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Press Complaints Commission

From the Chairman

The Right Honourable Lord Marnoch



11th February 2005

Chairman
Sir Christopher Meyer

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Dear Lord Marnoch,

Thank you for your letter of 7th February.

It was helpful of you to provide copies of the leader article and press release. Generally speaking, the Commission does not – of course – specifically encourage editors publicly to comment on its decisions, especially in cases where no formal adjudication has been published by the PCC. However, there is no doubt that they have a right to do so, not least because they are obliged to publish our adjudications when the Commission *is* critical of them. Any reporting on the subject is itself covered by the terms of the Code; we have, in the past, received (rare) complaints about a newspaper’s subsequent coverage of the outcome of a PCC investigation.

In regard to your more general point about press releases, the Code makes clear that it is the responsibility of each editor to ensure that the Code is implemented by all contributors to his or her publication. If published material proves to be inaccurate, it is the responsibility of the editor to ensure that it is corrected in accordance with the terms of the Code. This is true for material provided by press releases or news agencies (to take another example) and ensures that there is no gap in the Code’s coverage of newspaper content. The argument that the newspaper had merely published information contained in a press release would not, by itself, be considered to be a sufficient defence to a complaint that an article was inaccurate.

I hope that this is helpful and am grateful to you for drawing these points to my attention.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Christopher Meyer

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