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Sir Peter Westmacott KCMG
HMA
PARIS

5 June 2009

Dear Peter,

HANDLING EXTREMIST MEPS

1. I am writing to update you and copy recipients on our policy in dealing with Members of the European Parliament from extremist or racist parties.
2. The basic policy for Embassies remains as in Kim Darroch's letter of 4 May 2004, attached for ease of reference. In addition, FCO Ministers have decided that all British MEPs should be provided with standard written briefings with no differentiation. British and other MEPs can also be provided with factual written briefing on specific policy issues upon request, again with no differentiation. However, FCO Ministers have also decided that there should be no other contact with MEPs of any nationality who represent racist or extremist views. Permission for FCO officials to depart from this guidance can only be given by the PUS and the Minister for Europe. If posts have any questions about how to implement this guidance in practice (e.g. whether a specific party is deemed extremist or racist) they should err on the side of checking with the FCO's EU Institutions team in the first instance.
3. We would encourage other Departments to put similar arrangements in place for their own direct contacts with MEPs. I do not think that any of them would want to deviate from the guidance above; but if they did, please can they talk it through first with the FCO so that FCO Ministers have the chance to express a view.
4. I am copying this letter to all Heads of Mission in EU member states and to the distribution list for Darroch-Cunliffe.

Yours ever,

Matthew

Matthew Rycroft
Director EU

cc: Heads of Mission in EU member states
Distribution list for Darroch-Cunliffe

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