

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



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MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Rt Hon William Hague MP  
Leader of the Conservative Party  
32 Smith Square  
LONDON SW1P 3HH

CONFIDENTIAL

28 September 1997

*Dear William,*

Firstly thank you for your kind letter of September 18 on my election as chairman of the Conservative MEPs. I hope that it represents an opportunity for us to build bridges between those of us who work in the Conservative interest in Brussels and Strasbourg and the Party at home, particularly in Westminster. After certain meetings last week I know that better understanding is much needed.

Secondly I should like to thank you, on behalf of all my colleagues, for a very open and friendly first meeting in your rooms at the House of Commons on Friday. We covered a wide range of topics and my colleagues very much look forward to further exchanges.

Thirdly, at the conclusion of the meeting I raised a point which the MEPs had earlier discussed, and which causes us much concern. The Daily Telegraph carried on Thursday last a second Leader which was highly critical of Conservative MEPs, urging our deselection. We understand that the item was promoted by Daniel Hannan, secretary of the European Research Group, which includes senior Conservative MPs such as Archie Hamilton and Michael Spicer and former MPs such as Angela Rumbold, although it was actually written by a former PPC, Dean Godson. Mr Hannan has also acted as researcher for both Michael Howard and Michael Spicer. In addition, and of which I am sure the latter are unaware, Mr Hannan was in 1996 elected vice chairman of the Campaign for an Independent Britain (whose policy is 'complete withdrawal of the UK from the EU') and it is this connexion which most troubles us.

I have arranged to see Michael Howard on Wednesday to discuss this and other points, but it does raise the question about the background of some of the people who may offer their services to the Party in opposition. Needless to say, there are ideologues on both sides of the European question, who may wish to tilt the Party away from a mainstream position, but the running has been almost exclusively from the right. Further, on Friday after our meeting with you I met Robin Oakley of the BBC who asked how it went and also "Did he mention deselection of you lot?". Needless to say, I have completely respected your wish that nothing of our meeting is reported. However, Saturday's Daily Telegraph carried an item by Robert Shrimpsley which stated that at our meeting you told us that you "intended to reform their selection contests in a way that could lead to [the MEPs] being replaced by more Euro-sceptic candidates".

**In light of all this, I strongly recommend that no decisions about Euro-candidate selection are now taken by the Standing Committee on Candidates and that the Reform Green Paper contains no specifics about the arrangements for the Euro-elections in June 1999, pending further discussions and in particular, publication of the PR Bill.**

I am sorry to have to write in such frank terms. I have copied this to Robin Hodgson.

*Yours Edward*

NORTH YORKSHIRE EDWARD McMILLAN-SCOTT MEP CONSERVATIVE

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