

From: Lord Shore of Stepney, Labour Euro-safeguards Campaign

20th January 2000

Stephen Wittle,

Director,

Broadcasting Standards Commission,

7 The Sanctuary,

London, SW1.

Dear Mr Wittle,

**MINOTAUR MEDIA REPORT ON TV AND RADIO 4 COVERAGE OF THE
EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 9.5.1999 – 12.6.1999**

I have seen the letter sent to you today by Global Britain. My associates in LESC (Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign) have been kept in touch with their initiative from its inception and we ourselves of course kept a close watch at the time on the reporting of the Euro election campaign last May/ June. Furthermore, we have studied the very interesting and worrying analysis made of that coverage by Minotaur Media.

We are also aware of the correspondence that has taken place between Global Britain and Sir Christopher Bland and Sir Robin Biggam – and share their disappointment that complaints have not been taken as seriously as one would have expected.

So, we join them in making this formal complaint to yourselves. I am writing on behalf of LESC in my capacity as Chairman of what is the leading Labour Euro-sceptic body in this country, representing a very strong body of opinion within the Labour Party itself and within the wider Labour movement. That opinion embraces both firm opposition to the UK joining the Single Currency and the Economic and Monetary Union that goes with it and also to the UK's continuing drift towards becoming part of a Federal and unitary European State. In particular, we do feel aggrieved that no Labour Euro sceptic appears to have been allowed on air throughout the entire 600 hours monitored by Minotaur.

I should also add, that as members of the Labour Party, we are hardly likely to be "over sensitive" about bias against the Conservative Party! But it really is not too much to assert, that for the main BBC current affairs and news coverage of the subject last May/ June, the main focus was hardly the European Elections at all – it was the divisions that exist within the Conservative party on this issue. The combination of giving such high profile coverage to the internal debate within the Conservative Party while totally ignoring the equivalent debate within the Labour Party is bias of a really extraordinary kind.

The broadcaster's Europhile bias is further underlined by the fact that the majority of

Labour voters have been shown to be against scrapping the pound and adopting the euro. So our broadcasters are not only disregarding the views of sceptical Labour politicians and activists, they are also failing to give proper weight to majority public opinion in the matter.

That does seem to us to be bias – and bias of a serious kind since, on admittedly divisive European issues, a genuine commitment to impartiality is, in the national interest, essential. We do hope that you will be able to help us in securing a more balanced coverage on this most important issue in the period ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Shore,