

Office of Molly Scott Cato MEP
Building ASP 9 G317
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B-1047 Brussels
5th November, 2019

No 1 Smiths Square
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London
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Dear Mentorn Media,

I am writing to you to express concern over recent events involving an audience member who was wrongly criticised during a Question Time debate this past Thursday, 31st October.

During the programme, the audience member stated that the Vote Leave campaign was accused of breaking electoral law in the run-up to the June 2016 EU referendum. In response, Fiona Bruce stated: "As far as I'm aware they were cleared of a number of things, I'm not sure you're right about that". In 2018, the Vote Leave campaign was however found guilty of breaking electoral law and was fined £61,000 by the Electoral Commission for doing so.

After more than three years since the EU referendum, we have learnt that much of the Leave campaign was built on lies, false promises and scaremongering. Through her inaccurate rebuttal, Fiona Bruce defended those complicit in these actions, failing to hold them adequately to account. As one of the complainants taking legal action to ensure the Vote Leave investigation faces the rule of law, it is clear to me that incidents such as these only serve to impede this investigation.

Sadly, this is not the first time the BBC has misled viewers and defended the illegality of the Vote Leave Campaign. In February this year, I was involved in a cross-party letter in response to a similar incident on Question Time, in which a viewer who commented on how Leave ran a "dirty" campaign was corrected by Fiona Bruce, saying instead that there were "questions on both sides". This too was incorrect, and failed to inform the public of their wrongdoing.

As Brexit continues to polarise and divide our country, it is imperative that factual and unbiased information is presented to the public. It is particularly vital at this time as Boris Johnson and Dominic Cummings, who led Vote Leave, are now campaigning to lead the country.

The BBC response to this error has been totally unsatisfactory. The BBC claim that the studio was noisy, and that the programme is filmed 'as live', so genuine misunderstandings of this nature can happen. But the programme is recorded several hours prior to broadcast so that edits can be made where necessary. Where this is not possible there is still the opportunity to point out mistakes that occurred in the recording and before broadcast.

In view of the failures by the BBC, **I am requesting that Fiona Bruce opens this Thursday's programme with an apology and a clear statement of the legal position regarding Vote Leave.** This is the only way to ensure that viewers who were misled can be provided with accurate information about the wrongdoings committed by Vote Leave and that trust in the BBC and its flagship political panel show can be restored. I would also welcome your reassurance that the young woman who was wrongly criticised when sharing accurate information has received a full apology from the corporation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Scott Cato".

Molly Scott Cato MEP