



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

RS

To  
The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister

4th February 1982

*Dear Margaret*

We write, as committed supporters of the Government's European policy, to express some misgivings about possible political consequences of the dispute about the United Kingdom net contributions to the EEC budget.

We do not believe that it is going to be possible to bring off a second victory such as you won on May 30 1981, if only because of the insignificant net contribution which, in the event, the UK had to make last year. We see a double danger in this situation.

The first is that expectations will build up in public opinion here which cannot be fulfilled. The subsequent let-down could do us immediate electoral damage.

The second is that, in the inevitably bruising fight to get a reasonable budget settlement, Ministers will be obliged to say some harsh things about our EEC partners, and perhaps about the institutions of the EEC. Even if the fight results in a better settlement than we would have got otherwise, the whole process will inevitably have a serious impact on the EEC's present relatively high standing in public opinion. This will mean that we, as a Party committed to EEC membership, will go into the Election with a policy which we ourselves have helped to make unpopular.

In view of the very small proportion of public expenditure which even a high EEC budget contribution represents, and its insignificance in comparison with the volume of trade at risk, we believe that we ought to be very careful indeed how we handle this issue.

Would you be prepared to receive the signatories of this letter to discuss the matter?

*Yours sincerely*

*Maria Hamilton*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Robert Meyer*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*John Gifford*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*John Gifford*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*John Gifford*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*John Gifford*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Paul Hand*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Robert Gifford*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Tim Rother*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Kenneth Corbitt*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*John Gifford*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*David Gifford*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Robert Gifford*