Dear Mr Blair,

Historically, the Labour Party has benefited enormously from the financial support of Mr Lakshmi Mittal, most recently in July of this year, when it received a donation in the sum of £2m.

Mr Mittal, when announcing this donation, made it clear that he would take legal action against any who insinuated that the donation was conditional upon any benefits accruing to him as a result.

However, our research has indicated a number of measures passed by the European Commission which would appear to favour Mr Mittal’s companies unduly.

In order to ensure that government is seen to be transparent in such matters, and to drive home to the voting public that you are as determined now as you were in 1997 to stamp out the appearance of sleaze, I would request that you make available the following information:

(a) Details of instructions provided to the British negotiating team in respect of European Union anti-dumping tariffs imposed on steel products produced in Romania, South Africa, India and China at any time since 1997.
(b) Details of documentation relating to EU decisions which saw the tariff on steel produced by Ispat Sidex SA of Romania or its predecessor or successor companies reduced to 5.7%, and any instructions to the British permanent delegation in Brussels relating to negotiations concerning Directive 963/2002 or 979/2002.
(c) Details of correspondence between the British and Luxembourg governments relating to any decision to extend the reduction in tariffs applied to imports from Ispat Sidex SA which would account for the appropriate directive (630/2005) being passed on the final day of the Luxembourg presidency of the European Union rather than under the British presidency.
(d) Details of documentation relating to EU decisions which saw the tariff on steel produced by Ispat Iscor of South Africa reduced to 5.2% under Directive 963/2002, and any instructions to the British permanent delegation in Brussels relating to negotiations.
(e) Details of documentation relating to EU decisions which saw the tariff paid by Ispat Industries Ltd of India reduced to 14% under Directive 1310/2002, and any instructions to the British permanent delegation in Brussels relating to negotiations.
(f) Details of the British position on the removal of anti-dumping tariff barriers to steel produced in Romania, China and India as per official notice 2005/C 192/5 on the 6th August 2005, and any instructions to the British permanent delegation in Brussels relating to negotiations.
(g) Details of any instructions or representations on behalf of the British government, formal or informal, which were passed to the EU Trade Commissioner, Mr Peter Mandelson, relating to these matters.
(h) Details of correspondence received from or sent to Mr Mittal or his agents in relation to these tariffs by the British government.
(i) Details of correspondence relating to the European Union punitive tariff on US steel, particularly in relation to Ispat Inland, Mr Mittal’s US company, and on Mr
Mittal’s donation to the campaign in the United States to impose retaliatory tariffs on EU steel imports contrary to the interests of the UK.

(j) Details of studies relating to the impact on Anglo-Dutch steel company Corus, including the effects on UK employment in the steel industry, of the reduction and/or removal of tariffs imposed on non-EU produced steel.

I am concerned that shortly after Mr Mittal’s donation of £125,000 to the Labour Party became public, the EU decided to reduce tariffs on steel produced by Mr Mittal’s company in Romania to 5.7%, compared with between 9.9% and 37.2% applied to the products of other Romanian steel companies. At the same time, the import tariff applied to steel from Mr Mittal’s South African company, Ispat Iscor, was also slashed from the standard 38.2% to 5.2%. The information requested above will allow you disprove any link between the donation and subsequent legislation.

I am further concerned that shortly after Mr Mittal’s donation of £2m to the Labour Party last month, and within 2 weeks of Mr Mittal’s purchase of a stake in the Chinese state steel producer Varin Iron and Steel, the European Commission cancelled all anti-dumping tariffs on steel produced in China, whereas previously these tariffs were set at 8.1%. As with the previous instance, information relating to these measures will dispel any notion of a link between the large donation and the advantageous outcome of tariff negotiations conducted by EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson. This cancellation of anti-dumping tariffs also applies to Romania and India, where Mr Mittal has considerable interests in the steel industry.

With thanks in anticipation of your prompt response in line with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Roger Knapman MEP
Leader U.K. Independence Party