



Ref. A08399

MR SCHOLAR

*MLJ*  
✓

*Sir Robert Armstrong*

*RA*

*Many thanks. The Prime Minister will not intervene in this correspondence.*

*MLJ 13/5*

Standards

The Secretary of State for Trade has copied to the Prime Minister his letter of 11th May to the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the implementation of recommendations by MISC 14 on the matter of standards, and in particular on the setting up of an official committee under the chairmanship of Mr Robin Gray.

2. As the Secretary of State indicates, I was asked whether this committee should be a Cabinet Committee, and thus serviced and perhaps even chaired by the Cabinet Office. It seemed to me that, though other Departments were involved, the Department of Trade were very much in the lead and should be given the opportunity of making a go of this. I therefore suggested that this should be an inter-departmental committee chaired and serviced by the Department of Trade.

3. I do not think that the Prime Minister need intervene in this correspondence; given the way in which the letter is worded, her silence would be interpreted as agreement.

*RA*

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

13th May 1982



From the Secretary of State

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP  
 Chancellor of the Exchequer  
 HM Treasury  
 Treasury Chambers  
 Parliament Street  
 London  
 SW1P 3AG

Govt Mach.

Prime Minister (2)

MUS 11/5

11 May 1982

Dear Geoffrey,

My letter made  
 it plain that the decision was  
 only for a  
~~short~~ period, full of  
~~uncertainty~~

STANDARDS

Now that the question of responsibility for standards policy has been resolved (Mr Scholar's letter of 22 April about the Prime Minister's meeting refers), I naturally wish to press on quickly with the implementation of our agreed policy. You will have seen the Report of the Ad Hoc Group of Officials on Follow-up to Conclusions of the MISC 14 Committee on MISC 14(81)10, which my predecessor sent to the Prime Minister and members of MISC 14 on 18 March. I have now studied that Report and fully support the recommendations made for implementing MISC 14's decisions.

Provided you and other members of MISC 14 are also content with the recommendations, the sooner the new high-level official committee gets on with the task of implementation the better. I have, therefore, asked Mr Robin Gray to press ahead as a matter of urgency with setting up the committee. I propose to follow Sir Robert Armstrong's suggestion that my Department should chair and service the committee without Cabinet Office participation. I shall bring to E(EA) any issues which may need collective discussion.



*From the Secretary of State*

The immediate question, therefore, is whether you and other members of MISC 14 agree that the recommendations in the Report are an acceptable basis for action. I hope this can be agreed through correspondence, and suggest that if I receive no objections from colleagues by the end of 14 May, I should proceed as proposed.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, other members of MISC 14 and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*J. Am.*  
*Arthur.*

LORD COCKFIELD