

Nigel Farage
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David Jordan
BBC Controller of Editorial Policy

July 28, 2009

Dear David,

It is after serious deliberation that I am writing to you to complain about the broadcast coverage received by the UK Independence Party from the BBC.

The treatment that UKIP received during the Norwich North by-election campaign was disgraceful. It was not only our supporters, but many independent commentators as well, who noticed that UKIP was excluded from broadcast opportunities preceding the election, on election day and during the aftermath.

In fact, it became clear to even the most casual observer that the Green Party was considered 'The Story' and given far more coverage than its meagre representation warranted.

The UK Independence Party recorded a massive national vote in the most recent European elections, taking 17% of the vote to put the party in second place nationally. Surely we deserve to be ranked among the major parties when broadcast determinations are being made?

In those elections, our Party won 13 seats and came second; the Green Party won two seats and came fifth. In the local elections on the same day, UKIP beat the Greens in most Norwich North wards

But in the Norwich North by-election, it seemed that Newsnight, BBC Look East and Radio 4 all determined that UKIP was not to be mentioned while other parties were. This is a clear case of editorial bias working against our party and an obvious breach of the BBC's own Code of Practice.

To further the insult, the BBC news at 1pm on Friday, July 24, used a graphic to illustrate the result which clearly displayed first, second, third and fifth places, ignoring the fourth-placed party, which happened to be UKIP.

In a Radio 5 Live report on the same day, a presenter referred to UKIP's proximity in the poll to the Lib Dem vote as "worryingly close". Why is that a cause for worry? Surely this counts as biased editorialising from a journalist peddling a political line?

So it seems that if the party does not fit into the BBC agenda, it is simply airbrushed out for convenience and hoped that no-one will notice. Well, it has been noticed and we now insist that we come to a clear understanding of our future relationship with the BBC.

The only way this matter can be dealt with to the satisfaction of all concerned would be in a meeting with yourself and Ric Bailey.

The sooner this can be expedited, the better. I must emphasise that we are not looking for any special treatment, nor would we expect it. But what we do demand is fair treatment by the nation's broadcaster.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Farage MEP
UK Independence Party Leader

Cc Ric Bailey ,BBC Chief Adviser, Politics