



Alliance EPP for 4 Freedoms

8 March 2016

The Chair
Electoral Commission
By email

Dear Madam,

BIAS ON EUROPE REFERENDUM BALLOT PAPER: CALL ON ALL COMMISSIONERS TO RESIGN

By this letter, copied to the media, we note bias on the referendum ballot paper and, given the gravity of the matter, seek the immediate resignation of all Commissioners. The red horizontal lines on page 2 are ours but the ballot paper is extracted from [Statutory Instrument 2016 No. 219](#).

This matter of great constitutional significance required exceptional care. We repeatedly and graphically warned you about the ballot paper. We do not here address our on-going dispute about the Commission's censorship of EPP and your effective elimination of our Party, with no fault on our part alleged, from the General Election but it is relevant evidence. As with your unlawfully censoring EPP, the Commission has again overstretched its legal powers with mishap as the result.

Section 104 PPERA addresses *intelligibility* of referendum ballot papers but, at para. 1.17 onwards of your [referendum assessment](#), you indulge yourselves with unbalanced *concerns about the potential legitimacy, in the eyes of those campaigning to leave and some members of the public, of the referendum result - particularly if there was a vote to remain a member of the European Union.*

You chose to abandon the Yes/No format of earlier referendums and **in previous referendum ballots the simple Yes/No choice was either aligned to a notional left margin or was centred above the other**: each creates a broadly neutral visual impression.

At para 5.41 of your [referendum assessment](#), and without proper disclosure/rationale (and having earlier in the document aligned the two questions to a left margin), **you break precedent by aligning the ballot paper questions of different length to a right margin: this gives greater prominence to Leave the European Union.** We warned you this would be problematic.

This is now exacerbated in [Statutory Instrument 2016 No. 219](#) where at Schedule 4 on page 103 **on the prescribed ballot paper the words *the European Union* are aligned almost half a character even further to the right for voting Leave compared to voting Remain. This is a strong - all the more so for being almost subliminal - visual inducement to vote leave. Your abysmal course of conduct with our party entitles us to assume it is not mere incompetence.**

Even if Parliament's printer made matters even worse, the core underlying lack of judgment is still yours. There is no excuse either for your failure immediately to spot the Parliamentary printer's solecism or for your failure to act if you did spot it. You and your fellow Commissioners are worse than useless. The referendum ballot paper is a disgrace. You should all go: North Korea might suit.

Yours sincerely

Dirk Hazell
Leader

Attachment

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Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union

Vote only once by putting a cross in the box next to your choice

Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?

Remain a member of the European Union

Leave the European Union