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Dear Sir Andrew,

I am writing in response to your letter to the Rt Hon. Norman Lamb, which was published on your website on 21 April 2016 ([link](#)). Although we were given advance sight of the letter before it was published, we had very limited notice of it. This is regrettable in light of the errors and omissions contained in your letter and the accompanying document which need not have entered the public domain had we been given additional notice of its intended publication.

I should state at the outset that Vote Leave has always striven to use the most accurate statistics as possible. We are proud that we only use the facts. I note that you accept that 'the UK's gross contributions to the EU in 2014 were £19.1 billion, according to official statistics available'. As you will be aware, this amounts to £367 million per week. I therefore welcome your view that Vote Leave's claim that the UK's gross contribution in 2014 was £350 million per week is an underestimate of the true amount. The EU debits more than £350 million per week from the UK Government, money which could be spent on our priorities like the NHS.

Unfortunately, both your letter to Mr Lamb and the note by Deputy National Statistician, Jonathan Athow attached to it, are highly misleading in other respects. You take into account in your letter 'receipts [from the EU] to non-public sector bodies' without making any attempt to quantify contributions from such bodies to the EU budget, which are also not included in the 'UK official transactions with with the institutions of the EU'. Mr Athow goes further and claims in his note that:

*'The figures for the net contribution including payments to non-public sector bodies (line [4] in table 2, around £110-£135m a week) show the net level of resources being transferred from the UK as a whole to the EU'.*

Since these statistics do not include private sector contributions to the EU budget, for example, fines paid by economic undertakings to the European Commission for breaches of European Union competition law, this is a claim which is not merely misleading but false, since such monies would be paid to the UK

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Government if we Vote Leave. We would be able to spend these sums on our priorities if we took back control.

The 'net level of resources being transferred from the UK as a whole to the EU' can be only be ascertained by considering the UK's balance of payments with the EU institutions. These figures are published in table 9.1 of the Office for National Statistics *Pink Book* (ONS, October 2015, 'tab 9.1: Current account: summary transactions in 2014', [link](#)). These figures show that in 2014:

- Credits from the EU institutions to the UK were £7.665 billion.
- Debits in favour of the EU institutions were £19.994 billion, or £384.5 million per week.
- The UK's balance of payments with the EU institutions was -£12.329 billion, or £237 million per week.

It is therefore a statistical fact that in 2014, £237 million per week was 'the net level of resources being transferred from the UK as a whole to the EU', rather than £110 to £135 million per week as Mr Athow claims. Since you included private sector receipts from the EU without including private sector payments to the EU, the claims that you published do not ensure that 'official statistics are used accurately, with important limitations or caveats clearly explained' as you demanded in your letter to Mr Lamb.

I would be most grateful if you would rectify the omission from your letter and if Mr Athow would correct his note at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



Dominic Cummings

Campaign Director, Vote Leave