



Sir Michael Lyons  
Chairman, BBC Trust  
Room 211  
35 Marylebone High Street  
London W1U 4AA

By e-mail and letter

2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2009

Dear Sir Michael,

I write in despair at the BBC's coverage of these European Elections. The final straw came this morning when Jim Naughtie allowed David Cameron to claim (several times), that as Prime Minister he would, with his new friends in Brussels, reform the EU and repatriate powers to this country (I attach the transcript). Jim did mutter quietly at one point "but there's no evidence that anybody else would be with you on that" but he failed, yet again, to challenge him on the fact that **the Treaties require unanimity** among the 27 member states before a comma, let alone the smallest power, can be returned to the United Kingdom (or any other country for that matter) This (the "acquis communautaire" - or just "acquis" if you want to sound really expert) is fundamental to understanding the nature of our position as members of the EU.

I have checked with our monitors, Newswatch, and as far as we can tell, the BBC has still not explained any of the other defining basics of our EU Membership: the big idea behind the project; the commission's monopoly to propose legislation; COREPER; the Council's decision making (all in secret); the Parliament's limited powers of co-decision; the Commission's role as executive of all EU law; the Luxembourg Court and the Court of Auditors. The clear result of this failure by the BBC (given that none of the main parties want the people to be enlightened, and UKIP has not been given the space to do so), is that the British people do not know what they are voting for the day after tomorrow. And nor do most MPs or our political class generally - they are as out of touch on "Europe" as they have been on the Additional Costs Allowance, immigration, Islamism, climate change, education, health, multiculturalism, political correctitude and so on, which is why the people have held their political class in disdain for so long, even before the expenses fiddles turned that disdain into serious anger. I fear the BBC bears the heaviest responsibility for this dangerous state of affairs. If you think I am wrong, find me an "ordinary voter" who knows what he is voting for.

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You cannot say that I have not tried over the last 10 years to help the BBC to fulfill its duty to the licence fee payer in this crucial area of our national life. You have only got to look at the Global Britain website ([www.globalbritain.org](http://www.globalbritain.org)). In the last 3 months, at your helpful suggestion, Newswatch and I have spent hours with your Trustees, Fran O'Brien and Penny Young, and hours more with Sue English, Stephen Mitchell and Ric Bailey of your Executive. All, it appears, to no effect.

I spoke to the producer of your *Today* programme straight after the Cameron interview this morning, and he showed no sign having heard of the acquis. I tried to speak to Jim (who owes me lunch) as the programme closed, but White City couldn't put me through to Millbank.

I am copying this to your colleagues mentioned and to others who have been following this depressing saga. I would be grateful for an urgent answer and not to be told, yet again, that the BBC has explained the EU in lots of programmes which we just haven't noticed. Of course I appreciate the *Today* programme may not be the vehicle for the national education which the Corporation has avoided. But you have other programmes, as I have often pointed out before.

My questions are simple: do the British people know what they are voting for the day after tomorrow? Do they know how the EU parliament fits into the Project of European integration? What have you done to enlighten them?

With good wishes,



Malcolm Pearson  
Mobile: 07971 176828

*Copies to:*

Fran O'Brien, BBC Trust, Penny Young, BBC Trust, David Jordan, BBC Executive, Ric Bailey, BBC Executive, Sue English, BBC Executive, Stephen Mitchell, BBC Executive, Ceri Thomas, Editor, BBC Executive, Jim Naughtie, Today and others.