



Michael Grade Esq., CBE
Chairman, The BBC
201 Wood Lane
London W12 7TQ

7th, July, 2004

Dear Mr. Grade -

'Millions of jobs depend on our membership of the EU'

Thank you for your letter of 17th June. We are grateful for the small mercy of the 6pm Radio 4 News item on 9th June, which was designed to counterbalance the pre-recorded interview with the Prime Minister on *The World This Weekend* on 6th June. However, we don't understand why the BBC thinks that the Prime Minister's interview with James Naughtie on the *Today* programme on 8th June did not break the guidance issued on 2nd June. We enclose the transcript, and would be grateful for elucidation.

We regret to report that the new guidance is not being followed. We enclose the transcripts of the Prime Minister on *Breakfast with Frost* on 20th June, and of Andrew Smith on *The Politics Show* the same day. We gather the soundbite also went out unchallenged on *Any Questions*, but do not yet have the transcript.

On the bright side, John Humphries did challenge Neil Kinnock on the *Today* programme on Saturday 19th June, and didn't do too badly in the time available, considering that he and his researchers do not know the subject. As far as we are aware, this is the only time the soundbite has been challenged by the BBC and trust you agree that the extract (enclosed) could contain the makings of a vital national debate.

As to other leftish bias, the Centre for Policy Studies has recently published two papers on the BBC's EU coverage – *An outbreak of narcolepsy?* and *Blair's EU-Turn – a case study in BBC partiality*. Neither of these found their way onto BBC prime time, yet when the Glasgow University Media Group published a paper at the end of June, making the highly controversial claim that the BBC is biased in favour of Israel and against Palestine, its author, Greg Philo, was given substantial time at 8.42am on 23rd June on the *Today* programme to put his case, unchallenged. This is particularly galling because Philo's research is based on only some 60 transcripts from a period during the year 2000, and contains extrapolations which are not supported by the facts. The Minotaur EU reports are based on systematic analysis over 5 years, and have never been covered by the BBC. We enclose Appendix II from *Blair's EU-Turn*.

Continued

As to narcolepsy, the shallowness of the BBC's EU coverage can be seen from the fact that nowhere in your coverage of the recent EU Constitutional IGC, the row over the next Commission President, or the elections to the EU Parliament, does the BBC appear to have explained the functions and powers of the EU Parliament (i.e. what people were voting for) or those of the Commission President. The EU Parliament is a comparatively powerless talking shop which cannot even propose legislation, whereas the President of the Commission appoints its other members, who enjoy the monopoly of proposing legislation and who thus control the EU's agenda. Nor did the BBC cause the functions of the Council, the Court or Qualified Majority Voting, or the way our present relationship with the EU works, to be explained during this important period.

We accept that none of the main parties want an honest debate about our EU membership, but surely that is all the more reason for the BBC to encourage it? If you don't, how can the British people judge the proposed Constitution? Is there any wonder that 90% of them say they haven't been told enough about our EU membership? How do we put this right in time for the eventual referendum?

In this respect, the BBC faces an important test when the Civitas study *A Cost Too Far?* emerges next week. This is the latest research to confirm that leaving the EU is most unlikely to cost any trade or jobs, and that really the only question is by how much the UK would be better off if we did leave, but it's at least £30 bn p.a., or 3% of GDP, and perhaps as much as 10%. Might this be the peg upon which to hang the 'jobs and trade' debate?

Yours sincerely,

I with good wishes -

*+ copy to Richard Ryder
& others.*

Niall Pearson

Lord Pearson of Rannoch
(also for Lords Harris of High Cross and Stoddart of Swindon)

P.S. Even *Thought for the Day* is not immune to Europhilia. We enclose the transcript of a paean to EU enlargement on 30th April this year. Has *Thought for the Day* ever put out the opposing view, that EU enlargement is a potential disaster?