



17 September 2017
Sir David Norgrove
Chairman
UK Statistics Authority
1 Drummond Gate
London SW1V 2QQ

Dear Sir David

I must say that I was surprised and disappointed by your letter of today, since it was based on what appeared to be a wilful distortion of the text of my article.

When we spoke you conceded that you were more concerned by the headline and the BBC coverage, though you accepted that I was not responsible for those. I suggest if the BBC coverage offends you that you write to the BBC.

You say that I claim that there would be £350 million that "might be available for extra public spending" when we leave the EU.

This is a complete misrepresentation of what I said and I would like you to withdraw it. I in fact said : "once we have settled our accounts we will take back control of roughly £350m per week. It would be a fine thing, as many of us have pointed out, if a lot of that money went on the NHS. "

That is very different from claiming that there would be an extra £350m available for public spending and I am amazed that you should impute such a statement to me.

You claim in your defence that we would not really be taking back control of that sum, because it includes the rebate and other EU spending in this country. But, as you accept, these sums - amounting to about half the £350 million - are spent at the discretion of the EU. We do not control them.

To give you an example: when I was Mayor of London I thought it would be a good idea if we persuaded the Commission to spend £8m on the Emirates cable car. We succeeded, and the Commissioner concerned was so delighted with the results that he said he would like to fund some more cable cars in London. I was delighted, too, and was glad to have steered some of our EU contributions back to this country. But the decision was his. Control was in the hands of the Commission, not the UK. Or do you suggest otherwise ?

As for the balance of the £350 million, it of course disappears around the rest of the EU, and is spent as the EU sees fit in other countries. Once we leave the EU we will take back control of all such UK-funded spending, and, although of course I have no

doubt that we will continue to spend significantly on UK priorities such as agriculture and research, that spending will be done under UK control.

As for the rebate - whose value you did not know - it only forms part of the EU's financing arrangements with the agreement of all other EU Member States. We do not control it ourselves.

What is beyond doubt is that, upon withdrawal, we will have complete discretion over the £350m per week and that huge sums will indeed will be available for public spending on priorities such as the NHS. I believe that would be a fine thing.

If you had any concerns about my article, it would of course have been open to you to address the points with me in private rather than in this way in a public letter. As it is, if you seriously disagree with any of the above, I look forward to hearing your reasoning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Boris Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

THE RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP