

Dear Sir or Madam,

You have asked us as members of the public to comment on the current state of the state of the press regulatory system.

My approximate recalled words of Charles Grant of the Centre for European Reform from yesterday's Brexit conference at Osborne's Solicitors yesterday evening were that the 'left wing' newspapers such as The Guardian and Independent were reporting both sides of the EU Referendum debate, whilst the 'right wing' newspapers (he highlighted the Daily Mail and The Sun) were neither accurate or balanced. He highlighted that BBC, ITV, and Sky News were reporting impartially.

This in a nutshell is why press factual accountability to the public (a much more appropriate word than regulation and is after all what the PRP is endeavouring to deliver), which gives the readers the right to challenge incorrect reporting, is desperately needed.

As to the current state, whilst the actions of the Mail, Times/Sun, and Daily Express with their set up and control of IPSO can only be regarded as to be fully expected, I am disturbed bordering on astonished at the slow pace of introduction of a fully recognised regulator. This would surely have more effect at staying the hand of John Whittingdale to sign off Section 40, and tying the hands of press freedom campaigners to pursue change, more than anything the Murdochs and Dacres of this world could ever do.

I consider it will be close to fatal for the entire Leveson project if after four years the PRP report to Parliament that they have been unable to present an alternative to IPSO, then try to argue for Section 40 to be signed or a backstop regulator be created. I need to say that should the country have voted to leave the EU by then and there has been a change of Prime Minister then we should carefully focus on the words of a certain Mr Johnson: "We have no need of some new body backed by statute, or the privy council, and it is wrong in principle. You either have a free press or you don't. You can't sell the pass, and admit the principle of regulation – because it is in the nature of regulation that it swells and grows."

Please do not report to Parliament without a recognised regulator in place with at least some signed up publications. It will likely be the end.

That said, I also wish to amplify and support Hacked Off's view." PRP should strongly recommend to Parliament that the key 'guaranteed access to justice incentive' (section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act) should be brought into effect as Parliament had intended. "

With kind regards

Chris Clark