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20th March 2007

Dear Tim,

The UK is fortunate to be hosting this year's annual meeting of the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe, a body of which the PCC was a founding member. The host press council – the PCC in this case – is normally responsible for obtaining sponsorship for the event.

Chairmen and chief executives from around 25 different media councils will be present – from Iceland in the West to Russia in the East. The meeting normally attracts a good deal of publicity for its debates on privacy, freedom of expression and the relationship between the media and legislators. Previous speakers at the conference have included the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, the European Commissioner for Information Society, Viviane Reding, and European Court of Justice judge Professor Giuseppe Mifsud Bonnici.

This year, the meeting is being held in Edinburgh between 19-21 September. The First Minister has been invited to open it. There is a dinner on 20th September at the Signet Library, to which politicians and newspaper representatives will be invited.

I am writing to invite the Scotsman to sponsor the dinner, given its status as Scotland's national newspaper. We would expect about 80 people to attend, and it would be sensible to allow about £90 per head including room hire, food, drinks and decoration. I am enclosing further details about the conference. It would be excellent if the paper could sponsor this event. I look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards.

*Yours ever,
 Christophe.*

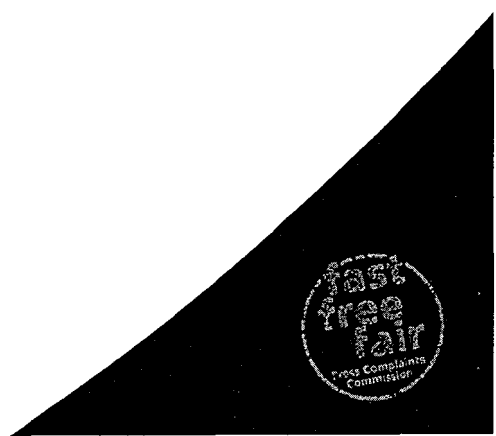
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Outline

In September 2007, the Annual General Meeting of the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe (AIPCE) will be held in Edinburgh. This is a high-profile 2 day event which will bring together senior representatives from Press Councils and media bodies across Europe in an exciting forum debating important issues around the press, media regulation and freedom of expression. There will be approximately 40 delegates in total, the vast majority of whom will be Directors or other senior representatives of their respective Press Councils.

Background to the conference

AIPCE is a loose-knit group consisting of Press Councils and Press Complaints Commissions from countries throughout Europe, which brings together representatives of press owners, journalists and the public to examine complaints against the media on behalf of the public, and to defend press freedom. AIPCE's primary role is to facilitate networking between Councils, enabling cross-cultural cooperation and the exchange of new ideas and best practice.

All arrangements for this AGM (including sponsorship) are being handled by the UK's Press Complaints Commission (PCC), which will coordinate the AGM on behalf of AIPCE. This will be the first time in AIPCE's history that the AGM has been held in the UK.

Plans for the conference

The AGM will be held between Thursday 20th and Friday 21st September 2007 at the Radisson SAS Hotel in the heart of Edinburgh's Royal Mile. Jack McConnell, First Minister of Scotland, has been approached to make the opening remarks at the conference, and we have received positive indications from his office that he will be available to do this. Confirmation will be sought shortly.

Whilst the specifics of the conference programme are yet to be finalised, the AGM will follow a similar format to that of previous years. Each participating country will present a brief report of their Council's activities to update delegates on news from throughout the Alliance. Topics likely to be discussed include the impact of the internet and online journalism on press regulation, and how best to develop self-sustainability in under-developed Press Councils in Eastern Europe. A number of detailed case studies of the various types of complaints dealt with by Councils during 2006 will also be discussed.

In line with previous AIPCE conferences, the day immediately after the close of formal proceedings (Saturday 22nd September) will be dedicated to allowing delegates to experience something of the culture of the host country before they depart. Details are still being confirmed for this, but the day will likely include a trip to Edinburgh Castle and a visit to the Royal Yacht Britannia.

The dinner

The dinner will be the most high-profile part of the conference. Held on Thursday 20th September, it will mark a stylish and prestigious start to proceedings. In addition to the AIPCE delegates, guests will be drawn from other backgrounds with an interest in media regulation, including politics, academia and the law. We anticipate that there will be approximately 90 guests in total.

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