

THE BBC and 'EUROPE'

The 'Today' Programme's EU
Coverage:
8 April – 29 June 2013

Background

After Lord Wilson's critical report in 2005 about its EU coverage, the BBC promised:

- 1) **To explain how the EU's secretive legal system actually works (which makes much of our national law), and**
- 2) **To allow those who believe that the UK should leave the EU the time to put their case.**

This report shows that Today continues to ignore these promises entirely.¹

And the BBC cannot tell us where it has fulfilled them elsewhere, despite repeated requests.

Health Warning

In this report we continue to classify EU reformers such as the Prime Minister as 'Eurosceptic', even if they want to stay in a reformed EU.

¹ See Appendix I for full text, p.61

THE BBC AND 'EUROPE'

SUMMARY: 'Today' 8 April – 29 June 2013

1. The BBC's continuing and glaring failure is not to allow 'come-outers' the time to put their case.
2. During this period, withdrawal from the EU was a mainstream political issue, both because of a high level of support for UKIP in the South Shields by-election and the local council elections, and because of a Conservative commitment to an 'in/out' referendum after renegotiation of the EU treaties. Today devoted almost nine hours to EU affairs. Despite this, only 513 words (3 minutes and 42 seconds), contained in six contributions, came from supporters of withdrawal talking about withdrawal, (but not making its case.) This amounted to just 2.1% of the programme's EU airtime which was devoted to discussion of the UK's relationship with the EU, only 0.7% of the total programme airtime devoted to EU affairs, and 0.02% of the programme's total feature airtime. None of the contributions was long enough to advance the case in favour of withdrawal.
3. The only Labour figure to appear who was critical of the EU was John Mills, the Labour party donor. He argued that there should be a referendum over EU membership, and claimed he had substantial support inside and outside Parliament. The appearance of a Labour supporter of withdrawal was a very rare event - **only 0.09% of Today's speakers on EU affairs since 2005 have been from the Labour party or British left.**
4. Today also failed to ask Conservative contributors about their attitude towards EU withdrawal. It was estimated during the period that one third of Conservative MPs had come to support withdrawal, but those who appeared were asked only about renegotiation. Section 2 shows how the main thrust of Today's coverage was to show that there was a return – possibly to a worse level than at any point in Party history – to Conservative infighting over the EU. **So, Today continued to present Euroscepticism in all its forms through the prism of 'Conservative splits', as indeed it has done for the last 14 years.**
5. In the entire survey period, only one question was asked of a supporter of withdrawal about withdrawal. The effect of the question was to push the interviewee into talking about other aspects of policy. (*Interview with Nigel Farage, May 3. See pp.24-25 and p.27 for commentary; p.76 for full transcript.*) On every other occasion when the topic was raised, it was by the guest rather than the presenter. So withdrawal was yet again airbrushed out of consideration. The most striking omission was that Lord Lawson of Blaby, who called for Britain to withdraw from the EU on May 7, was not interviewed about his views. And nor was anyone who supported his case.
6. **Today gave those opposed to change in Britain's relationship with the EU ample time to advance their arguments, including the hotly disputed Europhile claim that 3.5m jobs would be lost if the UK was to leave the EU. As on numerous occasions in previous surveys, this key assertion went unchallenged by the Today presenter.**
7. **In other aspects of EU coverage, for example on the EU business news, negotiations over the CAP and the EU carbon market, Today failed to carry a range of voices; bias by omission, and bias in favour of one viewpoint. This was most striking in items about the carbon market, where all contributors criticised the EU for not doing enough promote 'renewables'.**

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(A full running log of the survey’s EU coverage has been omitted from this document for brevity, but is available in a companion document from www.news-watch.co.uk)

THE BBC'S TODAY PROGRAMME AND 'EUROPE' 8 APRIL -29 JUNE

PART ONE:

SUMMER 2013 MONITORING STATISTICS

This survey investigates the Today programme's coverage of EU news and current affairs over a twelve-week period between Monday 8 April and Saturday 29 June 2013. Newswatch monitored and analysed in all 72 editions of the Today programme broadcast during this interval.

Each programme was monitored in its entirety and every item was logged, timed and categorised. All reports concerned with the European Union or its relationship with the UK were fully transcribed and analysed on a line-by-line basis. Information was also collated in Newswatch's bespoke database to facilitate comparisons with programme data collected during the twenty surveys undertaken by Newswatch since 2002.

The Newswatch methodology allows for weaknesses in individual programme items to be explored in detail, and also for longer-term trends and imbalances to be identified and investigated.

1.1 OVERVIEW

Today is BBC Radio 4's flagship news and current affairs programme. It broadcasts for three hours each weekday morning, and for two hours each Saturday. A full edition of each programme is made available 'on demand' through the BBC iPlayer service, and selections from the programme are included in a 'Best of Today' podcast, made available for listeners to download.

Part-way into the current survey, the Today programme made significant changes to its dedicated website. Each morning's running order is now presented on a 'Live Page', which features selected Tweets and emails from audience members on individual programme items. However, this new focus on interactivity has been at the expense of maintaining a comprehensive archive: the 'Live Page' remains online for just seven days, and Today's audio archive is no longer being maintained. Individual clips of selected interviews and discussions are still being posted, but overall the range of material available online is far less comprehensive than it was a decade ago, when every programme was archived in its entirety.

RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research) figures show that the Today programme had an average weekly reach of 6.97 million in the second quarter of 2013 (the period 1 April to 23 June). This represents an increase from 6.76 million a year ago and 6.94 million in the last quarter.

1.2 AIRTIME

Newswatch bases its airtime calculations on Today's 'feature reports'. This ensures that totals are not skewed by repeated programme content, for example, the bulletins and newspaper reviews, and 'non-news' parts of Today, such as sports reports, weather and trailers for other BBC programmes.

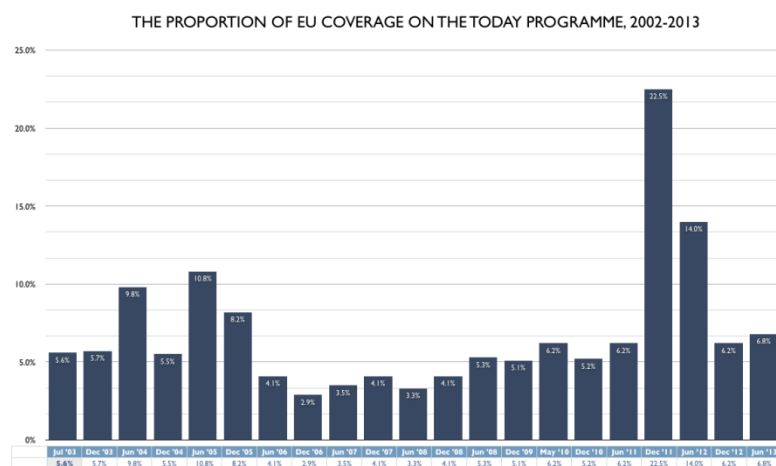
During the Summer 2013 survey interval, the total space available on Today for feature reports was 132 hours 16 minutes. Of this, exactly 8 hours and 58 minutes – 6.8% of the total available airtime – was EU-related. All EU material broadcast during the survey was fully transcribed, categorised and analysed. These transcripts had a combined length of over 140,000 words.

Since 1999, Newswatch has monitored, tracked and analysed Today for 317 full weeks. This equates to 1978 individual editions with a combined airtime of 5389 hours, generating over seven thousand EU transcripts, running to over 4 million words of broadcast output. This long-term monitoring has established that Today has, on average, devoted 6.7% of its 'feature' output to the discussion of EU themes. Coverage during the Summer 2013 interval therefore saw EU coverage at 0.1% higher than this long-term average.

The table provides details of the 21 Newswatch surveys undertaken between September 2002 and June 2013. A number of the surveys, particularly during election periods, included multi-programme monitoring. For the purposes of the current survey, information pertaining solely to the Today programme has been isolated to facilitate direct comparisons.

| | Survey Date | Monitored Weeks | Proportion of Today's EU coverage |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | September 2002 – July 2003 | 47 | 5.6% |
| 2 | September – December 2003 | 12 | 5.7% |
| 3 | March – June 2004 | 13 | 9.8% |
| <i>June 2004, Mark Thompson appointed BBC Director General</i> | | | |
| 4 | October – December 2004 | 10 | 5.5% |
| <i>January 2005, Publication of the Wilson Report into the BBC's EU Coverage</i> | | | |
| 5 | March – June 2005 | 15 | 10.8% |
| 6 | October – December 2005 | 9 | 8.2% |
| 7 | February – June 2006 | 16 | 4.1% |
| 8 | September – December 2006 | 14 | 2.9% |
| 9 | March – June 2007 | 14 | 3.5% |
| 10 | September – December 2007 | 14 | 4.1% |
| 11 | March – June 2008 | 12 | 3.3% |
| 12 | September – December 2008 | 14 | 4.1% |
| 13 | April – June 2009 | 6 | 5.4% |
| 14 | September – December 2009 | 13 | 5.1% |
| 15 | March – May 2010 | 6 | 6.2% |
| 16 | September – December 2010 | 13 | 5.2% |
| 17 | March – June 2011 | 13 | 6.2% |
| 18 | October – December 2011 | 11 | 22.5% |
| 19 | April – June 2012 | 12 | 14.0% |
| 20 | September – December 2012 | 13 | 6.2% |
| 21 | April – June 2013 | 12 | 6.8% |

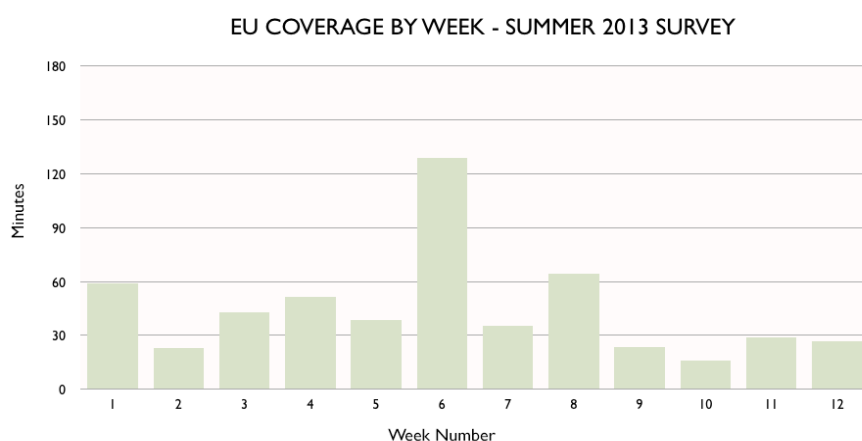
The graph presents EU airtime proportions in the 21 most recent Today surveys, listed by the end date of each investigation. The chart shows how coverage has returned to more typical levels following the dramatic increases observed in the surveys undertaken in Winter 2011 and Summer 2012.



The significant increase in the volume of EU coverage recorded during the Winter 2011 and Summer 2012 surveys was a consequence of the economic crisis in the eurozone and the social and political turmoil in peripheral EU member states. Although the eurozone economy remained an issue during the current survey, Today devoted far less airtime to its discussion than it has done in recent surveys, and other issues – including the debate surrounding a future referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU – were given closer scrutiny. A breakdown of the EU themes covered during the survey is presented in section 1.4.

1.3 WEEKLY EU COVERAGE

Today transmitted 277 EU-related programme items during the thirteen-week survey. 71 were bulletin reports, 43 were mentions of EU matters in the programme’s newspaper review section, and there were 163 ‘features’, with a total duration of exactly 8 hours 58 minutes. In addition, there were 79 occasions in which EU issues were mentioned in passing and two discussions of EU matters in the programme’s religious affairs slot, Thought for the Day. The chart shows the amount of EU coverage broadcast during each week of the twelve-week survey.



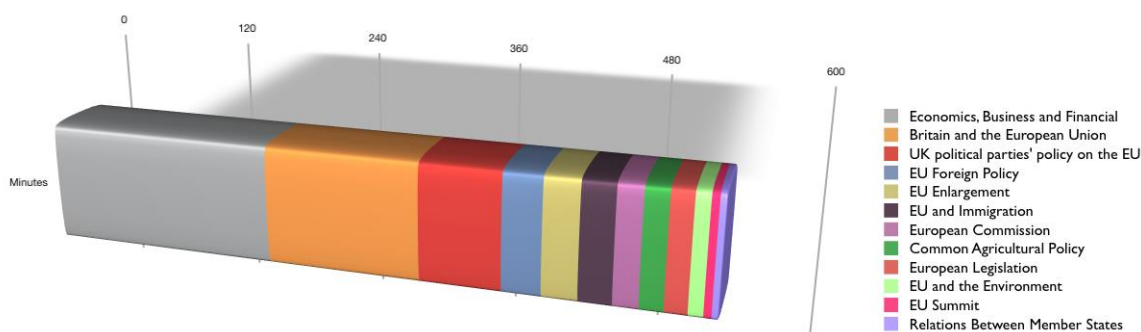
Today’s EU coverage reached its zenith during the sixth week of the survey, in which 2 hours and 9 minutes – 19.4% of the programme’s available feature airtime – was devoted to EU matters. This particular week saw David Cameron in Washington for talks on an EU-US trade deal, a Commons vote on a bill expressing regret that there was no provision of a referendum on the EU in the Queen’s Speech, and news emerging that the eurozone was entering its longest ever recession.

EU coverage was at its lowest during the tenth week of the survey (10–15 June), with 16 minutes of coverage, or 2.4% of the available airtime, being EU-related.

I.4 EU THEMES

The table and chart show the range of EU themes that were covered by Today in its feature reports during the twelve-week period of analysis.

| Subject Area | Minutes | % |
|--|---------|------|
| Economics, Business and Financial | 188.25 | 35.0 |
| Britain and the European Union | 124.75 | 23.2 |
| UK political parties' policy on the EU | 64.5 | 12.0 |
| EU Foreign Policy | 30.5 | 5.7 |
| EU Enlargement | 27.5 | 5.1 |
| EU and Immigration | 25.5 | 4.7 |
| European Commission | 19.25 | 3.6 |
| Common Agricultural Policy | 18 | 3.3 |
| European Legislation | 17 | 3.2 |
| EU and the Environment | 11 | 2.0 |
| EU Summit | 5.75 | 1.1 |
| Relations Between Member States | 5 | 0.9 |
| Member States and the EU | 1.25 | 0.2 |



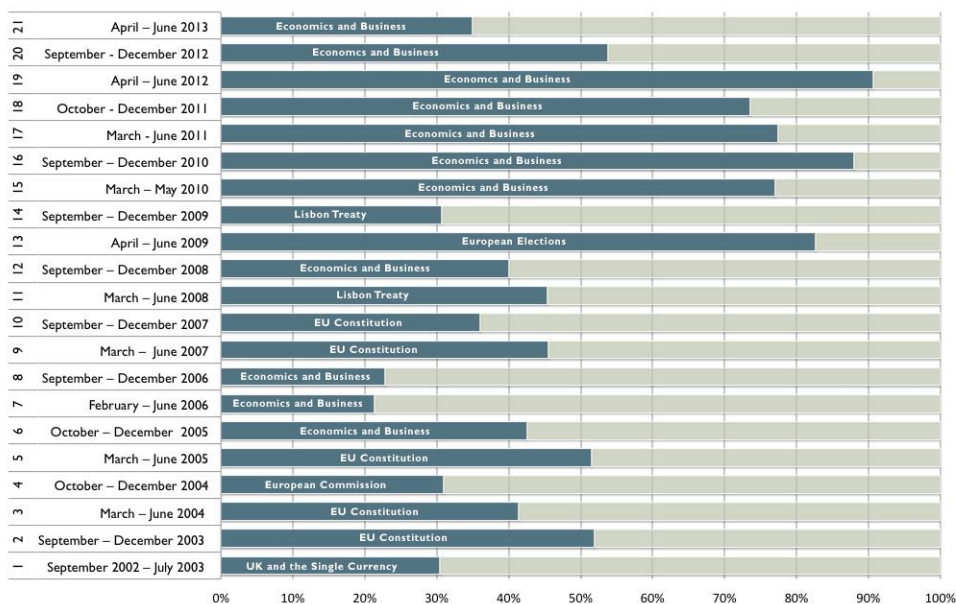
As the chart and table show, ‘Economics, Business and Financial’ was the most heavily-covered sub-theme, with 3 hours 8 minutes – more than a third of Today’s EU coverage during the survey interval – being devoted to this subject. This included discussion of struggling eurozone economies such as Greece and Italy, debates around the euro in the context of the Scottish Independence debate, and coverage of ECB decisions on interest rates. The second most widely-covered issue was that of ‘Britain and the European Union’, a category which included discussion of the proposed referendum on the UK’s EU membership. This accounted for almost a quarter of Today’s EU reportage.

In recent surveys, Newswatch has observed a distinct shift in Today’s coverage patterns. Beginning in March 2010, and lasting for five consecutive surveys, Economics and Business coverage became the most dominant aspect of EU reportage, accounting for at least 70% of Today’s EU coverage, and in Summer 2012 reaching a peak of more than 90%. This meant that comparatively little space was

given over to the treatment of other EU matters, and entire subject areas were routinely being covered insufficiently, or ignored altogether.

In its two most recent investigations, Newswatch has observed a degree of equilibrium being restored to Today’s EU coverage, with Business and Economics reports no longer dominating so completely. In the last survey, Winter 2012, Economics and Business coverage accounted for 54% of all EU coverage, and in the current survey this had fallen to 35%.

MAIN EU THEMES ON TODAY, 2002 - 2013

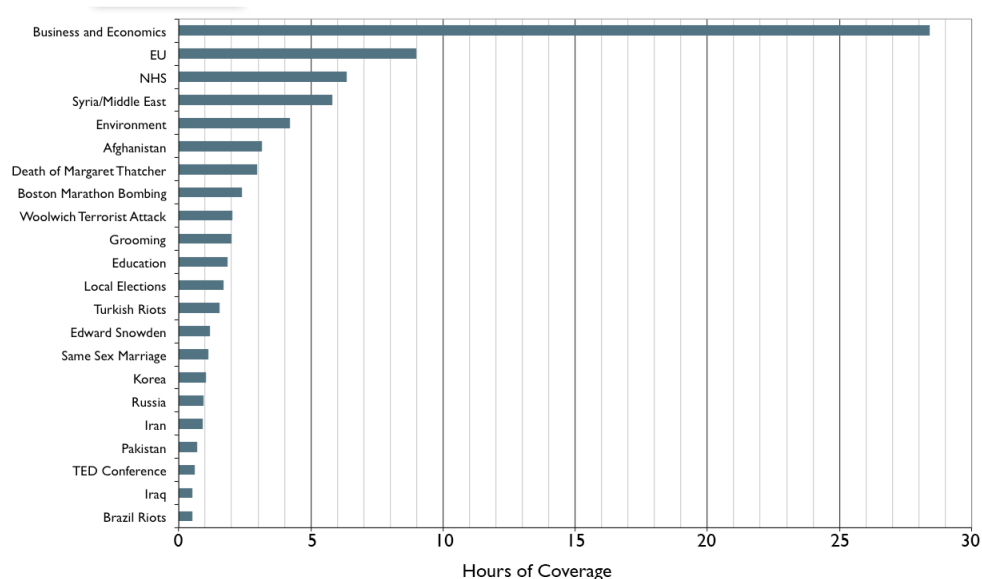


1.5 THE WIDER NEWS AGENDA

Newswatch timed and categorised all feature reports broadcast by Today during the survey period. News stories and themes which received thirty or more minutes of feature coverage are listed in the following table.

In total 22 separate news themes qualified for inclusion in the table. In combination, these ‘main stories’ accounted for 59% of Today’s total feature output, with the remainder – 41%, or more than 53 hours of features – comprising themes which generated less than thirty minutes of coverage, many of which were single, standalone feature reports.

It is important to appreciate that, for the purposes of Newswatch’s analysis, EU themes take precedence in the categorisation process, and the EU airtime totals presented in each survey thus represent an absolute maximum. For example, stories on the cleanliness of Britain’s beaches were categorised solely as EU stories, rather than as a environment stories, or a combination of the two.

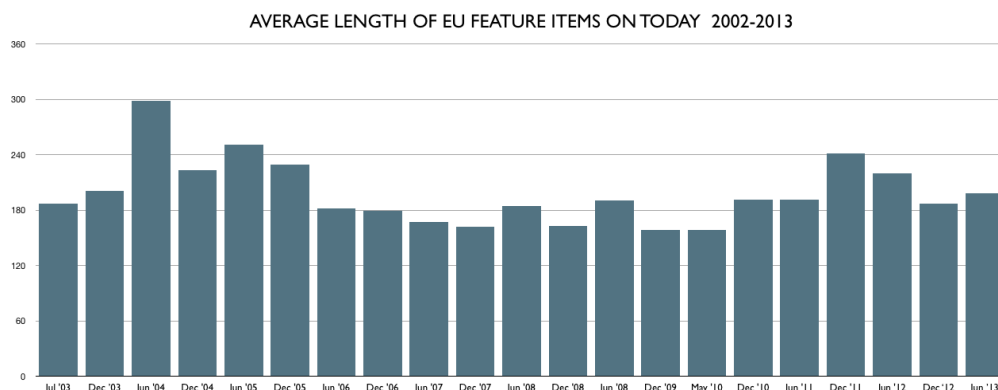


As the chart shows, the most significant news theme was Business and Economics, which received 28 hours and 23 minutes of coverage over the twelve-week interval, or 21.4% of the total feature airtime available on Today. The EU was the second most widely-covered issue, receiving a fraction less than 9 hours of feature airtime, (or 6.8% of the feature space available)

Aside from the 22 stories listed in the table, Today included 53 hours 43 minutes of additional features, or 41% of its overall space within the programme. These often took the form of single, standalone reports, a proportion of which might not be considered 'newsworthy' in the strictest sense.

1.6 EU ITEM LENGTH

The chart shows the average length of EU feature items in the 21 Newswatch surveys undertaken between September 2002 and June 2012.



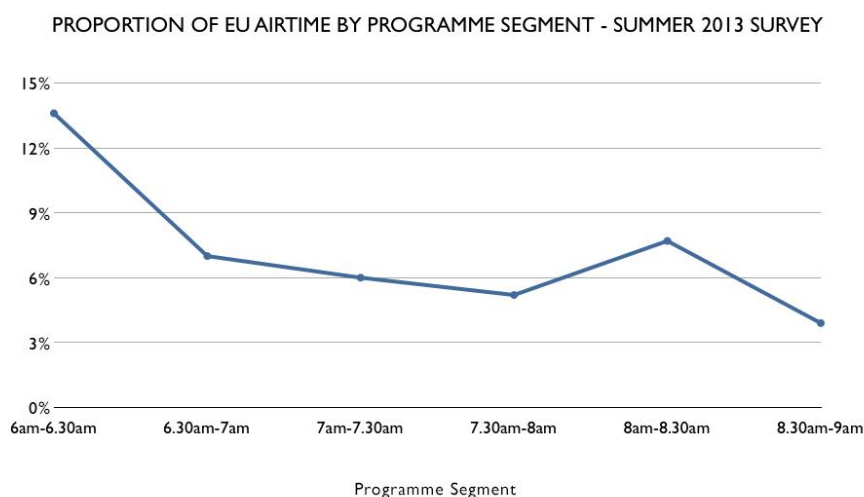
During the Summer 2013 survey, the average duration of an EU feature item on Today was 3 minutes and 18 seconds. This duration was eighth highest of the 21 surveys undertaken by Newswatch to date.

The number of extended EU features during the survey period was nothing out of the ordinary: Today broadcast 12 EU-related packages lasting seven or more minutes during the survey interval, and five of these packages were over ten minutes long.

1.7 THE POSITION OF EU FEATURE REPORTS

Assessing the positioning of EU material in the Today running order necessitates a complex calculation, given that each half-hour segment does not carry equal space for features. For example, the first half hour of the programme generally has space for 17 minutes of features, while the last half hour has between 26 and 29 minutes. In addition, the Saturday programme begins at 7am, and has a slightly different running order to the weekday editions.

With all these variables taken into account, the next graph gives weighted totals for EU news coverage, as a percentage of the total airtime available in each half-hour segment of Today, over the course of the full survey interval. If EU coverage had been distributed evenly across each programme segment for the full twelve weeks, the graph would show a horizontal line.



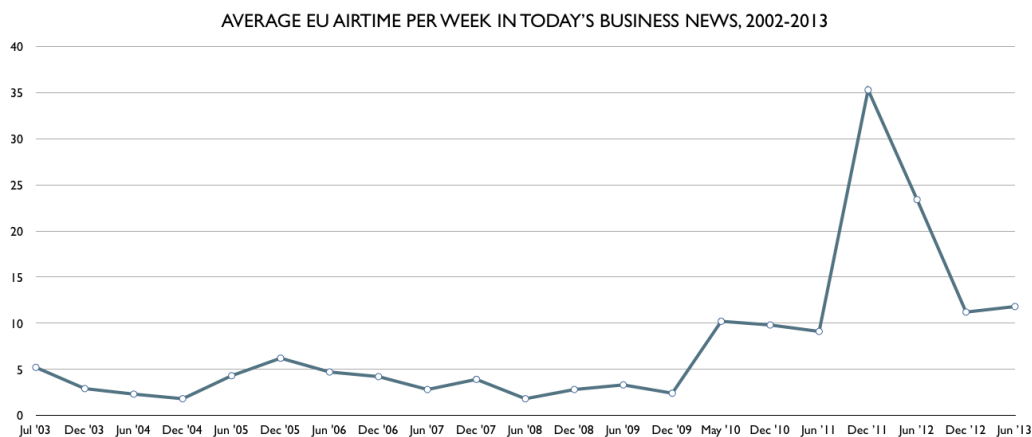
There are major structural disadvantages to material positioned early in the programme, namely that the first half hour of the programme generally receives an audience of around 1 million, compared to 2.5 million during the 7.30am-8.30am peak time. As the chart shows, EU coverage was significantly more prevalent in the first half hour, where 13.6% of feature items in the 6am-6.30am slot having an

EU theme. This was as a consequence of a greater proportion of EU issues being covered in Today's main Business News slot, which airs on weekdays at 6.15am, a phenomenon explored in more detail in the following section. EU coverage was at its lowest in the 8.30am-9am slot, where the theme accounted for just 3.9% of the programme's feature coverage. As such, those listeners tuning into only the first half hour of Today would have heard three and a half times more EU coverage than those who only tuned in to the final half hour.

1.8 THE BUSINESS NEWS

Today broadcasts a main Business News package at around 6.15am each weekday morning, along with two shorter updates later in the programme. Combined, these three slots typically account for somewhere between 14 and 20 minutes per programme, or between 12% and 17% of the total feature coverage in Today's weekday editions.

During the Summer 2013 survey, Today carried 2 hours and 22 minutes of EU coverage in its dedicated Business News sections, which accounted for 26.3% of the total EU coverage broadcast during the survey interval. The chart shows the average EU airtime per week in Today's Business News and Business Update slots in all 21 Newswatch surveys undertaken since September 2002.



As the chart shows, a dramatic rise in EU business coverage occurred during the Winter 2011 survey. Until this point, the long-term average had been 4 minutes 34 seconds of EU coverage per week in the Business slots, but this increased almost eight-fold to 35 minutes 19 seconds per week. Since this peak, coverage has fallen back, but has remained more than double the long-term average. In the Summer 2013 survey the Business News slots devoted 11 minutes and 48 seconds a week of their airtime to EU themes – the third highest figure since long-term monitoring began in September 2002.

I.9 SPEAKERS

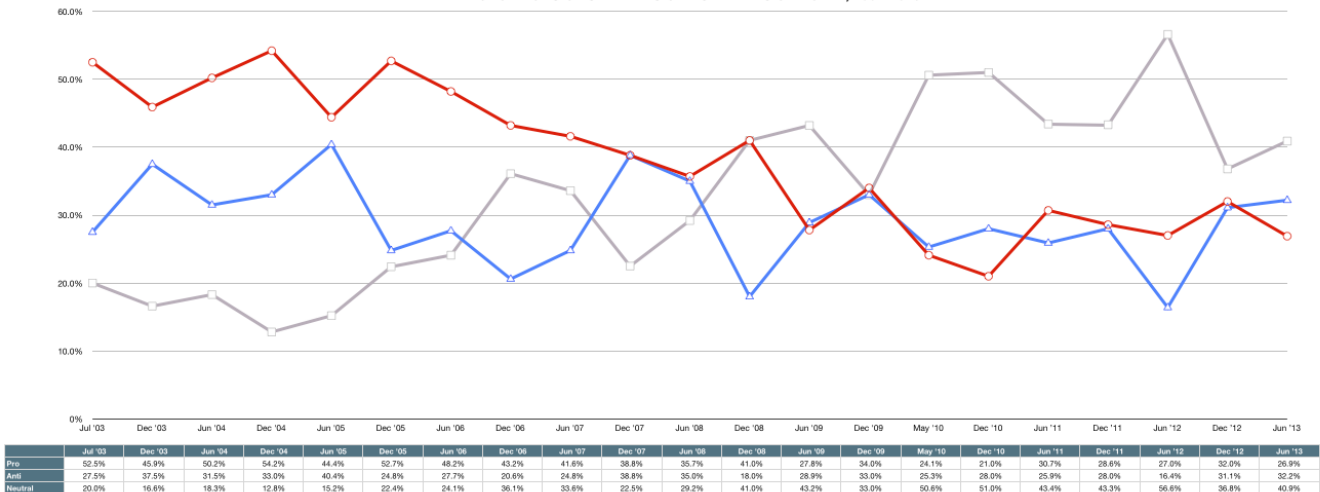
Today's EU coverage included 208 guest contributors during the survey, of which 136 were interviews and 72 were pre-recorded soundbites or vox pop contributions. The table lists speakers according to whether they expressed Europhile or Eurosceptic views. Each guest was categorised according to the contents of the contribution, rather than the established views of the person concerned, or their party affiliation. The two rows referring to 'specific EU legislation' allow a greater degree of subtlety in the classification process. Labelling speakers simply as Europhile or Eurosceptic presented difficulties in two circumstances: first, when it is impossible to deduce a speaker's wider view of the EU from the content of their contribution alone; and second, when a politician with known Eurosceptic views speaks in favour of a particular EU policy or a pro-EU politician speaks against it.

| Contributions by Party | Labour | Conservative | Liberal | UKIP | EU | Other | Total |
|---|---------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Pro-EU | 8 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 11 | 13 | 43 |
| In favour of specific EU legislation/action | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 13 |
| Anti-EU or Eurosceptic | 1 | 37 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 46 |
| Against specific EU legislation/action | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 21 |
| Neutral/Factual viewpoint | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 75 | 85 |
| Total Speakers | 13 | 48 | 10 | 5 | 16 | 116 | 208 |

In broad terms, 56 guests (27%) spoke in favour of the EU or specific legislation, 67 (32%) were against the EU or specific legislation, and 85 speakers (41%) offered a neutral, factual or unclassifiable viewpoint.

Neutral and factual contributions have dominated the EU debate on Today in seven of the last eight surveys. In Summer 2013, neutral speakers still accounted for the largest proportion, but the survey was unusual in that broadly eurosceptic speakers outnumbered broadly pro-European guests – only the fourth time this has occurred in the 21 surveys undertaken since 2002. A word count analysis was undertaken of each guest contribution. This showed a balance in favour of Eurosceptic/anti-EU guests: 12,704 words (27%) were spoken in favour of the EU, 17,924 words (37%) were spoken against the EU, and 17,144 words (36%) came from a neutral, factual or otherwise unclassifiable viewpoint. The chart shows the proportions of broadly Pro-EU, Anti-EU and Neutral speakers over the course of the 21 Newswatch surveys since September 2002, and represents a total of 4590 individual guest contributions to the Today programme's feature reports and news bulletins.

PROPORTIONS OF SPEAKERS ON EU THEMES ON TODAY, 2002-2013



I.10 THE WITHDRAWAL ARGUMENT

Of the 208 speakers invited onto Today to speak on European Union matters, eight could be classified as ‘withdrawalist’ as a result of their party affiliation, the contents of their contribution, or the commentary given by journalists or presenters.

Five of the withdrawalist speakers were members of the UK Independence Party, three were Conservatives MPs, and one was a financial supporter of the Labour Party. Five of the withdrawalist contributors were interviewed live, and three contributed through pre-recorded soundbites.

As in all previous surveys, contributors had to meet at least one of three criteria in order qualify as ‘withdrawalist’: they explicitly expressed as part of their contribution a support British withdrawal, their own country’s withdrawal, or the dissolution of the European Union; they were said to hold such views in introductory sequences or in additional journalistic commentary; they belonged to a party explicitly advocating withdrawal or a comparable policy. This process was expressly designed to replicate the experience of the ‘casual listener’ and therefore to only include speakers who were clearly identifiable as being ‘withdrawalist’ within the narrative of a particular report or feature.

The table shows the numbers and the proportion of withdrawalist speakers appearing on Today in the survey periods since March 2004.

| Survey Date | Weeks | Total Speakers | Withdrawalists | % |
|---|-------|----------------|----------------|------|
| Mar – Jun 2004 | 12 | 279 | 15 | 5.4% |
| June 2004, Mark Thompson appointed BBC Director General | | | | |
| Oct – Dec 2004 | 10 | 94 | 7 | 7.4% |
| January 2005, Publication of the Wilson Report into the BBC's EU Coverage | | | | |
| Mar – Jun 2005 | 12 | 389 | 12 | 3.1% |
| Oct – Dec 2005 | 9 | 165 | 3 | 1.8% |
| Feb – Jun 2006 | 16 | 166 | 6 | 3.6% |
| Sep – Dec 2006 | 14 | 98 | 4 | 4.1% |
| Mar – Jun 2007 | 14 | 125 | 4 | 3.2% |
| Sep – Dec 2007 | 14 | 178 | 5 | 2.8% |
| Mar – Jun 2008 | 12 | 123 | 2 | 1.6% |
| Sep – Dec 2008 | 14 | 139 | 4 | 2.9% |
| Apr – Jun 2009 | 6.3 | 97 | 9 | 9.3% |
| Sep – Dec 2009 | 12 | 197 | 10 | 5.1% |
| Mar - May 2010 | 6 | 79 | 5 | 6.3% |
| Sep - Dec 2010 | 13 | 156 | 3 | 1.9% |
| Mar – June 2011 | 13 | 205 | 1 | 0.5% |
| Oct – Dec 2011 | 11 | 517 | 7 | 1.4% |
| Apr – June 2012 | 12 | 366 | 3 | 0.8% |
| Sep – Dec 2012 | 13 | 231 | 14 | 6.1% |
| Apr – June 2013 | 12 | 208 | 8 | 3.8% |

In the Summer 2013 survey the categorisation process was more challenging than usual, with a growing number of Conservative MPs openly making the case withdrawal. This meant that the lines between firm Eurosceptics and withdrawalists became more blurred as the debate intensified. The most pertinent example was that of Conservative MP John Baron, who tabled an amendment regretting the lack of EU referendum legislation in the Queen's Speech. Mr Baron appeared on Today five times during the survey interval, and in his final appearance, the commentary from parliamentary correspondent Susan Hulme noted that Mr Baron had said he would vote to leave the EU if a referendum were to be held tomorrow. However, in his previous appearances Newswatch had categorised Mr Baron as a 'strong sceptic', and when the earlier transcripts were rechecked there was nothing within them to indicate to listeners that Mr Baron supported withdrawal. Indeed, the lengthiest of his five appearances saw presenter Sarah Montague introduce him as a 'senior Eurosceptic Conservative backbencher.' Consequentially, Mr Baron's four additional appearances did not meet the criteria for inclusion as 'withdrawalist'.

The table provides information on the eight contributions that were categorised as withdrawalist during the Summer 2013 survey. Each speaker's contribution was individually timed and a word count analysis was undertaken. In keeping with Newswatch's established categorisation parameters, contributors were only included if they spoke about EU matters. The monitoring process also recorded a number of identifiably withdrawalist guests who discussed non-EU issues. This was primarily a result of coverage of UKIP surrounding the local government elections and included: a

bulletin soundbite from Nigel Farage on the suspension of a UKIP candidate; three soundbites from UKIP's deputy leader Paul Nuttall and a soundbite each from two unnamed UKIP voters on the morning after the election; John Sylvester, a plumber from Boston in Lincolnshire explaining he had voted UKIP because he was sick of the other parties 'ripping us off' and of their immigration policies; and a soundbite from Nigel Farage in which he had referred to Tony Blair as an 'SDP Prime Minister', which formed the basis of a subsequent interview with former SDP leader, Lord Owen in which this thesis was discussed. In addition, two of the three interviews with UKIP leader Nigel Farage only partially focused on EU issues, and the word count totals in the chart have been adapted to reflect this.

| Date | Time | Speaker | Party | Contribution | Words |
|--------------|--------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 25/04/2013 | 8.49am | Paul Nuttall | UKIP | Interview | 336 |
| 30/04/2013 | 7.47am | Nigel Farage | UKIP | Interview | 207 |
| 03/05/2013 | 8.10am | Nigel Farage | UKIP | Interview | 164 |
| 16/05/2013 | 6.45am | John Baron | Conservative Party | Soundbite | 106 |
| 16/05/2013 | 6.45am | Lord Lawson | Conservative Party | Soundbite | 27 |
| 17/05/2013 | 6.44am | Lord Pearson | UKIP | Soundbite | 33 |
| 17/05/2013 | 8.47am | Nigel Farage | UKIP | Interview | 705 |
| 04/06/2013 | 8.32am | John Mills | Labour Party (Donor) | Interview | 529 |
| Total | | | | | 2107 |

The interview with Mr Mills was notable in that it was only the third appearance by a Labour Party withdrawalist in the Newswatch surveys undertaken since 2005, and only the fifth appearance from any left-wing advocate of withdrawal during the same period. As the table shows, the withdrawal debate continues to be colonised by UKIP, whose representatives have accounted for 74% of all withdrawalist appearances. The party's leader Nigel Farage has been responsible for more than half of these UKIP appearances and, alone, he has represented 38% of the total withdrawalist appearances recorded on Today during the surveys undertaken since 2005.

| Party | UKIP | Conservative | BNP | Labour | Other/Unknown | Veritas | Total |
|------------------------------|------|--------------|-----|--------|---------------|---------|------------|
| Number of Appearances | 74 | 13 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 100 |

The BBC's own editorial guidelines on impartiality state, 'We must ensure a wide range of significant views and perspectives are given due weight and prominence, particularly when the controversy is active.' However, the figures illustrate clearly that not only has the withdrawal argument been marginalised within the wider EU debate, but that the range and scope of withdrawalist speakers offered to listeners is extremely limited.

On 6 February 2013, Ric Bailey, Chief Adviser, Politics, BBC, Mary Hockaday, Head of Newsroom, BBC and Peter Knowles, Controller, BBC Parliament, gave evidence to the European Scrutiny Committee in the House of Commons. A member of the Committee, Labour MP Kelvin Hopkins, put it to them that, 'there is one great yawning gap and that is the left critique of the European Union, which does not feature at all.'²

Newswatch provided written evidence to the European Scrutiny Committee, using figures up to and including the previous survey undertaken in Winter 2012. At this juncture, 89 identifiably withdrawalist speakers had appeared on the Today programme in the editions surveyed by Newswatch since the publication of the Wilson Report in 2005, and only two of these (Austin Mitchell and Gisela Stuart) had been from the left. This accounted for just 0.06% of the total number speakers on the EU in the survey periods spanning seven years. Their appearances amounted to just 241 words – approximately a minute and a half of airtime.

When Newswatch subsequently gave oral evidence before the same Committee, Kelvin Hopkins said that the figures gathered by Newswatch were 'a revelation' to him as a Labour withdrawalist, and added:

I just wanted to note the figure that 0.06% of the total number of speeches on the EU in seven years were made by Labour withdrawers; that is one in 1,400, approximately. Even in the House of Commons, at least one in 10 speeches are made by Labour withdrawalists, so the imbalance is very clear.³

The appearance on Today by John Mills during the current survey has altered these figures slightly. But even with Mr Mills's contribution included, the most recent figures indicate that just 0.09% of speakers appearing on Today to talk about the EU since the publication of the Wilson Report in January 2005, have been from the Labour Party or British left. This still equates to just one speaker in every 1,147, and remains just as damning. In the light of these statistics, the BBC cannot claim their flagship radio news and current affairs programme is selecting an adequately wide range of voices to represent the withdrawalist case. Newswatch also notes that there have never been, in any of the editions of Today monitored by Newswatch, withdrawalist contributions from academics, economists, business leaders or members of the British general public.

1.11 TOM BURRIDGE ON DAVID CAMERON'S VISIT TO SPAIN

Within just eleven minutes of the Summer 2013 Newswatch survey commencing, Today broadcast a report which raised serious concerns. Presenter Justin Webb interviewed correspondent Tom

² House of Commons, European Scrutiny Committee, Session 2012-13, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeuleg/c711-v/c71101.htm>

³ House of Commons, European Scrutiny Committee, Session, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeuleg/uc711-viii/uc71101.htm>

Burridge on the David Cameron's visit to Spain as part of a 'diplomatic offensive' within the EU. The full transcript of the exchange was as follows:

JUSTIN WEBB: The Prime Minister arrives in Spain today on the start of a tour of the European Union. Tom Burridge is our man in Madrid. And Tom, it's . . . the case for treaty change is basically what he's doing, isn't it?

TOM BURRIDGE: Exactly, I mean, the Prime Minister's essentially going on the diplomatic offensive today, meetings first in Madrid here with Mariano Rajoy, the Spanish prime minister, and then later, he travels to France to meet with François Hollande, the French leader. And then, at the end of the week he'll sit down with Angela Merkel in Germany.

JW: And we know that those last two aren't very keen, but what's the position in Spain?

TB: Well, I think Spain is going to be an awkward partner too. I mean, you have to remember that Spain is inherently pro-European, it's benefited hugely from its membership of the European Union, and I think here too, I think some people, a lot of people really in Spain see us, Britain, as, if you like, an awkward partner in Europe. So I think it is going to be a difficult one here too. And of course, you know, Spain's priority right now also, is not reforming European Union institutions . . .

JW: (laughter in voice) It's just surviving in the euro, isn't it?

TB: . . . it's fixing the eurozone crisis, exactly.

JW: But I mean, I wonder how that impacts on the whole of this, this tour in a way, that actually, people are going to say, well, you know, whatever your ideas, actually we've got other things to think about – particularly in southern Europe – right now, and maybe we'll come back to this in the future. And that's not enough for Mr Cameron?

TB: It's not. I mean, you know, the Prime Minister will say, well, look, you know, you can have both, you can have, you know, reform of Europe, more integration within the eurozone, within the banking systems here to fix the eurozone crisis, and at the same time you can create what he wants to create, in his words and more flexible Europe in which, you know, countries like Britain can opt out of certain European laws and directives. You know, for him, for him the two are not mutually exclusive.

JW: Hmm. More on this later, Tom Burridge thanks.

Newswatch took issue with the claim made by Tom Burridge in his commentary that 'Spain is inherently pro-European and has benefited hugely from its membership of the European Union.'. Newswatch pointed to the latest Eurobarometer survey which indicated that public opinion in Spain

had shifted against the EU. The Eurobarometer survey showed only 20% of the Spanish population 'tend to trust' the European Union (exactly the same as the figure for UK), while 72% 'tend not to trust the EU' (compared to 69% in the UK). In terms of those who tended not to trust the EU, Spain was the second highest of all the 27 EU member states, behind only Greece.

Newswatch also compiled a table using statistics from individual Eurobarometer questions⁴, which showed Spanish responses to stated 'benefits' of EU membership.

| Benefit | Has Benefited | Has not Benefited | Don't Know |
|---|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| No/Less Border Controls when Travelling Abroad | 32% | 67% | 1% |
| Improved consumer rights when buying goods and services in another EU member state | 13% | 86% | 1% |
| Less expensive communication costs when using a mobile phone in another EU Member State | 10% | 88% | 2% |
| Receiving medical assistance in another EU Member State | 8% | 91% | 1% |
| Strengthened rights of air transport passengers in the EU | 11% | 86% | 3% |
| Working in another EU Member State | 8% | 91% | 1% |
| Living in another EU Member State | 9% | 90% | 1% |
| Studying in another EU Member State | 5% | 94% | 1% |
| Less expensive flights and a wider choice of airlines | 19% | 80% | 1% |

As the table illustrates, those believing they had benefited from a particular EU policy were heavily outweighed by those who believed they had not benefited in each of the nine areas listed.

Newswatch believed that the Tom Burridge report highlighted the ready editorial acceptance that the EU is not only liked but also almost universally supported, and pointed out that this was an issue that had been raised frequently in previous Newswatch surveys.

Conservative MP Philip Hollobone put Newswatch's concerns to Today's editor Ceri Thomas by letter on 3 May 2013. On 5 June, Mr Thomas replied:

You criticise the interview with Tom Burridge on *Today* on April 8th, looking ahead to David Cameron's visit to Spain that day. This was a very short interview which inevitably compressed complex issues. But, having discussed your concerns with Tom, we accept that it would have been better if he had explained what he meant when he said, "Spain is inherently pro-European". As you rightly point out, the EC's recent polling data does indicate growing dissatisfaction with the EU amongst the Spanish population and we should have set this context.

Here are Tom's observations in response to your complaint:

"When I stated that Spain has benefited from Europe, I should have qualified this by saying, 'historically, it has benefited from EU funding'. On top of that, membership of the EU, and the single market, is regarded in Spain as a key factor in the country's relatively impressive economic growth post-Franco, through to the creation of the Euro.

However, I do still stand behind my assertion that 'Spain is inherently pro-European'. By 'Spain', I refer to the Government, the political class, and the vast majority of Spaniards. Even though Spain is experiencing a deep economic crisis, with record unemployment and deep austerity which, you could argue, is at least to a certain extent imposed from Brussels, there is no debate about leaving the EU. It is not part of the political narrative.

Yes, there is growing criticism (especially on the left) of the way European institutions, as well as the

⁴ Annex to Eurobarometer 78 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb78/eb78_en.htm

IMF, are, in the minds of some 'forcing' Spain to make cuts to public services/increase taxes etc.

Dissatisfaction with the European Union and its current leaders and policies is increasingly easy-to find. However dissatisfaction with the concept of the European Union is still virtually non-existent.

Given that, during the economic crisis, there is growing dissatisfaction with a lot of institutions in Spain (political parties, government, the royal family, banks etc), you could argue that growing dissatisfaction with the EU is inevitable, especially when the quality of life for so many in Spain has deteriorated.

That said, I agree that I should have provided more context to my comments and will take on board Mr Hollobone's comments in my future reporting."

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention and I hope that this reply addresses your concerns.

Although there was some admission from Ceri Thomas and Tom Burridge that the report had lacked context, Newswatch still takes issue with some of the reasoning contained in the BBC's response.

First, Mr Burridge's overstatement of Spanish pro-Europeanism give greater credence to the EU than it commands, and similar examples have been highlighted by Newswatch on many other occasions. In addition there remain questions concerning Mr Burridge's assertion that 'the vast majority of Spaniards' continue to support the EU. On the contrary, there seems to be a major shift underway towards Spain becoming among the most eurosceptic nations of the EU, and this has been widely covered by other sections of the media. For example, Ian Traynor, writing in the Guardian on 24 April 2013 said:

Figures from Eurobarometer, the EU's polling organisation, analysed by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), a thinktank, show a vertiginous decline in trust in the EU in countries such as Spain, Germany and Italy that are historically very pro-European.⁵

Mr Burridge maintains that the 'vast majority' of Spaniards remain 'inherently pro-European'. But can he really do so in the face of Eurobarometer results which show that 72% of Spaniards – a figure higher than in the UK – responded that they definitely 'do not trust' the European Union?

There seems to be a major disconnect between Mr Burridge's analysis and the reality on the ground, and yet he provided no firm evidence upon which he had based his conclusion. In fact, even at the height of the economic boom in Spain (2007), the Eurobarometer survey found that only 73% of Spaniards accepted that membership of the EU was 'something good'. That means that 27% did not necessarily accept that it was. This is a figure that is higher than the percentage who voted UKIP in the 2013 UK local elections. There may not yet be coherent expression of euroscepticism or withdrawalism in Spain in terms of political movements, but that does not mean that the sentiment does not exist, or that it is inconsequential in the way suggested by Mr Burridge.

⁵ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/24/trust-eu-falls-record-low>

Mr BurrIDGE also contended that “dissatisfaction with the concept of the European Union is still virtually non-existent”. When Newswatch started monitoring BBC News programmes in 1999, appearances by those who supported withdrawal were so infrequent that they were not recorded separately in its database until five years into the project. Newswatch questions as to whether it might be that withdrawalist voices are currently being excluded from the media in Spain, in the same way they were over here for many years?

The most significant problem with Mr BurrIDGE's response is that it sets up a dichotomy between 'pro-European' and 'anti-European' - in which 'anti-European' equals withdrawalist. His logic appears to be: as there is no obvious support for withdrawal in Spain, Spain is therefore a pro-European country.

Newswatch has never framed the EU debate in such a polarised way. This would discount completely British eurosceptic opinion. Indeed, the 'eurosceptic' database category has been mainly populated by those who, while criticising specific operations or institutions, have supported continued British membership of EU. If Newswatch categorised speakers in the terms employed by Mr BurrIDGE in his analysis of Spain, then the proportion of those who are truly 'anti-EU' (given that most Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative eurosceptics actually support British membership) would have accounted for just 5% of EU contributors to the Today programme in the surveys undertaken over the last eight years.

Mr BurrIDGE asserts there may be dissatisfaction with the EU within Spain, but claims there is virtually no dissatisfaction with 'the concept of the European Union'. To follow his logic, the only way that Spain could be considered *not* to be inherently pro-European would be if the government, political classes and members of the public were mainly declared withdrawalists.

Finally, Mr BurrIDGE asserts that the rise in dissatisfaction with the EU is part of an 'inevitable' process that means Spaniards are unhappy with all their institutions because of the economic downturn. However, the Eurobarometer survey reported by the Guardian indicated very clear mistrust *specifically* of the EU, and showed that this had grown very markedly since 2007. Mr BurrIDGE appears to be suggesting that Spaniards can't or don't distinguish between the impact of measures imposed by the national government and those by the EU. Of course, banking reform is a highly complex matter, but Today has reported many times in the past that the Spanish government is deeply unhappy with what is being imposed on it by the ECB and the EU, but Mr BurrIDGE appears to be suggesting that the Spanish population as a whole are not aware of this.

Lord Wilson, in his Independent Panel Report of BBC News Coverage of the European Union concluded that a major problem in the reporting of EU affairs was the lack of accurate knowledge of BBC staff; almost 10 years on, this is evidence that it remains a major concern.

THE BBC AND 'EUROPE'

ANALYSIS OF EU COVERAGE ON BBC RADIO 4's TODAY PROGRAMME

8 APRIL – 29 JUNE 2013

PART TWO

SECTION ONE: WITHDRAWAL

'Not just Nigel Farage' – BBC Correspondent Iain Watson

In this survey period, the possibility of withdrawal from the EU by the UK was without doubt an important element on the news agenda. On January 23, 2013, David Cameron had set out his plans to hold a referendum on EU membership and a linked policy of striving to achieve renegotiation of the terms of EU membership. At the opening of Newswatch's survey period in April, he was beginning a round of diplomacy which he said was linked to that projected renegotiation. On May 2, UKIP attracted 24.2% of the vote in the South Shields by-election, and 23% in the local council elections, comfortably ahead of the Liberal Democrats, part of the governing Coalition. After the UKIP poll result, around a third of Conservative MPs exerted strong pressure for the commitment to a referendum to be firmed up and cast in legislative stone ahead of the 2015 general election. The dissent culminated with around 100 backbenchers urging that the party should not support the Queen's Speech, and when that motion failed, the preliminary adoption of a Private Members' Bill about the referendum. Another significant development was that on May 7, the former Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lawson of Blaby, declared in a Times article that for both economic and political reasons, he now believed the UK must leave the EU. Today's commentators judged he had thus lobbed a 'hand grenade' into the debate over the EU, particularly in terms of the impact on the Conservative party. David Cameron told the Today programme on May 22 that despite this, his party was united behind what he claimed was the most clearly-defined and decisive policy relating to the EU of any party leader in 40 years, with both renegotiation and an iron-clad commitment to a referendum on withdrawal at its heart.

Against this background, Today reflected the EU agenda, as has been tabulated in Part I, by broadcasting a range of items about Mr Cameron's steps towards renegotiation, the local council election campaign, the results, and the aftermath, and – especially – about the debate within the

Conservative party about the urgency or otherwise of the need for a referendum on EU membership. Such coverage constituted 35.2% of the EU affairs total. This added up to almost three hours, sufficient to explore the various themes in some depth.

The coverage of news and current affairs is not painting by numbers, and nor is there a quota system of what levels there should be of specific topics, because the news agenda is dynamic and constantly changing. Nevertheless, BBC programmes are required by law to broadcast balanced coverage of major news topics. With the issue of British withdrawal from the EU centre stage during this period, it could reasonably be expected that those advocating it, along with the arguments in its favour, would receive a significant airing on a BBC flagship news and current affairs programme such as Today.

Part I established that only a tiny number of voices on the Today programme were those who supported withdrawal speaking about the topic. A total of 6.8% of the programme (amounting to almost nine hours) was devoted to coverage of EU issues and there were 208 guest speakers on EU-related items. Just eight of these speakers, amounting to 3.8% of the total, were supporters of withdrawal from the EU. That compares with the long-term programme average (March 2004 to December 2012) of 3.2%, so despite the clear rise in public support for UKIP during this period, there was no equivalent rise in the proportion of withdrawalist speakers invited to appear on Today.

The picture becomes even more negative under closer scrutiny. At a basic level, their combined eight contributions totalled 2,107 words, or approximately 15 minutes of the 538 minutes devoted to EU affairs, or 2.7% of the available feature airtime.

But this figure, even though it is low, does not reflect the actual *content* of the coverage. When the transcripts are closely analysed, it emerges that the actual words spoken by supporters of withdrawal about *the subject of withdrawal* amounted to just 518 words. That, at 140 wpm, is 3 minutes and 42 seconds. This was 2.1% of the Today feature running time that focused on Britain's relationship with the EU and the related political developments at home, 0.7% of the total feature airtime devoted to EU affairs, and just 0.02% (two one thousandths) of the programme's total feature airtime.

In fact, two of the eight speakers flagged editorially as supporters of withdrawal did not discuss the topic at all – or mentioned it only in passing.

The ones that did were:

Paul Nuttall (57 words, c.20 seconds, April 25): Mr Nuttall, the deputy leader of UKIP, was interviewed with the Bulgarian ambassador to London about claims that UKIP's policy towards EU immigration was racist. Much of the time was taken up by Mr Nuttall defending himself and his

party against these claims. At the end, Mr Nuttall said briefly that leaving the EU would solve elements of the UK's immigration problems, but in no sense was the exchange substantially about withdrawal. The relevant extract was:

We're just stating simple facts, that from January 1 all restrictions are lifted and quite frankly, we don't have control over our own borders because Brussels does it on our behalf, and the only way we can do something about it is by leaving the European Union, and I don't think that's stoking any flames at all.

Nigel Farage (122 words, c.50 seconds, April 30): Mr Farage was interviewed as UKIP party leader in the build-up to the council elections. The main focus of John Humphrys was domestic policies, and his response to allegations from his political opponents that the party were 'clowns'. Mr Farage was not asked directly about withdrawal in this interview, but himself raised the topic. Two sections of his interview mentioned withdrawal, the first was:

NIGEL FARAGE: Well, what we're for, we're for an independent self-confident, self-governing United Kingdom that believes in itself and changes its entire future course away from being obsessed with being part of Europe, to actually linking out and forging new trade relationships and cultural relationships with the rest of the world. We are the modern, forward-looking party saying, we want a global future for Britain in the 21st Century, not to be tied to this completely outdated European model that is now making 75% of our laws.

The second was:

NF: Well, the point is we cannot engage with the rest of the world, we cannot form those relationships all the while we are part of the European Union, because membership of that club forbids us from doing so.

Nigel Farage (109 words, c.45 seconds, May 3): The day after the election results, Mr Farage was asked for his reaction. In a sequence lasting 13 minutes (that also included a Conservative party spokesman), Evan Davis suggested at the outset that UKIP's share of the poll was due to the 'Europe thing'. In the past, John Humphrys has repeatedly accused Mr Farage and his party of being variously a 'one trick pony' and a 'single issue pressure group'⁶ (so perhaps unsurprisingly), the UKIP leader responded to the rather disparaging tone of the question defensively, by going out of his way to stress that other factors were involved, such as disillusionment with the other parties. In effect,

⁶ For example, on September 18, 2012, in an interview of Nigel Farage, Mr Humphrys put it to Mr Farage that his willingness to do a deal with the Conservatives indicated that UKIP was 'not actually a real political party at all' and was actually 'just a single-issue pressure group'. And on October 4, 2007, in an exchange with Mr Farage about the UKIP conference, Mr Humphrys twice said that the party was 'a one trick' pony, that trick being its desire to leave the EU.

therefore, Mr Davis calculatedly drove Europe off the agenda, and he did not ask anything else about it. It was thus left to Mr Farage to weave the topic into his answers. He was able to do so only briefly, in two sections. The first was:

NIGEL FARAGE: And you know, the next big election that coming up of course is a European election, which takes place this time next year, in which we will be positioned as the only party saying we should divorce ourselves from political union and have a simple free trade alternative, and I think in the run-up to 2015 UKIP's in a very strong position.

The second was:

NF: ...and this is back to the Europe question which nobody, amongst the metropolitan elite wants to talk about, but actually there is now settled majority out there that wants us to get our country back, and we're the only people they can vote for putting that view.

Lord Pearson (33 words, c.15 seconds, May 17): After days of debate about whether the referendum on the EU membership could be mentioned in the Queen's Speech, there was an extract in Yesterday in Parliament of a speech made by Lord Pearson of Rannoch. He attacked in a soundbite of less than 15 seconds, both 'integration' and the euro. He said:

As a first step towards closing down the whole ill-fated project of European integration, why doesn't Her Majesty's Government propose the abolition of the euro, with all its participants returning to national currencies?

Nigel Farage (66 words, c.25 seconds, May 17): In this interview, although Mr Farage's UKIP affiliation was clearly flagged, the main focus of Sarah Montague's questioning was the extent to which his extreme views had provoked an attack by the SNP during a visit to Edinburgh. Mr Farage mentioned in passing that independence from the EU was in Scotland's interest, but no questions were asked about withdrawal by Ms Montague and nothing discussed about it. He said in passing:

Now the whole independence debate with a referendum coming up, the EU was now becoming a major factor in Scottish politics, and that I believe that Alex Salmond's recipe for an independent Scotland, but staying part of the European Union, frankly doesn't work.

He added later in the interview:

NF: I think independence from the European Union is just as vital to Scotland as it is for the rest of the United Kingdom.

John Mills (49 words, c.20seconds , June 4): The peg for this exchange was the launch of a 'Labour for a Referendum' campaign, of which Mr Mills was a leading light. He was asked whether he wanted a referendum about EU membership, whether the Labour party should support a

referendum, and if he would vote in favour of leaving. He said he would and he also argued that Labour policy should change to be in tune with public opinion, which was in favour of a vote to make the EU more like the proposition of the Common Market that was originally sold to the British people in 1975. He contended that 15 Labour MPs openly supported the campaign and many more – up to a third of those in Parliament – did so behind the scenes. Overall, the interview gave Mr Mills the opportunity to say he thought a referendum was necessary and that he himself supported leaving. But there was no effort by the interviewer to ask why Mr Mills supported withdrawal, or about the economic and political factors which had led to him being at odds with the party leadership. He made only two short statements, the first, speaking about the Labour party was:

JOHN MILLS: I think better still, they should support having a referendum.

Second, he was questioned about the timing of the referendum, and said:

JM: Yes, I think the sooner the better, I think the uncertainty about whether Britain is going to stay in the EU or not is bad for business and bad generally. I think we need to get a decision taken.

As has been noted in section 1, Mr Mills appearance – as a Labour withdrawalist – was an extremely rare occurrence in that only 0.09% (1 in 1,147) of speakers who have appeared on Today to talk about EU affairs in the monitored periods since 2005 have been from the Labour party or British 'left'.

The two other items featuring those who supported withdrawal were both on May 16 and in Yesterday in Parliament. In the first, John Baron, the Conservative MP who was at the centre of demands for a firm legislative commitment to a referendum, said that if given the chance, he would vote to leave the EU (106 words). A soundbite was also included from Lord Lawson. Although Lord Lawson had written in the Times that he did now want Britain to leave the EU because the economic argument for doing so had become overwhelming, there was no mention of this in the chosen extract. He spoke only about the need for a 'thorough debate' on the issues surrounding the moves towards the referendum. He is included as 'withdrawalist' because Susan Hulme, the presenter of *Yesterday in Parliament* described him as such.

Adding all this up, the picture that emerges is that Today seems to go to extraordinary lengths to avoid talking to supporters of withdrawal about their core views rather than including them in the debate. Perhaps a cliché, but their scarcity is the elephant in the room. A total of just 518 words specifically about withdrawal, fragmented over three hours of EU coverage and almost three months of the programme can at best be described as minimal.

These stark facts still do not convey the narrowness of the contributions about withdrawal. Other factors to be taken into account are:

- May 3 was the only occasion when a withdrawal speaker (Nigel Farage) was asked directly about withdrawal and then only in a loaded fashion which meant he was pushed into explaining not ‘the Europe thing’ (in Evan Davis’s words) but into defending his party’s wider policies against clear accusations through the exchange that his party’s electoral success was an aberrant protest vote. This was the day after the election and it might reasonably have been expected that the leader of the party that had secured almost a quarter of the vote in contested seats (and two months earlier had narrowly missed winning overall the Eastleigh parliamentary by-election) would be asked in some detail about the relevance of his party’s central policy to the swing in the vote. But he was not. By contrast, Tom Watson of the Labour party and Tim Farron of the Liberal Democrats, both strong opponents of withdrawal, were given clear opportunity in a joint interview (at 8.47am) to say that they believed that the poll results were nothing to do with EU withdrawal, but were rather a protest vote about immigration policies. The programme also invited on a polling expert – John Curtice – who has frequently expressed the opinion that voting for UKIP is a protest vote rather than an explicit wish to leave the EU. He repeated, as the programme editors must surely have known he would, his previous opinion, emphasising that concern about immigration was a key factor in the poll (7.44am). And the Conservative party spokesman who appeared in the same sequence as Nigel Farage, Grant Shapps, said the vote was not primarily about withdrawal, but local services. He was not challenged on this. He claimed the David Cameron’s renegotiation policy was addressing voters’ concerns about the EU. The only other programme guest who did not agree with the general line that voters had not expressed a view about the EU was Conservative MP John Baron (7.24am). He said that the electorate no longer trusted politicians in their EU policies, and that the only way of dealing with their concerns was by holding a referendum earlier than had been promised. But he did not mention withdrawal, nor offer any implicit or explicit support for it. **Thus overall, withdrawal did not figure on the day of the election results in the core interview with the party supporting withdrawal. It seems that Today also went to considerable lengths to provide platforms for those who were queuing up to diminish the importance of withdrawal as a factor in the poll result.**
- As noted above, Lord Lawson became during the survey period one of the most senior figures in the Conservative party to declare open support for withdrawal from the EU. Today covered in depth the resultant pressure from Conservative backbenchers for the party to change its EU-related policies. But it is striking that although Lord Lawson was a pivotal figure, his only contribution came in Yesterday in Parliament, in a brief extract that mentioned a referendum but not withdrawal. His Times article attracted headlines

throughout the world. On May 7, the date it appeared, the development was discussed on Today by political correspondent Iain Wilson, and Times political columnist Tim Montgomerie was interviewed about the importance of the former Chancellor's views in the continuing debate about the EU. BBC correspondents later described the move as a 'political hand grenade' that could seriously undermine David Cameron's renegotiation strategy. But there was no personal appearance by Lord Lawson himself on May 7 or any other time. Listeners only heard about his views through the commentary of other people. And most of that analysis of his article by Mr Wilson and Mr Montgomerie was about the impact on the Conservative party – whether it would cause fresh party divisions – rather than about withdrawal itself. Overall, this was a striking example of withdrawal assuming centre stage in the national political debate from a different perspective than that of UKIP. It is hard to understand why Today did not interview Lord Lawson, other than because they did not want to give a platform to those who supported withdrawal. He might, of course, have been invited and declined to appear. But if so, this surely would have been mentioned.

- Detailed analysis of what was actually said about withdrawal suggests that the editorial interest in the topic was extremely limited. Paul Nuttall said he wanted to leave the EU because of the impact on the UK of over-liberal immigration policies. Nigel Farage advanced three separate points: he wanted exit because Britain could then engage better with the rest of the world, because withdrawal presented a free-trade alternative to the EU, and because the SNP approach to independence (within the EU) did not work. Lord Pearson of Rannoch said that the policy of EU integration should be 'shut down' and John Mills that he wanted to end uncertainty about Britain's relationship with the EU by the holding of a referendum. **No one was asked about – or had the opportunity to raise – issues such as the impact withdrawal would have on the UK, how and if it could be achieved, and what improvements (in the eyes of its supporters) departure could engender. These were legitimate, relevant and important subjects for exploration on May 3.** Nor – unlike their political opponents – were the withdrawal contributors asked directly about why voters had opted for a party that supported withdrawal. It is also striking that five of the six contributions to comment about withdrawal were from UKIP. The Wilson report into the BBC's coverage of EU affairs said that a range of voices (of those pro and anti- the EU) should figure prominently. In reality, with the exception of John Mills, Today went to the most obvious choices. In fact, in the Newswatch surveys since Wilson, 38% of all contributions on withdrawal by withdrawalists have been by Nigel Farage, and his three appearances here thus added to that dominance. There are numerous supporters of withdrawal from outside UKIP, most notably Conservative MPs, who could have asked to discuss withdrawal. But none were.

- It was also the case that Today continued to make special efforts to suggest that UKIP itself – although, as established above, the main conduit through which it chooses to consider withdrawal issues – is not really a serious or responsible political organisation. Scrutiny of the conduct and motives of political parties is obviously a vital part of journalism. But in that process, their policies also need clearly airing, so that the audience can understand the issues involved and make their own judgments. In relation to ‘withdrawal’ as a political aspiration, Today focused almost entirely on what it perceived to be its negative connotations and not at all on the guts of its policies. This was most noticeable in the Nigel Farage interview of May 17, mounted after he claimed some supporters of independence for Scotland were ‘fascist scum’ in the way they had seriously disrupted a political dinner he had attended in Edinburgh. A significant focus of Sarah Montague’s questioning was to suggest that Nigel Farage had brought the attack on himself because he had not been careful enough with his language and because the party’s message did not resonate in Scotland. Ms Montague thus clearly implied that those who espouse withdrawal did not properly know how to judge the political process. Such negativity was also in evidence on April 30, when John Humphrys introduced Nigel Farage by first saying that his party had been described as ‘clowns’, then that a member had been photographed giving a ‘Nazi’-style salute⁷, and then by suggesting that it was a ‘here today, gone tomorrow’ movement. The latter, as already noted, had been a regular theme of his interviews of Nigel Farage for at least six years. The reference to Nazis – though based on recent press reports – particularly underlined the programme’s editorial negativity about withdrawal in that it disproportionately drew attention to that episode; by contrast, no serious attempts were made to examine withdrawal itself as a factor in the elections. The clear aim was to bracket support of withdrawal in particular with unacceptable behaviour.
- Today’s coverage, again as a consequence of being so narrowly examined through the lens of UKIP politics, had the effect of linking withdrawal with racism. The interview of Paul Nuttall on April 25 illustrates this. At the end of this sequence, he said briefly that the solution to immigration problems was for the UK to leave the EU. But, as is noted in section I, he was not invited to appear on the programme to discuss withdrawal itself. The purpose appeared to be to set a senior UKIP figure against someone who explicitly thought the party was racist in opposing immigration from particular EU countries. The Bulgarian ambassador Konstantin Dimitrov, duly delivered an accusatory soundbite in which he said that UKIP’s fears were an attempt ‘to fan up anti-Bulgarian sentiments’. Similar editorial motives were also in evidence on May 4. The programme carried in its ‘front page’ 8.16am slot a special report exploring views about immigration in Boston, Lincolnshire. The area

⁷ In December 2011, Conservative MP Tom Burley issued an ‘unreserved apology’ for appearing in a Nazi uniform at a stag party in Switzerland (<http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/60353/tory-mp-burley-sorry-nazi-stag-party>). In January 2012, Labour MP Tom Harris stood down as a party whip after he posted a video in which he portrayed SNP leader Alex Salmond as Hitler (<http://www.channel4.com/news/labour-mp-stands-down-after-nazi-film-spoof>). No mention of these broadly equivalent incidents was made in the BBC’s election coverage on Today.

was chosen, according to the introduction, because UKIP had made strong election advances there, winning 16 seats. Reporter Tom Bateman spoke to locals who thought an influx from Latvia had damaged for the worse the fabric of local life as well as job prospects for locals. As is inevitably the case with vox pop interviewing, the views obtained were one-dimensional and without subtlety. It is impossible to glean what the participants really felt about immigration because the contributions were far too short and were in response to leading questions. But the editorial purpose of the item was surely to suggest – the day after the election result – that voters for UKIP had been swayed by strong anti-immigration views, rather than support for the concept of withdrawal. There was no attempt elsewhere to explore whether there might in fact have been a wider or different appeal of issues (such as) a desire for greater independence for the UK. As a result, it can be concluded that this vox pops sequence was a rather crude attempt to plant in the minds of listeners – yet again – that supporters of withdrawal were not actually voting for withdrawal. It could easily have been balanced with another item asking a sample of voters why (for example) they wanted to leave the EU, but there was nothing in that vein in the coverage.

Overall, this adds up to a long list of concerns about Today's coverage of withdrawal. In essence, not only were withdrawalists given only extremely limited airtime at a time of its elevated political importance, but also, there seemed to be a determined editorial effort to twist and misrepresent their views.

Conversely, this clear lack of exposure of withdrawal-related thinking was in sharp contrast to the treatment and exposure given to the views of those who support greater powers for the EU. During the survey period, several features were clearly constructed to explore pro-EU opinion in a way that gave the chosen interviewees clear opportunities to put across their ideology and reasoning.

For example:

On May 7, Richard Corbett, the spokesman for Herman van Rompuy, appeared in an interview sequence with Conservative MP Sir Gerald Howarth to discuss the latest developments in the efforts to move towards renegotiation. Sir Gerald, described himself as a 'eurosceptic', and though scathing about the EU and hinting that he might well vote to leave, suggested primarily that he believed there was a prospect of renegotiation. Before that, Mr Corbett was asked to comment on the likelihood of Mr Cameron reaching his objectives. He suggested that aspects of the EU could be changed provided others agreed. He was asked by Sarah Montague if he 'accepted Sir Gerald Howarth's view that renegotiation of the EU's relationship with the EU would be possible because the performance of the euro showed 'the whole thing was breaking down'. Mr Corbett responded by ridiculing the idea that a weak euro was good for the UK. Ms Montague then asked him if it would be a 'disaster' for the UK if Britain left the EU. This opened the way for Mr Corbett to

explain why on the contrary, the UK should definitely remain within the EU. The Europhile mantra that leaving the EU would lead to the loss of 3m+ British jobs was at the heart of his statement:

...It would be bad for Europe to lose one of its most prominent and most influential member states. The bigger problem would be for Britain. Most of British trade, half of British trade is with the rest of the European Union, it would be opting out of the world's largest single market, 3.5 million jobs in Britain depend on access to that market, but crucially it would be losing a voice at the table where the common rules to the Common Market are negotiated. It would have to accept the rules of an outsider, if it wanted to export to the European Union, without actually having a say. It would be a tremendous loss of influence and sovereignty.

At the end, he also said:

It's one heck of a risk. Just take British car manufacturing - most of the cars produced in Britain are exported, most of that is to the rest of the European Union. If we left the European Union imagine what that would do to jobs in Britain, it would be devastating.

This was not an open goal for Mr Corbett to put across pro-EU points in that Sir Gerald was alongside him and arguing that the terms of membership should be renegotiated because of worsening bureaucracy. Sir Gerald was given scope to develop his counter-argument that renegotiation must happen and that Britain in any case was improving its trade links with the rest of the world. But Sarah Montague's questioning appeared to be deliberately designed to allow Mr Corbett to put across his strongly pro-EU views and the idea that leaving the EU would be 'disastrous' (a word introduced by Ms Montague) for the UK. No Today presenter during the survey period paved the way for a withdrawalist to develop anti-EU arguments in the same open way. Mr Corbett spoke 169 words (c.1 minute 15 seconds) in the two extracts cited above, longer individually than any of the three Nigel Farage contributions. It is also noteworthy that Mr Corbett's pro-EU contribution exceeded those of Paul Nuttall, Lord Pearson and John Mills combined – their total was 139 words.

Later in the same May 7 edition, the programme seemed to deliberately engineer an opportunity for another Europhile to advance pro-EU arguments, including again the mantra about 3m jobs. Strikingly, no effort was made to challenge the claim. The interviewee was Nick Clegg in one of the few appearances during the survey period where he or members of his Liberal Democrat party were asked about their EU views. Give that his party had been beaten into fourth place in the local council elections by UKIP four days earlier, it might have been expected that he would be asked about if he thought the party's pro-EU stance was showing signs of being damaging. But the editorial approach focused narrowly on his response to Lord Lawson's views about leaving the EU. As has been noted, Lord Lawson himself did not appear, but the programme clearly thought it important to give opponents of his views the space to put across their perspectives. Justin Webb simply asked Mr Clegg what he thought of the Lord Lawson 'hand grenade'- a term that BBC political correspondents

had used in reports earlier in the programme to describe their view of his intervention. In response, the deputy prime minister explained that leaving the EU would be damaging for the UK in terms of international security and prestige, and then that he thought that a referendum 'in response to nothing' was a bad idea. Mr Clegg was given plenty of space to develop his various points (211 words, one minute thirty seconds) and Justin Webb did not challenge him about them, other than to ask why he did not want a referendum. Mr Clegg said:

Oh, I think leaving the European Union, whilst of course the European Union isn't perfect and needs to be constantly reformed and improved and made more streamlined and so on, I think leaving the European Union would make us less safe, because we cooperate in the European Union to go after criminal— . . . you know, criminal gangs that cross borders, it makes us less prosperous, it jeopardises, well, potentially up to three million jobs that are dependent on our place in what is, after all, the world's largest borderless single market, it means it's more difficult to deal with cross-border threats like climate change. I also think it means that we'll be taken seriously in Washington, Beijing, Tokyo, because, you know, frankly, our friends in the White House, for instance, partly take Britain seriously and treasure the special relationship because we stand tall in our own European backyard. If you were to pull up the drawbridge in Europe, I think we'd become less . . . less relevant to other major powers around the world. So it's for all those reasons I think it's the wrong thing to do. Of course, it's part of an anguished debate within the Conservative Party, they've had it before, and they'll no doubt have it again.

His was, in the space available, an elaborate argument in the EU's defence, and was longer by a considerable margin than any of Nigel Farage's contributions. Not only that, Mr Clegg was deliberately asked by Mr Webb to marshal his reasons for wanting Britain to stay in the EU, and was unchallenged in advancing them. In the next stage of the interview, he was asked why he was opposed to the Conservative plans for an early referendum on EU membership. It seems that Justin Webb specifically set out to allow Mr Clegg to make the case he did; the programme thus permitted a leading pro-EU figure to spell out the case for remaining in.

A third example of a political figure being invited to advance the case for staying in the EU came on April 12, when a sequence was broadcast about David Cameron's attempts to begin renegotiation of the EU treaties. This was an interview sequence involving the Conservative MP Andrea Leadsom, and the German Michael Meister of the German CDU party. In the first part of the feature, there were vox pops from Germans expressing views about renegotiation, and then a brief soundbite from Bernard Lucke, the founder of a new German party, Alternative für Deutschland, that wanted the reintroduction of national currencies in the euro area. Herr Lucke suggested that up to 25% of Germans would vote for an 'anti-EU' party. Despite this clearly being on the agenda, Today chose instead to speak mainly to Herr Meister. Evan Davis first suggested that there might be ways of Germany and the UK working together over the future of 'Europe' because the existence of the

new sceptical party might lead to Angela Merkel putting the brakes on 'more Europe' and further transfers of power to Brussels. He asked in that context what chances renegotiation stood as a realistic prospect. But Herr Meister seemingly ignored this sceptical dimension. He said:

We want to unify Europe, and we want to do it together. And I think there are a lot of common ideas on the British side and the German side on it, and it's a good thing that we have idea (*sic*) of a private competitive economy, and it's much different from other countries in Europe.

Then:

Because we are a member of the eurozone, we need more Europe because otherwise our common currency wouldn't be able to stay. But the question is, what means more Europe? We think that we should follow three principles: that everybody should live in self-responsibility; second point we live the principal subsidiarity, which means we have to check for each question, which we take on the European level, is it really necessary to take it there, or could it stay on the national level? And the third point is we need a kind of solidarity because otherwise we could not handle the questions from the financial crisis and the banking crisis.

Evan Davis suggested that Germany and Britain were not really on the same side of the renegotiation debate, even though they agreed on some elements. Herr Meister said:

We have a period of time, where it not really was clear (*sic*) that we have to move things on a common European level. For example, the questions of budget discipline were unclear to a lot of people, especially in Germany, that we have to give up national competence to a European level. So, at first, all the nations, all the people have to learn that in some cases we need common solutions. The second point is nobody discuss (*sic*) at the moment what really has to go to the European level, and what could stay on the national level. I think there is an intense discussion necessary on this question.

Yeah, we need intensive discussion, and then we have to see what is coming out and what has to go on the European level and what could stay on national level. And the third point is we have to think about democracy - it's very difficult to answer the question which parliament really controls the things which will unify on the European level, though we have to discuss how democracy could work if we move more competence on a common level.

At the moment we do not discuss this way, but I think we are open for arguments, why it makes sense and follows the principle of subsidiarity to move something back. But then you need good arguments and have to show there is no reason to move it on a common level.

In total, Herr Meister spoke 410 words – over 150 words more than Nigel Farage’s combined contributions about withdrawal - and in so doing, explained in some depth why his vision of further integration within the EU was necessary. He also outlined when competences could be moved back from the centre, but warned this was very rare and would be only allowed if other members accepted the arguments. **In a nutshell, Mr Davis asked Herr Meister about his pro-integrationist views, and allowed him the time and space to develop them.** Immediately afterwards, Andrea Leadsom was asked what she was expecting in terms of renegotiation. She replied that she and her Fresh Start group wanted considerable change, but definitely wanted to stay in the EU and were ‘realistic’ in their expectations. Overall, this was a third example of the programme allowing a pro-EU figure to put their case. There was a peg to explore in parallel the apparent growing depth of euroscepticism in Germany (and withdrawal from the euro), but it was not taken. Instead, Mr Meister put the case for ‘more Europe’ and Ms Leadsom for a process of renegotiation that accepted at the outset that departure from the EU was not on the agenda, and that substantial compromise was necessary in order for the UK to stay in. **So this was emphatically not two sides in the withdrawal debate putting contrasting opinions, but two politicians both wanting compromise around renegotiation putting different visions towards the same end. Mr Lucke, or someone who supported withdrawal from the UK, would have brought a very different perspective into play, but they were not asked to do so either here or anywhere else in the programme.**

A fourth contribution that was positive contribution towards the EU came from David Cameron on May 22. Mr Cameron is classed as ‘eurosceptic’ for the survey as a whole, because Conservative policy is towards ‘renegotiation’ of the terms of EU membership. In reality, however, as this transcript shows clearly, the prime minister is strongly pro-EU, and believes continued membership is vital in winning ‘the global race’. Points he made were as follows:

I think there is actually incredible unity and agreement, not just in the Conservative Party but I would argue across the country that what we need for the good of Britain is to renegotiate our relationship with Europe, get that relationship right, make sure that Europe helps us win in the global race...

... on January 24 I set out very clear, very compelling policy for the country towards Europe, which is to renegotiate our relationship with Europe, to make the European Union more open, competitive and flexible...

...I’m not avoiding the question, because I believe Britain would be better off in a reformed European Union. Now, the public is going to get a choice about that in a referendum, that is the right approach....

Britain does best when we engage with the world, when we're outward looking and when we play to our strengths. And the way that we're going to compete and succeed in a global race is by making ourselves more competitive, keeping our tax rates down, reforming our welfare system, making sure we've got the best schools in the world, doing those things, knowing that when Britain looks outwards we can win, we can be a success story. I don't accept the narrative that says the only way that Britain can succeed is to pull up the drawbridge, to build a wall round ourselves and to look backwards. That's not the way Britain has ever succeeded, it's not the way we will succeed in the future, the task for us . . .

I don't go into a negotiation believing that I'm going to fail. I mean, the people who say to me, 'You won't succeed in getting what you want from Europe' these are, by and large, the same people who said, 'You'll never veto a treaty', and I did, the people who said, 'You'll never cut the European budget', and I did; the people who said, 'You'll never get the bailout powers back, you'll just have to go on contributing to Cyprus and Greece or wherever', I got out of those bailout powers. You know, what's interesting about the approach I've taken on Europe is that it's backed, by and large, by the business community in Britain, it's got the unity of the Conservative Party, it's backed by the overwhelming majority of the country, and in Europe, far from being rejected, Angela Merkel in Germany, the Dutch and Swedish prime ministers, they don't welcome every part of it, but they've said this is an agenda we can work with . . .

. . . Because the big fact is, and the reason it is right to talk about the European issue is Europe is undergoing massive change because of the single currency. The euro is driving fundamental change in Europe, that Britain should be quite rightly saying, outside the euro, we need a European Union that can work for us as well.

Mr Cameron spoke a total of 468 words in favour of his vision of Britain at the centre of a reformed EU. His thrust was clear, that unless Britain was part of the EU, it would lose out competitively. In some respects, it echoed the approach of Nick Clegg. Mr Cameron came close in one interview to the combined total of all the contributions of all those who supported withdrawal.

Overall, in these four examples, figures who support close ties with the EU spoke a total of 760 words directly about their views and, as has been demonstrated, had both time and space to advance complex arguments in pursuit of their respective pro-EU stances in the core area of Britain's relationship with the EU. Unlike the withdrawalist contributors, they were actually asked questions by the presenters which encouraged and allowed them to elaborate their arguments. The features in which they appeared were constructed to that end, whereas the withdrawalists only managed to drag the topic into the frame by doing so themselves. Of course, David Cameron in particular was challenged about elements of his views, notably on whether his party was unified in supporting his

negotiating stance. But he had the space both to deal with that and advance his overall thoughts about EU policy. James Naughtie might have suggested that Mr Cameron was facing backbench rebellion over the EU on an unprecedented scale, but he did not challenge him at all over his assertion that membership of the EU was vital for Britain's interests. Withdrawalists had no such luxury – the purpose of the programme, especially in the interviews of April 25, May 3 and May 17, was clearly to keep them on the back foot over perceived negativities in their conduct and political outlook. **The contrast is best exemplified in Evan Davis's treatment of Michael Meister on April 12 and Nigel Farage on May 3. He asked Mr Farage crudely if his electoral advance was due to the 'Europe thing', knowing full well that this would most likely ensure Mr Farage was forced on to the defensive in explaining the party had other policies. With Herr Meister, in strong contrast, he politely listened while the German MP outlined at some length (by Today standards) his arguments for increased integration.**

During the survey period as a whole, there were many more example when those in favour of the EU had the opportunity to advance their views in detail. They have not been outlined in full because the key points can be deducted from the examples above.

Today might ask itself a fundamental question. In discussing the politics and issues of ethnic minority rights, or those of Muslims, does it set out to do so by virtually excluding those from the ethnic or religious groups involved? Yet that, in effect, is what the Today programme editors have consistently done in the past and continue to do with regard to those who support withdrawal in the continuing debate about the UK's relationship with the European Union.

In this context, the editorial attitude to the withdrawalist perspective in Today coverage can perhaps best be summed up by remarks made on May 7 by political correspondent Iain Wilson. Analysing Lord Lawson's Times article calling for departure, he said what was important was that this was a 'mainstream, senior' politician now supporting withdrawal 'not just Nigel Farage'. The figures below show that since 2005, only 16% of Today's contributions by withdrawalists speaking about withdrawal have in fact come from the main political parties. In Mr Walker's estimation, it seems the vast majority of the 100 speakers have therefore been non-mainstream. And in this survey period all of the 518 words that were spoken were in that category. Most notably, Lord Lawson did not appear.

STATISTICS 2005-2013

Newswatch has been monitoring the Today programme for approximately 6 months of the year since 2005. It is the longest-ever, and most detailed, research project of its kind. In this survey it has been established that withdrawalists talking about withdrawal took up minimal programme time. That fits in with longer-term trends. Since 2005:

Total feature airtime in monitored programmes: 2,291 hours

Airtime devoted to EU coverage: 156 hours (6.8% of total airtime)

Total number of EU-related speakers: 3439

Number of identifiably withdrawalist speakers 100 (2.9% of all EU speakers)

Withdrawalist Speakers

Since 2005, there have been exactly 100 appearances by identifiable supporters of withdrawal. Of these, 74% were representatives of UKIP, 13% Conservative Party, 7% BNP, 3% Labour Party, 2% were vox pops, and 1% from Veritas.

Just over half (38 out of 75) of all UKIP appearances were from Nigel Farage, which also means that he accounted for 38% of all withdrawalist appearances in the surveys undertaken between 2005 and 2013

Speakers who discussed Withdrawal

58 Speakers of the 100 withdrawalist speakers made an argument for withdrawal as part of their contribution, (with the remaining 42 commenting on other EU matters but making no case for withdrawal).

Of these 58 speakers:

41 (70.7%) came from UKIP;

10 (17.2%) were from the Conservative Party,

3 (5.2%) were from the BNP,

2 (3.4%) were from the Labour Party

2 (3.4%) were from vox pop contributors.

Words spoken on withdrawal by withdrawalists

The total words spoken on withdrawal by withdrawalists between March 2005 and June 2013: **6786**
At 140 wpm, this equates to: **48 minutes and 27 seconds. That is six minutes per year in the monitored periods (half of the total output).** This is **0.5%** of total EU coverage, and **0.035%** of total airtime available on Today.

Word Counts by Party for those who discussed withdrawal

The 6786 words spoken by withdrawalists who discussed withdrawal can be split into the following:

BNP: 115 Words (1.7%)

Conservative Party: 1042 words (15.4%)

Labour Party: 141 words (2.1%)

Vox Pops 29 words. (0.4%)

UKIP: 5459 words (80%)

PART TWO, SECTION TWO: CONSERVATIVE 'SPLITS' – THE MAY 7 PERSPECTIVE

(A summary of coverage focused on developments about the EU related especially to the Conservative party follows at the end of this analysis).

The pivotal edition during Today's coverage of the unfolding Conservative party debate about the UK's relationship with the EU was that of May 7.

On that day, the Monday after the local council election results, bulletins contained (and were led at 7am and 8am) an item about Lord Lawson of Blaby's call in an article in the Times for the UK to leave the EU altogether. The former Chancellor claimed that, despite what David Cameron hoped, renegotiation would not work, and that the economic and political arguments for leaving were now overwhelming.

The analysis that follows illustrates in microcosm important elements of the programme's editorial priorities regarding the EU and the Conservative party during the survey period.

The dedicated coverage that day of the Lord Lawson article consisted of interviews with four political figures, two items of political analysis, as well as the item in the bulletins which ran as lead for most of the morning. At 8am it was updated to include an excerpt from one of the political interviews.

Points to emerge were:

- Lord Lawson did not appear on this day (or any subsequent occasion) to talk about his revised views, nor did anyone who shared or supported his perspective. His opinions were conveyed to listeners by BBC political correspondents Carole Walker and Iain Watson, together with political editor Nick Robinson, and through the interpretation of Times columnist Tim Montgomerie. The only descriptions of the actual content of the Times article, as opposed to its impact, were, first, from Ms Walker in the bulletins, who said:

(Lord Lawson says) the very nature of the European Union and this country's relationship with it fundamentally changed with the creation of the eurozone. He says Britain is increasingly marginalised, doomed to being consistently outvoted by countries in the eurozone, and any changes David Cameron would be able to negotiate on the terms of British membership would be inconsequential.

Political correspondent Iain Watson said at 6.32am that Lord Lawson had argued that the case for departure was based on that the economic case for continued membership 'simply wasn't there'.

Later in the piece, he also said that the article claimed that Britain would continue to be outvoted on 'major issues' and that damage would be caused to the City of London.

In his interview at 7.09am, Tim Montgomerie referred to Lord Lawson's argument that changes that could be achieved through renegotiation would be 'inconsequential'. Overall, listeners were thus not conveyed the full tenor and range of Lord Lawson's arguments; they were given only a brief, partial précis of the main guts of them.

- The only programme guests who were asked about, and given the space to explain the consequences of a changed relationship with the EU were, in fact, men who could be seen as Lord Lawson's political opponents, both strong Europhiles: Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg, and Richard Corbett, Herman van Rompuy's spokesman. Both sequences have been highlighted in the previous section for their strong pro-EU content. Mr Clegg, whose interview by Justin Webb was prefaced by the claim that Lord Lawson's claims were a 'hand grenade', maintained that the consequences of the UK leaving the EU would be a major loss of prestige around the world and reduced security against crime and terrorism. Mr Corbett said that limited renegotiation could be achieved, but warned that this would have to be accepted by other members. He was then asked directly by Sarah Montague what the consequences for Britain would be if Britain left the EU. He claimed the impact would be 'devastating' because it would lead to 3.5 job losses, and intimated that the car manufacturing sector would be particularly hard hit. He also combatively wove in – in response to Sir Gerald Howarth MP, who appeared at the same time – that he believed it was nonsense to suggest that it was in Britain's interest that the euro was in danger of collapsing, and, indeed, that it was collapsing. The contribution of Nick Clegg was 521 words (about 3minutes 50 seconds) and that of Mr Corbett 519 words. Between them, they thus had almost eight minutes to spell out their arguments in favour of the EU and against Lord Lawson's views.

- Sir Gerald Howarth was the only Conservative politician to be interviewed. He spoke in total 423 words, a fraction over 3 minutes, so had less space than either of the Europhile contributors. As already noted, he appeared jointly in the sequence with Richard Corbett. He was invited to comment after Mr Corbett had first set the scene by mapping out what (limited) elements of renegotiation he believed might be possible. Sir Gerald was not asked by Sarah Montague about Lord Lawson's article, but rather what level of renegotiation he would accept, and then whether there was any level of renegotiation that would satisfy him. The MP did not answer directly, but replied that because the euro was unravelling and the EU breaking down, there might be a good prospect of securing change in the treaties. He suggested that the EU was 'collapsing' under the weight of its own regulation. Meanwhile, Britain was doing very well in expanding trade to countries outside the EU, and could continue to do so if there was a departure from the EU. Sir Gerald accepted that he had 'eurosceptic form' and warned that he would vote to leave if the changes secured by the prime minister were 'inconsequential'. Overall, what he said was broadly in favour

of the David Cameron policy of renegotiation and against EU bureaucracy. He did not at any point directly advocate withdrawal; he suggested it would be the last resort if the current policy failed.

- A second element of Conservative opinion and analysis was provided by Tim Montgomerie, the Times columnist who was the founder and previous editor of the Conservative Home website. He was asked first by Sarah Montague what Lord Lawson had said about David Cameron's policy of renegotiation. In his response, he said the main claim was that it had not worked with Harold Wilson and it would not work now. Lord Lawson thus believed it was time to leave. Ms Montague did not explore anything further about Lord Lawson's views, but shifted instead to asking what 'damage' this would cause to Mr Cameron. Mr Montgomerie said that with regard to the EU, there were a third of Conservative MPs sitting on the fence, and a third in favour of renegotiation. Mr Cameron, he believed, was targeting the former. He claimed Lord Lawson had 'given more confidence' to the remaining third who wanted to leave 'to go public with their views', so a big debate over the EU might now in consequence happen earlier than he had wanted. Ms Montague again (as with Sir Gerald Howarth) did not explore anything further about withdrawal. She instead asked how damaging this was to the Prime Minister, in view of 'what could happen to the Conservative party'. Mr Montgomerie, clearly picking up that she was implying major splits, riposted that there could be a debate without 'enormous infighting'. Mr Cameron had licensed a 'grown-up debate' and he wanted to stay in the EU; Lord Lawson had signalled that others in the party thought differently. Ms Montague asked if Mr Cameron would have to resign if he lost the debate. Mr Montgomerie said not. Mr Montgomerie spoke for a total of 530 words, and so his contribution was on a par with Nick Clegg and Robin Corbett. But there was a huge difference in the way the three guests were treated. The latter two were quizzed about their views about the effects if the UK left the EU. By contrast, Mr Montgomerie was asked very briefly to summarise what Lord Lawson had said, and then to give his opinion of how this would impact the Conservative party. He was not asked at all (for example) what advantages to the UK Lord Lawson claimed would ensue from leaving the EU. Most of his time was spent rebutting the idea that 'obsessing about Europe' (Nick Robinson's later phrase) would be a serious embarrassment to the Conservative party and ran the risk of generating significant splits.

- The third Conservative contribution, minor and not directly relevant to Lord Lawson, came earlier in the programme during analysis by political correspondent Gary O'Donoghue. Referring to pressure from Conservative backbenchers for an early referendum about the EU, he claimed that 'success in the local elections' (for those who wanted to leave the EU) had 'emboldened' Conservative backbenchers to call on the prime minister to hold a referendum about EU membership before 2017. He played a soundbite from David Davies MP, who said:

There are differences between the parties, particularly between the Conservatives and Liberals. But you know, the Labour Party hasn't even said where it stands on some of this,

and I actually think it'd be a really, really good thing to put a bill in front of Parliament and, if it gets voted down by a coalition of the Liberal and Labour forces in Parliament then so be it.

- An important plank of the direct coverage of Lord Lawson's article came from the BBC political staff. At 6.32am, Iain Watson was asked to explain the background. He did not attempt to summarise what Lord Lawson had actually said but moved immediately to interpreting the likely impact. His first point was that 'unlike Nigel Farage', this was a senior mainstream politician who served as a Conservative Chancellor, and who had been both in favour of membership of the EU and had joined the ERM, the precursor of the euro. So this, he claimed, was a first indication that the campaign to leave the EU was going to be 'very serious', with 'mainstream politicians' on the 'no' side. He added that after the UKIP victory in the local election, this was 'far from helpful' to David Cameron because Lord Lawson also 'trashed' his approach of renegotiation through claiming that he was following in the footsteps of Harold Wilson, who had secured changes so trivial that no one could remember them. Sarah Montague asked whether Lord Lawson's intervention therefore opened up 'the whole debate about Europe and the pros and cons'. Mr Walker said that it did, because David Cameron wanted to advocate continued membership of the EU if he could secure renegotiation. He now was faced with a former Chancellor who was saying that the case for continued membership 'simply wasn't there', so that had moved the debate into 'very clear political territory' rather than 'simple political manoeuvring, not simply how do you take on UKIP'

- At 8.10am, Nick Robinson, in a 'front page' preface to the interview of Robin Corbett, said that Lord Lawson had effectively leap-frogged the political debate. It had moved from whether or not there should be a referendum, to whether the UK should stay in the EU or not. Lord Lawson had asserted that 'no' was the answer. Mr Robinson suggested that the importance of this was not just that Lord Lawson was a former Chancellor who had supported EU membership. The most 'brutal' point for David Cameron was also that he had said that the idea of renegotiation was pointless, exactly as Harold Wilson's had been, and had also compared Mr Cameron's approach to that of Mr Wilson. Mr Robinson said that his approach therefore brought forward a debate about 'the substance of the issue, about Britain's EU membership'. This was no longer on the fringes, was not an argument for 'UKIP alone'. This was someone in the mainstream arguing that it was in the UK's economic interest to get out. He concluded:

I think one crucial thing it does, that was really happening already, is it absolutely tears apart the idea that David Cameron came to the Tory leadership with, which is his party should, and I quote, 'stop obsessing about Europe', I think they now are.

Overall, this latter point was perhaps the most significant of the coverage by Today on May 7. It underlined that Mr Robinson's primary focus was not on Lord Lawson's idea that Britain should leave the EU – there was virtually no analysis of that – but rather on the impact of his 'brutal' intervention on the Conservative party and David Cameron. Today thus chose to highlight

perceived divisions in party ranks above explaining the background and substance to Lord Lawson's intervention. Both, of course, were important ramifications of the Times article, and listeners needed exploration and explanation of both elements. But that did not happen.

Most of the questioning by presenters and analysis by correspondents adopted the same theme. On the occasions when it could – and surely should – have done more, Today conveyed only the bare minimum of what Lord Lawson's article actually said. More crucially, as noted above, the programme chose not to interview him or, if he was unavailable, someone who could convey to listeners the full flavour and texture of what Lord Lawson actually said. The content was distilled to half a dozen brief summary points in the contributions from Carole Walker, Iain Watson and Tim Montgomerie.

In essence, yet again - as with treatment of withdrawal in the UKIP context – this shows that there was no attempt to analyse 'withdrawal' as a political or ideological concept, even when it was a bulletin-leading topic being advocated by a former Conservative Chancellor. Editorially, it appeared to count only as something that caused embarrassment to the Conservative party, and which flowed from what Nick Robinson interpreted as their perennial 'obsessing' about the EU.

Most strikingly, while not including a direct contribution from Lord Lawson, editors did go to considerable lengths to ensure that those who disagreed with him had ample opportunity to attack his ideas. The set-ups in which Nick Clegg and Robin Corbett delivered their pro-EU arguments were clearly deliberately planned. Between the two men, they had ample time (eight minutes) to air why they thought membership was vital in the UK interest. The programme presenters' tone – from Justin Webb's description of Lord Lawson's contribution as a 'political hand grenade', to Sarah Montague's insinuation to Tim Montgomerie that it was the precursor to a repeat of deep Conservative divisions – also fitted with this overall approach.

The BBC's post Wilson inquiry promise was specifically to 'ensure impartiality by reflecting the widest possible range of voices and viewpoints about EU issues'. But deliberately here, the only voices that were included were ones that were either in favour of continued EU membership, or renegotiation of the treaties. Opinion to the contrary – even though it was the news peg for the item – was deliberately excluded.

Sir Gerald Howarth, though clearly in his own (and presumably, the programme's) description a strong eurosceptic, did not at any time express views in favour of withdrawal and was not asked questions about it. Sarah Montague deliberately steered the sequence with Sir Gerald and Robin Corbett solely towards issues of renegotiation. It was, in fact, Richard Corbett who raised the topic of withdrawal, from the point of view that it would seriously damage the UK economy through the loss of 3m jobs. This is a hotly disputed figure (by both withdrawalists and eurosceptics) and Sarah Montague must have known it was. But she chose not to challenge Mr Corbett's inflammatory assertion, even though had she done so, she could have opened up an important line of debate raised by Lord Lawson's views. This underlined again how uninterested Today was in exploring the subject of withdrawal.

In summary, on May 7, withdrawal as an issue was centre-stage. Lord Lawson, the architect 25 years previously of the UK's entry into the ERM, said the EU had become such a hostile force against Britain's interests that there was no alternative but to leave. He had a battery of reasons to support his views, including the negative impact on the City of London, and hence the UK economy. Yet Today left these virtually unexplored. Instead, they engineered two clear platforms for strong Europhiles to explain the reasons for their opposition. The programme's political experts both markedly ignored detailed analysis of Lord Lawson's remarks, and focused heavily on their impact on Conservative party unity. The Conservative contributors were both steered primarily into that same domain. They explained minimally why there was pressure to change the EU, but not the reasons for potential departure.

PART TWO, SECTION THREE: A 'MATTER OF TRUST WITH VOTERS' – OR CONSERVATIVE SPLITS? - THE PERIOD AS A WHOLE, 8 APRIL – 29 JUNE 2013

The Conservative backbencher John Baron, reacting to the council election results on May 3, said there was a need to firm up a commitment to a referendum about EU membership because voters no longer trusted politicians on this matter. It was a key statement of backbench views. Today's editorial focus, however, was not on exploring this perceived rift with the electorate. Instead, they concentrated on potential splits within the Conservative party.

May 7 was a day of specific failure to create balance in the EU debate by properly covering 'the widest range of voices'. Across the period as a whole, consideration of the unfolding relationship with the EU formed 32.5% of the total EU-related programme material, a considerable chunk. Tim Montgomerie said in his appearance on May 7 that one third of the Conservative party now supported withdrawal. Yet, as on May 7, it scarcely figured, as will be now shown. There were other problems, too.

The full list of those interviewed from, or with close links to, the Conservative party in addition to Tim Montgomerie and Sir Gerald Howarth on May 7, were Andrea Leadsom (April 12), John Baron (May 3), Theresa May (May 4), Gavin Barwell (May 13), Sir Malcolm Rifkind (May 13), John Baron again (May 14), William Hague (May 14), Tim Montgomerie for a second time (May 20), and David Cameron (May 22). Times columnist Danny Finkelstein (May 14) also briefly commented about developments.

The transcripts show that the government ministers all spoke unequivocally in favour of the official Conservative party renegotiation policy. David Cameron made it plain that he remained passionately in favour of staying within the EU. With almost 3,000 words between them, they had the lion's share of coverage.

Backbenchers in their appearances were steered principally towards speaking either in favour of EU renegotiation, or – as the debate about the timing of the EU referendum intensified in mid-May – about why the commitment to the vote should be set in stone. John Baron and Gavin Barwell were no doubt chosen to appear because they were opposed to elements of David Cameron's renegotiation policy; the editorial intention was probably to ensure 'balance' between the various elements of Conservative opinion. But in the event they were not questioned at all about their wider views on the EU, only about the practicalities of what they were proposing. And there was no mention in their interviews of withdrawal. It was as if it did not exist as an area of debate.

Not only this. Effectively, withdrawal was airbrushed out. But also, the major focus of both presenters and political correspondents seemed to be aimed towards establishing that what was mainly happening over the EU was an internal Conservative party debate – gravely in danger of

spinning out of control, as it had in the past – over whether backbenchers trusted Mr Cameron on his referendum promise.

The upshot was that although Today clearly mentioned there was significant activity within Conservative ranks over EU policy, listeners were given only a very narrow inkling about the range of ideology that underpinned the debate. The most ‘eurosceptic’ of those who appeared only went as far as calling for renegotiation. Detailed analysis is essential towards an understanding of the extent of this.

This was evident in the first relevant interview sequence on April 12, which featured backbencher Andrea Leadsom and the German CDU member Michael Meister. They were invited to comment about David Cameron’s efforts towards renegotiation in the context of a visit by him to see Angela Merkel.

It was noted in the introduction that a new German party, the AFD, had been formed with the goal of pushing the EU to be less about economic affairs and more about ‘cultural sharing’. This could surely have been a peg for exploring why euroscepticism in Germany was seemingly rising – and to link that to opinion amongst Conservative backbenchers in the UK – but this did not happen. There was only a brief soundbite from Bernard Lucke, the party founder, in the intro, and the matter was not raised again⁸. The mention of the party was solely a bookend; there was no further editorial curiosity about it. Instead, Ms Leadsom’s appearance was preceded by an exchange with Michael Meister of the German CDU party, who; as was noted in the previous section was a strong Europhile. He perhaps predictably argued that ‘more Europe’ was needed to deal with banking crises. Evan Davis suggested that Mr Cameron disagreed with this and wanted a more general review of EU ‘competences’, but Mr Meister said that the ‘common solutions’ adopted by the EU had proved to be vital. He conceded that there might be some room to change the Working Time Directive, but only if it was shown to be vitally necessary and those changes were then agreed by other countries. In the face of this strongly pro-EU invective, Mr Davis put it to Ms Leadsom that there nonetheless appeared to be ‘a lot of room’ for Britain and Germany to make headway on reform. Ms Leadsom said she agreed, and then added there was scope for Mr Cameron to achieve changes as put forward by the Fresh Start movement (of which she was part). Evan Davis noted that Mr Meister had also suggested that the British might have to compromise on the reforms they wanted. Ms Leadsom agreed that the UK would have to go with the grain of what was possible and insisted that the British were not being dogmatic. She said the Fresh Start group wanted five treaty changes, covering the CAP, immigration, access to benefits, structural funds and EU budgets. Mr Evans pushed hard on whether she would compromise on the agenda, and whether that was what the majority of Conservative backbenchers wanted. Ms Leadsom said it was.

So this sequence, though it had a ‘eurosceptic’ presence in that Ms Leadsom did clearly want to reform the EU and was speaking on behalf of a group that wanted to see such changes, was

⁸ This is particularly striking in that subsequently, in the German elections, the party, despite its newness, almost gained sufficient seats for Parliamentary representation.

predominantly in favour of the EU. Ms Leadsom's primary argument was that a reformed EU was vital to achieve international competitiveness for Britain. The feature was thus focused strongly on pragmatic reform of the EU on the lines proposed by David Cameron, and to an extent on the German CDU view of further integration. It touched upon, but did not explore further, the fact that within Germany, there was a now a political party which did not accept that tightening of monetary union was the way forward.

On **May 3**, John Baron MP was interviewed about the local council election results. It was said in the bulletins that three quarters of the seats won by UKIP were from the Conservatives, and an extract from this interview of Mr Baron was used in later editions. In this, he called for a referendum on the EU to be held because – he claimed – it showed the public mistrusted all politicians about the EU. Mr Baron's opening point was that the message to take from the poll was that UKIP was no longer a protest party. He asserted that in the past, too many promises had been broken by Britain's politicians about the EU. This now needed to be redressed by a firm commitment to a referendum in legislation to be put before the current parliament. Mr Baron said that all politicians had broken promises over the EU. Sarah Montague pushed him on whether he trusted David Cameron. Mr Baron side-stepped; he said it was a wake-up call for the government and matters relating to the referendum needed to be discussed and acted upon before the Queen's Speech. He added that if that happened, people might question why they would vote UKIP.

In the same programme (3/5), John Curtice of Strathclyde University said that although voters had opted for UKIP in high number, the EU did not really concern voters, but immigration did. At the same time, people were losing confidence in the Conservative's ability to handle the economy, so this should be seen as a protest vote against the Government. At 8.10, Nick Robinson said that although UKIP had emerged as a real political party, they had no chance of achieving power. Later in the programme, after an interview with Nigel Farage, Tim Farron of the Liberal Democrats echoed John Curtice in stating the vote was purely in protest at the government's record and Tom Watson, the Labour MP, agreed. Notably, Mr Watson's appearance was the only interview in the survey period of a Labour politician about his views on an EU theme related to the Conservative moves towards a changed relationship.

In bulletins on May 4, political correspondent Iain Watson said that the election results had hit the Conservatives hardest, and the impact on the party was 'divisive', with some backbenchers wanting legislation on a referendum, and David Davies going 'even further', calling for one before the European elections. The programme also included an item from Boston in Lincoln, chosen, it was said, because it was an area of significant UKIP gains. In vox pops with locals, concerns were expressed primarily about levels of immigration. The purpose of the sequence appeared to be to suggest that those who had voted UKIP had done so because of such concerns. Later, Liberal Democrat Lord Owen – the only figure from Labour or the Liberal Democrats to appear who favoured renegotiation – argued that contrary to the claims of many senior politicians, the results did show real dissatisfaction over the various parties' EU policies, and he urged renegotiation to deal

with their concerns. At 8.38am, it was put to Theresa May, the Home Secretary, that her party had not done enough about immigration and about immigrants' benefits reform. She maintained that in terms of the referendum on EU membership and renegotiation, the government had laid out its policy and would stick to its targets.

Overall, therefore, in the election results coverage, there was only one interview with a Conservative MP who was against government policy. He was not asked anything about why he wanted change other than the timing of the referendum. The focus was on whether what he was suggesting was potentially divisive in terms of party unity and whether it could help reduce the electoral appeal of UKIP. The other main editorial thrust, in the interviews with John Curtice and in Boston, appeared to be to want to bracket the UKIP vote with the rise of concerns about immigration, and to establish that their success had not been primarily to do with support for withdrawal.

The next tranche of EU-related coverage, on **May 7**, has already been dealt with in detail in the previous section.

On **May 13** – as parliamentary discussions about the timing of a referendum intensified – bulletins said that, as David Cameron arrived in Washington to talk about how much the EU mattered with President Obama, tensions were rising in Westminster about referendum legislation not being included in the Queen's Speech. In later bulletins, MP Gavin Barwell was quoted as saying that, while he trusted the prime minister, people wanted a firm commitment to a referendum because of past broken promises. At 6.10am, James Landale said the prime minister did not want to give ground over the referendum legislation. He said the simple fact that Conservatives were now talking about the EU and 'mainstreaming' about it was worrying Downing Street. At 6.32am, Gary O'Donoghue reminded John Humphrys that the Conservatives who wanted legislation about the referendum, were not 'rebels'. This was because a substantial group of backbench MPs wanted a referendum now and two cabinet ministers, Michael Gove and Philip Hammond, had said over the weekend that in such a referendum they would vote to leave. That, in turn, had 'emboldened' those who wanted the early legislation, and backbencher Peter Bone had put down a motion congratulating Mr Hammond and Mr Gove. Mr O'Donoghue – in a rare reference to Labour – suggested that this put the party in a tricky position because they did not want to be seen as the anti-referendum party. It was nevertheless unlikely they would support the legislation. He concluded that it was unprecedented to allow a vote in this way. At 7.09am, Gavin Barwell was interviewed. John Humphrys said the background was that two cabinet ministers (Messrs Gove and Hammond) had said that they would vote in a referendum to leave the EU. Mr Humphrys suggested that the problem was that Mr Barwell did not trust Mr Cameron. Mr Barwell (almost identically to what he had said to Sarah Montague on May 3) denied this and said the legislation was necessary to persuade voters that promises would not be broken again. Mr Humphrys persisted on the matter of trust. Mr Barwell repeated that he did trust Mr Cameron, and again contended that there was a need to persuade the electorate to trust referendum promises. Mr Humphrys said it was unprecedented and remarkable

for a ruling party to urge members to vote against a Queen's Speech. He suggested that Mr Barwell should resign rather than vote in such a way. Mr Barwell said the problem had arisen because there was a Coalition government and the Liberal Democrats would not support such legislation. It was thus the Coalition that forced this way of working. Mr Humphrys asked if he had had encouragement from the government 'because it strengthened Mr Cameron's hand'. Mr Barwell said he took the decision because of feedback from his constituency. At 8.10am, in the 'front page' slot, Sir Malcolm Rifkind was interviewed. In the intro, John Humphrys made it clear that editorially, the programme believed that the differing views among Conservatives now amounted to potentially a very serious problem. He contended that Europe had 'helped destroy Mrs Thatcher's leadership'. The promise of the referendum had forged a way for Mr Cameron to escape from the 'EU quicksand'. He said the whole scenario as was now developing was 'a mess'. In prefatory analysis, Nick Robinson said that what Mr Cameron was trying to do in reaction to pressure over the Queen's Speech was to show that the vote that week was not important, other than a way of letting off steam. Mr Robinson added that there was, however, 'an enormous amount of confusion and a great deal of ill-discipline' in party ranks. Mr Humphrys suggested that this made Mr Cameron look weak. Mr Robinson replied that Mr Cameron was putting a brave face on it, and thought it had the plus side of reminding the public that his party had now given a clear promise on a vote over the EU. He added that the problem with that was that backbenchers were now saying that a 2017 promise was not good enough. He added that 'others' (implying those other than politicians, such as business leaders) did not trust the government or the leader. Mr Robinson concluded that not every diplomat nor every business leader wanting to invest in Britain 'wishes to be a Tory Kremlinologist...These people looked at the headlines and would remember only that those close to Mr Cameron wanted out'.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind argued that the motion was dangerous because it was causing a party split for reasons of tactics rather than principle. Those who wanted legislation were putting the prime minister in an impossible position. He said he was relaxed about when the referendum was, but did not want to split the Coalition or to lose the next election. And he wanted time for Mr Cameron to achieve renegotiation. John Humphrys asked Sir Malcolm if he remembered the days when the 'Tory party was almost literally tearing itself part'. He replied that the problems of the past were over issues of principle, but the current vote was not.

In bulletins on **May 14**, it was said that David Cameron, the man who had told his party to stop obsessing about the EU, now wanted to pass a law holding himself to a referendum. Robin Brant said the move was designed to 'placate' his members who were planning to vote against the Queen's Speech. He added that the move did not appear to have worked because Tory MP John Baron, who had led the calls for 'more than a pledge from Mr Cameron', had said it was not good enough. In the 7am bulletin, the lead phrase was that Mr Cameron had 'failed to win over eurosceptics'. It was also noted that deputy prime minister Nick Clegg was opposed to giving parliamentary time to a private members' bill, while Nigel Farage of UKIP had dismissed the move as 'gesture politics'. Mr Brant added that David Cameron could also be trying to force Ed Miliband to take a long hard look at his

policy on Europe – he believed that if he came out against the referendum, it would be ‘deeply unpopular’. At 6.32am, Gary O’Donoghue said the private members’ bill had no chance of becoming law, but the purpose of the moves was rather to show that David Cameron was really serious in his support of the referendum. In an interview at 7.10am, John Baron said he did not agree with the prime minister’s approach and wanted instead support for the Queen’s Speech amendment which would have a far greater chance of success. Peter Bone (interviewed at the same time) said that the positions of himself and John Baron were identical in supporting and moving forward Conservative party policy relating to the referendum. Sarah Montague – echoing her and John Humphrys’ previous lines of questioning – said it looked as though they did not trust the prime minister. Mr Baron repeated that it was not a question of trust between politicians but between politicians and the public. He added that the referendum commitment had to be ‘credible and believable’. Liberal Democrat Government minister Norman Lamb said in a separate interview that he believed that considering the referendum in this way was a waste of government time. At 8.10am, William Hague was interviewed. He said that the compromise under debate about the referendum legislation had been reached because of the Coalition; the prime minister himself was committed to a referendum and would strengthen his position in relation to it. He added that he was not sure whether there would be enough parliamentary time for a private members’ bill, but there was definitely hope there would be. Mr Hague said he was relaxed about members voting for the amendment and the bill did not alter that position. He repeated that the government wanted a new settlement on Europe. Sarah Montague again contended that it seemed that his party did not trust Mr Cameron to deliver on this. Mr Hague said the commitment was being made clearer and stronger. Ms Montague asked whether there was not a serious rupture in the Coalition. Mr Hague said the Coalition was working. He said the differences over Europe were not rancorous (denying a question that they might be). Mr Hague said he would not reveal how he would vote over the EU ‘at every step of the way’. He was a eurosceptic who wanted ‘a new settlement’, which would include making the EU more flexible, more competitive, more accountable, and with a bigger role for national parliaments – as the prime minister had laid out in January. Afterwards, Nick Robinson said that the Conservative party’s stance on the Queen’s speech was extraordinary, and reflected what Mrs Thatcher had called ‘followership’, with Mr Cameron trying to catch up with the mood of his backbenchers. Mr Robinson said the Conservative party was in ‘agony’, but this was parliamentary graffiti that had no chance of becoming law. At 8.54am, Danny Finkelstein said a referendum was sensible and Mr Cameron should not be pushed too hard by his backbenchers.

In the **May 15** bulletins, Robin Brant said the debate over the referendum would come to a head. At 6.32am, Gary O’Donoghue said that 70 Conservative MPs had signed the amendment to the Queen’s Speech but the private members’ bill had no real chance of becoming law. John Humphrys suggested that the approach of the prime minister (in effectively vetoing his own Queen’s Speech) seemed ‘barmy’. Mr O’Donoghue said he had always promised a referendum but the bill now before the House, on one side of A4 ‘looked like panic’. He repeated his earlier point that those who wanted the amendment did not regard themselves as rebels, and Mr Cameron was now

content for the party to talk about the EU because it was hammering home that his was the only party to be committing to a referendum. Yesterday in Parliament contained several voices in favour of the referendum, as well as a number from Labour who opposed it. At 7.14am, there was mention that the British Social Attitudes survey, by Populus, had found that Britain was becoming more eurosceptic. A spokesman said that voters, however, wanted politicians to focus on other issues that mattered to them, like the economy. At 7.17am, Simon Jack in a business update, referred to the 'convulsions' that the Conservative party was going through over the EU, and the programme guest, Centrica boss Sir Roger Carr, said he was strongly opposed to the referendum.

The bulletins on **May 16** said that 114 Conservative MPs, almost half the party, had backed a motion criticising the lack of commitment to a referendum in the Queen's speech. At 6.15, Gary O'Donoghue said the vote showed the scale of those who were critical of David Cameron and it meant that the Conservative party would be talking about this 'for at least the next year'. Evan Davis asked if these people were 'rebels'. Mr O'Donoghue said they were clearly critical of party policy, but also claimed they were voting in its favour. He said: "We might call them dissenters". At 6.46am, another Yesterday in Parliament item contained opinion from several MPs. In her commentary, Susan Hulme said that John Baron had 'lobbed a grenade' into the political ranks by calling for the vote on the referendum. She also said that David Cameron 'hoped to quell this sort of thing'.

On **May 17**, Yesterday in Parliament opened with a quote from Labour front bencher Angela Eagle alleging that the Conservative vote about the EU was history repeating itself 'first as a tragedy and then as farce', then later that the party had 'descended into chaos', the vote being the 35th Conservative rebellion over the EU. Lord Dykes said the vote was a sign of xenophobia. Later, Lord Steel said he disagreed with parliamentary time being used in this way.

Evan Davis on **May 20** that some of the grass-roots members of the Conservative party had reportedly been called 'swivel-eyed loons' by a high-ranking party official. Tim Montgomerie said that David Cameron was 'listening to the troops in calling a referendum', and asserted that the only way 'the squabbling' would end in the party was when there had been a nationwide vote. He claimed that the party was not far away from unity and the EU position 'is almost settled'.

On **May 22**, James Naughtie said that no Conservative party leader had ever 'endured' what David Cameron had in terms of revolts. He asked him as the first interview question what he would do to 'get a grip'. Mr Cameron countered that in fact there was 'incredible unity' over the EU, and what was now needed was renegotiation. He said the Conservative policy over the EU was now the boldest and clearest of any party for over 30 years. James Naughtie suggested that in reality, people in his party believed that 'open rebellion' on this scale would once have been unimaginable, and that his policy was a 'farce'. Mr Cameron repeated that he had a very clear decisive policy, and that the party agreed that there should be renegotiation and a referendum, an approach that was overwhelmingly backed by the British people. Mr Naughtie pointed out that Lord Lawson claimed that in trying for renegotiation, he was following in the footsteps of Harold Wilson, who had got

nothing. Mr Cameron said Lord Lawson was wrong. Mr Naughtie asked whether he now believed (and had changed his mind) over whether Britain could be outside the EU. Mr Cameron said he wanted an EU of nation states but not a superstate, and thought Britain would be better off in a reformed EU. Mr Naughtie asked why, if he thought UKIP was made up of fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists, there was so many of them. Mr Cameron said he did not want to insult people who had voted UKIP, but wanted to win them back by addressing immigration, welfare and schools. Mr Naughtie said he was in effect acknowledging that people voted UKIP because they represented a traditional Conservative view that he did not like. Mr Cameron said he disagreed and that Britain did best by looking outwards and not pulling up the drawbridge. Mr Naughtie said he had to face the possibility that he would have to. He replied he was not going into the negotiations over a changed relationship to fail. He had already resisted the EU over the budget and won. Mr Naughtie suggested he had watched (as a younger man) when 'a rather smaller number' of hostile backbenchers under John Major had generated rows over the EU that led to the massive defeat of 1997. Mr Major had forced a vote on the issue, but what was he going to do? Mr Cameron repeated that he was demonstrating adherence to a clear strategy that involved renegotiation and he was sure he could succeed. After the interview, Nick Robinson said that the problem for Mr Cameron was that a large number of backbenchers now believed that pressure worked and it would thus continue. He added that he did not believe that the Liberal Democrats wanted to exit the Coalition over the EU or any other issue.

After May 22, the only other interview about the referendum or renegotiation was with John Mills, the Labour party donor. As noted in the previous section, the peg for the interview was the launch of the *Labour for a Referendum* campaign. Mr Mills was asked if he wanted a referendum, and he said he did. He also suggested that Labour leader Ed Miliband should consider changing the party policy to incorporate the referendum. He suggested that 15 Labour MPs openly wanted to leave the EU and up to a third of the parliamentary party supported the campaign behind the scenes. He was not asked why he and other party members supported withdrawal.

Overall, combining all the analysis in this section, it is established that what happened on May 7 was a microcosm for the whole period. There was no editorial effort to bring into the equation a full range of voices and opinions about the EU because the views of Conservative MPs who supported withdrawal were not explored. The transcripts show that the programme concentrated almost solely on the steps towards changed priorities over a referendum, and attitudes towards renegotiation. Political correspondents and presenters interpreted the discussion over the EU as primarily an internal Conservative civil war in which they posited, inter alia, that 'barmy' positions were being adopted, 'hand grenades' were being lobbed, and serious headaches caused to David Cameron on a scale that was both unprecedented and went beyond anything seen in the John Major years.

Of course, as Sir Malcolm Rifkind acknowledged, there were divisions within the party over strategy and process. To the outside world, elements of this battle seemed to be 'infighting'. It was important

that the Today programme investigated this and conveyed to listeners its essence. But that was not all that was going on and Today virtually ignored the other elements.

Further evidence that Today wanted to project this primarily as a Conservative civil war comes from the fact that during the period as a whole, there was no interview of a Labour politician about the party's stance towards to the debate over the EU. Political correspondents mentioned the matter was a hot potato for them because they were on the one hand enthusiastic about EU membership, but on the other – especially in the light of the local council election results – did not want to be seen as a force that opposed giving people a vote about issues related to the EU. Correspondents also mentioned that both David Davies and the prime minister was trying to ‘flush them (Labour) out’ in terms of their stance. And, of course, John Mills was interviewed in a limited way about the *Labour for the Referendum* campaign. But the total absence of Labour politicians is an extraordinary gap.

In the Newswatch tabulation of speakers in Section I, this omission gives the clear impression that in the period as a whole, there were more ‘eurosceptic’ speakers than ‘europhiles’. But this is an illusion. In fact, as has already been established, nothing said by the Conservative guests supported anything other than continued, albeit renegotiated, membership of the EU. And Labour were not on the list at all in terms of the major debate about the crucial issue of the nature of continued membership. From the outside it is impossible to know why. It may have been – in these days of ‘message’ control – because Labour party figures did not want to comment and declined invitations to do so. But whatever the reason, it is the case that, Joe Mills aside, there was no-one on the programme who brought the Labour party perspective. This amounted to another very significant failure to have a range of voices in the overall EU debate.

In summary, it seems that Today took the easy – and ultimately biased route – of choosing to portray these developments as a battle within the Conservative party over the fine details of renegotiation and the timing of a referendum. But the programme failed to get to grips with the dimension that underlying that was a very real debate about continued membership which was supported not only by at least a third of the Conservative backbench MPs but also a considerable number of Labour MPs, too.

PART TWO, SECTION FOUR: POST-WILSON PROMISES

After the Wilson inquiry, the BBC promised to the then BBC governors that it would improve EU-related output. Specifically, it said:

‘With specific reference to Europe our aims are:

- To offer our audiences across all platforms clear, accurate and accessible information about the way EU institutions work and their impact on UK laws and life;
- To ensure impartiality by reflecting the widest possible range of voices and viewpoints about EU issues, and to test those viewpoints using evidence-based argument or informed opinion;
- To demonstrate the relationship between the different member states and the European Union;
- To reveal or explain to our audiences areas of contentious fact and disputed principle.’

The analysis above establishes that in very fundamental respects during this survey period these objectives were not met. At a time when withdrawal was centre stage both for the Conservative party and on the wider political agenda, there was a major failure of delivery because the voices that support withdrawal both inside and outside the Conservative party, despite significant electoral success – if not a breakthrough – were largely ignored, and when they did appear, they were pushed to the margins. The debate about withdrawal was simply not put into the programme. The total of only 513 words speaks for itself. So, too, does the non-appearance of Lord Lawson. But much more disappointing was the almost complete lack of editorial curiosity about the topic. In the period’s editorial agenda, there were numerous occasions when presenters and correspondents could have demonstrated that they were aware of the growing importance of withdrawal in their questioning and their analysis. The step-by-step breakdown above demonstrates that there was what appears to be an almost wilful avoidance of the subject. Editorially, too, the knee-jerk reaction by the programme to the election results on and after May 3 was to go out of the way to engineer features which established that the success of UKIP was not a vote for ‘withdrawal’ as such, but rather because voters such as those in Boston were upset about immigration. And after that, the focus was to show determinedly that the debate about the EU was a matter for the Conservative party, a militaristic continuation of the old splits that took the hostilities to new levels of what could be seen as both ‘barmy’ tactics and internecine strife. From the outside, it appears the programme producers never stepped back to take an overview of their coverage, because the imbalance is so obvious.

The BBC’s attitude towards such allegations of editorial shortcomings is complex.

Allegations of bias on such scale are only rarely investigated. This is because the formal BBC complaints mechanism will only investigate individual features or programme editions, and then only within a few weeks of transmission. All of this analysis would be ruled out on timing grounds alone. Yet such analysis takes considerable time.

In 2004, the then BBC governors set up the Wilson inquiry – one of a series of investigations into different areas of coverage. This was a unique exercise in several respects, but most notably that the inquiry panel, including Lord Wilson himself, was made up of figures from outside the BBC. It found considerable shortcomings. In response, the BBC promised to make sweeping changes including the pledges outlined above.

Soon afterwards, the then BBC director general Mark Thompson said there had been internal monitoring of the EU-related output and it was now balanced and in line with editorial rules and obligations. Yet he cited no evidence to back this up, and Newswatch surveys in this period found that on the contrary, the problems identified by Wilson continued; in fact, appearances by those supporting withdrawal, for example, had declined.

Five years later, Mark Thompson again returned to the subject of EU coverage. His message was mixed. He maintained that coverage in the present was properly balanced and wide-ranging. But he also said that in the past – at an unspecified time – it had not been.

Partly because of this, BBC Chairman Lord Patten announced in October 2012 that there would be another inquiry into coverage of EU affairs, alongside religion and immigration. He pledged that this would be ‘independent’. Yet it palpably was not. The man appointed to conduct it was Stuart Prebble, a former BBC employee who had subsequently spent much of his working life as a colleague at Granada Television with David Liddiment, the BBC Trustee who appointed him to carry out the inquiry. Mr Prebble’s report appeared in the summer of 2013. It gave the EU-related output a largely clean bill of health. He dismissed Newswatch’s work as ‘arithmetic metrics’, but without a shred of detailed analysis or evidence to support this. Yet the evidence he relied upon in his report was a much narrower set of transcripts that had been collated by Cardiff University (originally for a different purpose), together with the impressions of a handful of senior BBC editorial staff. Mr Prebble did not explain why he had appointed Cardiff University to conduct the research exercise. It is striking, however, that many of the senior staff of the Cardiff media department have, like Mr Prebble, spent significant time working at the BBC.

Thus in summary, the BBC will not consider complaints about bias which are based on detailed analysis of its output, and – Wilson apart – the only recent inquiry into its EU-related editorial performance has been conducted by a BBC appointee with close links to the Trustees. His findings were a whitewash. Not only that, he relied for his conclusions upon data gathered and interpreted by a university department overseen by former BBC staff, or upon the word of BBC editors.

This is a period when, for whatever reason, withdrawal has assumed increased political and popular support. In this context, it is astonishing and deeply disturbing that the BBC still refuses to meet

properly its editorial promises made post-Wilson. In not doing so, it is in serious breach of its Charter.

The Corporation is wilfully ignoring evidence that shows clearly that in the European debate, it is frequently airing the views of those who support the EU while heavily stifling those of supporters of withdrawal and eurosceptics who, in their different ways, want radical change.

Further evidence of this was provided of this in the survey period in a number of other areas. They have been chosen to highlight that when there is close scrutiny of EU coverage other issues emerge that underline in different ways that routinely and systematically, the Wilson promises are not being met.

In business news, for example, which was 35% of the EU coverage, a disproportionate weight was given to pro-EU arguments⁹. Simon Jack, the main presenter made several mentions of the Conservative problems over the EU in a way which reinforced the ‘civil war’ tenor adopted in the rest of the programme. He also suggested (June 11) – in the only mention of German moves towards less exposure to EU bailouts – that the relevant court challenge might be led by ‘crackpots’, thus adding to the idea that those who were opposed to the EU were not rational. In business news as a whole, there were no items that mentioned or discussed withdrawal, except fleetingly in negative terms. One feature (April 15) examined the argument by the British Chambers of Commerce that renegotiation should place priority on reducing the amount of EU red tape that affected business. The chairman, John Longworth, said that he believed that David Cameron was in a strong position to achieve change. This was the only interview in which a business news guest looked favourably on a ‘eurosceptic’ measure, although it was plain that he did not wish to leave the EU. By contrast, there were several interviews where the speakers plainly favoured stronger ties. Sir Roger Carr, president of the CBI, appearing on the programme on May 15 as a main signatory of a letter in the FT that warned against David Cameron’s renegotiation policies, said that closer ties with the EU were in Britain best interests. Two days later, as the parliamentary debate continued over the timing of a possible EU referendum, Mark Price of Waitrose said the discussion over the referendum was worrying because it was affecting business prospects, and hitting the confidence of potential investors in the UK. On May 31, Manfred Bergemann, Director for Indirect Taxation and Tax Administration at the European Commission, said the Financial Transactions Tax – which had been singled out by Lord Lawson on May 7 as a primary reason why the UK should leave the EU – was both desirable and would not hit the UK’s financial interests. Simon Jack, as presenter, mildly challenged Herr Bergemann’s pro-EU views, but no one else appeared on the programme to provide a contrasting opinion about an issue which clearly had hit raw nerves in the City of London.

Another problem was in the coverage of CAP negotiations. Here there was what Wilson called ‘bias by omission’ – the issue was the narrowness of the coverage, with

⁹ A summary of business news coverage is in Appendix IV.

changes in major areas of policy not considered sufficiently for the listener to form a full impression of the issues involved. The CAP talks were in late June, and EU watchers said they focused on some of the most important changes for several years. Outside the bulletins, Today carried three feature sequences on the talks (including dedicated interviews of Owen Paterson, the government minister responsible for CAP, and the chairman of the NFU). The items also contained brief edited sequences with a representative of the RSPB, the Free Trade Association, a farmer from Lincolnshire and Simon Coveney, the Irish farming minister who was chair of the reform talks. In addition, on the main day of negotiations, Chris Morris, BBC Europe correspondent, analysed the substance of the talks and the likelihood of success. Overall, the features considered a few basic questions about CAP, including whether subsidies to big farms should – as was being proposed - be reduced and the extent to which green and fair trade measures (that helped the developing world) should be adopted. The coverage added up to 1,473 words from the six outside contributors (c.10 minutes). Did this meet the BBC's promises as laid out in a) and d) above? The answer is only barely. These were significant reform talks. Listeners were given a narrow impression of the core issues, especially with regard to the 'greening' of the CAP. They heard that Owen Paterson wanted to cut subsidies to avoid the building up of production surpluses, as well as supporting green measures. The president of the NFU conveyed that his members were opposed to the subsidy cuts because they believed they would hit production and disadvantage UK farmers. The RSPB spokesman wanted to protect wildlife, and the fair trade advocate to ensure that developing world producers were less affected by EU subsidies. Ten minutes of coverage was time only for a very narrow 'range of voices' and only the briefest of explanations, despite a very clear news peg, of what the CAP changes meant for the economy, for food production and the future of farming.

This fits with a long-term lack of interest in CAP. The policy accounts for 40% of EU expenditure, and food prices are a vital ingredient in the overall cost of living – they thus have direct relevance to the Today audience. But since 2005, Newswatch records show that only 0.94% of Today's EU-related output has been features about CAP, averaging around only around two features per survey period. However, the bulk of the coverage, was before 2009 – only seven of the 33 features have been in the past four years, as is shown in the table below.

| Survey Date | Weeks | CAP Features | CAP Feature Airtime. |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Mar – Jun 2005 | 12 | 5 | 13 min |
| Oct – Dec 2005 | 9 | 6 | 24 min |
| Feb – Jun 2006 | 16 | 3 | 11.5 min |
| Sep – Dec 2006 | 14 | 2 | 1 min |
| Mar – Jun 2007 | 14 | 2 | 6.5 min |
| Sep – Dec 2007 | 14 | 1 | 5 min |
| Mar – Jun 2008 | 12 | 4 | 11.25 min |
| Sep – Dec 2008 | 14 | 3 | 16.5 min |
| Apr – Jun 2009 | 6.3 | 0 | 0 min |
| Sep – Dec 2009 | 12 | 2 | 10.75 min |
| Mar - May 2010 | 6 | 0 | 0 min |
| Sep - Dec 2010 | 13 | 1 | 2.5 min |
| Mar – June 2011 | 13 | 0 | 0 min |
| Oct – Dec 2011 | 11 | 0 | 0 min |
| Apr – June 2012 | 12 | 0 | 0 min |
| Sep – Dec 2012 | 13 | 0 | 0 min |
| Apr – June 2013 | 12 | 4 | 18 min |
| TOTAL | 203.3 | 33 features | 120 minutes |

Did this correlate with newsworthiness? The BBC would no doubt argue that it did, but the evidence in this period is rather of only minimal interest in the topic and a failure to explore the key themes.

A third problem area related to coverage of EU-related ‘green’ policy. During the current survey there were only three items in this contentious subject area, and the major issue here was that they showed a heavily one-sided approach.

On April 16, Simon Jack said the European Parliament was considering steps to strengthen the EU carbon market against a background of flagging prices. Kash Burnett, analyst for IHS energy, a company whose corporate goals are to reduce greenhouse gases¹⁰, was invited to explain how their carbon market worked. He said the problem was the price of permits had dropped substantially, and that Eastern Europeans did not want to take measures to increase it because they were ‘coal intensive’. He concluded:

Well, carbon emissions have come down, but that’s really almost entirely a result of the recession, as opposed to the carbon market itself. I think it has the potential to work, and most stakeholders are very keen to see it work, especially the utilities, they say, look, this is a flagship European policy, we ought to stick to our guns and intervene because of the unusual circumstances that have come about as a result of recession. However, you know,

¹⁰ <http://www.environmentalleader.com/2012/01/30/ihs-makes-sustainability-a-measure-of-success/>

it's certainly not doing anything to incentivise investment into renewables right now, or clean technology. You need a much higher carbon price.

On April 18, as talks continued about the EU carbon market, John Humphrys first asked how companies could be stopped from 'pumping into the atmosphere more and more CO₂'. He suggested the answer was to 'hit them in the pocket', but then explained that the price of carbon permits (in the EU carbon market) was so low that 'it's not working'. He spoke to Andreas Arvanitakis, a director at the carbon markets analyst Thompson Reuters Carbon Point, to explore why not. Mr Arvanitakis was asked why the market was not working as it should. He explained that too many credits were around, so that their price had dropped and companies were thus not working to reduce emissions. He asserted:

So what we have at the moment is a carbon price which is so low that it's not sending the kind of signal to . . . to the, you know, to these companies, that they should be investing in reducing emissions.

Mr Humphrys suggested that the European Parliament should have taken measures to increase the price but had not done so. Mr Arvanitakis agreed. Mr Humphrys asserted:

So, are we now in the situation where people, manufacturers in particular, obviously, because presumably they're the greatest polluters if that's the right word, where they can pretty much do what they want to do without worrying about the cost?

Mr Arvanitakis said that another problem was that the low carbon price was 'perversely' leading to the burning of more coal. He added:

And more coal means more emissions. So, you know, that's basically the problem, that the carbon price is low and we're still emitting, and we're not investing in the clean technologies that we should be doing.

JH: I think I understand that. Amazing!

Thus, Mr Humphrys accepted from the beginning of the exchange that CO₂ was a 'pollutant'. The main aim of the feature was to give Mr Arvanitakis – a mouthpiece of an organisation with a direct vested interest in promoting carbon markets and the EU's energy policies – a platform to argue that companies must to do more to both reduce carbon emissions and to invest in 'clean technologies'. No one else was invited to discuss this issue.

The final item was on April 29. The background here was that there had been complaints that reported steps by the EU to force electrical goods to contain a switch which allowed them to be switched off by electricity supply companies at times of peak demand were in 'Big Brother' territory.

Konstantin Staschus, the secretary general of the European Network of Transmission Systems Operators, confirmed there were such plans, but said they would add only a few pounds to the cost of goods, and maintained that not all appliances would be shut off automatically. He denied the approach would be 'big brotherly'.

This was only a small amount of coverage: 1,213 words, or just over eight minutes. But all three items were astonishingly narrow in their scope. In the first two, the topic on the agenda was the future of a market that has had a huge impact on business operations across the EU in seeking to reduce energy consumption. The only contributors chosen to discuss it were spokesmen from energy analysts who had a vested interest in the markets they were talking about, and who expressed strong opinions that the EU was not doing enough to encourage investment in 'renewables'. There was a brief mention that other industrialists (from Eastern Europe) were opposed to the market and wanted more investment in coal. This underlined that the programme made no effort to speak to these people or explain their perspective. It was crudely accepted editorially that the only perspective that mattered, and worth detailed exposure, was the need to move towards cutting CO₂ and encouraging investment in other energy sources. John Humphrys is often adversarial to guests. But on April 18 his only objective was to give his guest an uninterrupted platform to advocate that MEPs should adopt measures that would lead to a higher CO₂ price.

In the third feature, the programme guest acknowledged that there were very significant moves towards the adoption of technology that allowed the remote control of individual appliances. He was given the scope to claim that the fears about this were without foundation because it was in the interests of efficiency. Today mentioned the concerns about the measures, but did not bring on to the programme an interviewee who could articulate his concerns and challenge the views put forward by Mr Staschus.

Overall, in these three areas, the programme failed to bring on to the programme a sufficient range of speakers, and did not explain to listeners, except in the briefest of terms, the operation of key areas of EU policy. With energy, there was an almost comical one-sidedness towards supporters of 'green' policy. With the CAP, the problem was mainly bias by omission; far more coverage was warranted about an area of EU policy that affects food prices, and that would have added both to the range of voices and the amount of analysis provided. In business news, as elsewhere in the coverage, there was what appeared to be a wilful ignoring of the withdrawal perspective and a corresponding enthusiasm to give platforms to those who supported closer EU integration.

APPENDIX I

THE BBC'S POST-WILSON PROMISES

In May 2005, the BBC's Board of Governors published the BBC management's response to the Wilson Panel's Independent Panel report on the BBC's coverage of the European Union.¹¹ This document set out four key promises for the Corporation's coverage of the EU:

- a) To offer our audiences across all platforms clear, accurate and accessible information about the way EU institutions work and their impact on UK laws and life;**
- b) To ensure impartiality by reflecting the widest possible range of voices and viewpoints about EU issues; to test those viewpoints using evidence-based argument or informed opinion;**
- c) To demonstrate the relationships between the different member states and the European Union;**
- d) To reveal and explain to our audiences areas of contentious fact and disputed principle.**

¹¹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/govs/eu_management_response.txt

APPENDIX II

SUMMARY OF APPEARANCES BY WITHDRAWALIST SPEAKERS

The first withdrawalist appearance came on 25 April. Presenter Sarah Montague interviewed the deputy leader of UKIP, Paul Nuttall, alongside the Bulgarian ambassador to London, Konstantin Dimitrov, who had said comments made by UKIP on Bulgarian immigration were ‘absolutely unacceptable.’ Ms Montague began by asking Mr Dimitrov what specifically it was that he objected to. Mr Dimitrov said that he was against the notion that Bulgaria was a ‘threat’ to the UK’s social benefits system. He argued that Bulgaria was not in the top twenty countries having access to the Britain’s welfare system, and that 2014 would not see any easier access for his country’s citizens to UK benefits. Ms Montague put these points to Mr Nuttall, who spoke about the work and welfare restrictions being lifted for Bulgarians and Romanians, and said that 29 million people could now come to the UK and claim benefits. He added a lot of those who would come from Bulgaria would be ‘the young, the brightest and the best’. Ms Montague interjected to ask Mr Nuttall how many people he thought would come to the UK. Mr Nuttall said that he didn’t know, but that the organisation Migration Watch UK were saying there would be around 50,000 a year from Bulgaria and Romania combined. The same question was put to Mr Dimitrov, who said he didn’t think the rate would be any greater than at present, and his embassy’s informal estimates suggested somewhere between 8,000 and 10,000 immigrants a year. He added that this did not mean any change in access to the social benefits system, and that the people coming would be in the UK to work, and not dependent on social benefits. Ms Montague put it to Mr Nuttall that he was scaremongering for political purposes. Mr Nuttall replied, ‘absolutely not’ and said that he believed the immigrants from Bulgaria and Romania would come to the UK with every intention of working, and that Eastern Europeans ‘generally have a fantastic work ethic’, but they would discover 22% youth unemployment in the UK. Mr Nuttall said he would like ‘the brightest and best people in Bulgaria to stay in Bulgaria, become accountants and lawyers and teachers’, rather than ‘serving tea and coffee in London’. Ms Montague turned to Mr Dimitrov and asked him if he was concerned ‘about the tone of this.’ Mr Dimitrov said UKIP were attempting to ‘fan up anti-Bulgarian sentiments’, and that although the citizens of Bulgaria were not being encouraged to come to the UK, ‘we cannot stop them if they would like to work legally.’ Ms Montague turned back to Mr Nuttall and asked him if he was stoking anti-Bulgarian sentiment. Mr Nuttall replied, ‘Well, I don’t think we are. We just stating simple facts, that from January 1st all restrictions are lifted and quite frankly, we don’t have control over our own borders because Brussels does it on our behalf, and the only way we can do something about it is by leaving the European Union, and I don’t think that’s stoking any flames at all.’

The package seemed to have been designed with the explicit purpose of producing an adversarial clash between UKIP and the Bulgarian Ambassador, but Mr Nuttall’s responses came across as far

more nuanced than might have been expected. Mr Nuttall's core argument – that the 'brightest and best' Bulgarians would travel to work in England, and such immigration flows would actually be detrimental to both Bulgarian society – appeared at odds with the claims being made by Mr Dimitrov, and echoed by Ms Montague, that UKIP were stoking up anti-Bulgarian sentiment. Only in his final statement did Mr Nuttall make any sort of explicit call for British withdrawal from the EU, and the majority of the interview sequence was spent discussing the logistical changes in the arrangements for Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants.

The next appearance by a withdrawalist speaker came on 30 April. UKIP leader Nigel Farage was interviewed in a ten minute sequence ahead of the Local Elections taking place on 2 May. Only 1 min 45 sec of the interview was spent discussing matters relating to the EU – the interview took in a range of other topics including: Conservative cabinet minister Kenneth Clarke having called UKIP 'a collection of clowns'; a UKIP candidate pictured on the front of the Daily Mirror giving a Nazi salute; the vetting of UKIP candidates before they stand for office; a reported black hole in UKIP's spending plans and whether UKIP had abandoned plans for a flat rate tax; whether UKIP supported the repeal of the smoking ban; if it supported an increase in the number of grammar schools; and whether UKIP would 'sling the idea of climate change in the dustbin'. Mr Humphrys said the problem with UKIP was that the party was against a lot of things, but it wasn't quite clear what they were for. Mr Farage said that UKIP were for 'an independent self-confident, self-governing United Kingdom' that believed in charting a future away from Europe and building new trade and cultural relationships with the rest of the world. He said Britain ought to no longer be tied to a 'completely outdated European model that is now making 75% of our laws.' Mr Humphrys said he wanted them to 'put aside the Europe bit', and said that if Mr Farage heard politicians making the same claims, his response would be, 'what a lot of rhetoric'. Mr Farage, however, kept the focus on the EU, arguing that Britain could not engage with the rest of the world or form relationships while remaining part of the EU, because membership of the EU forbids them from doing so. Mr Humphrys interrupted to say, 'Right, in that case, vote Tory and you'll get a referendum.' Mr Farage started to say, 'we've heard it all before', but was interrupted by Mr Humphrys, who said, referring to David Cameron, 'Yes, he's promised, he's promised, he's promised, he's promised.' Mr Farage countered that Mr Cameron had promised before, with his 'cast iron guarantee.' Mr Humphrys interrupted again, 'So the Prime Minister is a liar, is he?' Mr Farage said David Cameron would give a referendum in five years' time, if he wins the election, but Mr Farage did not want to wait five years, because the doors would be opening to 29 million people from Bulgaria and Romania. He concluded by saying, 'If we're going to have a referendum on this, let's have it this year.'

Had Mr Farage not raised the issue, then it seems the EU would not have been mentioned during the sequence at all. Certainly, Mr Humphrys was initially keen to steer the interview away from the topic when it was raised by Mr Farage. There could certainly have been direct questions from Mr Humphrys on how EU decisions affect the UK at a local level, including EU immigration policy and the consequences this has had for the provision of local services, but the single point made about

Romania and Bulgaria had to be shoehorned into the discussion by Mr Farage himself. It was, of course, entirely legitimate for the programme to focus upon UK political matters, given that the interview's primary focus was on the local elections. However, it serves to illustrate how, with withdrawalist speakers being given relatively little access to the EU debate more generally, they often have to express their viewpoints however and wherever they can. As a consequence, the withdrawal argument is often delivered a piecemeal way, on this occasion being swamped by matters concerning UKIP as a political party and its domestic policies.

Nigel Farage appeared on Today again on 3 May, the morning after the local elections. Although counts were still continuing, it was becoming clear that UKIP had had been very successful, receiving a quarter of the vote in the seats they had contested, and had achieved second placed in the South Shields by-election. As with Mr Farage's previous appearance, only a small proportion of the interview focused on the EU. The package in its entirety was 13 minutes long (including an interview with Conservative Chairman Grant Shapps), but Mr Farage spoke about EU matters for under a minute. He made three points relevant to the EU debate: first that the 'open-door immigration policies' pursued by the 'established parties' had fundamentally changed Britain; second, he said that UKIP were in a strong position for the European Elections in 2014, being the only party that would divorce the UK from the political union with the EU and have a 'simple free-trade alternative'; and third, that no one amongst the 'metropolitan elite' wanted to talk about the fact that there is 'a settled majority out there that wants us to get our country back.'

As with Mr Farage's previous appearance, UKIP's EU policy took something of a back seat, with the primary focus of the interview sequence being on UKIP's electoral success, and the perceived 'threat' to the Conservative Party. While Mr Farage did make general withdrawalist points, he made no sustained or detailed argument.

The next withdrawalist speakers appeared on 16 May. Yesterday in Parliament reported on 'a huge protest vote' by Conservative MPs over the lack of an EU referendum bill in the Queen's Speech. Backbench Conservative John Baron said there invited the Commons to 'be bold of heart, seize the moment and do what is right by the electorate and the country', and added that he supported the publication of a draft bill that had appeared in the previous couple of days. Shadow chancellor Ed Balls challenged Mr Baron as to how he would vote in a referendum, and correspondent Susan Hulme reported that Mr Baron had replied that if a referendum were to be held tomorrow, he would vote to leave the EU. Later in the same report, Ms Hulme reported that former Conservative Chancellor Lord Lawson had been under fire over the EU, having said that it was time for the UK to leave the Union. The soundbite selected from Lord Lawson did not mention withdrawal, he criticised the proposed vote saying, 'What is needed is a thorough debate about the momentous issues, political and economic involved, and this will not be assisted by a necessary and pointless votes.' Neither speaker made an argument for withdrawal, but they qualified for inclusion on account of the commentary from Susan Hulme explaining the men held withdrawalist views.

The following morning's programme, 17 May, saw another parliamentary report featuring a withdrawalist contribution. Correspondent Sean Curran reported that the Conservatives' draft bill on a referendum on Europe would be put to Parliament after a Eurosceptic backbench MP volunteered to champion it. The final segment of the report also covered business from the House of Lords. UKIP peer Lord Pearson of Rannoch said, 'As a first step towards closing down the whole ill-fated project of European integration, why doesn't Her Majesty's Government propose the abolition of the euro, with all its participants returning to national currencies?' The brevity of the chosen extract, coupled with its positioning at the end of the Yesterday in Parliament package, meant there was no further exploration of Lord Pearson's proposal or response to his idea from other peers. Indeed, Sean Curran in his conclusion appeared to admonish Lord Pearson for focusing on prospective events rather than the present. He said, 'But let's not get ahead of ourselves. In a few weeks' time the bill on an EU referendum will be debated for the first time' and added that this would be the start of a brand new parliamentary battle.'

Later on the same programme, 17 May, Sarah Montague interviewed UKIP leader Nigel Farage about protestors having disrupted his Scottish news conference, and how Mr Farage had required a police escort to escape an angry crowd. Mr Farage said that the protestors were 'fascist scum', and explained that he was in Scotland to speak at a business dinner, as UKIP had hitherto been a weak party in Scotland, but with the referendum on Scottish independence approaching, the EU question was becoming a major factor in the country's politics. Mr Farage said that he was making the point that SNP leader Alex Salmond's recipe for an independent Scotland, but staying part of the European Union doesn't work, but had been overwhelmed by 'a sort of flash student protest'. Ms Montague asked if the protestors reflected a wider feeling in Scotland about him. Mr Farage said he refused to accept this, and that he did not believe that '50 jobs' represented ordinary Scottish people. When questioned on whether the event suggested UKIP needed a different message for Scotland, Mr Farage also disagreed, and said he believed that independence from the European Union was just as vital for Scotland as it was for the rest of the UK. He said he believed that the SNP were concerned that the UKIP message could gain traction in the by-election for the Scottish Parliament in Aberdeen South. Ms Montague asked Mr Farage if he would carry on campaigning in Scotland 'without being worried about where you're going to have to take refuge?' Mr Farage said that it had been an odd experience which hadn't been very nice, but it hadn't changed the arguments one bit. He claimed that the British media never talk about 'the excesses of Scottish nationalism and how deeply unpleasant they can be.' Ms Montague asked if he was suggesting that the protest had been directed by the SNP, or that the party was involved. Mr Farage said he was not, but that he would like to hear Alex Salmond condemning the behaviour. He argued that the media were quick to 'jump down [Mr Farage's] throat' if anyone from UKIP said anything 'homophobic or mildly racist', and demand that they be expelled from the party, which he did. He said that it was about time that Scottish nationalism was put under the same level of scrutiny. Ms Montague said she thought it striking how far Mr Farage was tying in his experience with the protestors to the SNP. Mr Farage

said that they were all SNP voters and 'all united by a hatred of the English, the Union Jack and everything the United Kingdom represents'. Ms Montague said that the event might suggest all politicians should be careful with their language in terms of what reaction this might lead to. Mr Farage said that he was careful with his own language, but the group he had encountered in Edinburgh were 'a hate mob'. Ms Montague concluded by asking Mr Farage what he would say to those who believed this showed UKIP to be an English nationalist party. He countered that UKIP has representation in Wales and Northern Ireland, and would be fighting the European Elections in every part of the UK, including Scotland. Mr Farage said he was confident that UKIP would win a Scottish seat in the 2014 European Elections, and the party had grown rapidly in England and would do so in Scotland.

The purpose of Mr Farage's visit to Edinburgh - to discuss the 'EU question' within the context of Scottish nationalism - meant that the interview in its entirety was categorised by Newswatch as an EU-related report. In fact, the interview really had just two main points of focus: first, Mr Farage providing a description of the events which had taken place in Edinburgh, followed by his criticism of 'the excesses of Scottish nationalism'. Ms Montague, meanwhile, at times appeared to suggest that Mr Farage himself was somehow to blame for the event, by putting it to him that UKIP needed a different message for Scotland, or that politicians should be 'careful with their language.' Mr Farage made just one general withdrawalist point, saying that independence from the EU was just as vital for Scotland as for the rest of the UK, but this was certainly not the central focus of the discussion.

The final appearance by a withdrawalist speaker came on 4 June. Sarah Montague said, 'It's not just the Conservatives that can't agree on Europe. Ed Miliband is facing pressure from within his own party, from those who want him to offer the British people a referendum on our membership of the EU.' She explained that a new group, Labour for a Referendum had been launched, and introduced businessman John Mills, chairman of the home products company JML, who was said to be bankrolling the group. Ms Montague began by asking Mr Mills about Labour Party policy towards a referendum, noting that Ed Miliband hadn't ruled a referendum out. Mr Mills explained that Mr Miliband had made a speech earlier in the year which indicated he wasn't keen on having a referendum, but Mr Mills said he personally believed that it would be unwise for Labour to rule out a referendum in the run up to the next general election. Mr Mills said he believed that the uncertainty about Britain's membership of the EU was bad for business, and the sooner a referendum was held the better. Ms Montague said, 'And to be clear, you would vote 'no' in any referendum?' Mr Mills replied, 'I'd vote 'no' in the present circumstances, yes.' but qualified this by saying that he felt the vast majority of the population would like to see the terms of the UK's EU membership renegotiated towards something more closely resembling the free trade area they had voted to enter in 1975. He said that if this could be achieved, 'I think you might get a different result, I think people then may want to stay in.' Ms Montague asked how much support Mr Mills had from within the Labour Party. He explained that 15 MPs had signed up to Labour for a Referendum, but that there was 'much wider tacit support' within the Labour Party, with around a third being

open to the idea of including provision for a referendum in the manifesto. Mr Mills said that polls showed clearly that the public did want to have the opportunity to take a decision on whether Britain stays within the EU or not. Ms Montague asked Mr Mills what he thought of the Prime Minister, David Cameron's, position, which involved renegotiating with the EU and then coming back 'and putting that to a referendum.' Mr Mills said he didn't think this stance was unreasonable, and this was supported by another organisation with he was involved, Business for Britain. Ms Montague challenged Mr Mills about having called Ed Miliband 'policy-light'. Mr Mills said that this was on economic policy, and how none of the main parties seemed to have a clear idea of how to get the economy to grow more robustly and to reduce unemployment. He said there was a danger of ten years or longer of austerity and no growth. Ms Montague asked Mr Mills if he supported Ed Miliband's leadership of the Labour Party, and he said that he supported it 'very strongly.' Ms Montague retorted that, in spite of his claims, Mr Mills didn't like what Mr Miliband was doing on 'Europe' or on economic policy. Mr Mills said he supported the Labour Party on a large proportion of its policies, but had some disagreements about their commitment to a referendum. The interview culminated with Ms Montague asking if these sorts of issues would influence Mr Mills with regards to which party receives his donations. Mr Mills replied that he had been a lifelong supporter of the Labour Party 'through thick and thin', and this would continue.

APPENDIX III

TRANSCRIPTS FEATURING WITHDRAWALIST SPEAKERS

Transcript of BBC Radio 4, Today, 25th April 2013, Bulgaria and Romania, 8.49am

SARAH MONTAGUE: Bulgaria's ambassador to London has said that what UKIP said about Bulgarian immigration to the UK is absolutely unacceptable in a European country. Well, the ambassador, Konstantin Dimitrov is here in the studio with us.

KONSTANTIN DIMITROV: Good morning Sarah.

SM: Good morning. We are also joined from Stoke by the deputy leader of UKIP, Paul Nuttall, good morning to you.

PAUL NUTTALL: Morning.

SM: Ambassador Dimitrov, what is it that you object to that UKIP have said?

KD: The using of the word 'threat' as being part of the characteristics of a nation like Bulgaria to the UK's social benefits system. This is utterly unacceptable, and moreover, it doesn't reflect the reality of the matter that Bulgarians are outside of the first top 20 countries whose nationals have any recourse to your social benefits system. And finally, the year 2014 will not see an easier access to that social welfare system, for Bulgarians compared to the situation today. These three are arguments, very important, I invite anyone to use them whenever developing his or her thoughts on the topic.

SM: Okay. Paul Nuttall, UKIP has said that Bulgarians will be a threat to the social system of the UK?

PN: Well, I just think that any increase in . . . a huge increase really in the opportunity for people to come to this country, which is given by the European Union, now from January 1 all restrictions to work and welfare as such for Bulgarians and Romanians, that's 29 million people, who can now come to this country and claim benefits, but beyond that I don't think that these people from Bulgaria, I want to make this point perfectly clear, I think a lot of the people who will come from Bulgaria, and I've been to Sofia, will be the young, brightest and best, and they will come here with good intentions, to work. The problem that we have . . .

SM: (*interrupting*) How many do you reckon will come here?

PN: Well, we just don't know at the moment, I mean Migration Watch UK are saying around fifty thousand per year from Bulgaria and Romania combined, we just don't know.

SM: (*speaking over*) What's the view from Bulgaria? What do you think, ambassador, of how many Bulgarians will come here?

KD: Well, I think the number want to be larger than the rate we have today. It's our internal informal estimates at the embassy, which does not reflect the view of the Bulgarian government, it's about eight to ten thousand per year.

SM: Why want to be more than today, because there are restrictions that will be lifted from next January.

KD: But this doesn't concern, I stress again, the access to the social benefits system. It will only reflect, the change will consist in the removal of the need for the issuance of work permits for people. But most of those . . .

SM: (*speaking over*) Sure, but I suppose the argument is that if people come here looking . . . more people might come here looking for work, and if they don't get it then they'll be more dependent.

KD: Well, that is not true, because even today they're in a capacity to indeed seek such allowances if they haven't been employed, a) or b) if they're not self-employed, which gives them every right to practice legal work in the United Kingdom. There will be a qualitative change in the status of Bulgarians with regards to the axis of the social benefit systems, and as Paul said, additionally, these will be, if at all, young people aged between 18 and 35, they are mostly single, if married without dependent children, and they are here will be here to work and they won't be here, if there is no demand for their type of labour.

SM: You're just scaremongering, Paul Nuttall for political purposes?

PN: No, absolutely not, and I will go back to what I've just said: they will come here and they will have every intention of working, you know, Eastern Europeans generally have a fantastic work ethic, what they will find is that the streets of London are certainly not paved with gold. We've got 22% youth unemployment at the moment, a million of our own young people are at home, not working, and what I would like to see is for the brightest and best people in Bulgaria to stay in Bulgaria, become accountants and lawyers and teachers . . .

SM: (*speaking over*) Alright . . .

PN: . . . because that's what they're qualified to do.

SM: . . . Konstantin Dimitrov . . .

PN: Hold . . . can I just finish?

SM: Well, I want to come back to you, I just want to have time to . . .

PN: Not coming here . . . and serving tea and coffee in London . . .

SM: Okay.

PN: That's what's going to happen.

SM: What are your concerns, Konstantin Dimitrov, about the tone of this? Do you fear what it will mean for Bulgarians who are already here, or who may come here?

KD: Well, this is an attempt to fan up anti-Bulgarian sentiments, not to say any stronger word. And this is unacceptable, because what we talk about is a very tiny nation, as Paul himself recognised these are hard-working people, we don't encourage them to come to the UK, but we cannot stop them if they would like to work legally, in case there is a demand. And of course, most of them would like to do so . . .

SM: Right . . .

KD: . . . if they have a job offer from a distance.

SM: I want to go back to Paul Nuttall on that point, on that question of tone, what you're in danger of doing, which is sort of stoking anti-Bulgarian sentiment here?

PN: Well, I don't think we are. We're just stating simple facts, that from January 1 all restrictions are lifted and quite frankly, we don't have control over our own borders because Brussels does it on our behalf, and the only way we can do something about it is by leaving the European Union, and I don't think that's stoking any flames at all.

SM: Paul Nuttall, Konstantin Dimitrov, thank you both very much.

KD: Thank you.

Transcript of BBC Radio 4, Today, 30th April 2013, Local Elections and UKIP, 7.47am

JOHN HUMPHRYS: UKIP candidates and their supporters are collection of clowns who shouldn't be allowed to set the political agenda - that's what the Conservative Cabinet Minister, Ken Clarke said this week in his typically understated way, and the leader of UKIP, Nigel Farage responded in kind – 'Mr Clarke is a member of an ossified elite.' All of which suggests that the Tories are getting rattled by the threat posed by UKIP, and that UKIP is under a lot of pressure with the local elections only two days away to show that they're a bit more than a here today gone tomorrow protest party. Mr Farage joins us, good morning to you.

NIGEL FARAGE: Good morning.

JH: A bit more evidence for Ken Clarke this morning, front page of the Daily Mirror, one of your candidates giving a Nazi salute, a picture of him inside with a knife clenched between his teeth in front of a union flag, I mean, what kind of people are these to be (*words unclear due to speaking over*)

NF: (*speaking over*) Yeah, it doesn't look very pretty, I agree with you. And we have had, out of our 1700 candidates a handful that have embarrassed us, mostly because they simply haven't told us the truth. We're the only party in British politics who actually forbid former members of the British National Party or extreme organisations from even becoming members of UKIP, let alone candidates, and in one or two cases people haven't told us the truth, but I'm pleased to say it is only a handful.

JH: Well, how do we know that?

NF: We know that because . . .

JH: (*interrupting*) Because you haven't vetted them, so we can't know, can we?

NF: . . . a huge amount, a huge amount of time and money has been spent on researching every single UKIP candidate standing in these elections. I would speculate . . .

JH: (*interrupting*) Researching every single one?

NF: I would speculate that if the same degree of scrutiny was put to the Labour and Conservative parties, they were equally find their own embarrassments.

JH: So how come they're not popping out of the woodwork like your lot? I mean, some of the things that some of them have said (*laughs*) make your toes curl up.

NF: Well, actually the Tory party sacked somebody last week who was a serving councillor for talking about coloured people coming into Sussex. The week before that . . .

JH: (*interrupting*) He had been a councillor, he was already a councillor and he had been for a long time, and he came to those views, goodness knows why, that's for him to answer, but nonetheless, slightly different from having a candidate . . . if we open the papers every other day and there's a . . . somebody, representing YouGov (*sic*) UKIP, with some very bizarre things to say indeed.

NF: Yeah, we have had a couple of very bizarre cases, and we've had two people who were former BNP members who basically lied to us. You know, we have done what due diligence we can at branch level, if people seem to be very, very odd we didn't accept them, but we had taken people on faith. You know, we don't have the resources to trawl through absolutely everybody's social media sites . . .

JH: Ah!

NF: . . . and that has led to one or two embarrassments. But I . . .

JH: (*interrupting*) Well, look, hang on though, if you don't have the resources to check these people out properly, then you should have few of them, surely? I mean, you're trying to run before you can walk.

NF: No, the party's been through a huge period of growth, I mean, our membership is up nearly 50% this calendar year, and inevitably we're going to have one or two teething problems. As I say, it is just a handful of embarrassments and none of it takes away from the fact that UKIP is fighting a big national campaign and we're making a real impact.

JH: Alright, well, let's have a look at the policies on which you're fighting that campaign, and you've got a few little problems there, haven't you? Your economic policy simply doesn't . . .

NF Well . . .

JH: . . . stack up, does it? I mean . . .

NF: It's really very funny, last week the Tories said we had an £80 billion black hole, this week they say it's £120 billion, and no doubt by Thursday they have played their joker and doubled it up to 240. They haven't read our 2010 manifesto, yes we made spending commitments, yes we gave aspirations for where we'd like the country to be in years to come, but we also, in that manifesto clearly spelled out £77 billion worth of cuts that needed to be made from public expenditure in this country. And they're deliberately, wilfully twisting the figures, which is a bit rich really when they're in a £130 billion black hole this year with the real economy.

JH: Alright, so let's cut to the chase then, you have abandoned the flat rate tax have you? That's gone?

NF: No.

JH: Oh, it hasn't gone?

NF: No, it hasn't gone at all.

JH: Oh.

NF: What we have said is we are having a debate in the party as to what the flat tax should be, and whether it should be one tier or two tier . . .

JH: (*interrupting*) You don't know how much it should be?

NF: . . . and that is an on-going debate that will form part of our manifesto for the next general election.

JH: So, a two tier flat tax then?

NF: I think it's quite possible, given that the tax code in Britain . . .

JH: (*speaking over*) It's not a flat tax in that case is it?

NF: Given, given that the tax code in Britain is now 13,000 pages long and the most complex bedevilling series of documents in the Western world, the argument for mass simplification is very, very clear. And politically, we have to decide, do we have just one rate or do we have another higher rate as well? And that's an normal internal debate that any party will have.

JH: (*speaking over*) Because I thought you'd settled on 25p in the pound?

NF: No, we certainly haven't . . .

JH: Oh.

NF: That was a policy proposal that was put to us . . .

JH: Right.

NF: . . . by one of our MEPs at the spring conference. It is good, healthy and natural that parties should debate policy, and that's exactly what we're doing. I can't dictate what the policy of UKIP is, it'll be the national executive committee that makes that decision.

JH: And, but can you tell me, give us a clue as to how much the tax cuts will add up to?

NF: No, because we have not formulated that policy.

JH: So it might be £90 billion or £200 billion, it might be?

NF: No, it's not going to be anything of that magnitude.

JH: Which one, £90 billion is that, that's . . .

NF: No, it'll be tens of billions, not hundreds, of course . . .

JH: (*speaking over*) It'll be tens of billions, right.

NF: But I mean just as . . . I mean, the Labour Party have no policy at all for the next election, at least we're engaged in a debate to try and get that policy right.

JH: Well, I suppose the difference with the Labour Party is they've got (*laughs*) and you might say this plays against them, but they do have a track record, you don't . . .

NF: (*speaking over*) A very bad one.

JH: . . . that's, that's your difficulty isn't it? You haven't been in government, so you can effectively, at least this is the impression a lot of people get, you can effectively say pretty much what you like, we've nothing to test you against. You don't have a record.

NF: (*speaking over*) Well, you know the mess we're in, given what the last government did . . .

JH: Well, I've acknowledged that (*laughs*)

NF: (*laughs*) And what this coalition's doing, that gives us a slight advantage. You know, the disadvantage UKIP has is we haven't done it before, and I agree with that. But the advantage UKIP has is that we are not made up of people who are part of the career political class. You know, nearly all of us have actually had jobs in the real world, and that is a very marked contrast to what I see on the front benches at Westminster today.

JH: But what sort of country would it be if you, if your party, was running it? I mean, the sort of things, The Times had an interesting leader on this yesterday, you'll have read it of course, it'd be a Britain in which it would once again be permissible to smoke in pubs, in which the Armed Forces would be restored to their former glory, in which there would be a grammar school in every town and schools would restore proper discipline. Are we getting there, I mean, is that the sort of . . .

NF: (*speaking over*) That all sounds pretty good to me.

JH: (*speaking over*) You like that idea, smoking in pubs?

NF: Why give up on the things . . . why give up on the things that work, and I would, I would pick up, if I can on grammar schools – the 7% of people that go to the private schools in this country are now dominating politics, the media and sport in a way they haven't done for 100 years. What is wrong with being a party that says, we want bright kid from poor backgrounds to have the best opportunities?

JH: Alright. Smoking ban has saved 40,000 lives, people reckon, but you'd bring it . . . you'd end it?

NF: Well, sensible countries like Germany brought in the smoking ban, realised how silly and completely illiberal it was and now in Northern Germany pubs and restaurants have separate smoking rooms which gives no offence and non-smokers, and lets people get on with their lives (*words unclear due to speaking over*)

JH: Right, so the lives that have been saved, and the number of people that have given up smoking because of the ban, that would all be just chucked out of the window?

NF: Well, there's a great danger, of course, with young people that if you ban things in many ways you make them more attractive.

JH: Right so . . .

NF: We are big enough, we are big enough and ugly enough to make our own decisions in our own lives, we don't need government doing it for us.

JH: Even if it saves lives and stops kids smoking and all that kind of thing, to hell with it, you'd just get shot of it?

NF: Well, you could ban chip shops, you could ban doughnuts, you could do all sorts of things.

JH: (*interrupting*) Oh, so the same sort of thing is it? Smoking and chip shops, same sort of thing?

NF: Well, I think obesity, actually, is killing more people in Britain now than smoking is. What we're saying is, it's up to people how they should live their lives, not the state.

JH: Right, so in other words we should be able to do pretty much what we like, you'd get rid of stuff like multiculturalism and inclusion and we'd, you know, the idea of climate change, that'd be slung in the dustbin as well, all that kind of thing, we'd chuck all that out?

NF: Well, I think the climate change arguments are going on and there is at least now a proper debate. But what we are absolutely certain of in UKIP is that wind energy is not the solution to climate change, even if there is a problem there in the first place.

JH: Isn't your problem that you're against an awful lot of things, immigration, the European Union, and (*words unclear*) but, but we're not quite clear what you're for, are we? What you seem to be doing and what you seem to have done for a very long time now is kind of talk like, you know, the taxi driver to the bloke in the back of the cab saying, 'I'll tell you what's wrong with this country mate.' And then you reel off a whole list of things, and everybody says, 'Right on!'

NF: Well, what we're for, we're for an independent self-confident, self-governing United Kingdom that believes in itself and changes its entire future course away from being obsessed with being part of Europe to actually linking out and forging new trade relationships and cultural relationships with the rest of the world. We are the modern, forward-looking party saying, we want a global future for Britain in the 21st-century, not to be tied to this completely outdated European model that is now making 75% of our laws.

JH: *(speaking over)* And if . . . and if you heard anybody else saying, the first part of that anyway, put aside the Europe bit, the first part of that, any other politicians say it, you say, 'What a load of rhetoric, what a load of promises.'

NF: Well, the point is we cannot engage with the rest of the world, we cannot form those relationships all the while we are part of the European Union, because membership of that club forbids us from doing so.

JH: *(speaking over)* Right, in that case, vote Tory and you'll get a referendum.

NF: Well, will you? You know, we've heard it all. . .

JH: *(interrupting)* Yes, he's promised, he's promised, he's promised, he's promised.

NF: . . . before . . . I know he has, he did before. He did before. It was called a cast-iron guarantee. *(words unclear due to speaking over)*

JH: *(speaking over)* So the Prime Minister is a liar, is he?

NF: He's telling us that in five years' time, if he wins the election, which looks pretty impossible, he will give us a referendum. I don't want to wait five years, the doors are opening on January 1 next year to 29 million people from Romania and Bulgaria, if we're going to have . . .

JH: *(word unclear speaking over)*

NF: . . . a referendum on this, let's have it this year.

JH: Nigel Farage, many thanks.

Transcript of BBC Radio 4, Today, 3rd May 2013, Local Election Results, 8.10am

All the package is transcribed, but only selected parts were focused on the EU and thus were included in word counts and statistics for the survey period.

EVAN DAVIS: The story so far in those elections yesterday, bearing in mind that most of the story will emerge in counts that start a little later this morning, UKIP have had a sensational night, they've been getting more than a quarter of the vote in the seats they've contested; the Lib Dems, hoping for a recovery after their success in the Eastleigh by-election have not got one - in fact, in the South Shields by-election, they got 1.4% of the vote; Labour have picked themselves up from the gutter they'd fallen into four years ago but are still stooping, they're hardly standing upright; and the Conservatives have taken a beating, as anticipated. Most, but not all of UKIP's gains are at the expense of the Tories. Well, one caricature of the results is they show mid-term protest and in the absence of the Lib Dems being available as a protest party that protest has all gone to UKIP. A second view of it suggests voters are voting for UKIP in large numbers because they like what it stands for. Well, we'll talk to Nigel Farage, leader of UKIP in a minute, but first, Nick Robinson, our political editor. Nick, it was almost as though there are two battles in politics, there's the one between the three main parties, Lib Dem, Tory, Labour, and one between established parties and the outsider party, UKIP.

NICK ROBINSON: Yes, and that's the key word, isn't it, 'established' - the establishment. The establishment labelled UKIP the clowns, the loonies, the fruitcakes and this was an election in which many, many voters, a quarter of the electorate in England have declared, 'send in the clowns' - they like the look, the sound, the feel of the clowns, when, in truth, they know very, very little about what UKIP stand for, what their policies are, and often don't know the candidates they were voting for. The impact of this overnight is on the other main parties. Why? Because they will now be agonising about how to react. We've already heard on this programme a Tory backbencher openly challenging the Prime Minister to call a parliamentary vote on an EU referendum. There will be some in the Labour Party who will angst about the need to appeal to their traditional white working class supporters and to extend their support further than they obviously have done in the south of England. The intriguing thing that has happened, I think, Evan, is this: that UKIP have changed from being a pressure group to a real political party. It was quite conceivable before this evening that UKIP would conclude after a referendum on Europe, 'game's up, we've done it, we've pressurised the parties to deliver what we wanted' - they now emerge as a party with councillors, possibly a share of power once the day is out in certain parts of the country, and that really matters, because it means they'll be scrutinised but they will also have roots and they'll be unwilling to tear them up. One just last note of caution, if I could - it has been an extraordinary night, but never forget, Labour did win the by-election, the Tories have won more councils and councillors, the Lib Dems are still much, much bigger than UKIP, UKIP have no MPs, no prospect of an MP under our current electoral system, unless politics changes dramatically, so it's an important moment but if you've woken up this morning and think Nigel Farage is a candidate for prime minister, I think even Mr Farage might disagree with that.

ED: Nick, thank you very much. And yes, Nigel Farage smiled as you said that. And good morning to you, Mr Farage.

NIGEL FARAGE: Good morning.

ED: Look, the big issue is whether this is just the usual kind of protest vote, mid-term blues and all of that or whether this is positive support for your party. What's your theory?

NF: We've been gaining momentum for the last two years, you know, by-election after by-election happened, and people say, 'goodness me, what a surprise, UKIP have done well'. And okay, the people that vote for us are rejecting the establishment, and quite right too, I understand that completely, three parties, three frontbenches that look the same and sound the same, and made up

of people who have basically have never had a job in the real world. But are they voting UKIP just to stick two fingers up and scream very loudly? Or are they voting UKIP because we are offering positive policy alternatives? And I remember the morning after Eastleigh, walking up the high street and meeting person after person who said, 'according to the news this morning, I'm a protester, no Nigel, I voted for you because I believe in what you stand for.'

ED: Well, what you stand for? What particular bit of what you stand for do you think is the most active ingredient of the success then, if we buy your theory. Is it the Europe thing?

NF: I think it's a mindset.

ED: Immigration?

NF: I think it's a mindset, I really do. I think we are run by career politicians who don't actually connect or talk in the same language that we do.

ED: But that just isn't, in a, saying it's a protest against the way the established parties are doing business, isn't it? And what we know about . . .

NF: *(interrupting)* Well, I think, I think they look at it, we've got three parties who've given away the ability to govern our own country, who's led us into near bankruptcy and who have pursued open-door immigration policies that have fundamentally changed virtually every city and market town in this country in the last ten years.

ED: What we know about protest parties though, if you'll accept my premise that, for the sake of argument, that it is perhaps a reflection of disenchantment with existing parties, what we know about protest votes is they come and they go, that they, in a way, you know, it is just something that passes with the wind.

NF: I don't think these votes are going away quickly. I really don't. And you know, the next big election that's coming up of course is a European election, which takes place this time next year, in which we will be positioned as the only party saying we should divorce ourselves from political union and have a simple free trade alternative, and I think in the run-up to 2015 UKIP's in a very strong position. Now, I accept . . .

ED: *(speaking over) (fragments of words, unclear)*

NF: I accept that when it comes to a general election, we have a problem, and that is the first past the post system, and that is difficult.

ED: *(speaking over)* Well, when the SDP were making enormous benefits in the early 1980s, they I think in the subsequent election, 1983, got six seats.

NF: Yeah, that's right, and the SDP didn't last very long but it won, because actually they finished up with Tony Blair, who was an SDP Prime Minister. They fundamentally changed the entire Labour Party. Foot and Benn and the hard left were all gone and you've got a new, modernising Labour Party with people like Peter Mandelson in strong positions, so if ever there was a pressure group in British politics, it was the SDP.

ED: Ooh, that's very interesting, because that is in a suggesting what you see the role of UKIP as being is not just about being a flash in the pan protest vote from one election to another, it's about . . . and it's not about winning a general election, which obviously, and our electoral system, you're not very likely to do.

NF: *(speaking under)* Yes, it's hard.

ED: It is about influencing the Conservative Party.

NF: We want to . . . well, it could be the Labour Party, who knows. But we want to fundamentally change British politics. And there is a very good example of this. You know, 25 years ago, the Reform Party in Canada started, everybody said, you're wasting your time and a first past the post system, they won one by-election and then at the next general election they were the biggest party in the Canadian Parliament. It can happen.

ED: Well you're sounding . . . I mean, that's a very interesting analysis. I mean, the active . . . the mechanism by which UKIP would then work would presumably be a reverse takeover of the Conservative Party.

NF: *(speaking over, laughter in voice)* Well, I mean, that would be quite a nice idea.

ED: And people suggest you'd like to be a Conservative peer, Boris Johnson says you're a Tory.

NF: Well, Boris can make his own mind up, and I don't think I am a Tory. I did support the radicalism that we saw economically in the 1980s. I mean, Britain is in a mess, and we need radical reform, and I am absolutely certain that getting back control of our country - and this is back to the Europe question which nobody, amongst the metropolitan elite wants to talk about, but actually there is now settled majority out there that wants us to get our country back, and we're the only people they can vote for putting that view.

ED: Nigel Farage, thank you very much for talking to us. Well, on the line and listening to that is Grant Shapps, Conservative party chairman, good morning to you.

GRANT SHAPPS: Morning.

ED: Give us your reaction to the results overall.

GS: Yeah, it's quite patchy so far of course, there have been seven county councils where we know the results, or pretty much know them. We still control five of them, Conservatives, two of them are no overall control, with the Conservatives the largest party. But we come off a very high base from the 2009 elections and I do want to acknowledge that lots of people have chosen to vote for not one of the three mainstream parties, so it hasn't been a great night for any of the mainstream parties in this election.

ED: The habit of course is to try and talk of results after they've been . . . but it's been a pretty dismal night, isn't it *(sic)* I suppose the Conservatives, the question for the Conservatives is how you react to the success of UKIP. Do you yield to UKIP, move in UKIP's direction, or do you just stand firm and do what you're doing, stick with your leader, stick with the modernisation of the Conservative Party and carry on, keep calm and carry on?

GS: Well, first of all, on the results I don't want to kind of either over-egg them or under-egg them, and I just make this simple point that we've actually had more votes in those seats, in those counties that have been counted than any other party and do still lead them, but I do accept you know, that people are sending quite a clear message, which is I think they're sort of impatient for change, they want the economy fixed, they want the welfare system sorted out, they want a government that is on the side of hard-working people, they want the immigration system resolved, and you know, a say over Europe as well, so I mean, I think, that is a very loud and clear message and what I really say this morning is 'We get it, we've heard you, we understand, and we are also anxious to make progress in all of those areas in the next couple of years.'

ED: John Baron, on the programme earlier, one of your MPs, suggesting that the best, simplest thing you could do straightaway to pull the carpet from under UKIP would be to bring forward legislation on a referendum, bring forward the legislation in this Parliament for a referendum on EU membership?

GS: Well, I mean, look, I think the results that we've seen so far, and there are of course many, many more to come today, this is only small snapshot, demonstrate that people have concerns and reasons for voting in different directions, including UKIP, which go beyond Europe. I mean, after all, this election was not about the EU, this was about who runs your street lights and your local schools. So I think that that would potentially be oversimplistic. What we need to do is grasp the issues that people care about. Now, on Europe, we are offering a referendum if we get a Conservative government next time round. On the deficit, we've cut a third of it so far, on immigration, we've cut a third of it so far . . .

ED: (*interrupting*) But what's interesting is everybody knew all, everybody knew all of those things before yesterday, and it hasn't sort of worked for you, has it?

GS: Well, I'm not . . .

ED: What's your analysis of, why for example, there hasn't been any change really, material change, in electoral support for the Conservatives since David Cameron promised that referendum in the next parliament? It doesn't appear to have . . . it was said at the time, maybe that would pull voters back from UKIP, if anything, it seems to have channelled more voters towards UKIP?

GS: No, I've never thought you do these things with, like, one simple silver bullet. People want serious governments who have a full programme of government, and by the way, you know, with UKIP for example, they will now presumably be exposed to the full rigour of tests and inspection by the media and other political parties in terms of their policies and their plans, to see if it all stacks up. I think people want to see that we have a plan to fix the economy, that it's working. And you say that people know, how many people listening to this programme actually knew that we have, for example, cut a third of the deficit? How many people know that we've cut a third of immigration?

ED: (*speaking over*) But you're basically saying . . .

GS: I think we have to take some of the responsibility for failing to get our own message out.

ED: But I think, I think, I think, then it sounds like you're saying, nothing needs to change we carry on doing everything we've been doing, because when we explain it to people they will support us. Or are you saying that something will change, in which case, what will change?

GS: No I mean, I'm actually almost saying the opposite. A lot needs to change and we need to change things faster, I think this is a vote that says, yes we have so far in the results we've seen . . .

ED: Yeah.

GS: . . . the Conservatives have topped the poll, but actually, we want you guys to go further and faster, we want you to change things quicker, and what sort of things? Well, we want more jobs created in this economy, we want to make sure that hard-working people are genuinely rewarded so it pays to go out and work, and yes, we want to see you to continue to control immigration, get that system back into, into, into control. And we want to see things in the longer-term like a referendum on Europe. I think people are saying all of this.

ED: (*speaking over*) You've been trying to create jobs, trying to curtail immigration, trying to create jobs, trying to get the economy moving, you've been trying to get the deficit down, you've been trying to do that three years haven't you? What actually changes? I mean you've just enunciated a lot of objectives that you've long had?

GS: Well, let me give you one simple example.

ED: Okay.

GS: In the last few weeks you've seen a lot of talk about changes to the welfare system which will ensure for the first time that work always pays in this country. That's something that has taken three years from getting into government to legislating, to putting the pieces in place, till last week, the very first person would have been able to pick up the universal credit, that's the thing which ensures it always pays to work. These changes take a long time and what I'm suggesting is, in the next couple of years, we need to not only have legislated in all these different areas, but make sure that people actually recognise the changes in their own lives and see that the Conservatives are the party on the side of hard-working people in this country.

ED: Grant . . .

GS: If we can demonstrate that, then at the next election the choice between Ed Miliband and David Cameron will be clear, with David Cameron being the person who is really offering the proper choice for this country.

ED: Grant Shapps, thank you very much indeed. And we will be talking to Tom Watson of the Labour Party in the next half-hour too.

Transcript of BBC Radio 4, Today, 15th May 2013, Yesterday in Parliament, 6.46am

JOHN HUMPHRYS: The Prime Minister's draft bill for a referendum on Europe has failed to dissuade Conservative MPs from trying to vote against the Queen's Speech. The issue of Britain's relationship with Europe has dominated debate in the Commons this week, as Sean Curran reports.

SEAN CURRAN: A few days ago, clowns were all the rage in British politics, as, in the wake of the local elections headline writers and commentators seized on Kenneth Clarke's description of UKIP. This week, 'fruitcake' is in fashion.

DAVID DAVIES: But it was the fruitcakes who warned against the euro 10 years ago, we were all accused of being fruitcakes then, the fruitcakes were right. Fruitcake is a cheap and reliable source of energy, I'm for fruitcakes, I'm proud to be a fruitcake, long may fruitcakes continue.

SC: Crumbs. That was a Conservative, David TC Davies, having an 'I am Spartacus' moment in the Commons. Later today, we'll find out if the speaker, John Bercow, will allow a vote on an amendment regretting that the Queen's speech didn't include legislation paving the way for a referendum on the UK is mentioned with the European Union. Mr Bercow is playing his cards close to his chest, but he's not keen on all this fruitcake talk.

MR BERCOW: Let's not pursue this exchange, whether in relation to fruitcakes or a prospective amendment that has not been selected.

SC: David Cameron will miss the vote, if it comes, and Prime Minister's Questions because he's in America. And when MPs turned up to have their regular question and answer session with George Osborne, they discovered that he too was missing.

DANNY ALEXANDER: My Right Honourable Friend the Chancellor is in Brussels today at the Ecofin Council, exercising the considerable influence that Britain enjoys as a full member of the European Union.

SC: That was Mr Osborne's Liberal Democrat deputy, the chief secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander. Now, of course, the Lib Dems are much more keen on the European Union than their Conservative coalition partners. And Mr Alexander found himself in an unusual position. For once, Labour MPs, like Heidi Alexander, agreed with him.

HEIDI ALEXANDER: Could one of the ministers here today explained to me exactly how publishing a bill for an EU referendum in four years' time will 1) create jobs, 2) attract investment and 3) secure Britain's future in the global economy.

DA: I don't think it would achieve any of those objectives, and that's why, and that's why I don't support it.

SC: But not all the questions were as helpful are straightforward. The longest serving member of the Commons, the Conservative Sir Peter Tapsell, reminded Mr Alexander last weekend finance ministers and central bankers from the world's richest countries had attended a summit in Buckinghamshire.

SIR PETER TAPSELL: Well, the finance ministers in Aylesbury last weekend seemed to be remarkably cheerful, that the Archbishop of Toledo was warning that their fiscal policies were threatening to cause social breakdown and the overthrow of democracy in Spain and in much of southern Europe.

DA: I'm afraid I had noted the comments of the Archbishop of Toledo, though I did notice the successful G7 finance ministers meeting, Mr Speaker.

SC: Later, during a debate on the contents of the Queen's speech, the former leader of the Liberal Democrats, Menzies Campbell, said the arguments about the UK's relationship with the European Union reminded him of John Major's time as Prime Minister - and not in a good way.

MENZIES CAMPBELL: If we undermine the authority of our Prime Minister, we will undermine the credibility of our government. And if we undermine the credibility of our government, we will undermine the economic objectives of that government. And this is all the more the case, Mr Speaker, when the coalition agreement contains a perfectly rational mechanism for a referendum if there is constitutional change. Is it rational to spend the next two years on a fractious and divisive debate over Europe, when so much remains to be done?

SC: But a Conservative, David Ruffley said that the time had come for a national debate about the costs and benefits of the UK's membership of the EU.

DAVID RUFFLEY: I do regret the absence of a referendum bill in the gracious speech and in the case of any hypothetical amendment so regretting that omission, I will be gleefully and proudly supporting it.

SC: And we won't have to wait long to find out if the hypothetical is about to become a reality.

Transcript of BBC Radio 4, Today, 17th May 2013, Yesterday in Parliament, 6.44am

SARAH MONTAGUE: The Conservatives' draft bill on a referendum on Europe will be put to Parliament after a Eurosceptic backbench MP volunteered to champion it. James Wharton finished top of the ballot for private member's bills, which allow individual MPs to put forward legislation on the topic of their choice. Downing Street says the Prime Minister's very pleased that that he's taken the bill on, and promised he'll have the full support of the Conservative Party. Sean Curran reports.

SEAN CURRAN: As a dramatic parliamentary week draws to a close, what have we learned?

ANGELA EAGLE: We have a Conservative Party determined to prove that Karl Marx was right.

SC: Now, be honest, in the wake of the big Commons vote on an EU referendum, that wasn't what you were thinking, was it? Unless, of course, like Labour's shadow leader of the Commons, Angela Eagle, you'd been brushing up on your Karl Marx quotes.

AE: In The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon, Karl Marx said, 'History repeats itself, first as tragedy and second as farce.' Well, it seems with the antics last night we are firmly in the farcical stage.

SC: On Wednesday night, more than 100 Conservatives voted for a motion regretting that there was no referendum bill in this year's Queen's Speech. But that isn't the end of the story. It's not even the beginning of the end. And the start of the day, the deputy speaker, Lindsay Hoyle announced the result of the annual private member' bill ballot.

LINDSAY HOYLE: Last but not least, and the winner of the day is . . . shake them up, David, good stir.

UNNAMED SPEAKER: John McDonald

LH: (*laughs*) Again? 199. James Wharton.

SC: And within minutes, the winner of this legislative tombola, the Conservative backbencher, James Wharton, confirmed that he would bring forward draft legislation paving the way for a referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union. A Labour MP, Kevin Brennan, suggested that in future the private member's bill ballot could be held like an FA Cup draw.

KEVIN BRENNAN: Although I accept football is different, because there, they're all looking for a good draw to get into Europe, and like his Little Englander party want a good draw to be able to get out of Europe.

SC: It can be notoriously tricky for a lone MP without the clout of the government to fall back on, to change the law. Only a limited amount of time set aside to debate private member's bills, and opponents can simply talk them out. Angela Eagle made those comments about Karl Marx as she teased the leader of the Commons, Andrew Lansley, about Wednesday's vote.

AE: As the Tory party descended into chaos, the Prime Minister shared with us his unique concept of firm leadership - proclaim that you're intensely relaxed; leave the country; blame the Liberal Democrats; panic and rush to publish an entirely spurious private member's bill, which contains no implementation clause, and no money resolution.

SC: Ms Eagle said the vote had been the 35th Conservative rebellion over the EU since the election. Andrew Lansley told her she got it all wrong, there had been no rebellion.

ANDREW LANSLEY: The government did not have a policy on the question of whether there should be an EU referendum bill, there was not a policy of the government, so voting for the

amendment last night, which many of my colleagues on the Conservative benches, and indeed, members from her party and indeed, Liberal Democrat member, voting for that amendment was not voting against government policy, because the government didn't have a policy against it.

SC: A leading Tory Eurosceptic Peter Bone was pleased that that Parliament had been at the centre of political debate this week.

PETER BONE: There were 117 coalition MPs, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats who voted for the amendment, and only 36 who voted against. Could we have a statement next week from the appropriate minister, to explain how we get government legislation introduced? Is it the fact that the Deputy Prime Minister has a complete veto, despite what coalition MPs voted for?

SC: It's a good job he didn't hear the former Tory MP turned Lib Dem peer Lord Dykes offer this advice to David Cameron about how to handle Europe.

LORD DYKES: Wouldn't the obvious solution therefore, because of agreement by those two, to assign any negotiations to the Deputy Prime Minister, and other (*laughter from house*) and other Liberal Democrat ministers in the Cabinet who have excellent relations with other EU member states and could help to exorcise the Tory Demons of xenophobia.

SC: The former leader of UKIP, Lord Pearson, had a slightly different approach.

LORD PEARSON: As a first step towards closing down the whole ill-fated project of European integration, why doesn't Her Majesty's Government propose the abolition of the euro, with all its participants returning to national currencies?

SC: But let's not get ahead of ourselves. In a few weeks' time the bill on an EU referendum will be debated for the first time. Downing Street has confirmed that all Conservative MPs will be under orders to vote for the proposals. Labour and the Liberal Democrats are expected to oppose them. And that will be the start of a brand-new parliamentary battle.

Transcript of BBC Radio 4, Today, 17th May 2013, Nigel Farage Ambush, 8.47am

SARAH MONTAGUE: The UKIP leader Nigel Farage says protesters who disrupted his party's news conference in Edinburgh yesterday were 'fascist scum'. He needed a police escort to escape the pub after he was heckled by an angry crowd. Well, Mr Farage joins us on the line, good morning.

NIGEL FARAGE: Good morning.

SM: Fascist scum? Is that how you describe them?

NF: Very much so, filled with total and utter hatred of the English and not prepared to engage and debate at all, and I have to say, you know, if this is the face of Scottish nationalism, it's pretty ugly.

SM: What actually happened yesterday?

NF: Well I came to Edinburgh, I was speaking at a business dinner, but I did a small press conference very close to the Scottish Parliament, really to say that hitherto UKIP has been a very weak party in Scotland, but that now the whole independence debate with a referendum coming up, the EU was now becoming a major factor in Scottish politics, and that I believe that Alex Salmond's recipe for an independent Scotland, but staying part of the European Union, frankly doesn't work, and before we knew it, we were overwhelmed by a sort of flash student processed.

SM: Do you think it reflects a wider feeling in Scotland about you?

NF: I really, sincerely, do not believe that 50 yobs, not prepared to engage in debate and being threatening and unpleasant represent ordinary, decent Scottish people. Now, I absolutely refuse to accept that.

SM: Do you think the suggest you might need a different message in Scotland than you have in the rest of the country?

NF: Not really, no. I mean, I fully accept that the Scottish Parliament is here to stay, I fully accept devolution within a modern United Kingdom, but I think independence from the European Union is just as vital to Scotland as it is for the rest of the United Kingdom. And there is a by-election coming up for the Scottish Parliament in Aberdeen South, and I think that the SNP, or elements of the SNP are very worried that the UKIP message could get some traction up here.

SM: So, you'll carry on campaigning up there, without being worried about where you're going to have to take refuge?

NF: Well, it was a slightly odd experience being locked in a pub, (*laughs*) it's not quite happened to me before, you know, look, I didn't enjoy it, it wasn't very nice, but it doesn't change the arguments one bit. For some reason the British media has never talked about the excesses of Scottish nationalism and how deeply unpleasant they can be.

SM: Are you suggesting that this was directed by the higher up in the SNP, or even that they were involved?

NF: No, but these people were supporters of Scottish nationalism, virulently opposed to the English, all sorts of suggestions as to what we could do with the Union Jack. And I would like to hear Alex Salmond come out and condemn this sort of behaviour, and I challenge him today to do that.

SM: But surely, just given your experiences in England I wonder that you're tying Alex Salmond to their behaviour?

NF: Well, you know, if anybody from UKIP says anything on Facebook that is anyway homophobic or mildly racist, you guys jump down my throat and demand that I condemn them and expel them from the party, which of course I do. And it's about time Scottish nationalism was put under the same level of scrutiny.

SM: So it's right that we do that to you, and you will do that to Scottish . . . to those who protest in Scotland?

NF: Well, I think it's long been known in Scotland that there are some elements of Scottish nationalism in the SNP that are deeply unpleasant, and this needs to be talked about.

SM: I'm, I'm . . . it's striking how much you are tying what happened to you yesterday to the SNP.

NF: They were all campaigners for independence, they were all people who vote SNP, they were all united by hatred of the English, the Union Jack and everything that the United Kingdom represents. I was there, in the middle of it . . .

SM: Do you think Alex Salmond hates the English?

NF: I don't know. I would rather hope that he doesn't, but I do think that here in Edinburgh there is such a level of intimidation that people are now scared to speak out.

SM: Some people, of course, will suggest that actually it suggests all politicians should be very careful with their language in terms of what reaction it might lead to.

NF: Well, I generally am very careful with my language. But, you know, I have never been anywhere around the United Kingdom where I met people, even those with a completely contrary view, that I wasn't able to have a discussion or a debate with. And this was just a hate mob, and nothing less than that.

SM: And for those who say this shows that UKIP is an English nationalist party, what would you say to them?

NF: I would say, we have elected representation from Wales in the European Parliament, we are the only UK party that now has representation in Stormont in Northern Ireland, we're the only UK party that will be fighting the European elections in every part of the United Kingdom. And the fact that . . .

SM: (*interrupting*) Apart from Scotland.

NF: Well no, of course we're fighting . . . you know, we will be fighting the European elections in Scotland and we will win a seat in Scotland in the European elections next year. You know, this party has grown rapidly in England and it will now do so in Scotland, and I think some people would rather that we were intimidated out of being in the race, but that simply isn't going to work.

SM: Nigel Farage, thank you very much.

Transcript of BBC Radio 4, Today, 4th June 2013, Labour and EU Membership, 8.32am

SARAH MONTAGUE: It's not just the Conservatives that can't agree on Europe. Ed Miliband is facing pressure from within his own party, from those who want him to offer the British people a referendum on our membership of the EU. Labour for a Referendum is a new group being launched today, and it's being bankrolled by the businessman John Mills, who is chairman of the home products company JML, and he's here in the studio with me. Good morning..

JOHN MILLS: Good morning to you.

SM: Ed Miliband hasn't ruled out a referendum as he?

JM: He did make a speech earlier on this year which indicated that he wasn't at all keen on having one. But I think the Labour Party would be unwise to rule out having a referendum before the run-up to the next general election. A lot can happen over the next two years.

SM: You're saying they would be wise *not* to rule out?

JM: No, I think, well I think better still, they should support having a referendum.

SM: You want a referendum and you want one soon?

JM: Yes, I think the sooner the better, I think the uncertainty about whether Britain is going to stay in the EU or not is bad for business and bad generally. I think we need to get a decision taken.

SM: And to be clear, you would vote 'no' in any referendum?

JM: I'd vote 'no' in the present circumstances, yes. But I think that the vast bulk of the population would like to see our terms of membership renegotiated to something more towards what they thought they'd gone into in 1975, a free trade area without all the rest of the Federalist superstructure that we've got. And if this could be achieved as a result of renegotiation, I think you might get a different result, I think people then may want to stay in.

SM: Okay. And how much support do you have from within the Labour Party?

JM: Well, we've got 15 MPs signed up whose names are on our website, but I think there's a much wider of more tacit support within the Labour Party, perhaps, I don't know, a third of MPs wouldn't be against at all at the moment having a referendum in the manifesto, not least because the polls very clearly show that people do want to have the opportunity to take a decision on whether we stay in the EU or not.

SM: What about David Cameron's position on this, which is that he'll go away, renegotiate and then come back and put that to a referendum?

JM: Well I think that's not an unreasonable stance at all. I mean, this is supported by one of the other organisations with which I'm involved, which is Business for Britain, that's very much the stance that we encourage should happen.

SM: But I can't help wondering, because you have been a significant donor, I think you've donated more than £1.5 million in company shares to Labour, and yet you've accused Ed Miliband I think of being policy light, that was your words.

JM: Well, this was on economic policy where I think there's a general problem in this country which is that none of the parties, either the Conservative Party or the Lib Dems or the Labour Party have got a very clear idea about how to get the economy to grow more robustly and to get

unemployment down. And I think that the speech that Ed Balls made yesterday, a number of proposals which are positive were produced, but I think there is still a danger that we're going to finish up, if we're not very careful, with 10 years or so, or perhaps longer, austerity and no growth. And this seems to me to be a very daunting prospect.

SM: And as far as a Miliband goes do you support his leadership of the party?

JM: Yes, very strongly, very strongly.

SM: You support him very strongly, you just don't like what he's doing either on Europe or on economic policy.

JM: Well I support the Labour Party very broadly on a large proportion of the policies it wants to pursue. I do have some disagreements about putting a commitment to a referendum in the next general election, and I would like to do all I can, and work with other people, if that's going to be possible to see whether we can get a more successful prospect for the economy into Labour's next manifesto.

SM: And is it the sort of thing that you would take a decision about where you put your money?

JM: Not really, I mean, I've been a lifelong supporter of the Labour Party through thick and thin, and I'll go on doing that.

SM: John Mills, thank you very much.

APPENDIX IV

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS NEWS REPORTS

April 8: Pedro Passos Coelho, Portuguese prime minister said his country would be sticking to EU spending, despite a high court ruling. Then an exploration in Business Update whether austerity was hurting Spain and Portugal. Simon Jack pushed especially hard on that.

April 10: Mentioned that George Soros had criticised Germany's role in the euro crisis, and had recommended the collectivising of EU debts and that Germany could leave the euro because its behaviour had been unhelpful. Richard Jeffrey of Cazenove said the German currency was so strong – and sucking money out of other economies – that unless the country made permanent fiscal transfers to southern Europe, it might endanger the survival of the euro. It was noted in a separate item that problems of the euro indicated that – in the context of possible Scottish independence – currency union was 'hard work'.

April 11: Olli Rehn, European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, said the British economy needed reform to achieve sustainable growth. He refused to be drawn on whether austerity should be abandoned in favour of growth. He also asserted that the EU had done the right thing with Cyprus and that the main problem had been delay in implementing the bailout. It was mentioned that George Soros had called for the 'mutualisation' of debt across the EU, and for Germany to leave the eurozone. Simon Jack said it was nonsense to suggest that the EU was a club of equals; it was now one country (Germany) and then everyone else. Olli Rehn said it was vital everyone worked together. Simon Jack then suggested that the eurozone was dying the death of a thousand cuts, and despite what Brussels said this was leading to economic paralysis. Matina Stevis of the Wall Street Journal said that a heart attack had been avoided and no member states had dropped out 'and that's progress'. She said that there had been crises, but the currency was 'resilient'. She was asked about Italy. Simon Jack said the message from Olli Rehn was that if there was a credible plan, you did not need austerity, the foot could be taken of the accelerator in that respect.

April 15: Bernard Lucke, leader of a new political party in Germany, said there needed to be devaluation of some currencies to ensure the survival of the euro. It was stated that he was outlining the politically obvious. Simon Jack said that only 15% of the members of British Chambers of Commerce saw the relationship with the EU as positive. John Longworth said his members wanted renegotiation, especially of employment law, health and safety and regional policies. Mr Longworth said that renegotiation was better than leaving the EU, and was more likely to be accepted by his members. Simon Jack suggested that no one among his members was suggesting leaving. Mr Longworth said that was a much better position to go into a referendum. Simon Jack added asked if it was 'fairly predictable' what his members thought – 'just members of the business community agreeing with Mr Cameron'. Mr Longworth said his members had wanted a referendum before Mr Cameron did, and suggested he was in a strong negotiating position to ask for change, because the UK had a huge trade deficit with the EU. Mr Jack said the can of worms would be open for five years. Mr Longworth said it would have been better if negotiations had started earlier.

April 16: An item explored why the carbon market in the EU was suffering problems. The programme guest said the programme was not working because nothing was being done to get investment in renewables.

April 25: It was reported that the ECB had moved away from the mood music of 'unrelenting austerity' and was now allowing the bond market to perform well.

April 29: Simon Jack said that the EU's retail redistribution review had led to a sharp fall in the number of financial advisers because they could no longer take commissions on products.

May 2: It was said that the ECB, because of its federalist structure, did not have the same capacity to take risks as other banks did. Lena Komileva, managing director and chief economist at G+ Market Economics, added there was an acute need for the ECB to start supporting growth.

May 6: It was said that the new government in Italy had stabilised the economy and was now making anti-austerity noises.

May 8: Simon Jack said that the IoD wanted measures in the Queen's Speech to facilitate a reduction in the impact of the EU, including deregulation of the employment market. Simon Walker, of the IoD, in answer to a question whether the IoD agreed with Lord Lawson's view that the UK should leave the EU on economic grounds, said his members mainly wanted renegotiation 'and that's the general view of the business community'.

May 9: It was noted that Slovenia was announcing financial reforms after its credit rating had been reduced to junk status.

May 15: Simon Jack said that the offices of several oil firms had been raided in connection with alleged price-fixing. Marie Diron, senior economist with Ernst & Young, noting that France's economy remained in recession, said that reforms were necessary. She added that the eurozone crisis was past its peak as a result of really significant action by the ECB. In the business news update at 7.14am, Simon Jack said that the political agenda had been dominated by the 'internal convulsions' of the Conservative party 'with confused messages coming from the government'. Sir Roger Carr, president of the CBI, and chairman of Centrica, was introduced as a signatory of a letter to the FT warning about the pitfalls of David Cameron trying to renegotiate the terms of EU membership. He said that the possibility of the referendum meant there was no longer clarity about EU membership and that was needed. He said any negotiations must be conducted constructively and must be done in the understanding that the UK was part of Europe, not an isolated country. Simon Jack said Norway and Switzerland managed OK outside the EU and it was not the 'death knell' if Britain withdrew. Sir Roger said the EU must be dealt with positively so that the EU could compete. Mr Jack asked if recent anti-EU feeling was to do with poor economic performance and the recent economic hardship in the EU. He said:

If that's the case, that might subside by 2017, we might have an ultracompetitive eurozone which is firing on all cylinders. Then we'd be mad to leave?

Sir Roger repeated that the way forward was to make the EU more competitive. Mr Jack said meanwhile David Cameron was in Washington, selling the benefits of an EU-US trade accord. He suggested that this was 'shambolic really'. Sir Roger said Mr Obama had said it was a good idea for the UK to stay in the EU.

May 17: Andrew Price said that a business summit in Brussels had called for closer integration in Europe. French investor John Schmidt, who had attended, said there was strong optimism about a more integrated Europe and a strong desire to bring it about. In business update, Mark Price, of Waitrose, said that uncertainty about the referendum – which might lead to there being no free trade agreement – was hitting business prospects. He added that the uncertainty was limiting confidence in investment in the UK. He predicted that 'parochial' national government would find it increasingly difficult to affect the overall trade agenda. In future, things would be done collectively.

May 20: James Emmett, global head of trade at HSBC, noted that the UK was looking for markets other than the EU, and trade to the rest of the world had now overtaken EU exports. Justin Urquhart Stewart, co-founder and director of Seven Investment Management, reacting to a letter

from a group of business leaders which claimed that Eurosceptic MPs were putting politics before business, said there was no coherent voice from business on this issue, and the letter simply indicated that a debate on the topic was beginning.

May 21: Robert Reich, a US political economist, discussing efforts to ensure that big companies paid more tax, said that the UK without the EU had far less bargaining power than Britain with the EU, because the EU could speak for a much larger trading bloc.

May 24: It was noted that the EU carbon market had effectively collapsed. There was demand for an EU-wide price floor, and call for reform by the EU so that it was more effective in curbing emissions.

May 28: There was examination of the impact on the EU of the Chinese 'dumping' solar panels.

May 29: Sarah Hewin, head of European research at Standard Chartered, said that reports from the OECD and the European Commission would show that labour costs in France continued to be high and uncompetitive. She said the main message would be moving away from 'unrelenting austerity' in France and Spain so that they could get their deficit to less than 3% of GDP. She said the European Commission was much more focused now on stimulating growth.

May 31: Simon Jack challenged Manfred Bergmann, the Director for Indirect Taxation and Tax Administration at the European Commission about the Financial Transactions Tax, putting it to him that Sweden thought the tax insane. Mr Bergmann insisted it would not lead to distortions in the market.

June 4: The reasons why Latvia wanted to join the euro were investigated. It was said that this was because it was seen as a security against Russia.

June 5: Maria Paola Toschi, strategist at JP Morgan Asset Management, said that the Greek economy was improving, indicating that EU support was working.

June 7: Simon Jack said that the European Commission was considering taking control over LIBOR, currently based in London. Steve Maijoor, Libor chairman, said that although there had been problems in the past with regulation, new benchmarks were being published. He said he could not comment on the European Commission proposals until they were properly published. It was noted that the EU had responded to Chinese 'dumping' of solar panels on European markets by imposing tariffs.

June 11: Simon Jack, in an item about a group which had challenged the legality of the German EU bailout policy, asked whether it was being led by 'nationalist crackpots'. Dr Holger Schmieding, Berenberg's chief economist, strongly defended the ECB on the ground that it was the only major central bank that had not bought government bonds in the previous 16 months. He did not think the court action would succeed because the "ECB is the best of the bunch".

June 20: Marie Diron, of Ernst & Young, said that a report by her company into the eurozone, said that in future – against a background of a very long recession – fiscal policy (as it had been now revised and re-framed) should not be as much a restraint to growth and economic activity as it had been. She said that the eurozone was now more secure, but not to the point where companies wanted to invest again.

June 27: Tom Burrridge, reporting from Spain, said youth unemployment was at 50%. It was also said that Italian government had been forced to deny claims it had rigged its finances to enter the euro. Christian Schulz, of Berenberg Bank, said it was alleged that the government used financial products to pull their deficit down below 3% to meet the Maastricht criteria for joining, and had lost €8bn in the process. He said that as the worst of the eurozone crisis was over, this probably did not really matter and pointed out that markets had responded with relief that the figures were not worse.

June 28: In an item about the history of Eurobonds, Tanya Beckett noted that when the euro was launched, 'it created a currency of enormous dominance that could also play a large role' (alongside Eurobonds). Tim Skeet, managing director of the financial institutions group at RBS, said the euro remained a big deep pool of liquidity on a par with the dollar. He said that although people argued where it was going, a future could be anticipated which showed 'very significant flows'.