



News-watch's Research into the
BBC's Coverage of the EU
1999 - 2016



Overview

Between 1999 and 2015 News-watch tracked more than six thousand hours of BBC programming and analysed its coverage of the European Union news and current affairs. This generated thousands of pages of programme logs and more than eight thousand full transcripts of EU-related items containing over four million words. It was the largest sustained monitoring of the BBC ever undertaken. In the period leading up to the 2016 referendum on Britain's membership of the EU and beyond, News-watch deployed new technologies which facilitated the recording and archiving of all BBC News and Current Affairs content, across all the Corporation's radio and television channels, amounting to an additional 7,900 hours of programme content.

In this 17 years of monitoring, News-watch has recorded large-scale and sustained bias in the BBC's coverage. This has included:

- Massive bias by omission, with key issues ignored or under-reported, and EU-related news afforded low priority or downplayed.
- Systematic and long-term inequalities in the numbers of Pro-EU and Eurosceptic guests voicing their opinions. A ratio of 4:3.
- The 'withdrawal' case has been heavily ignored or presented very narrowly, often through the prism of divisions within the Conservative party, or through focusing primarily on perceived problems within UKIP.
- UKIP itself has been disproportionately derided as a 'one-trick pony', inept, and venal.
- The argument for withdrawal when linked to immigration issues has been regularly if not systematically painted as xenophobic, racist and 'extreme'.
- Alternatives to EU membership have rarely been investigated from business or economic perspectives.
- Discussion of the left-wing case for withdrawal has been pitifully rare.
- News-watch has identified clear differences in tone and treatment of Eurosceptic and 'out' guests compared to their pro-EU counterparts, including a higher rate of interruptions during interviews and the recurrent use of negative language and stereotypes.



Key Statistics from News-watch's Pre-Referendum Monitoring

- In the editions of Today monitored by News-watch between 2002 and 2015, a total of 5,037 guest speakers contributed to the EU debate on the Today programme. Of these, 1950 (38.7%) were in favour of the EU or its legislation, 1458 (29.1%) were against the EU or its legislation and 1619 (32.1%) expressed a neutral opinion or provided a factual overview. **This equates to an approximate ratio of 4:3.** Before the 2005 Wilson inquiry, the inequality was worse. In 485 individual editions of Today between 2002 and 2004, 63% of those who offered political opinions were broadly pro-European, compared to 37% who were broadly Eurosceptic – a ratio of approximately 2:1.
- Those explicitly supporting withdrawal from the EU were marginalised consistently in the years leading up to the EU referendum. In News-watch's earliest surveys, so few withdrawalist speakers were invited onto the programme that there was no coding category set up to reflect their appearances; on the few occasions they did appear, they were simply placed into the broader 'Eurosceptic' category along with most of the Conservative Party. News-watch categorised all withdrawalist speakers who appeared on Radio 4's Today in its survey periods for thirteen years between September 2002 and July 2015. In the monitored editions, Today included 5037 guest speakers on EU themes, but only 172 of these speakers (3.4%) were identifiably 'withdrawalist.' This was in spite of widespread public support (often 50%+) for a referendum on Britain's EU membership, and increasing support for withdrawal from voters across the political spectrum.
- Of the 172 withdrawalist speakers featuring on Today in News-watch's surveys between 2002 and 2015, the majority were from UKIP (72%), and 33% were from Nigel Farage alone. There were only five appearances by left-wing supporters of withdrawal, equating to just 0.1% of the 5,037 contributions to the EU debate.
- In special tracking between 2005 and 2011, withdrawalist interviewees were asked 182 direct questions by Today's presenters and correspondents. 54 of these questions were on matters not relating to the EU at all – for example questions about domestic policy, or about leadership or personality. 18 questions were on general issues



concerning EU projects or legislation. **Only 20 questions** – 11% of the total direct questions put – were on the issue of withdrawal. Thus, in the 1073 surveyed editions of Today there was an average of one question on withdrawal **for every 54 editions or every 153 programme hours**. Explanation of withdrawal-related policies by withdrawalist speakers between 2005 and 2011 amounted to only 5761 words - approximately 40 minutes of airtime. This was three ten thousandths (0.03%) of the space available to Today editors. To put this 40 minutes into perspective, Today devoted 86 minutes of its airtime to overwhelmingly positive coverage of the launch of euro notes and coins in just **a single edition** of the programme on 1 January 2002.

- The monitoring has also found bias in coverage of significant EU events. For example, Vox pop contributions during the launch of the euro in 2002 were in the ratio of 5:1 in favour of the single currency. In Today's coverage of the EU's 'Enlargement Summit' in October 2002, 12 speakers expressed pro-EU sentiment, but there was no inclusion of Eurosceptic opinion.
- A Radio 4 series 'Inside the British Presidency', broadcast in 2006, examined the British tenure of the EU's rotating presidency. There were three half-hour episodes. Astonishingly, none of the 39 speakers – who between them provided 168 separate sound bite contributions – offered a Eurosceptic or withdrawalist perspective on events. Home Secretary Jack Straw became the de facto narrator and his viewpoint amounted to 25% of the words spoken by guest contributors.
- In a special series on withdrawal on the Today programme in January 2001, a programme poll found that 30% of Britons wanted to leave the EU. But there was no analysis of this finding other than from Remainers. Of 55 minutes coverage in three days of items that were supposedly exploring the case for withdrawal, only five very short sentences, amounting to just 35 seconds of airtime, were actually delivered by someone putting the case for coming out. There were no detailed interviews with anyone in favour of withdrawal – the main focus was on Remainers.
- On the day that David Cameron announced the EU referendum (January 23, 2013), Newsnight devoted an entire programme to the story, with a collection of guests comprising 18 pro-EU speakers and only one withdrawalist. A complaint by News-



watch was not upheld because under the BBC's impartiality guidelines the Prime Minister's announcement was not seen to be a 'major matter' and the gross inequality was therefore deemed perfectly acceptable.

- During its 2015 General Election Survey, 25 speakers spoke about the EU referendum in the Today programme's business coverage. Two guests gave a neutral response; two speakers (both from the CBI) said they saw the referendum decision as a matter for government but indicated that they were pro-EU generally and supported continued British membership, albeit with reforms, and two (both Conservative politicians) said they were in favour of the referendum, but from the perspective of wishing to remain within a reformed EU. The remaining 19 speakers all saw the in/out referendum as a worry or a threat to business. Not a single guest offered an argument in support of the 'out' perspective. The overriding narrative in the selection of guests was that 'business doesn't like uncertainty', and that an in/out referendum would be a cause of such uncertainty. Certainly, audiences were offered no perspective that might position the in/out referendum as an opportunity for business or the wider economy.
- Analysis of tone, language, questioning and argument have brought to light grave problems with how the withdrawal case is examined. For example, Today has reported on a psychologist drawing parallels between UKIP and 'the hooligans who besmirch Britain's reputation abroad', interviewed the head of a religious think-tank who labelled the party 'unchristian' and 'selfish', and repeated innumerable times – in both Today and across the wider television and radio schedule – that David Cameron had commented that UKIP were a party of 'fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists'.
- Perhaps the most sustained attack on the withdrawalist perspective came in an opinion piece by Mark Mardell on the Today programme ahead of the 2009 Elections to the European Parliament. In a precursor to an interview with Nigel Farage, he used almost every available stereotype and slur against UKIP, and this opinion piece probably still stands as the clearest example of invective by a BBC journalist towards a withdrawalist speaker in 17 years of monitoring (See Appendix III)

- The 2005 Wilson Report raised the issue of bias by omission within the BBC's EU coverage, and that 'the BBC News agenda understates the importance and relevance of the EU in the political and daily life of the UK.'¹ In the period leading up to Wilson News-watch had regularly published data² in a large surveys which suggested that EU news tended to be given a low priority – for example, news about the work and processes of the EU were often side-lined in programmes or parts of programmes with the smallest audience, or ignored altogether. Even after Wilson, and despite public claims by the BBC that the volume and depth of EU coverage had been increased, News-watch recorded no evidence to justify this claim.³
- There have been regular insinuations from BBC journalists and guests that EU politics is a 'dull' issue. In the period before the publication of the Wilson report, one of Today's main EU correspondents, Tim Franks has openly and on air, called EU politics 'dreary', suggested that his audience might 'turn over and go back to sleep', and proposed a new collective noun: 'a depression of summits'.⁴ This negativity subsided following the publication of Wilson, but has started to reappear – indicating that little has changed within the BBC mindset. In April 2008, Jonny Dymond referred to himself as 'a devotee of dull meetings about the EU' and explained how he had been 'stunned' by a large turnout for a public meeting in Cork to debate the Irish Referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.⁵

¹ Independent Panel Report, BBC News Coverage of the European Union, January 2005, p8

² <http://news-watch.co.uk/monitoring-projects-and-reports/>

³ For example, in October 2006, then BBC Director General said in a Mail on Sunday article that when he took up his post he had believed the BBC's EU coverage 'deficient', there was 'too little' and the Corporation was 'delivering more consistent coverage of the work of the European institutions. But News-watch's research showed this to be inaccurate: Mr Thompson took up his post on June 22, 2004, coincidentally the final day of the Summer 2004 News-watch survey, which had recorded EU coverage on the Today programme at a level of 9.5% of airtime. At the time of Mr Thompson's article, EU features on Today had decreased to just 2.9%.

⁴ Europe correspondent, Tim Franks, Today, World Press Review, 23 October, 2002, and in discussion with Sarah Montague, 16 October 2003.

⁵ Today 2 April 2008, 8.49am



BBC coverage in the build-up to and during the Referendum Campaign period.

From the beginning of 2016, it was known that a referendum was imminent, and the BBC began to broadcast special referendum programmes. It would be expected that these were specially balanced to include the Leave as well as the Remain perspective. News-watch used a dipstick methodology to assess coverage on a much wider range than usual. This involved the recording and archival of all the BBC's news and current affairs output, along with documentaries, discussion programmes, phone-ins and comedy; hundreds of hours of material was transcribed and analysed in detail.

From April 15, the start of the campaign itself, the BBC was governed by specific editorial guidelines stipulating there should be 'broad balance' between the two sides.

A striking feature of coverage as a whole was that it was heavily reactive. The BBC made very few efforts to explain how the EU works or to explore the criticisms of those who wanted to leave – the bias by omission of previous years continued.

- Research during the build-up to the referendum into 40 editions of Newsnight between January 13 and March 11 found that there were 14 one-to-one interviews of Remain supporters compared to only six with the Leave side. Analysis of the transcripts of these exchanges shows that each guest was given a clear opportunity to state arguments from their respective perspectives. There was thus a significant imbalance on one very important level between the two sides. Looking at EU referendum items as a whole, including the interviews above plus those where Leave and Remain guests were interviewed simultaneously in a panel format, there were a further 11 guests who were clearly in favour of staying in the EU, and only eight who were supporters of Brexit. Thus the overall imbalance between the two sides was 25-14. As the referendum campaign progressed, a series of Newsnight referendum specials showed heavy bias to Remain, including crudely portraying the 'Out' prospect as being like the weird, wave-battered and decaying North Sea World War Two defence platform now called Sealand.

- Analysis of 20 consecutive editions of Radio 4's The World Tonight between February 22 and March 19 found it to be heavily biased in favour of Britain remaining in the EU. Staunchly pro-EU figures such as former French Prime Minister Edith Cresson and Alan Johnson, the head of Labour's Keep the UK in the EU campaign, were given a platform to advance detailed arguments on why the UK should remain in the EU. But only one supporter of the Leave camp – Wolfgang Ott, a member the German AFD party – was given airtime. Presenter Ritulah Shah introduced him by saying he was from an 'anti-immigrant party' that was 'criticised for its links with the far right'. The programme carried a dozen features focusing on the upcoming EU referendum. Of the named guests (some were in vox pop items and therefore not named) who offered views about the EU, 19 expressed pro-EU or pro-Remain ideas, seven wanted exit or were clearly anti-EU, and eleven were neutral. This imbalance was made worse as seven of the pro-EU figures were given the opportunity to outline detailed arguments, whereas only three of the Brexit supporters were allowed more than one or two sentences. There were three editions in which the programme went out of its way to elicit comment from strongly pro-EU figures – there was no equivalent leave side comment in any of the 20 editions.
- News-watch monitored BBC Radio 1's evening and lunchtime editions of Newsbeat for the ten-week period that the referendum guidelines were in effect. Newsbeat audiences were 1.5 times more likely to encounter a Remain supporter than a Leave supporter. 238 guest speakers contributed to the various discussions on the referendum; 45% spoke in favour of Remain, 30% in favour of Leave, with a further 25% giving a neutral, undecided or factual perspective. Politicians supporting Remain outnumbered those wanting Leave by 47 to 34. In terms of the number of words spoken by politicians, Remain supporters received 64% of the airtime, compared to 36% for Leave - a ratio of approximately 2:1. The programme attacked editorially the over-presence of 'experts' in the EU debate and suggested their contribution was 'boring'. Their appearances were limited to a handful. That meant conversely that by a large margin, most contributions came from members of the public and politicians. Opponents of current levels of immigration were cast as xenophobic and inward-looking, whereas the comment from those who approved of immigration were made to appear outward-looking, open and broad-minded.



- A set of six features on the BBC1 News at Ten between Sunday May 22 and Friday May 28 strongly favoured Remain, with the reports stressing repeatedly that EU money was vital and beneficial to aspects of the UK economy – in building new sports facilities, and in stimulating business growth and revival in stricken economic areas. However, there was no explanation that ‘EU money’ actually derives from the UK taxpayer. Vox Pop contributions from those supporting Remain were edited so that they included a wider and more coherent range of views such as: the EU provided more opportunities for jobs and travel, that it promoted diversity, better security, that introducing border security was ‘completely insane’, that the EU was not broken, that being outside the EU would make the UK ‘very vulnerable’, that the UK was too small and no longer had strong enough armed forces to stand alone. Vox pops from those supporting Leave tended to be shorter and narrower in scope. They included: that the UK’s influence was waning in an expanding EU, that the EU had taken millions (of pounds) from the UK, that being in the EU allowed in too many immigrants and led to too much Polish food being in Tesco, that jobs were being lost to immigrants.
- An edition of Radio 2’s Jeremy Vine Show on 18 May 2016 featured a guest from each of the other 27 member states, who gave overwhelmingly positive opinions about the EU at great length and juxtaposed them with just one phone-in caller from Britain who offered a pro-Brexit perspective. There was no equivalent show favouring ‘leave’.
- Comedy programmes focused heavily on stereotypes. For example, on the night before the vote, BBC2 broadcast a programme called Jack Dee’s Referendum Helpdesk, which culminated with comedian Nish Kumar being asked whether he could convince an audience member how to vote using just three words. He replied, ‘don’t be racist’.
- In the range of programmes monitored by News-watch during the campaign period, there was disproportionate emphasis that the £350 million per week figure being used by Vote Leave was incorrect, but very little discussing EU accounting irregularities, fraud and wastage. There was no equivalent attempt to look at the history of the contribution and rebate, aside from the fact that Margaret Thatcher had secured it. The Treasury’s projected cost of £4,300 per household for leaving the EU didn’t



appear to be challenged as regularly, nor were claims about the emergency budget that would need to be enforced should the UK vote for Brexit

- Immigration was seen as a strong suit for the Leave campaign, but coverage of the issue became less measured and more problematic as the campaign progressed, and following the murder of Jo Cox, and in the post-referendum coverage. The Leave campaign came to be positioned as intolerant and racist, with a heavy emphasis on speakers from the societal 'underclass' who felt threatened by immigration, but speakers were selected who were uneducated, racist or even fascist.

Post-Referendum Coverage

News-watch's first survey in the post referendum period analysed an online archive of referendum-related programmes and features entitled The Brexit Collection. Two months on from the referendum News-watch analysed 27 programmes of the 31 programmes that were featured in the online collection⁶ of Radio 4 programmes amounting to 10 hours of coverage. This was chosen by editors to reflect post-Brexit coverage and should thus have been reasonably balanced. Key findings were:

- 212 guest speakers contributed to the Brexit Collection. 49 (23%) spoke in favour of Brexit, were anti-EU, or bolstered Leave arguments. 124 contributors (58%) spoke against Brexit, were pro-EU, or bolstered the Remain perspective. The remaining 39 speakers (19%) gave a neutral or factual perspective, or provided contributions which could not be categorised neatly in terms of the referendum or wider EU debate. As such, those listening to The Brexit Collection (and to the original programmes themselves, of course) would have been **two and a half times more likely to hear a Pro-EU/Remain speaker than an Anti-EU/Leave contributor**.
- The Brexit Collection featured a number of reports from Radio 4's PM in the occasional series 'Brexit Street', a supposedly 'ordinary' street in Thornaby-on-Tees near Middlesbrough. However, research by News-watch has identified it is not an 'ordinary' street at all. House prices there are a third of the national average, and the local council has taken a very high number of asylum seekers, many of whom have been housed in 'Brexit Street' itself. The reporter, Emma Jane Kirby spoke of houses peppered with satellite dishes, low home ownership, high unemployment and daytime street drinkers. The focus of the early programmes has been on the problems of the asylum seekers and the apparent negative attitudes of locals towards them, including verbal and physical abuse and Swastika graffiti painted onto doors.
- Programmes included in the Collection but pre-dating the referendum campaign (most prominently five editions of the documentary series 'Europe's Choice') contained no domestic opinion espousing British withdrawal from the EU and exposed the huge disparity in coverage of the two sides of the debate in the preceding 17

⁶ Two comedy sketch shows were seen to have been removed by the BBC when the page was revisited, and two programmes, *In Our Time* and *The Human Zoo* were excluded from the statistical analysis because they only dealt with the referendum tangentially.



years, and how the arguments for leaving the EU had been severely and consistently unrepresented in the BBC's EU coverage.

- An edition of The Food Programme, first broadcast on 3 July 2016, contained contributors from a range of food industry figures and 'experts' who overwhelmingly thought the consequences of Brexit on the UK food industry – from farm gate to supermarket – would be disastrous. Predictions included 'a serious sets of challenges', rioting in the streets, the possible demise of the Scotch whisky industry, businesses large and small in serious jeopardy, huge uncertainties about farming, and sharply rising costs and prices. The contributors were mainly Remain campaigners and they argued that the benefits of Brexit had been hugely exaggerated and, in any case, would not materialise. There was only one contributor who believed that the Brexit vote would have a positive impact and presented his arguments in detail. Dan Saladino introduced him pointedly as a 'former speech writer for Nigel Farage' and someone who did not think it morally wrong to take food from Africans.⁷
- 'How to Make a Brexit' a documentary first broadcast in December 2016, focused on the 1983 exit from the EU by Greenland and examined whether the process could have potential lessons for the UK now. The main thrust of presenter Carolyn Quinn's commentary was that huge difficulties would be involved. She gave contributors who confirmed this point most space in the programme (to an approximate ratio of 3:2) and edited their comments so that they contained longer, more coherent arguments. Further, there was extensive comment from Claude Piris, an EU mandarin, about the problems of Brexit such as the impact on EU citizens living in Europe – nothing in the programme was provided to balance this. There was no equivalent contributor, because the main Leave campaigner who appeared, Ruth Lea, was asked principally about procedural issues linked to trade deals.

After the vote on June 23, News-watch also continued its dipstick methodology, to survey as many programmes as possible in the post referendum period.

⁷ Subsequent events have shown the benefits of the fall in the value of the pound to the British food industry, with The Sun newspaper reporting on 11 November 2016 that British food and drink manufacturers had exported good worth a record £3.4 billion between July and September 2016, a 12.1% increase on the previous year. The Food Programme focused only on those importing ingredients from overseas. <http://bit.ly/2gdCK1T>

- In the immediately aftermath of the vote, numerous television bulletins and current affairs programmes focused on the fall in the value of the pound, showing graphics of the sharp fall that occurred when markets were caught off-guard by the result, but only focusing only on a narrow timeframe which omitted longer-term trends. In none of the programmes monitored by News-watch was anything done to contextualise the fall in value of the pound (for example by comparing it to other historical events that caused significant movements in the currency and stock markets) or to explain that a weaker pound might benefit exporters or tourism to the UK.
- There was an inordinate focus on those who regretted voting Leave, or who had voted as a 'protest' without expecting Brexit to happen. Newsnight on 1 July broadcast the results of a poll it had commissioned from Ipsos Mori and announced that 5% of Leave voters had said they would now change their vote, but this was a misrepresentation: only 1% of Leave voters surveyed had said they would *definitely* vote differently, and an onscreen graphic compounded the problem by conflating two separate and distinct questions from the polling to suggest a much larger proportion regretted their decision than the polling itself suggested. Given the inability of opinion polls to predict the referendum outcome, it seems extraordinary that Newsnight decided to commission a poll at all. The suspicion must be that the editors were desperate to find another way of showing that voters were now unsure about the result and projected the poll findings as an 'objective' and reliable verification of that.
- A further problem in the post-Brexit period was that BBC coverage latched on to and amplified the idea that the Leave vote was motivated by race hate, and that there had been a large spike in attacks. This was particularly evident in the killing in late August of a Polish man in Harlow, when the BBC reporter on the BBC1 evening news speculated that this could have been a 'frenzied attack triggered by the Brexit referendum'. The claims reverberated in coverage around Europe and the world. Much more caution should have been exercised, first because such race hate crimes are registered on a self-report basis, and second because on the day of the killing, the facts of the crime were too sketchy to support such inflammatory speculation.

Appendix I – Summary of News-watch Surveys 1999-2015

News-watch reports over 17 years have shown that the BBC's EU reporting is not sufficient to allow audiences to understand our relationship with Brussels and fails to meet the Corporation's Public Purposes requirements.

Before the 2016 referendum, coverage was consistently heavily biased towards Europhile opinion and scarcely dealt at all with withdrawal. Since June 23, the thrust of BBC coverage – as is shown by the News-watch analysis of its Brexit Collection programmes – has been to question the Brexit decision on multiple levels while not exploring the potential benefits.

Coverage of EU affairs has thus emphatically not met the BBC Charter requirement to be impartial.

The BBC's response has been mostly to ignore, refuse to engage with the research or, on occasions, to try and discredit it. Frequently, senior BBC staff have declared – usually without a scrap of evidence – that the methodology is flawed and unworthy of consideration. They have wrongly characterised News-watch methodology as 'arithmetic' and claimed that such counting is an inadequate way of assessing impartiality.

Yet the Corporation has never provided any evidence to the contrary. Their one attempt at doing so was a mockery. In 2012, the Trustees – as a follow-up to the 2005 Wilson report into EU coverage, which found serious shortcomings – commissioned the Prebble report as a follow-up. This was supposedly objective, but it was anything but; it had a biased chairman, deployed seriously flawed methodology, and sided flagrantly with BBC staff in its inquiries and conclusions.

After the Wilson report – in line with its findings – the BBC said they had set up an internal monitoring unit using the same accepted techniques of academic research as News-watch to check for impartiality on a regular and systematic basis. None of these findings were ever published, and in 2014-15, in hearings held by the Commons European Scrutiny Committee, senior BBC news executives confirmed that the monitoring unit had been disbanded. Instead, they now relied on daily editorial meetings to check for impartiality.

Some key points:

The survey of European election of 1999 found overall a remarkably low level of coverage. In the sole interview with UKIP (Nigel Farage), John Humphrys contended that it was 'literally impossible' that the UK could leave the EU. There was more coverage of Alan Sked's party than of UKIP.

Today, summer 2000 report: no withdrawalist contributions about the EU. Two withdrawalists (Austin Mitchell and Geoffrey Titford) spoke respectively about Gordon Brown's approach to the euro and general moves towards further metrification.



In January 2001 on Today, a series of special of special reports about withdrawal adding up to 55 minutes, contained only five sentences about 'out' – adding up to around 40 seconds of airtime.

A special 'Europe and Us' week across BBC channels had at its heart a rigged 'referendum' about the euro in a street of around 55 people (which found strongly in favour), a heavily pro-remain phone in from Ireland on Channel 5 and a programme about Churchill which heavily focused on the role of the EU as a bringer of peace.

In the General Election of 2001, Nigel Farage was asked by Jeremy Paxman whether support for UKIP was undermining the Conservatives' euro-sceptic policies. The chief examination of the EU was the prism of 'Tory splits'. There were only a handful of mentions of UKIP.

In January 2002, in special programming examining the introduction of the euro currency, there was no mention of the UKIP perspective, and reports grossly exaggerated levels of enthusiasm for the new notes and coins and failed to reflect doubts about the currency.

The report in summer 2002 about the EU 'summit' showed very low levels of coverage. Was this to keep the electorate in the dark about the true rate and speed of the EU project?

The survey of the European election of 2004 (covering a range of programmes) contained three interviews with UKIP figures (Messrs Sykes, Knapman and Kilroy-Silk). UKIP, as usual, was seen as a threat to the Conservatives. There was no attempt to explore the party's policies and they were cast as both criminals (unchallenged allegations from Peter Osborne) and racists.

The General Election survey in 2005 showed that EU issues were very low on the agenda, the theme accounted for only 2.1% of 49 hours of election output, and there were only 12 interviews on EU matters. The simplistic assumption that UKIP was a threat to the Conservatives was maintained. There were four interviews of UKIP spokesmen, but no questions were asked of them about withdrawal.

The Winter 2005 News-watch survey of the Today programme (now a standard 14 weeks long) contained only three (out of a total of 165 EU-related speakers) UKIP appearances, adding up to only 4m 34s out of more than eight hours of EU material. Roger Knapman argued that the British EU contribution should not be renegotiated, while Nigel Farage, following the election of David Cameron as Conservative leader, invited the Conservatives to join UKIP's grouping in the European Parliament. In his second appearance, Mr Farage clashed with James Naughtie about the projected rise in the UK's EU contribution. Mr Naughtie (in a question longer than Nigel Farage's reply) said that many believed that the influx of Eastern Europeans was a 'a massive boost for the European market' and said that the EU's level of budget (only 1% of the budgets of member countries) showed it could not be a super-state.

The summer 2006 survey found that of 166 speakers on EU affairs, only six were withdrawalists, and in the UKIP interviews claims were put that the party was (the David



Cameron phrase) made up of 'fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists'. Questions focused on whether UKIP MEPs did any work, attitudes towards race, links with the BNP, and incompetence.

Winter 2006: Only four of 98 contributions in the EU coverage were from UKIP. There was only one interview, of Nigel Farage, who attacked that yet again, the EU budget could not be signed off, indicating waste and corruption. His contribution was immediately followed by an interview with an EU Commissioner, who had considerably more time to explain why Nigel Farage was wrong.

In summer 2007, of 125 EU-related speakers only four could be classed as withdrawalists. UKIP spoke for 4m 45s out of 5h 25m of coverage.

Winter 2007: (Lisbon Treaty signing imminent) - Five out of 178 EU-related speakers were withdrawalists, all from UKIP. At the opening of the UKIP party conference, John Humphrys suggested that the party was a 'one trick pony' that the party had not done well since 2004. After the Treaty was signed, Sarah Montague suggested to Nigel Farage again that UKIP had done very badly in 2009 and in any case the British people wanted to stay in the EU.

In summer 2008, the Lisbon Treaty remained the focus of EU-related coverage. Of 123 relevant speakers, only two supported withdrawal from the EU. One was from the MP Bob Spink, who was asked if his 'defection' to UKIP was a betrayal of his constituents and the other from Conservative MP Philip Davies, of Better Off Out, who said that a proper cost-benefit audit of the EU would show the EU for what it really was.

Winter 2008: There were four contributions from withdrawalists out of 139 EU contributions. Nigel Farage, in an interview pegged on the appointment of Baroness Ashton as the UK's EU commissioner, John Humphrys suggested that Mr Farage received more perks (in his role as an MEP) than she would. Mr Farage was also asked briefly about steps towards UK identity cards, which he condemned. In third interview, withdrawalist Nick Griffin of the BNP was bracketed with UKIP.

In the summer 2009 report about the European Parliamentary elections, most of the coverage of UKIP was linked to irregularities about MEP expenses (called 'allowances' by interviewers), allegations of racism over controls on immigration, and the alleged ineffectiveness of UKIP MEPs. The exchanges were characterised by aggressive questioning linked to suggestions that UKIP politicians were extremist, lax, and wrong-headed. In answering the various questions, Nigel Farage was able to make 13 incidental (usually of one phrase) points of rebuttal and, has already been noted, deliver a few sentences about core party policies. But the treatment UKIP received was markedly different from the Europhile parties – it was pushed always on the back-foot, whereas David Miliband, Nick Clegg and Ed Davey were allowed to go on the offensive with few interruptions, and even (when Ed Davey attacked UKIP over "expenses" allowances), with the encouragement of presenters. Finally, UKIP was the subject of a special feature about its conduct. Mark Mardell assembled as a preface to the main interview of Nigel Farage on Today all the most objectionable quotes that UKIP's political opponents had made

against the party, including that it was viewed as extremist and not capable of being taken seriously, that members were involved in financial irregularities, that the immigration policy was the 'BNP in blazers' and that MEPs were ineffective in the European parliament. There was no equivalent piece about any other party contesting the election, and no effort to balance the negativity with counterinterviews from those whom supported withdrawal and the party's goals.

Winter 2009: In this report there were 10 withdrawalist speakers out of 198 speakers on EU matters (among the highest recorded). But only three (from UKIP) were actually about withdrawal. In total, UKIP speakers contributed 1,624 words, equivalent to 4.5% of the total EU-related interview airtime. But the majority (713 words) were from Lord Pearson in one interview about his election as party leader, and 437 were from Derek Clark on metrification.

In the Summer 2010 report (covering six programmes in the General Election), only 3.2% of the coverage was about EU-related issues, and Today's coverage only 2.2%. Thus, 'the BBC seemingly acquiesced to the desire of the main parties to attach low priority to the EU as an election issue'. 55 guests could be classed as withdrawalists, of which 48 were from UKIP, four from BNP and two from the English Democrats. Detailed examination of the UKIP items shows that the low level of UKIP material already mentioned was made worse by a sustained emphasis in trying to discredit the party's policies and its senior figures. This pressure was applied in most of the key interviews with party figures. One of the main interviews, of Nigel Farage, was so aggressively conducted by Evan Davis that his questions formed more than half of the exchange and Mr Farage was forced so much on to the defensive that it was hard to discern what UKIP's policy proposals were. In addition, there was no attempt to investigate the case for withdrawal. Thus when Eddie Mair interviewed Lord Pearson of Rannoch on PM on April 27, his main questions were about his Lordship's alleged poor grasp of the UKIP election manifesto, whether he was competent as a leader, and on the minor details of the costing of UKIP policies.

Winter 2010: The coverage of other EU themes was only 53 minutes or 0.8% of Today's available airtime, roughly the same as was devoted to affairs in North Korea or Haiti and reducing EU coverage to a very minor sideshow. Only two stories received multi-strand coverage, and even these were not reported to the extent that they gave viewers a reasonable overview of the issues involved. There were only three UKIP contributions on EU themes during the survey, each about the party's leadership election. No UKIP opinion was solicited on either the 2011 EU budget negotiations or the Irish financial crisis. The one substantive interview, with newly re-elected UKIP leader Nigel Farage, focused almost entirely on whether Mr Farage saw parallels between his party and the American 'Tea Party' movement, and whether he was "angry". There were no attempts by the interviewer, Evan Davis, to discuss withdrawal-related policy, even though it would have been relevant to that day's agenda.

Winter 2011: (height of Greek bail-out crisis) There were 27 hours and 19 minutes of EU-related coverage amounting to 22.5% of airtime. This was the highest ever recorded by News-watch in 17 surveys. The average has been 5.6%. and the previous highest proportion was

10.8% during the debate about the EU constitution in 2005. Despite the intense debate about the future of the euro, the Eurozone and the EU generally, there were only seven short soundbite contributions from declared supporters of withdrawal from the EU amounting to 1.4% of the 514 individual speakers on EU affairs. There were no interviews at all with these withdrawalists. Their contributions were so short that none contained substantive arguments or explanation of the withdrawal perspective. In total, they spoke only 534 words; this was 0.4% of the 132,699 words of EU coverage. Only 72% of the words spoken by withdrawalists were in the main body of Today – the remainder were in Yesterday in Parliament in short soundbites. Withdrawal as an issue was never seriously considered by the programme, despite its relevance to many aspects of the EU debate.

Summer 2012: A poll carried out on May 20 for the Independent on Sunday showed that amid the tumultuous events affecting the eurozone during this period, 46% of the UK population wanted to leave the EU. But despite this, only three speakers on Today were identifiably supporters of withdrawal. **This was 0.8% of the total contributors.** Only the survey undertaken one year previously, in summer 2011, yielded a lower figure. Those who appeared who supported withdrawal were Nigel Farage – who was interviewed once and contributed a 90-word soundbite – and a vox contributor from Brussels. The combined contribution was 768 words, or 0.9% - **less than one hundredth** of the total words spoken about the EU during the survey period.

Winter 2012: The proportion of ‘withdrawalist speakers was 6.1% (the second highest recorded by News-watch, but this was boosted by the addition of an extra survey week to accommodate the UKIP party conference. If that week was included, the total was eight withdrawalists out of 215 EU-related speakers, or 3.7%. Even though withdrawal as a topic was firmly on the political agenda, only one question about withdrawal was put to a withdrawalist speaker in the 78 editions of the programme covered by the survey (worse than the long-term average of one question every 56 editions). A clear opportunity was presented to discuss the topicality and relevance of withdrawal in the debate over when Douglas Carswell’s private member’s bill calling for withdrawal on October 27. But the subject was considered only in Yesterday in Parliament and nothing of the coverage explained the rationale behind the bill.

Summer 2013: 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. 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 Mills was a rare event: only 0.09% of Today’s speakers on withdrawal from the EU between 2005 and the survey were from the Labour party or British left.

Winter 2013: There were only eight occasions when figures known to be withdrawalists spoke about EU-related themes. They contributed 2,341 words, 4.3% of the EU-related airtime. But sequences in which advocates of leaving the EU spoke directly on that theme were about 800 words (less than five minutes of airtime, divided between four interviews). Of this, there was only one sequence in which the speaker had the opportunity to express more than one sentence on the topic. The main points put to 'come outers' were that they were incompetent, potentially venal, and racist. No questions were put which attempted to explore the pros and cons of leaving the EU.

Summer 2014 (European Elections):

Summary: The survey fully examined and summarised all of the relevant transcripts from the output of every programme monitored.

This was an election to the European Parliament, and the party that eventually attracted the highest share of the vote had as its central, defining policy withdrawal from the EU. But in the entire election-related output, not a single question was put to a 'come-out' politician on that theme, and the words spoken in total by clear supporters of withdrawal amounted only to a few brief phrases and sentences. No-one from the BBC asked: 'Why do you want to leave?'

News-watch has also put the spotlight on three primary areas where problems of balance and fairness were detected. Similar problems, it was found, were common in the coverage as a whole.

On Today, which had the biggest volume of election coverage, the editorial focus was disproportionately on the issues surrounding the competence and integrity of Nigel Farage and UKIP. The presenters and editors also relentlessly asked questions about whether he/the party (and its supporters) were racist. This was lazy, narrow journalism. Mr Farage was also treated much more negatively than other party leaders in the key leadership interviews. Accusations put to him included that he was racist, 'Stalinist' and simply incompetent.

The BBC1 Six O'clock News, which broadcast around a dozen substantive features about the election, treated Nigel Farage and UKIP very similarly to Today. Nick Robinson, who interviewed the party leaders for the programme, was focused most on whether Mr Farage was racist over his attitudes towards immigration. Virtually nothing was brought into the frame about other EU issues, and nothing about withdrawal was asked or elaborated. Further major problems centred on two items designed to bring viewers basic information about how the EU operated. What was conveyed was so basic as to be almost meaningless, and it was also heavily pro-EU.

Newsnight broadcast an election special which contained an interview with Nigel Farage and three segments of what it claimed was essential information for voters about how the EU operated. The exchange with Mr Farage was shot through with the same negative approach towards UKIP and the withdrawal perspective as that on Today. The three segments about the EU, by reporter Chris Cook were heavily biased towards the EU, pointedly ignored or distorted

the eurosceptic perspective, and over-simplified to the point of banality some of the issues involved. This was particularly striking in the description of the workings of the European Parliament.

Winter 2014: This survey covered analysis of WATO and PM on Radio 4, BBC1 News at Ten and BBC Newsnight. Summary findings:

Coverage of the issues surrounding withdrawal was both minimal and inadequate.

The vast bulk of news about Conservative handling of EU affairs was through the lens of party splits, which, it was emphasised by BBC correspondents, had been raging since Maastricht. There was disproportionate effort to cover these divisions, exaggeration of the scale of the problem and a corresponding failure to scrutinise policies; rows took precedence over informing audiences about the bread-and-butter issues of EU membership.

There was relatively little analysis of Labour policies towards the EU. Party members were afforded regular platforms to attack Conservative and UKIP policies, but their own controversial approach towards limitation of immigration or the potential threat posed by UKIP was seldom featured or analysed. Members of the party who are strongly eurosceptic occasionally were asked for comment, but their quotes were too brief to give a true indication of the debate within the party about EU membership.

The main theme of coverage of UKIP continued to be (as has been noted in earlier News-watch reports) that both individually and as a party, it was inept, confused and potentially both venal and racist. There was a heavy focus on its shortcomings, but very little coverage or analysis of key issues such as withdrawal and the limitations of the EU. And the main editorial reaction to UKIP's by-election victory at Rochester was to ask Conservative MP Phillip Davies if he would now defect to UKIP.

Another problem was that, while it was frequently said that the EU opposed reform of matters such as the Free Movement of Peoples Directive – and platforms were often given to EU figures to say that – there was no editorial effort to scrutinise why such policies could not be changed or reformed.

Coverage seriously under-represented and misrepresented withdrawal as a political issue, flagrantly maligned many of those who supported it, and there was consistent 'bias by omission' in playing down or ignoring some of the key issues related to EU membership. The main emphasis was that the EU was a problem – but mainly for the Conservative party and eurosceptics. Audiences heard that relations with and attitudes toward the EU, particularly with regard to immigration policy, were tearing the Conservative party apart, and that David Cameron was pitched in a near-impossible losing battle with his EU peers to try to reform EU laws and regulations, including the Free Movement of People Directive.

They also heard abundant statements in sympathetic editorial frameworks from pro-EU voices in both Britain and Europe that the EU was important for jobs, stability, and the economy.



Opinion from various shades of euroscepticism were also included, but prevailingly juxtaposed with views and questioning that cast scepticism as wrong-headed, 'nasty', immoderate, verging on racism, or mad.

Carefully selected elements of Conservative EU policy were held up to rigorous scrutiny by BBC correspondents such as political editor Nick Robinson and Europe editor Gavin Hewitt. They frequently pointed out the reasons why this policy was unlikely to succeed. Reports by them and other reporters unfailingly included comment from dissenting voices inside the Conservative party and a variety of outside organisations ranging from the CBI to various Europhile think-thanks.

By sharp contrast, another feature of coverage was that it gave the impression that the Labour party was united in its desire to remain in the EU and had policies towards it that were effective and – by comparison with the Conservatives and UKIP – uncontroversial. Quotes included from party figures conveyed that Labour was very strongly in favour of the EU, knew that the Conservative policies towards the EU would not work, and that the party had effective plans to reduce the tide of immigration. There was virtually no exploration of whether UKIP also posed a threat to the Labour party, despite much comment in other media and political quarters that it did. Figures from the Labour party were rarely interviewed about EU policy, and certainly, their claims about immigration were not subjected to the same amount of scrutiny as the equivalent policies of either UKIP or the Conservatives. The overall assumption appeared to be that Labour policy towards the EU was unified and virtually uncontroversial.

Austin Mitchell and Kate Hoey, two Labour MPs who support a radically reduced role for the EU in UK affairs made brief soundbite contributions criticising the EU £1.7bn surcharge and supporting the holding of an EU membership referendum. But each was only a few words and their very brief appearances only emphasised how little editorial curiosity there was about this aspect of the opposition's approach to Europe.

Audiences heard regularly from UKIP itself and from a range of figures who supported withdrawal from the EU. The BBC has been forced over the past two years or so to reflect such voices as a result of the rising electoral support for UKIP.

But the coverage was not balanced in that it cast UKIP – and therefore the withdrawal argument itself – in a largely negative light. There was actually very little coverage or analysis of the party's policies towards the EU. Instead, the focus, as previous News-watch surveys have also shown, was firmly on UKIP's perceived incompetence, lack of experience, alleged venality, and gung-ho anti-immigration nationalism. UKIP only became 'news' when perceived evidence of their shortcomings emerged. When it did, party spokesmen were interviewed, but only then.



Appendix II - Summary of some key Nigel Farage interviews

16/5/2003 Today – peg: government says there should be no vote on proposed new Constitution. James Naughtie asks why Nigel Farage wants one. Nigel Farage said it reduced the UK to being a province of an EU state. James Naughtie says it doesn't and that the Single European Act (87) went through without a referendum. Nigel Farage says that since then, the UK has gradually lost its ability to govern, the new Constitution would result in the government only running secondary schools. JN says that this an overstatement, 'to put it mildly'. Nigel Farage said not.

13/12/2003 Today – peg: EU summit discussing EU Constitution, with Conservative party wanting a referendum. Nigel Farage argued that the Tories should do more and say they wanted nothing to do with the Constitution and should promise to take the UK out of the EU. Michael Ancram said the Constitution had deeper implications than Labour said, and they would aim for a renegotiation and a referendum on the Constitution. Sarah Montague said there was a lot of support for a referendum, asked if he wanted a two-speed Europe. Michael Ancram said the federalist agenda would be resisted, and especially the idea of a European army.

29/4/2004 – peg: Sir Stephen Wall, former Blair adviser on the EU, said the government should better make the case for 'Europe'. Nigel Farage said SSW relentlessly pushed the EU agenda. JH said that was because the EU was 'doing us proud' in trade terms. Nigel Farage said not, the need was to trade with the wider world. John Humphrys said that was possible through the EU. Nigel Farage said that GB needed to be able to negotiate its own trade policy. John Humphrys asked what was wrong with the idea of 'strength through union' and peace. Nigel Farage said it wasn't working, and the EU had not brought peace, that was NATO.

5/10/2004 – peg Paul Sykes not backing UKIP because it was now aiming to unseat Tories. Nigel Farage said the party was doing well at the polls and so it was right to attack the Conservatives. Sarah Montague asked if the policy was that of Robert Kilroy-Silk. Sarah Montague suggested Robert Kilroy-Silk wanted to get rid of the party leader. Nigel Farage said he would be disappointed. Sarah Montague asked if Roger Knapman could be persuaded to stand down. Nigel Farage said he had tripled membership and so he would stay. Sarah Montague said Paul Sykes had contributed £1m – half UKIP's European elections campaign, so that would damage general election prospects. Nigel Farage said he hoped PS would help again.

20/11/2004 – peg: row over Commission composition- Rocco Buttiglione forced to stand down because of homophobic remarks, and the discovery that Jacques Barrot had a jail sentence on his record. Nigel Farage said Barrot should be fired. Edward Stourton asked if it was fair to say Mr Barroso had been hoodwinked. Nigel Farage said information was being deliberately withheld. Graham Watson, the Liberal Democrat MEP agreed that Barrot should go, but said Nigel Farage's conduct had been disgraceful in recklessly attacking MEPs and



brought the whole of the EU into disrepute. Nigel Farage defended his conduct in unmasking irregularities. Nigel Farage said reform of the EU was never going to happen.

13/4/2005 – peg: polls showing France will vote ‘no’ in the referendum on the Constitution. Hervé Mariton, from the Chirac party, said voters were voting on the economy, not the Constitution. James Naughtie amplified this. Nigel Farage disagreed, said the response was typical. People were voting no despite everyone telling them yes. He asserted: “real people do not want a United States of Europe”. They wanted to keep their nationality. James Naughtie asked him if he was a real person or a politician. Nigel Farage said he was a businessman not a politician, and politics needed that. Hervé Mariton said the problem was that not enough was known about what the EU was doing, if people knew they would vote for it. James Naughtie asked if the French were going to ‘destroy the whole thing’ in May. Nigel Farage said he hoped so.

18/5/2005 – peg: No Campaign launch (separate from UKIP, the campaign was pro-EU membership, simply against the Constitution). Derek Scott, from the campaign, said the Constitution gave too much power to Brussels, but there was also a rise of a ‘very nasty nationalism’ that was wrong. Nigel Farage said he wanted the campaign to succeed and wanted a big debate to show the EU was irrelevant. James Naughtie said it seemed that he didn’t believe the EU delivered anything worthwhile. Nigel Farage said he agreed, he wanted a free trade agreement instead. There had been a general election where the issue of the EU had been ignored completely. James Naughtie said the issue had been debated for 35 years. Nigel Farage said it hadn’t been discussed and people wanted out, polls said so. James Naughtie said it was better to be in the EU and negotiating for change, than out. Nigel Farage said the EU was un-reformable.

17/12/2005 – peg: Tony Blair ups the UK subscription to the EU. Nigel Farage said it was game set and match to Chirac. James Naughtie said the UK increase was 63%, that of the French 120%. Nigel Farage said the real point was that the CAP was not going to be changed until 2014 and that was what Chirac wanted. James Naughtie said the Nigel Farage view was ‘out’, but the alternative was that the EU was definitely working and very good for Eastern Europe. It was in the national interest to invest in it, and what had been agreed was the equivalent of only 1% of national budgets. Nigel Farage said that UK taxpayers did not want to pay for new sewers in Budapest, they wanted money to be spent on hospitals back home. The EU was already a superstate in terms of its voice in the world.

24/3/2006 –peg: EU moves to ratify the Constitution, despite ‘no’ in France and Netherlands. Nigel Farage said they were pushing ahead to get majority acceptance, despite the ‘no’ vote. John Humphries said acceptance would not happen, it was inconceivable. Nigel Farage said the plan was for a new French referendum.

8/4/2006 – peg: Conservative party spring conference, following David Cameron remarks about ‘loonies, fruitcakes and closet racists’. James Naughtie asked which of these he was (stressing that he wasn’t accusing him of anything). Nigel Farage said the party was appalled



by the claims. Nigel Farage said he was turning his back on talking properly about EU issues and issuing insults instead. James Naughtie asked if UKIP suffered because there wasn't a bogey anymore because the Constitution wasn't an issue. Nigel Farage said the need still was for the UK to exit the EU.

24/10/2006 – peg: EU hits back at claims that its auditing was dismally inadequate, if not criminal. Nigel Farage said there had been 12 years of problems and a thirteenth was on the cards. Tim Franks suggested that things were getting better. Nigel Farage said that was a constant refrain, the reality was that the Commission was unaccountable and un-reformable. Tim Franks said member states did most of the spending and the Commission pointed out that the standards were tough. Nigel Farage said he did not accept that. Slim Kallas, of the Commission said the accounts were not a problem. Tim Franks disputed that and said the EU taxpayer was suffering. SK disagreed.

25/3/2007 - Andrew Marr interview – peg: 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome celebrations in Berlin. Nigel Farage said it was monstrous that the Constitution was being brought back, and it underlined the need for a referendum on membership. Andrew Marr asked Nigel Farage if UKIP was solvent. Nigel Farage said that a donor had been inadvertently off the electoral register for a while and that meant his money could not be accepted. He said the party was trying to expand its appeal to become the voice of opposition and win domestic seats. Andrew Marr asked how far he was from making any sort of breakthrough. Nigel Farage said on May 3 they would win seats.

10/4/2007 Today – peg: UKIP fielding 1,000 local election candidates. Nigel Farage said that broader policies had been developed and the majority now wanted to leave the EU. Carolyn Quinn said they hadn't got seats at the moment. Nigel Farage said there were 15 councillors. Carolyn Quinn said UKIP had failed to change its name to 'Independence Party' and also had received an illegal donation. Nigel Farage said there had been problems, but the party was now moving forward. He said he wanted local government to have more power, and to abolish VAT, to be replaced with a local sales tax. Carolyn Quinn said the Conservatives wanted more localism, too, and the bureaucracy in getting rid of VAT would be enormous. She doubted that efficiency savings could be made.

19/10/2007 – peg: should there be a referendum on membership of the EU now that the Lisbon Treaty had been accepted? Nigel Farage said it was necessary because it had been 30 years since the last and because the EU was now in effect a country. SM said people might not vote for out in a referendum but would object to the treaty. Nigel Farage said it was more likely that Gordon Brown would back a referendum on in or out because he thought he could win it. Sarah Montague asked if such a vote would ever happen. Nigel Farage said he thought it would. Sarah Montague suggested that the British people were against the treaty but seemed to be for the EU becoming wider and deeper. Nigel Farage said this was because in general elections, the main parties did not talk about the EU. Sarah Montague said voters weren't stupid, if they wanted they could vote on it (the EU). Nigel Farage repeated that the



EU wasn't on the agenda in general elections but was in the European elections and UKIP had got 3m votes.

4/10/2007 – John Humphrys asked if 'we cared about UKIP any longer?' and suggested the party had peaked. Nigel Farage said it hadn't been an easy year and the Electoral Commission was trying to close it down. John Humphrys said people did not want to vote for the party. He replied:

Well no, I don't agree with that. When we started off saying this, it was considered to be extremist, mad, bad, and only a tiny percentage of the population supported us. Look at the opinion polls now, you'll see half the country absolutely agrees with what UKIP stands for.

Then said that the party had won 2.7m votes in the European elections. John Humphrys said the total was only 618,000 in the general election. Nigel Farage said they would get more in the 2009 EU elections. John Humphrys said the party was a one-trick pony. Nigel Farage said the party wasn't that and many more policies were being debated at the party conference, especially regarding immigration, in which a 5-year moratorium was needed to assess and deal with the massive recent influx. John Humphrys said that came back to the one-trick pony because to do that, the UK would have to leave the EU.

21/10/2008 – peg: Baroness Ashton appointed new trade commissioner. Nigel Farage said she was not qualified, she had no relevant experience in a vital trade role. John Humphrys said it was odd that he wanted someone more powerful in the role. Nigel Farage said he wanted to get rid of Brussels but in the meantime wanted someone competent in the role. John Humphrys said if Nigel Farage did the role, it would be the end of UKIP. Nigel Farage said he would be interested in doing the job, but it wouldn't happen.

8/5/2009 – peg: UKIP launches EU election campaign. Nigel Farage said the UK should not be paying £40m a day to stay in the EU - a Romanian rapist could come live in the UK, but a Ghurka could not, the party was against open door EU immigration. James Naughtie suggested that he was in a scrap with the BNP for votes. Nigel Farage said not, out of 69 candidates were ethnic minorities. UKIP was patriotic but not racist. James Naughtie said the other issue was that the party had been through splits, and a member had been jailed for fiddling expenses. Nigel Farage agreed there had been bad apples, but the MEPs had done well. James Naughtie asked the extent that the party played a 'constructive part' in the European Parliament. Nigel Farage said the party had been unfailing constructive in pointing out the democratic deficit in Brussels and the way it ignored the referendums against the Constitution.

30/5/2009 – peg: UKIP ahead of Labour in the polls. Mark Mardell said that most members of the European Parliament viewed UKIP as 'diminished', as 'profoundly unserious pranksters with a weird obsession'. He noted the Cameron remarks about 'fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists'. He hinted at 'far right' links, said three MEPs had 'prominent gravy stains' on their blazers', said they voted against British interests in the EU Parliament. His closing remark was



that they made 'withdrawal look like a lost cause for mavericks'. John Humphrys first suggested that Nigel Farage had done rather well out of the gravy train, up to £2m in 'expenses'. Nigel Farage said they were 'set allowances' and the money had been used for campaigning. John Humphrys said this was using taxpayers' money to peddle party interests. Nigel Farage said it was 'a little bit of EU money' to counteract blizzards of propaganda. John Humphrys said he had employed his wife. Nigel Farage said she had been unpaid for five years, paid for two. John Humphrys said he had spent a lot of money and had been 'entirely ineffective'. Nigel Farage said the Mark Mardell report was grossly unfair. UKIP had been an effective opposition group and had influenced the 'no' vote to the referendum significantly. John Humphrys said UKIP had not been an 'effective opposition' and missed legislation. Nigel Farage said there were up to 1,000 amendments in some days, and so UKIP could not track everything, but did protect British interests. John Humphrys said the party was the BNP in blazers because it was opposed to immigration. Nigel Farage said the party wanted to control immigration. John Humphrys said everyone said that. Nigel Farage said they were not telling the truth.

8/6/2009 – peg: after UKIP came second in the European elections. Sarah Montague suggested that this was not about UKIP doing well but Labour doing very badly. Nigel Farage replied that UKIP had been told they would be wiped out and yet they were close to winning seats in the north of England, so he was very happy. Sarah Montague said they had done well because people were hacked off with the main parties after the expenses scandal, yet – she claimed – Nigel Farage had boasted about 'taking £2m in non-salary expenses and allowances'. Nigel Farage explained it was a totally different system from Westminster. He wanted to get rid of all MEPs. T(he interview was entirely a defence of SM attacks about 'expenses')

25/10/2009 – Question Time following Nigel Farage calling Herman von Rompuy 'a low-grade bank clerk' consisted of all the panel members calling Nigel Farage, in effect, a bigot, and several audience members, too. Nigel Farage was not given space to respond – David Dimbleby moved on the discussion before Nigel Farage had a chance to do so. It boiled down of ten minutes of anti-Nigel Farage bile.

30/4/2010: interview by Evan Davis. ED said that the figure that Nigel Farage claimed was sent to Brussels was 'bogus'. He said that not as much as Nigel Farage claimed could be saved by axing quangos. He attacked Nigel Farage's claims about the number of jobs that were duplicated by bureaucracy. Overall he suggested that it was not possible that UKIP policies would lead to savings of £50bn.

17/4/2010: Jeremy Paxman said UKIP's ideas had won them seats in 'that sink of iniquity, the European Parliament'. JP asked Nigel Farage how he pronounced his name. Jeremy Paxman suggested that UKIP policies of tax reform and spending more on defence did not add up. He said the party would not get a single MP, suggested that the party's policies on Iran, and on prison building did not work.



5/3/2011 (after the Barnsley by-election). John Humphrys suggested that the rise of UKIP, with 3,000 (2nd place) votes against the Lib Dems with 1,000 (6th place) was 'inconsequential'.

6/11/2010 (Nigel Farage re-elected leader of UKIP). Evan Davis asked Nigel Farage about comparisons between UKIP (Nigel Farage) and Sarah Palin (Tea Party). Evan Davis asked if it would be better of UKIP, like the Tea Party, worked within an established party (the Conservatives). Evan Davis said it was an uphill challenge for UKIP to win a single parliamentary seat. UKIP only got votes for representation in the less mainstream European Parliament. Evan Davis suggested UKIP was a party for angry people, and asked if Nigel Farage was 'angry'.

26/4/2012: (peg: local elections) Sarah Montague asked what the point voting UKIP was as it had only 31 councillors. Nigel Farage responded that the party was waking people up to lost sovereignty. Sarah Montague asked if UKIP would immediately pull out of the EU, then what that would mean in terms of free movement of people. Nigel Farage affirmed that it would stop the totally uncontrolled flow of migrant labour from eastern Europe. Sarah Montague suggested that he was trying to stop people in Europe coming to work in the UK. Nigel Farage said he wanted controls, not to stop altogether the flow of labour.

21/9/2012: (peg: party conference) John Humphrys asked whether UKIP was a 'single issue party'. JH asked Nigel Farage whether if UKIP would not contest some Conservative seats if a referendum on the EU was promised. Nigel Farage said nothing would be agreed unless the pledge was written in blood. John Humphrys said that this proved that UKIP was not a real political party but a 'pressure group'. Nigel Farage disagreed and said the party was campaigning on multiple issues. JH said that Peter Kellner believed UKIP would not win any general elections seats, they would simply do well again at the European elections. John Humphrys said that UKIP spending policies were 'puzzling', especially related to proposed flat rate tax – this showed yet again that the party was a single issue pressure group.

24/11/2012 (Rotherham fostering row): Evan Davis said that Labour and the Conservatives called UKIP racist. Evan Davis suggested he was against immigration but not racist (an implied contradiction). Nigel Farage said the party was not against immigration, it was in favour of controlled immigration. Evan Davis asked if he would stop babies being adopted by a BNP couple. Nigel Farage said BNP was a racist organisation.

23/1/2013: (peg: impending announcement by David Cameron of an in/out referendum) Nigel Farage said that henceforward the European debate would be taking place on the terms that UKIP wanted. James Naughtie replied:

Of course, Mr Cameron, we have to assume, believes that he can come up with some kind of renegotiated membership, some kind of change in the way the EU works, which will mean that it becomes obvious, in his view, to most people that it makes sense to stay in and he will say, look, 'I've done a deal which is good for this country.

James Naughtie suggested most polls supported DC's position. Nigel Farage disputed that.



Newsnight 23/1/2013: Nigel Farage said that the announcement of a referendum was a strategy to kick the can down the road by five years. He said it was unlikely that UKIP would do a deal with David Cameron. Kirsty Wark asked if he had received calls (as he had predicted) from disgruntled Conservatives. Nigel Farage (to laughter from other panellists) said David Cameron had done enough to keep his backbenchers onside for the moment.

3/5/2013 (local elections results with UKIP on 25% of the vote). Nick Robinson prefaced the interview by saying that the electorate had declared 'send in the clowns' when in truth 'they know very, very little of what UKIP stands for'. Evan Davis asked if this was midterm blues or positive support for the party. Nigel Farage said people were voting UKIP because they believed in what the party stood for. Evan Davis repeated it was a protest vote.



Appendix III – Today Programme Transcript, 30th May 2009, 7.32am, Preamble to Interview with Nigel Farage

MARK MARDELL: A small sea, more like a pond perhaps, of Union flags drop in front of a diminished group of men in the European Parliament. They thought their election heralded a revolution, but what have they achieved? Not, obviously, their main ambition of getting the UK out of the EU. Most members of the European Parliament regard UKIP as profoundly unserious pranksters with a weird obsession. ‘Criminal betrayal’ – so said UKIP’s rising star Robert Kilroy-Silk MEP, the former Labour MP and daytime TV host, he’s the man with the orange complexion, you’ll remember, before he quit the party. ‘An incompetent joke’ – that’s the verdict of another leadership contender. The pronouncements of sore losers, perhaps, but there’s something of a theme here which real opponents have been quick to pick up on: ‘fruitcakes, loonies, closet racists’ was what David Cameron said about them, and it’s the last bit that annoys the current leadership. Nigel Farage has dismissed the idea that they’re the BNP in blazers, but their main plank in this election is perhaps their opposition to unlimited immigration, and Mr Farage admits he’s spent a lot of time and energy fighting off a take-over by the far right. That must say something about the sympathies of some members. And what about the MEPs? Of the dozen elected, Robert Kilroy-Silk has disappeared from the political scene and two others have been expelled, one jailed for fraud, the other awaiting trial on similar charges. UKIP condemns the EU gravy train, but a good proportion seem to have prominent gravy stains all down their blazers. The European Parliament, for all its bad reputation, is a place where the politicians have a serious job modifying, tweaking, even kicking out proposed new laws. UKIP don’t boast of any achievements on this front, and their opponents say they’ve voted against Britain’s interests in a host of areas from fishing to trade talks. A UKIP news release ruefully admits that occasionally UKIP do miss pieces of legislation. If not the BNP in blazers, then there is something of the golf club militant about UKIP – so old-school they’re in constant danger of being expelled, the boys who didn’t make prefects because they were too ready to cock a snook and put two fingers up at the establishment. But there’s no doubt there is a market for this at the moment, but in a parliament that’s about quiet conciliation not gestures, they make a lot of noise, no one is unaware of their cause. For them the risk is that they become part of an institution they despise, the licensed court jester, who can poke fun at the EU’s po-faced pretensions, as long as they make withdrawal look like a lost cause for mavericks.

Appendix IV – The Wilson Report and BBC Management Response

In 2005, when the Eurosceptic and former Conservative minister Lord Ryder was briefly acting chairman of the BBC, he forced a Governors' inquiry into BBC EU coverage chaired by former cabinet secretary Lord Wilson of Dinton. The Wilson panel comprised two pro-EU representatives (Sir Stephen Wall, a board member of Britain in Europe, and Lucy Armstrong, a business consultant) and two eurosceptics: (Rodney Leach, chairman of Business for Sterling, and Nigel Smith, chairman of the No-euro Campaign.)

The report's findings were sharply critical of the BBC, suggesting that 'the BBC's coverage of EU news needs to be improved and to be made more demonstrably impartial'. It identified five problematic areas: an 'institutional mindset' at the Corporation; an over-simplified polarisation of the issues and stereotyping; the viewing of EU events through 'the Westminster Prism'; an ignorance of EU affairs amongst journalists; and bias by omission.⁸ The findings of the Wilson Report echoed closely News-watch's research over the previous six years.

In response, the BBC Management promised major improvements to its EU coverage. These included: appointing a dedicated Europe Editor based in Brussels; improving training for staff; and the introduction of a 'robust system of monitoring', with editors of individual programmes responsible for accurate and timely logging of interviewees, and 'regular qualitative analysis in order to assess content, tone and approach'.⁹

However, in the post-Wilson period News-watch observed little improvement in the range, depth and approach to EU issues in BBC News coverage, and regularly expressed concerns (as outlined in the first section of this document) that those speaking against the EU were not offered parity with those speaking in its favour.

In October 2015, David Jordan, Director of Editorial Policy and Standards at the BBC gave oral evidence to the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee. He revealed that the Corporation's post-Wilson commitment to monitoring EU output had been given up because the BBC had found it 'actually very unhelpful – not helpful at all – in defining whether we were impartial', he added that it was also 'very expensive and time-consuming'.¹⁰ The subsequent reliance on 'editorial judgement' as opposed to securing a detailed overview of broadcast output has undoubtedly led to an ongoing imbalance in the BBC's coverage of the EU, and referendum coverage that was out of kilter with the views of the majority of the British people.

⁸ http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/govs/independentpanelreport.pdf

⁹ http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/govs/eu_management_response.pdf

¹⁰ <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/european-scrutiny-committee/eu-scrutiny-follow-up/oral/23350.html>