

# Inquiry called into 'pro-Brussels bias' at BBC

By Matt Boon

ALLEGATIONS of pro-Brussels bias in the BBC's coverage of the European Union are to be investigated by an independent panel, the corporation announced yesterday.

The board, under Lord Wilton of Dinton, the former editor-in-chief secretary, will consider

complaints from eurosceptics that "anti-EU, pro-withdrawal voices" are routinely marginalised by the BBC.

It will also look at criticisms that too much of the broadcaster's EU coverage is seen "through a Westminster prism", and that it has contributed to public apathy about Brussels by failing to

explain European issues and their impact on British life.

The study is the latest in a series of reviews set up by the BBC board of governors on contentious areas, including religion, rural affairs and the Middle East.

But, in a new departure, the EU review will be wholly independent of BBC management.

The corporation has hired consultants to provide the panel with material, including broadcast analysis and focus group research.

In addition to Lord Wilton, who is also a non-executive director of Sky, the panel is made up of two eurosceptics and two europhiles.

The pro-Europe pairing

consists of Sir Stephen Wall, principal advisor to Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor and a board member of Britain in Europe, and Lucy Armstrong, a business consultant.

Representing the anti-Business for Sterling, and Nigel Smith, chairman of the No-euro Campaign.