

Letter to BBC

Dear Director General

Congratulations on your appointment. I am glad you are reviewing the extent to which the BBC delivers the impartiality and public service content Licence fee payers pay for.

As someone who seeks to make a contribution to the main arguments over public policy, specialising in economic and constitutional matters, I find the BBC output is often biased against discussion and thoughtful consideration of views and attitudes that disagree with the conventional wisdom of the large corporations, civil service and international quango establishment. As examples I have in the past been denied access or time to explain the case against the ERM and features of the Euro which duly went on to do considerable economic damage, the case against so called independent central banks when they were in recession creating mode, to consider the opportunities given to nationalisms by devolution or to make the case to rescue industrial and agricultural market share lost during our years in the EU single market. I have written and published on these and other themes extensively and wish to discuss them in a true Reithian spirit of independent enquiry. Instead I have to listen to a propaganda channel which just assumes the establishment view of Euro policy, thinks the single market is always a net gain which we must not lose, that Central Banks are wise and right and the errors of economic policy are all the fault of governments, and favours lop sided devolution which must be encouraged. There is a reverence towards so called independent experts who are often political in their judgements and sometimes not even good experts in their fields with poor track records at forecasting.

I do not think the BBC reveal party political bias between Labour and the Conservatives. The interviewers are usually rightly tough on both parties. There is however systematic bias against England, with many voices representing Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and liberal reporting of the devolved governments with never any consideration of the views of England where most Licence fee payers live. There is no English radio or tv channel to redress the balance, unlike the other nations in the Union which have their own channels. No-one is ever allowed to speak for England. We are endlessly told Scotland voted to stay in the EU but never told England voted decisively to leave. The BBC follows the EU agenda of trying to break England into regional and city area governments, whilst leaving Scotland whole despite the anti Edinburgh tensions in places like the Shetlands and the differences between the Highlands and the main cities. I would appreciate the opportunity to have a conversation with you about global establishment bias throughout BBC output, which has left the BBC finding it very difficult to report sensibly on Brexit or Trump or other populist movements. I think the BBC needs to do a lot more to foster intelligent debate about these economic and constitutional matters, as it misses out on many of the conversations listeners and viewers are having on social media in frustration with their state Broadcaster.

The bias is also reflected in the way so called populist politicians and parties in office overseas are reported. I am neutral on the US election, as UK politicians should stay out of foreign elections and be willing to work with any democratically elected government that emerges in an ally. Listening and watching BBC output it regularly frames the election as the Democrats would wish, concentrating plenty of hostile fire on Trump and his supporters but never doing the same to Biden and his. Coverage of continental parties in government that are sceptical of EU policy is also usually more hostile in tone than coverage of pro EU parties. I look forward to meeting.

Yours sincerely

John Redwood