

Sir Robin Biggam

Chairman

Independent Television Commission

31-33 Foley Street

London, W1P 7LB

16th July 1999

Dear Sir Robin

We enclose a research project commissioned by our organisation, Global Britain, into broadcast news coverage of the recent elections to the European Parliament.

The research was carried out by an independent company, Minotaur Media Tracking*, on the whole of the news output on ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 during the election period.

The survey, based on transcription of the relevant output over the five weeks from 9th May to 14th June, found:

- Significant elements of partiality or bias, particularly on Channel 4;
- A worryingly small proportion of the overall news output devoted to the elections, with the figure below 2%% on ITV. Coverage on the weekday part of GMTV and the whole of Channel 5 was almost non-existent;
- Some programmes were unbalanced in their political content;
- Some parties contesting the elections received unequal treatment.

If this survey is accepted, it must follow that your commercial licensees are failing to provide a news service as required by the Broadcasting Act 1990, or to meet the terms of individual licences.

May we therefore suggest a meeting at your earliest convenience, so that we can discuss the survey's findings in greater detail?

Yours sincerely,

Lord Stoddart of Swindon (Labour)
Lord Harris of High Cross (Independent)

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Conservative)

- Minotaur Media Tracking is a company run by:
- David Keighley, who founded the News World international conference for news

broadcasters and is a former BBC Head of News and Current Affairs Publicity and Director of Corporate Affairs at TV-am; and

- Kathy Gyngell, a research sociologist who worked at LWT as a researcher on Weekend World before becoming Features Editor at TV-am.