

*Lord Stoddart of Swindon
(Labour)*

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

*Lord Harris of High Cross
(Independent)*



*Lord Pearson of Rannoch
(Conservative)*

25th April, 2001

Dear Christopher,

BBC Europhile Bias

I take no pleasure in sending you another survey which Global Britain has commissioned from Minotaur Media Tracking (David Keighley). This time, Minotaur analysed the BBC's "**Europe and Us**" week (18th February – 23rd February). I enclose their 1-page 'overview summary' and their 6-page summary. The rest of the 52-page report can be found on the Global Britain website: www.globalbritain.org.

It makes depressing reading, and shows that the BBC continues in its endemic bias against Eurorealism in this country. The only programme which was balanced during "**Europe and Us**" week was **Question Time**, perhaps because it was live. Minotaur found **Referendum Street** to be a "*deeply flawed exercise*"; that **Newsround** "*gave far more weight to the pro-Euro vote*"; that Churchill, the European favoured the Europhile distortion of Churchill's views (as even the title implies); and that the Nicky Campbell phone-in was "*Europhile in its tone and not nearly critical enough of the issues involved.*"

This is now the fourth survey which Global Britain has commissioned from Minotaur. You have been sent them all; they are all available on our website, and they all tell the same story.

In view of all this overwhelming and detailed evidence, I do not see how you can claim that the BBC is fulfilling its duty either to impartiality or to its licence fee-payers, a large proportion of whom now want to leave the European Union altogether. They do so without even understanding that no jobs would be lost and our trade would not suffer if we left, because the EU would certainly sign a free trade agreement with us. After all, even Mexico now has a much better deal with the EU than we do, and the EU needs our free trade far more than it needs that of Mexico. It is vital parts of the debate like this which the BBC avoids like the plague.

The situation is even more serious because our three main political parties don't want an honest debate about our relationship with the EU. Labour and the Liberal Democrats are openly Euro-phile, and even the Conservatives say they want to stay in the EU (because they feel guilty at having led us into the wretched thing). Surely that makes the BBC's duty even clearer and more important?

But I am beginning to fear that the BBC is run by people who simply cannot get their minds round the idea that we might be better off out of the EU, and that the EU might be better off without us. As the Government never tires of saying to me and others in the Lords: "There is no point in debating what life might be like outside the EU, because the benefits of membership are so overwhelming and obvious." Or, as one of your very senior BBC colleagues exclaimed recently, "*Look, we do not discuss leaving the EU. We just say that anyone who wants to leave the EU is mad.*"

I suppose that explains why the 'come-out' case was allowed only 35 seconds (live) in the 55 minutes which the Today programme supposedly devoted to the implications of withdrawal on 30th January to 1st February this year, in the wake of my bust-up with Jim Naughtie on 5th December.

So I trust many of us can be forgiven for suspecting that when the BBC was forced to confront the issue of our EU membership at all, it decided to do so in a way which promoted the Euro-phile case. That is certainly what you have done so far.

I am not sure where we go from here. David Keighley and I are, of course, happy to come and see you or any of your colleagues whom you deem appropriate.

In the meantime, I would be grateful if you could arrange to have a copy of this letter and its enclosures sent to each of your Governors. I shall take it that you have done this, unless I hear to the contrary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Pearson of Rannoch'.

Lord Pearson of Rannoch

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