



From The Chairman

Lord Pearson of Rannoch  
52 Minories  
London  
EC3N 1JJ

22 April 2008

*(Crossed in post with mine of 21/4/08)*

Ref: AL/ 14200970

*Dear Lord Pearson,*

### **Today Coverage of the European Union**

Thank you for your letter of the 26 March 2008 enclosing a detailed rebuttal by David Keighley and Minotaur Media Tracking of the Editorial Standards Committee's (ESC's) finding of 28 February.

I am sorry to learn of your disappointment with the ESC's finding with regard to your appeal and your continued concerns about the impartiality of the BBC's output.

While I appreciate the tremendous amount of work that has undoubtedly gone into your response to the finding, I should explain that the ESC is the final arbiter of an editorial complaint against BBC, and there is no further right of appeal to either myself or any other Trust member once the Committee has made its ruling.

I am advised that in accordance with the Committee's processes, you were offered the opportunity to comment on supporting material provided to the Committee ahead of its discussion of your complaint, and that you submitted further comments which ESC took account of during its deliberations. The Committee then considered your complaint and all of the paperwork relating to it against the relevant editorial guidelines.

Whilst I note your disappointment, the ESC's finding was in no way an exercise to support or defend BBC management. The investigation carried out by the ESC was a thorough independent examination of the issues raised in your report weighed against the views of the programme team. I am also satisfied that the choice of the Trust Unit to engage Keith Bowers to investigate this issue was appropriate.

As I stated earlier, the Committee considered all the paperwork pertaining to the complaint including your final submission. Their decision was wholly independent of BBC management. I

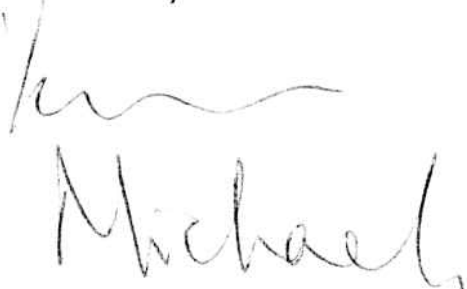
am satisfied that given the journalistic experience and fair-mindedness of the Committee members if fault had been found the Trustees would have been no hesitation in pointing out such concerns in their finding. The fact that they did not is testimony that they did not find evidence to support your concerns.

Although I am not in a position to reconsider the outcome of the ESC's decision, if you are not satisfied with the way your appeal has been handled – in terms of clear communication, fairness and timeliness - you can of course request that this be investigated. To do this, please write in the first instance to Francesca O'Brien, the Head of Editorial Standards, setting out your concerns:

Head of Editorial Standards  
Room 211, 35 Marylebone High Street  
LONDON  
W1U 4AA

You suggested a meeting might be of benefit between those who advise you and the BBC. Francesca O'Brien would be available to meet Minotaur to explain the Committee's process and the Trust's role and listen to Minotaur's general concerns. However, as you will understand, as the Trustee's decision is final she would be unable to discuss the complaint or its outcome.

Please be assured that I have noted and appreciate your concerns, and I hope you will understand why I am unable to look into the matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sir Michael Lyons  
Chairman