



Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
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29 March 2004

Dear Minister,

BBC Charter Review 2004

I am writing to you in connection with the review of the BBC charter. As you are aware, part of the role of the BBC is to help in the creation of an informed democracy, in a way that distinguishes it from commercial channels.

In considering the revision of the BBC Charter, we consider that a specific requirement to report the European Parliament should be mentioned.

As you well know, the European Parliament is the democratic expression of the people of the EU member states. In 1999, 55% of continental Europeans voted for the current parliament while the figure for the UK was 24%. It is clear that there is, in the UK, a specific problem of public ignorance, one which public service broadcasting should help overcome. The power of the European Parliament has grown with every significant Treaty. The decisions it makes in partnership with the Council of Ministers - when legislated by member states - have real effects on the lives of citizens.

This is not a party-political matter - the European Parliament is not a 'pro-EU' body in a political sense - it has seven political groups, and a minority of members who are opposed to the EU from all member states. We are not asking for the BBC to be obliged to support the EU, simply to be obliged to help create an 'informed democracy'.

If there is any help the European Parliament Office in London - or the Parliament in Brussels/Strasbourg - can give to the current Charter Review, we are very keen to help.

Yours sincerely,

Dermot Scott
Director, UK Office