Prime Minister is content, she may wish to suggest that the paper be added to the agenda of OD on 12 March.



Robert Armstrong

6 March 1981

Ref: A04407

MR ALEXANDERCommon Format Passport

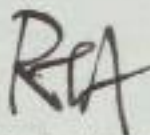
The Netherlands Ambassador called on me at his own request today. Mr Fack told me that he had received personal instructions from Mr van Agt to make representations at the highest possible level close to the Prime Minister about progress on the introduction of the Common Format Passport. Since he understood (he did not say how) that the Cabinet Office were now involved in this question, he had decided to approach me about it.

He had been asked to emphasise the importance which Mr van Agt attached to getting agreement on the introduction of the Common Format Passport at the forthcoming European Council meeting at Maastricht. Since the proposal for a Common European Passport had first been advanced at the European Council in 1974, there had been detailed consideration by the experts of ways of reconciling the various technical problems of the different Community Governments. Sufficient progress had now been made over these technical points for a decision on the Passport's introduction to be taken at Maastricht. Mr Fack understood that most recently the principal source of technical objections to the Passport had been the United Kingdom. But the Dutch believed that the compromise now worked out between the Community Governments would meet Britain's difficulties. Mr Fack had to add that, if agreement could not be reached at Maastricht, this would be a source of serious regret to the Netherlands Prime Minister.

I told the Netherlands Ambassador that I would take note of his representations and would convey them to the Prime Minister and to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. I was sure that they would be taken very seriously. Our Community partners had gone a long way towards meeting our technical problems, but it remained true (as he would be aware) that the introduction of a Common European Passport was an issue of considerable political sensitivity in Britain. It was likely that the position of Ministers would be influenced by their assessment of the likely domestic political reaction as much as by the extent to which the technical problems had been met.

Mr Fack said that he was grateful for my assurance that the matter would be drawn to the Prime Minister's and the Foreign Secretary's attention. He said that, speaking personally, he agreed that this was now essentially a political question. Seen from the Dutch stand-point, it was important to realise that the significance which Mr van Agt attached to the Passport was affected by the forthcoming Dutch elections. The Dutch Government expected the European Council in Maastricht to be primarily an occasion for reflection and to be unlikely to come up with major decisions. It would be useful for domestic political (ie electoral) reasons if Mr van Agt could point to agreement (either at the European Council at Maastricht or earlier in the Council of Ministers and then endorsed at Maastricht) on the Common Format Passport as one of the achievements of the Dutch Presidency. He thought that the degree of flexibility which had been agreed over the question of the introduction of the Passport (ie as from 1 January 1985, but with the possibility of a derogation for those Governments with technical difficulties) should be sufficient to allay any anxieties which the British Government might have about domestic political reactions. He suggested that this would in practice allow the British Government to link the introduction of the new ICAO format and the introduction of the European Common Format Passport.

I am sending a copy of this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Home Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.



Robert Armstrong

6th March 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

FRAME GENERAL

FM UKREP BRUSSELS 052038Z MAR 81

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 782 OF 5 MARCH

COREPER (AMBASSADORS): 5 MARCH

COMMON FORMAT PASSPORT

## SUMMARY

1. FIRST DISCUSSION OF PRESIDENCY COMPROMISE. TO BE DISCUSSED AGAIN BY COREPER ON 12 MARCH BEFORE GOING TO 16/17 MARCH COUNCIL.

## DETAIL

2. RUTTEN (PRESIDENCY) INTRODUCED THE PRESIDENCY COMPROMISE (SEE UKREP TELNO 620), STRESSING THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE WORDING ON THE DATE OF ENTRY INTO FORCE AND THE CONCESSION ON THE ORDER OF ITEMS ON THE COVER. THESE WENT A VERY LONG WAY TO MEET BRITISH CONCERNS IN ORDER TO MAKE PROGRESS ON A MATTER TO WHICH OTHER MEMBER STATES ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE. COULD THE UK ACCEPT THE PACKAGE?

3. I SAID THAT THE PRESIDENCY COMPROMISE PROPOSAL TOOK US A SUBSTANTIAL STEP NEARER TO A SCHEME WHICH WOULD MEET THE UK'S DIFFICULTIES, ESPECIALLY ON THE COVER AND DATA. ON LANGUAGES, THE NUMBERS-TILL CAUSED US DIFFICULTY, AT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT GROUNDS THERE WERE FOR OTHER DELEGATIONS TO OBJECT TO OUR PROPOSAL THAT THERE SHOULD MERELY BE AN INDEX PAGE INCLUDING THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH WORDS THAT NEEDED TO BE TRANSLATED. ON THE MOST SENSITIVE ISSUE, TIMING, THE PRESIDENCY'S FORMULA WAS INCONSISTENT. I REPEATED THE BRITISH PROPOSAL TABLED IN THE WORKING GROUP AND SAID THAT I WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECOMMEND TO MY AUTHORITIES THE ADDITION TO THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THE WORDS "AND IF POSSIBLE BY 1 JANUARY 1985" TO MEET THE WISHES OF THOSE FOR WHOM A TARGET DATE WAS IMPORTANT. I COULD ONLY DO THIS ON A PERSONAL BASIS. I HAD NO AUTHORITY TO GO BEYOND THE FORMULA TABLED IN THE WORKING GROUP. I STRESSED THAT MY INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO PREPARE A PROPOSAL WHICH COULD BE EXAMINED BY MINISTERS WHEN COREPER HAD COMPLETED ITS WORK. I COULD NOT SAY WHETHER ANY PARTICULAR FORMULA OR PACKAGE WOULD PROVE ACCEPTABLE TO MINISTERS. RUTTEN ACKNOWLEDGED THE INTERNAL INCONSISTENCY IN THE PRESIDENCY FORMULA ON TIMING.

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4. RUGGIERO (ITALY), IN A REMARKABLY VEHEMENT INTERVENTION, SAID THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO TERMINATE THE EXERCISE THERE AND THEN. THE COUNCIL SHOULD TAKE THE SCHEME WHICH NINE MEMBER STATES COULD ACCEPT AND AGREE THAT WHEN THE TENTH MEMBER STATE WAS ABLE TO IDENTIFY WITH THE COMMUNITY (''SE RECONNAITRE DANS LE COMMUNAUTÉ'') IT COULD JOIN IN.

5. RUTTEN THEN CONDUCTED A TOUR DE TABLE WHICH REVEALED THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

NETHERLANDS - READY TO ACCEPT PRESIDENCY COMPROMISE IN SPITE OF CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY OVER COVER AND LIMITLESS DEROGATION ON ENTRY INTO FORCE.

LUXEMBOURG, IRELAND DENMARK AND BELGIUM - ACCEPTED WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM.

FRANCE - COULD NOT ACCEPT DATA ELEMENT OF COMPROMISE.

GREECE - NO INSTRUCTIONS BUT EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO ACCEPT.

FRG - COULD NOT ACCEPT ORDER ON COVER (A STICKING POINT) BUT COULD GO EVEN FURTHER THAN PRESIDENCY OVER FLEXIBILITY ON DATE OF ENTRY INTO FORCE.

6. IN AN ATTEMPT TO SUM UP, RUTTEN SAID THAT NINE DELEGATIONS COULD HAVE ACCEPTED A MORE COMMUNAUTAIRE FORMULA, BUT THAT THEY COULD WITH GREATER OR LESSER DEGREES OF RELUCTANCE ACCEPT THE PRESIDENCY'S COMPROMISE. DISCUSSION WOULD RESUME AT COREPER ON 12 MARCH, AND THE ITEM WOULD REMAIN ON THE COUNCIL AGENDA BECAUSE THE PRESIDENCY HAD UNDERTAKEN TO REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT.

7. RUGGIERO DISPUTED RUTTEN'S SUMMING UP. ITALY COULD NOT ACCEPT A SOLUTION WHICH IMPOSED SOMETHING UNACCEPTABLE ON 9 MEMBER STATES AND LEFT MEMBER STATES FREE NOT TO APPLY IT AT ALL. I ARGUED THAT RUGGIERO'S POSITION WAS NOT REASONABLE. THE UK'S POSITION ON ENTRY INTO FORCE WAS STRICTLY PRACTICAL; THE UK COULD NOT CHANGE ITS PASSPORT TWICE WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD. THE QUESTION OF TIMING WAS CRUCIAL TO THE UK'S ABILITY TO REACH AN AGREEMENT. RUTTEN ASKED WHETHER CHANGING THE DATE TO 1 JANUARY 1986 WOULD

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HELP. I SAID THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS SIMPLY UNABLE TO SAY WHEN IT WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CHANGE ITS PASSPORT, AND I DOUBTED WHETHER CHANGING THE DATE WOULD MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE. NOTERDAEME (BELGIUM) AND NANTEUIL (FRANCE) THEN SAID THAT THEY AGREED WITH RUGGIERO'S LAST INTERVENTION. BUT TRUMPF (FRG) EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR THE UK'S DIFFICULTIES OVER TIMING AND, REPEATING HIS EARLIER POSITION, SUGGESTED THAT THE NINE ADOPT THE PRESIDENCY COMPROMISE EXCEPT ON THE COVER AND GIVE THE UK TEN YEARS OR MAYBE MORE TO "CATCH UP". RUGGIERO THOUGHT THIS ALTERNATIVE SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE COUNCIL.

8. RUTTEN MADE NO FURTHER ATTEMPT TO SUM UP BUT SAID THAT COREPER WOULD REVERT TO THE SUBJECT NEXT WEEK.

FCO COPY TO -  
FCO - HANNAY SPRECKLEY (ECD(1))  
CAB - FRANKLIN ELLIOTT WENTWORTH GOODENOUGH  
HO - WOODISS

BUTLER

FRAME GENERAL  
ECD (1)

[ADVANCED AS REQUESTED]



Ref. A04324

MR ALEXANDER

Provided  
to Mr. Walden  
Advice please  
ms

Prime Minister  
P.M.

(4)

European Passport

During last week's meeting of Personal Representatives I was lobbied by both my Dutch and my German colleague on this subject.

2. My Dutch colleague said that he had been asked by his Prime Minister, Mr van Agt, to give me a message to convey to the Prime Minister. She would know, he said, that Mr van Agt, who much valued his good relationship with her, faced an election shortly. He would be in the chair at the meeting of the European Council in Maastricht next month; and it would be of great electoral benefit to him if he was able to point to agreement on a European passport reached at Maastricht. He hoped that the Prime Minister would be able to support him in this matter.

3. My German colleague also told me that the Federal Chancellor attached much importance to reaching agreement at Maastricht on a European passport; he understood that this question had still to be resolved at political level in this country, and hoped that the Prime Minister would be able to come to Maastricht with the question resolved and able to reach agreement with her colleagues.

4. I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr. Walden.

ReA

(Robert Armstrong)

25th February 1981

Euro Pol.

file

SS



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

18 November 1980

Proposals for Common Format for Passports of  
EC Member States

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The Prime Minister has seen and taken note of your letter to me of 14 November on this subject.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Franklin (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Paul Lever, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SS



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

To bring you up to date

14 November 1980

Print - 14/11/80 MB K

Dear Michael,

Proposals for Common Format for Passports of  
EC Member States

Michael Franklin outlined the position on this in the paper attached in his minute to me of 29 July copied to you. He suggested that the proposed discussion between the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary could wait until we had a clearer indication of the intentions of the Luxembourg Presidency.

There has been no substantial progress since July. The Luxembourg Presidency have indicated that they do not intend to press Member States for early decisions. There will be a further meeting of the Working Group on 17 November but there are a lot of outstanding technical questions to explore. As soon as discussions in Brussels reach the point where decisions may be needed I will write to you again and Lord Carrington will seek the Prime Minister's views.

Meanwhile our instructions accord with the Prime Minister's views recorded in your letter to me of 16 April. We aim to postpone decisions on the common European format while we pursue the scheme for machine-readable passports. We are exploring the possibility of a European scheme which would either provide for machine readable pages for all Community countries or a compromise under which countries wishing to go machine readable page in the ICAO format, without having to duplicate the data on conventional pages. We also have to take into account the timing of the changes in our own nationality law which will affect entitlement to a future British passport providing automatically for freedom of movement through the Community - as would be likely in the case for a British passport in a common format. In view of these uncertainties in our own timetable we would like to establish that, if there is to be decision in the Community, Member States should have considerable discretion on implementation dates; these might be spread over several years.

/ Generally

Michael Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street



Generally, we attach importance to ensuring that any new scheme provides practical benefits, both for the traveller in the form of quicker handling at frontiers and for the immigration authorities. We also attach importance to the export potential of prototype terminals which are being studied for development by UK industry to exploit the part which machine-readable documentation might play in improving port procedures. At the same time we will make it clear that we continue to support in principle the Heads of Government's decision that national passports of the Nine should have a common format to demonstrate the links between the countries of the Community. We will only need to reconsider our position if we again become isolated in discussion.

I am copying this letter to Michael Franklin (Cabinet Office).

Yours GSK

Paul

(P Lever)  
Private Secretary

*Enno PD*

Qz 01697

*h.s. [Signature]*

MR LEVER

cc Mr Alexander, No 10 ✓  
Mr Woodiss, Home Office  
Mr Burrows, UKREP

COMMON FORMAT PASSPORT

1. Mr Alexander's letter of 16 April indicated that the Prime Minister wished to discuss this subject with Lord Carrington before the draft OD paper he had sent her was circulated or any new commitments were entered into in Brussels. The Presidency has of course now passed from the Italians, who were pursuing this subject actively, to the Luxembourgers who have not yet made a move.

2. I enclose copy of a paper which we have prepared here, in consultation with FCO, UKREP and the Home Office, which seeks to set out the relationship between the commitment to a common format passport, the prospects for a machine readable passport and the changes which will be required after the passage of a Nationality Bill. This paper could form the basis for a discussion between the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. However, I suggest that this could now wait until we have a clearer indication of the intentions of the Luxembourg Presidency.

*h.s.*

M D M FRANKLIN

29 July 1980

## QUESTION OF A COMMON FORMAT FOR THE PASSPORTS OF COMMUNITY MEMBER STATES

### Introduction

1. In 1974 the EC Heads of Government decided in principle that the national passports of the Nine should have a common format to demonstrate the links between the nine countries as members of the Community. The passports in a common format would not be Community passports. They would remain national passports and the issue of passports would remain a national prerogative. By 1977 the Nine had virtually reached agreement on a common format passport in conventional style. There has been no progress with this scheme since then, mainly because of UK reluctance to proceed. But the Italian Presidency have this year revived the discussions. We do not yet know how vigorously the Luxembourg Presidency intend to pursue this question. It is likely that if agreement could be reached, our partners would be content to let us suit ourselves about when we changed the British passport.

### Other Changes in Prospect : (a) Nationality Act

2. Two other factors could make changes to the present British passport necessary for domestic reasons. One is the proposed new Nationality Act. The White Paper is to be published on 29 July and the Bill will be in the main legislative programme for the next session of Parliament. It should receive the Royal Assent in the course of 1981, but because of the administrative complications implementation is likely to be 12-18 months after enactment, perhaps not until 1983. The Bill will create three categories of citizen. Two of these will not be eligible to enjoy the rights of freedom of movement conferred by the Treaty of Rome and it would be inappropriate and inconvenient for their passports to be in the proposed Community common format. We would therefore not wish to introduce the latter until we were ready to implement the Nationality Act.

### Other Changes in Prospect : (b) Machine-Readability

3. The second possible change would be the introduction of machine-readable passports. ICAO have made detailed recommendations concerning the format of a machine-readable passport page (or identity card). Machine-readability, if widely adopted, would have considerable advantages both for immigration authorities and for travellers, who could be processed more quickly and could probably be spared the completion of landing cards. The ICAO format would also make for easier reading even if machines were not used, and ICAO have been interested in standardisation for this reason also.

4. The ICAO format is also difficult to counterfeit or tamper with and is greatly superior to the conventional passport in terms of security. As many as 30,000 British passports have been lost or stolen annually in recent years and some of these have been used by terrorists or illegal immigrants. Because of the improved security, ICAO proposes to drop some of the traditional personal data, such as height and colour of eyes.

5. We are studying a number of outstanding technical problems. These include methods of production of the machine-readable page, ways of binding it securely into the passport, and various types of reading machine. These problems will take some time to resolve. Again, we would not wish to go over to a common Community format until we had decided whether to introduce machine-readability into the British passport and, if that decision were positive, were ready to do so. In taking this decision, Ministers may wish to consider possible public anxiety about the implications for individual privacy of the computerisation of immigration controls, as well as the intentions of other countries.

#### Community Negotiations : Machine-readability

6. In the revived discussions under the Italian Presidency, we have taken the line that a common format passport should not be just a symbolic gesture but should offer practical advantages to the traveller and we have suggested making a machine-readable page on ICAO lines part of the common format. But only the Germans seem to be as interested as we are in introducing machine-readability. The Danes are interested in the security advantages of the ICAO format, but apparently not in machine-readability. To judge from the attitudes of the Brussels representatives of other partners, there is little interest elsewhere. Soundings in the capitals might however produce different impressions. We know that the French are in fact considering machine-readable alien registration cards, which might be a step towards wider application of machine-readability.

7. A compromise has emerged in Brussels which would permit countries wishing to go machine-readable to substitute a machine-readable page in the ICAO format for the conventional personal data page. Our partners are however arguing that machine-readable countries should insert those personal data which appear in the traditional passport but not in the ICAO format either on the back of the machine-readable page or elsewhere. We argue that this would be of no practical value to us, would tend to undermine the ICAO recommendation, would be administratively burdensome and, if the extra data were to go on the back of the machine-readable page, technically difficult.

Community Negotiations : Other Questions of Format

8. We have succeeded in ensuring in discussions that a UK passport in the common format would look very much like the existing UK passport and be at least as distinguished, and that the main characteristics to which British people attach importance (the Royal coat of arms on the front, the rubric 'Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State ... requests and requires ... etc) would be retained. Unsettled questions <sup>include</sup> / the way in which all the languages of the Community would appear at some point in the passport, and, more sensitive domestically, whether the words 'European Community' or 'United Kingdom' would come first on the cover. Other member states would prefer European Community to come first. The legal basis of any scheme also remains to be resolved but we do not anticipate significant difficulty with that. We have said that we would expect to fall in with the consensus on these questions.

Future Policy

9. There is no need for Ministers to take a decision on the handling of the question of a common Community format unless and until the Luxemburg Presidency make it clear that they intend to pursue it. If this happens, the principal issue for Ministers to decide will be whether we should:-

- (a) continue on the course we have followed in recent months, seeking a compromise which would allow member states either to adopt a traditional common format or to go machine-readable in an agreed way but at their own pace; or
- (b) to suggest a pause for reflection, combined with lobbying in capitals for a common Community policy on machine-readability to be adopted before, and implemented in, a common format passport.



CONFIDENTIAL

*Europe Policy: Venice Council Policy*

①

PRIME MINISTER

*Overlain*

*for [unclear] [unclear]*

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The attached letter from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary reverts to the question of a common format for the passport of Community Member States. Lord Carrington agrees with you about the domestic sensitivity of this issue. His letter proposes a way of preventing the matter coming to a head for several months. However, his proposal assumes - though this is not very clear from the letter - that we would give some indication in principle of a willingness to accept a common format in due course.

I think this problem needs to be seen against the general background of our relations with the European Community in the next few months. We have just emerged from a prolonged period of difficulty. We will probably be entering a further period of argument in the autumn, first over the Common Fisheries Policy and then over the re-structuring of the Budget, and of the C.A.P. There would therefore, in my view, be much to be said in favour of H.M.G. striking as "European" a posture as possible in the pursuit of our interests in the next few months. It would be helpful to our efforts to get our way on the major economic issues if we can show, elsewhere, that we are interested in seeing the Community develop. *It would be a major mistake here - only consider if we can have a Britain and a European*

One way of doing this would be to appear reasonably forthcoming on the passport issue and to combine it with one or two other proposals which would be demonstrably "European" and designed to make Europe rather more attractive to the ordinary voter. The sort of ideas that have been mentioned in this connection are, for instance, cheaper air fares (in any case a UK interest) and the simplification of formalities for getting medical attention in other Member States.

An alternative idea (not relevant to the public image of the Community) would be for us to pursue proposals aimed at integrating Political Cooperation activities more closely with those activities which fall directly under the Treaties. *The French would not much like this.*

CONFIDENTIAL *not would / if*

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

If the thoughts set out above seem to you to have any validity, you might care to mention them at the European Council briefing meeting on Monday afternoon. *If they seemed worth pursuing they could be worked out more fully in time for you to mention them, formally or informally, to your colleagues in Venice.*

*And*

6 June 1980

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

4 June 1980

Agree A?

Am

Dear Michael,

Proposals for a Common Format for the Passports of  
EC Member States

You wrote to me on 16 April with the Prime Minister's comments on Lord Carrington's minute to her of 15 April on this subject.

The Prime Minister agreed with Lord Carrington that this would be a sensitive domestic issue and that the ICAO scheme for machine-readable passports should be pursued. She asked whether it would not be possible to postpone decisions on a common European format until the ICAO scheme was brought in.

In the past few months the Italian Presidency have pressed hard in COREPER and the Working Group for early, final agreement during their Presidency on the EC common format scheme for conventional passports. All other Member States say they can accept this. We are now isolated in refusing to accept the Community scheme as it stands and are taking the blame for delay. We will be exposed at the next COREPER discussion, probably on 10 or 12 June.

Our tactics have been to maintain a general reserve and to insist on the need for the EC scheme to take account of the ICAO proposals. We have argued that it does not make sense to adopt a new-style conventional passport when we expect to incorporate a machine-readable aspect in passports within a few years. We had some support from the Germans for a procedure which would reconcile the EC and ICAO proposals. They, like us, are impressed with the administrative and security arguments for machine-readability. The Germans will not, however, get into a minority in holding out against the existing EC scheme. Other Member States have criticised us for not saying more explicitly what solution we are ready to consider.

A. | Lord Carrington would like to have a word with the Prime Minister about this within the next two weeks. He thinks if Parliament is to accept a new passport with some form of Community dimension it must be convincingly shown that the new format passport is necessary for practical reasons in any case, and that the new system - with a machine-readable element - would give the traveller practical advantages. The appearance of the passport would need to be close to that of our present passport.

It would probably be possible both to achieve a long delay in EC discussion and to avoid acrimonious accusations of UK obstruction if we were to outline at COREPER the kind of practical scheme we envisage providing for machine-readable passports. A lot of technical problems would be involved and negotiations on them could be expected to take several months.

/I am



I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright  
(Cabinet Office), and to John Chilcot (Home Office).

*Yours etc*

*Paul*

(P Lever)  
Private Secretary

M O' D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 April 1980

PROPOSALS FOR A COMMON FORMAT FOR THE PASSPORTS  
OF EC MEMBER STATES

The Prime Minister has seen the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute to her of 15 April on this subject. She agrees with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary that the proposals described in his minute will be a sensitive domestic issue. She fears that no amount of "presentation" will overcome the problem.

The Prime Minister considers that the ICAO scheme for machine-readable passports is a good idea and one which should be pursued. She has asked whether it would not be possible to postpone decisions on a common European format until the ICAO scheme is brought in.

It follows that the Prime Minister would not be content for the Secretary of State's OD paper to issue in its present form, and it will be necessary for the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to discuss the matter before we go much further. In the meantime, representatives at the meeting in Brussels on 18 April will have to be non-committal.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Paul Lever, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

*Handwritten initials: KR*

*Handwritten notes: G... JS  
a: CO.*

*Handwritten note: BK 23-4-80*



PM/80/29

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

(1)

This is likely to be politically sensitive. But the practical advantages would be considerable. Agree Draft?

Print 15/4

EC Proposals for the Common Format for the Passports of Member States

Why?

1. In 1974 the Heads of Government agreed in principle at the Copenhagen European Council that the national passports of the Nine should in due course have a common format (not, of course, that there should be a Community passport as such). Discussions on implementing this have gone very slowly, but the Italian Presidency have now revived the scheme and hope for an early decision.

2. The British authorities, while continuing to accept this scheme in principle, have been cautious and concerned to ensure that it reflects practical realities and is not just a symbolic gesture. We feel, however, that in present circumstances we should be able to make some useful progress.

3. There are at least two complicating factors which make a decision within the next few months at least unlikely. The first is the parallel proposal in the International Civil Aviation Organisation for machine-readable passports; this is supported by all EC countries, including ourselves. The expected growth of international travel makes machine-readable passports highly desirable if the present effectiveness of port and frontier checks is to be maintained. The second factor affecting the UK in particular is that not all citizens are 'nationals' with full rights within the EC. This difficulty would however probably be overcome when we have a new nationality law.

This will cause immense hurdle and no 14.  
 amount of 'presentation' will overcome the problem. Agree  
 for the machine-readable page - which is a good idea - we need terms to me to be standardisation  
 for the sake of standardisation.



*It will keep out all the anti-European feelings  
just when we don't want it. I hope we can  
show the idea until the ICAO scheme is brought in.  
M*

4. We have argued in the Community that it does not make sense to go ahead with national common format passports in the old style without taking account of the ICAO recommendation which is expected in the next month or two.

5. It now seems likely that the EC will accept that the two proposals be considered together. The most likely outcome could be an EC/ICAO scheme for machine-readable passports with a common EC format. Another possibility is that technical problems with that scheme could lead to pressure in the Community for an interim EC agreement restricted to a common format for conventional passports.

6. Since this could be a sensitive domestic issue I should be grateful for confirmation that you agree with my approach in the attached minute which I propose to put to OD.

7. I have discussed the question with Willie Whitelaw who sees no objection to going ahead with the EC proposal for a common format, even in advance of final agreement on the ICAO proposal. The line I suggest is a little more cautious since we should, I think, be able to demonstrate to people in Britain that the new passport remains a British passport; that a new machine-readable format is necessary in any case; and that it will give travellers practical advantages in the form of quicker handling at points of entry. Only if agreement on such a passport is not possible would I wish to consider agreement on a common format for conventional passports.

8. In due course I shall need to consult the Palace, the issue of passports being a Royal prerogative.



9. A change in the traditional British passport is obviously open to misrepresentation and could become a sensitive domestic issue. Officials are next due to discuss the subject in Brussels on 18 April. We shall not need to commit ourselves to a final decision at this meeting: but if the Government was to adopt an approach markedly different from that outlined in the attached draft minute to OD, we should make our reservations known before going further down the present road. I should therefore be grateful for early confirmation that you are content with the approach in the draft minute, which I shall then circulate.

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

15 April 1980



DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:  
Secretary of State

Reference

DEPARTMENT: TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

OD Members

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PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

EC PROPOSAL FOR THE COMMON FORMAT FOR THE PASSPORTS OF MEMBER STATES

CAVEAT.....

In 1974 the EC Heads of Government decided in principle that the national passports of the Nine should have a common format to demonstrate the links between the nine countries as members of the Community. The passports in a common format would not be Community passports. They would remain national passports and the issue of passports would be a national prerogative. Progress with this scheme has been slow but the Italian Presidency have recently revived the discussions.

The United Kingdom has continued to accept the scheme in principle but we have urged that if it is to be implemented it must be clearly shown to give citizens practical advantages (in the form of quicker handling at points of entry) as well as being a symbolic gesture. To this end we have also insisted that the Community discussions should take full account of the international proposals, supported by all EC Member States, on machine readable passports (which would allow at least the present efficiency of port and frontier checks to be maintained despite the expected growth in international traffic).

I have also ensured in the discussions that a UK passport in the common format should look very much like the existing UK passport, at least as distinguished and that the main characteristics, to which British people

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attach importance (the royal coat of arms on the front, the rubric 'Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State.... requests and requires... etc). We shall also seek to maintain, as far as possible, the solid nature of the current British passport which, unlike most others, has a hard cover.

A few sample copies are available from my office of a passport in this format, taking account of the discussions so far. Unsettled questions are the extent to which all the languages of the Community would be included on the inside of the passport; and, more sensitive domestically, whether the words 'European Community' or 'United Kingdom' would come first on the cover. It is far from certain that we should persuade other Member States, particularly Germany, to allow the name of the country on top of the words 'European Community' and have been isolated on this so far. The legal basis of any scheme also remains to be resolved but I do not anticipate unsurmountable problems with that.

The introduction of machine readability could involve the incorporation into our traditional booklet type passport of a machine-readable page, possibly as the first page inside the cover. A sample of the kind of machine-readable card which would be involved can also be obtained from my office. The Community is in a strong position to take the lead on simplified travel documents of this kind, and I would urge Member States to look at common format passports in this light.

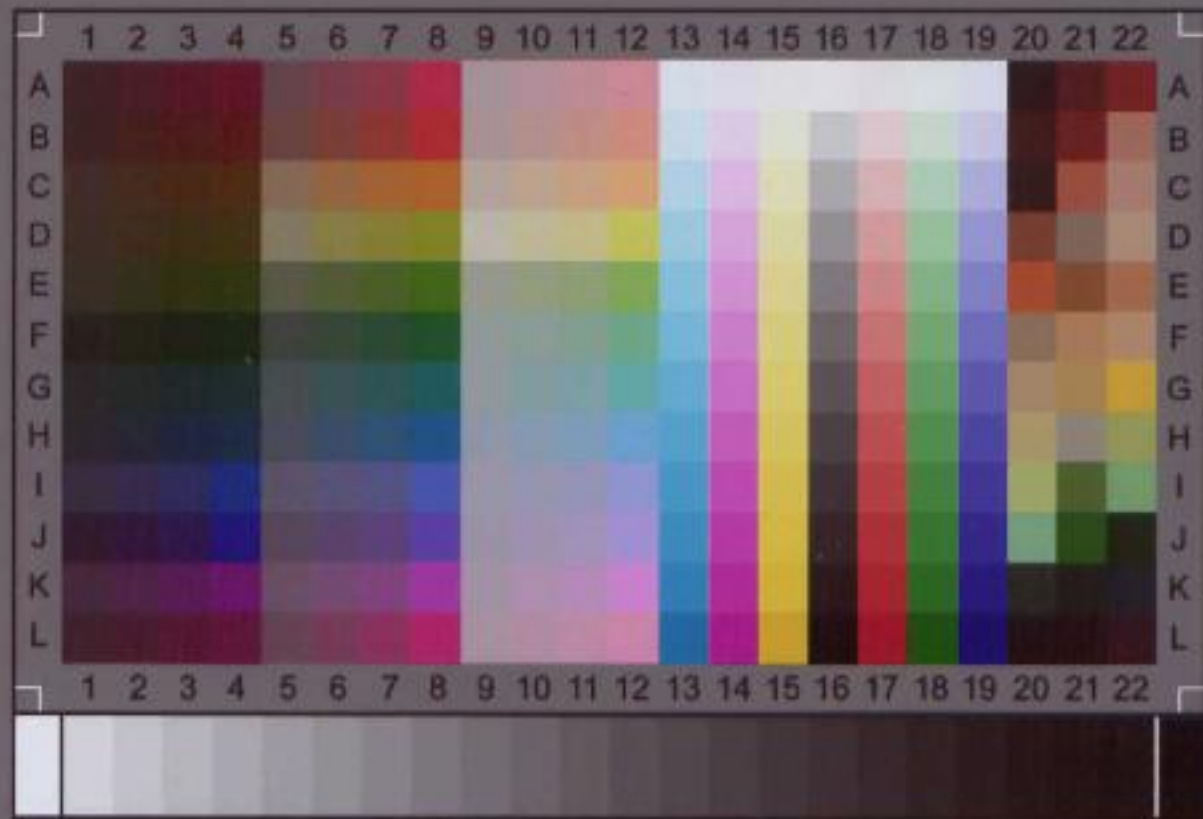
I seek the agreement of my colleagues that we should continue to take the general line in paragraphs 2 and 3 above. On the outstanding questions summarised in paragraph 4 I think it would be unwise for us to become isolated on the arrangement of the wording 'European Community' and 'United Kingdom'. We might accept any reasonable outcome on the use of languages and the legal basis. On the timing of any decision, however, I attach importance to our ensuring flexibility on our acceptance of any EC scheme, particularly since we would be reluctant to make substantial concessions from our present position in advance of a satisfactory outcome in our negotiations on the UK budget contribution.

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I also think it is desirable that we should be able to present the new passport to British people as a document which, due mainly to machine readability, could give clear practical advantages in terms of quicker handling through European and perhaps other immigration controls. We might also point out that a change in format was needed for this purpose, regardless of the EC proposals. I would consider an EC agreement on traditional non-machine-readable passports only if it became clear that we could not move forward on the machine-readable passport for some time to come.

I will give particular attention to the press handling on this issue. It will be important to emphasise that a change in the format of passports was essential for technical reasons and that the new format would provide practical benefits to the traveller.

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