

ANNEX C - Draft EU Referendum Consultation – Individual Responses

MP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It was essential that there was a proper monitoring system within the BBC itself, with output "properly logged and recorded...by date, time and immediately after the programme has taken place." Some means must be devised for all news and current affairs programmes to be required to reproduce the content of their programmes on request. Furthermore, the Trust needed to have this information available for them to evaluate whether a complaint was justified.○ The researchers/editors/producers of given programmes must have full knowledge of the subject matter. This raised questions about training and education. Who had been chosen to take part in the BBC's training programme to ensure staff/Trustees/Trust Unit staff had full knowledge?○ In seven years no appeal about EU coverage had been upheld. Unless this was repudiated, it was "inconceivable that the Trustees are properly conducting their responsibilities on any proportional evaluation". Those who adjudicate complaints should have continuous recourse to a panel of advisors throughout the referendum, to help them assess the nature of the complaints with impartiality and with due accuracy.○ Interviewers must pose well-informed and rigorous questions to the Prime Minister and other ministers, as the Government is advocating remaining in the EU, and interviews with members of the government should be balanced by a leading campaigner advocating leaving the EU. Paragraph 3 relating to "Due Impartiality covering the Referendum" and the application of the principle of "broad balance" raised "essential questions about what is and is not a fair output". Without "a rigorous determination upheld within the Trust's complaints process to ensure that both sides of the debate are properly reflected... there will be an inevitable failure of impartiality and due accuracy".
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The same criteria should apply to broadcast debates which are held during the Referendum Period and there was also the question of the extent to which pre-recordings were done in a fair manner. ○ There was another issue relating to the extent to which the designated organisation on both sides was given "the degree of authority, as compared to other campaigners and interests and 'voices' deriving from "Parliament itself, which confers on the Electoral Commission the right to designate lead organisations". ○ It was essential that both the arguments of those wishing to remain in and those who wish to leave were made properly available to the public, with no undue advantage to the Government. ○ If there was "the will and intention to ensure accuracy and impartiality", the BBC output on the referendum could be achieved in the ..."spirit of what the BBC is meant to provide and for which the licence fee payer pays".
Individual A	<p>The Guidelines for the coverage of the EU referendum appear reasonable. The requirement for impartiality confirms an essential tenet of the BBC's existence, but sometimes individual A doubted the impartiality of some political journalists and would feel reassured if s/he believed the BBC journalists were reminded of the requirement to be impartial and if there were an ongoing monitoring of impartiality.</p>
Individual B	<p>Clear distinction between EU and Europe Information programmes to focus on positive case for both, in particular how countries outside the EU are doing...and how Britain can seek new relationships All programming balanced, with particular reference to comedy A separate commission with equal representation of both sides should be consulted on this to point out issues in real time Careful in giving space to EU information as it is propaganda</p>

	Analyse research and statements including the vested interest behind it, instead of 'reporting on it' BBC tends to report independently but select the stories to fit an agenda causing a very unbalanced output
Individual C	Agreed that there must be no bias for or against and will monitor any reports with interest. Individual C had little confidence in the BBC on impartiality and if s/he found any bias over the EU would complain
Individual D	Individual D is dyslexic and points out that with detailed information online, one point that is overlooked is that a huge minority of citizens have learning difficulties and find such detailed information can be very daunting. S/he asks for further consultation, in more depth, with people with such difficulties. The submission then listed a number of areas s/he would like to see covered.
Individual E	In the main, the guidelines are well thought through and stress the essential of impartiality. However Individual E felt the phrase "rigorous scrutiny" would be used as an excuse for trying to trick, confuse and undermine interviewees and commentators on all matters covered. This is unnecessary and leads interviewees to hold back and give 'safe' circumspect responses. Coverage should instead be helping interviewees present complete and even handed statements of views, pros and cons which the public can reliably compare and which the BBC can compare and contrast to assist. Aggressive challenging of interviewees' views does not help get to any form of truth and simply serves to guarantee that planned, distorted messages are presented.
Individual F	If the BBC are saying that coverage will be on a "broad balance" then the BBC must be able to prove how due impartiality has been maintained This will mean that the BBC will need to keep a complete log of every EU story that they produce together with its content position (e.g. on front page of web) publication time of day and time, length and how and where and when that story has been balanced. If the BBC were unable to prove and show how they maintained due impartiality in relation to one sided biased stories then the BBC would be unable to show that impartiality had been maintained, but one sided biased stories would show that impartiality had not been maintained and then if BBC staff have intentionally failed to be impartial criminal charges may have to be brought against BBC staff. Individual F said s/he had the impression with regard to the BBC website that the BBC appears:

- to tend to place pro EU stories on the front page whilst anti EU stories appear to tend to be buried outside the front page.
- to use headlines which further the pro EU case while failing to give similar headlines to the anti EU case.
- to put pro EU propaganda at the top of the story and just a few lines of anti EU arguments at the bottom.

The Guidelines need to make clear how this type of bias will be prevented. In any story there must be an equal divide between pro and anti EU arguments and the anti EU arguments must be given equal room at the top of the story.

The BBC need to make clear that in the EU most of the real power is in the hands of unelected officials which is undemocratic. The BBC needs to show in great depth how undemocratic the EU is. At the moment the BBC do not appear to do this.

Individual F did not consider that the BBC ran a fair complaints procedure.