



From the Director-General

3 March 2014

William Cash MP  
Chairman, European Scrutiny Committee  
House of Commons  
7 Millbank  
London  
SW1P 3JA

Dear Mr Cash,

Thank you for your letter of 29 January, inviting me to give evidence to the Committee on outcomes following the Prebble Review.

As you know, the Prebble Review was commissioned and published by the BBC Trust, and it dealt with editorial output, rather than any organisational or strategic matters – covering the very broad issues of immigration, religion, and coverage of the European Union. Any lessons that we think should be heeded from that review will be reflected in our output.

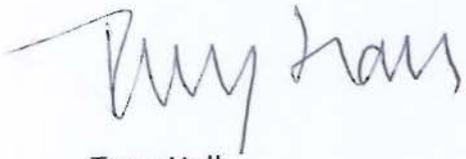
I hope you will understand that the BBC's editorial independence as guaranteed by the BBC Charter is something highly valued by the British public. The fact that Parliament does not, through any of its formal structures, seek to question the BBC on its editorial approach to issues, I am sure reinforces the confidence of the public that the BBC is genuinely independent from political pressure.

As I am Editor-in-Chief of the BBC, I believe that an appearance to be questioned on our coverage of highly contested political issues by way of a formal Select Committee hearing could undermine that critical perception, and for that reason, I am afraid I must decline the offer to appear. The Chairman of the BBC Trust, as the body charged with ultimately upholding the BBC's independence, has informed me that he will agree to appear at a future date.

As you know the BBC appears very regularly at those House of Commons Committees with a remit which includes scrutiny of the BBC, namely the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, the Public Accounts Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee, and so

my decision on this issue in no way reflects an intention to avoid proper scrutiny by Parliament.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Hall', written in a cursive style.

Tony Hall  
Director-General