

European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons 14 Tothill Street London SW1H 9NB

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From: Sir William Cash MP

22 January 2015

Lord Hall of Birkenhead CBE
Director-General of the BBC
Broadcasting House
Portland Place
London
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dee Lord Hall,". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Committee discussed your most recent letter, received on Tuesday, at our meeting this afternoon.

We asked, in our letter of 14 January, that you treat that letter as a formal summons. That is, of course, a formal summons to this Committee, in this current Parliament. Your agreement to appear before a future European Scrutiny Committee does not meet either that request or our legitimate expectations.

We wish to question you, as we questioned BBC executives in 2013, and as we questioned Rona Fairhead earlier this month, on matters which are clearly within the remit of this Committee, and directly follow up our scrutiny inquiry. The session with Rona Fairhead was productive but there were certain areas that it rightly could not cover, and which we would wish to cover with you as both head of the BBC Executive and Director-General of the BBC.

Your decision to offer to appear only after the general election rests on the fact that this is a "pre-election period". I remind you that the general election is still over three months away, and that you are already scheduled to appear before another Committee towards the end of the Parliament. I also note that we originally made this request on 29 January 2014, almost a year ago.

This timing question therefore has no basis, and given that you have conceded to appear before the Committee, we ask you to appear on Wednesday 11

February, at 2.30pm, and would be grateful if - as we said in our last letter - that you would treat this letter as you would a formal summons. We remind you that we would be able to issue such a summons were you not a member of the House of Lords.

Should you refuse to appear before us on 11 February our next step will be to consider the publication of a Special Report setting out the circumstances of your refusal to appear, and referring the matter to the Liaison Committee and colleagues across the House. This is a serious step and one which Committees do not take lightly, I hope that, even at this late stage, we will instead agree to conduct these discussions in public at the oral evidence session on 11 February.

I am copying this letter to the Chairman of the BBC Trust, the Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP, Chair of the Liaison Committee, John Whittingdale MP, Chair of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee and Lord Boswell, Chairman of the House of Lords European Union Committee.

Yours,

Bill Cash

CHAIRMAN