



Dear Tony Hall
cc Rt Hon Jeremy Wright MP

07/02/2019

During Question Time on 25th January, Fiona Bruce corrected a viewer who said Leave ran a 'dirty' campaign to say there were 'questions on both sides'. This bizarre and inaccurate statement was made following a series of findings of illegality against both the Leave campaigns and just days before the Information Commissioner's Office announced the outcome of its latest inquiry into the illegal activity by the Leave campaign during the EU referendum.

We feel that you are not meeting your Charter requirement to inform British citizens adequately about the shortcomings of the referendum campaign as a democratic process and specifically the illegality by the Leave campaigns. Bruce made a false equivalence between illegal acts by the Leave side and politically motivated criticism of the Remain side.

Viewers were misled and her comments fed into a narrative that both Leave and Remain sides cheated and that this is fair game. This is a dangerous path for the BBC to follow and for our democracy. It is vital that we uphold standards of communication in a democracy and we expect the BBC to challenge rather than support false propaganda narratives.

We are deeply concerned that pursuing the decision to Leave the European Union - a decision whose significance cannot be over-estimated - on the basis of a flawed mandate shakes the foundations of our democracy. It also strengthens the case for a confirmation of that mandate through a People's Vote. It is a live issue, and one of enormous national significance and it is therefore vital that British people are correctly informed.

We would request that you prepare new guidelines for BBC journalists with a summary of the findings against both Leave, EU and Vote Leave, including details of the illegal activity and fines imposed. It should also include a clear statement that there is no evidence of wrong-doing by the Remain side and that to suggest otherwise is to create a misleading false equivalence between the two sides.

As parliamentarians, we are deeply concerned about the decline in standards of our public debate and the negative impact this is having on the nation's ability to navigate a successful course in the choppy waters of Brexit. We look to the BBC to uphold the highest standards and to maintain its impartiality in spite of the highly polarised state of the country. We also foresee a time when we will all be held to account for our actions in the public inquiry that will inevitably follow the chaos that Brexit will bring it is wake.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Richard Ashworth, Conservative MEP for South East England
Catherine Bearder, LibDem MEP for South East England
Paul Brannen, Labour MEP for North East England
Richard Corbett, Labour MEP for Yorkshire and the Humber
Seb Dance, Labour MEP for London
Jill Evans, Plaid Cymru MEP for Wales
Julie Girling, Independent MEP (EPP) for South West England and Gibraltar
Jude Kirton-Darling, Labour MEP for North East England
Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London
Clare Moody, Labour MEP for South West England and Gibraltar
Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for South West England and Gibraltar
Alyn Smith, SNP MEP for Scotland
Keith Taylor, Green MEP for South East England

Ben Bradshaw, Labour MP for Exeter
Tom Brake, LibDem MP for Carshalton and Wallington
Jonathan Edwards, Plaid Cymru MP for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr
Peter Kyle, Labour MP for Hove
Ben Lake, Plaid Cymru MP for Ceredigion
Caroline Lucas, Green MP for Brighton Pavilion
Layla Moran, LibDem MP for Oxford West and Abingdon
Liz Saville Roberts, Plaid Cymru MP for Dwyfor Meirionnydd
Jo Swinson, LibDem MP for East Dunbartonshire
Dr Philippa Whitford, SNP MP for Central Ayrshire
Hywell Williams, Plaid Cymru MP for Arfon