

The Press Complaints Commission responds to today's speech by Ed Miliband (8 July 2011)

It is wrong of Mr Miliband to call for the scrapping of the PCC. His remarks are long on rhetoric and short on substance. He appears to be ignorant of the important and valued work of the PCC.

However, he is right to support self-regulation and to say that the phone hacking scandal should act as a catalyst for improvement and reform of the industry. Indeed, his remarks simply echo the statement the PCC itself issued on Wednesday. We believe that the industry is fully committed to the Press Complaints Commission, and will respond appropriately to this challenge.

Mr Miliband offers three areas for particular change: greater independence of its Board members from those it regulates; proper investigative powers; and an ability to enforce corrections. Mr Miliband is effectively agreeing with the PCC's own statement, which said that the areas of proposed reform should be: "its own constitution and funding arrangements, the range of sanctions available to it, and its practical independence".

However, it is worth pointing out that the PCC exercises the power to enforce corrections on a daily basis. It dealt with thousands of complaints across the whole newspaper and magazine industry in 2010, many involving corrections and apologies. The PCC has to agree prominence of all corrections in advance. Mr Miliband, in this respect, is suggesting a change that already exists.

On Wednesday, Baroness Buscombe said:

"The Commission is determined to play its part in bringing to a conclusion this shocking chapter, which has stained British journalism, and to ensure that good comes out of it."

The PCC welcomes the challenge to respond to the issues at stake, and looks forward to discussing this further with Mr Miliband and his team.

ENDS

8 July 2011