

*Lord Stoddart of Swindon
(Labour)*

*Lord Harris of High Cross
(Independent)*

*Lord Pearson of Rannoch
(Conservative)*

Sir Christopher Bland,
Chairman, BBC,
Broadcasting House,
Portland Place,
London, W1A 1AA.



17th May, 2001

Dear Christopher,

BBC Europhile Bias

Thank you for your kind letter of 8th May, in reply to mine of 25th April, which appears to have crossed with my further letter to you of 11th May.

I enclose a copy of a letter from the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, also dated 11th May, which confirms a fundamental point about our letters of 25th April and 11th May, and all our previous correspondence. The Secretary of State says "*You have correctly raised [your concerns] with Sir Christopher Bland as these are matters for the BBC. As you will know, the BBC's Charter and Agreement contain a specific requirement on the Corporation to treat controversial subjects with due accuracy and impartiality, and it is the responsibility of the BBC Governors to ensure that these obligations are met.*"

If the Secretary of State is right about this, and please let us know if you think he isn't, then it is not clear that the BBC is fulfilling its Charter and Agreement if you rely on the views of BBC News executives. The bias, which is now well-documented in four Minotaur reports over some two years, stems from those same executives; they should not be asked to sit as judge and jury on their own output. Indeed, we have had two meetings with Mark Damazer, who is a brilliant and charming man, but he cannot be expected to see the problem objectively, and he doesn't. Only the Governors should be able to do so.

This is obviously especially urgent and worrying during a General Election campaign. Can you assure us that you and the Governors have examined Minotaur's reports, independently of your executives? If you haven't, will you do so urgently and take appropriate action?

Yours sincerely,

Lord Pearson of Rannoch

PS: Minotaur tells us that the BBC's news and news-related coverage of the General Election so far "fails properly to consider that Euroscepticism draws support from across the political spectrum." (See my letter of 11th May).

Global Britain, Hope House, 45 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3LT

Telephone: 0207 233 4443 Fax: 0207 233 4446

e-mail: nicci@globalbritain.org website: globalbritain.org