

# PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Our reference: 081278

18 April 2008

Wiktor Moszczynski Esq  
Research Officer  
Federation of Poles in Great Britain  
238-246 Kings Street  
Hammersmith  
London W6 0RF

Dear Mr Moszczynski

I write further to my letter of 1 April.

The Commission has now received a response from the Daily Mail, a copy of which is enclosed.

As you will see, the newspaper is sorry that its coverage of Polish immigration has upset the Federation and has made clear from the outset that it is in no way anti-Polish. More pertinently, it has indicated that it would like to enter a "period of more understanding and less controversy with out Polish readers" – as such, it has marked its records so that you may be invited for comment in appropriate cases.

Moreover – while it has stated that it is not possible to examine every story in the extensive file – the newspaper has sought to address what appear to be the most significant areas of concern you have outlined. It has provided the source for the article of 11 October 2007 (Reuters), while explaining that the photograph in relation to the article of 26 November was captioned correctly in the paper edition. The offending caption online has now been removed. The article of 6 March about swans – which is actually an Evening Standard report – has also been removed from the newspaper's website.

At this stage of the complaint, it would be useful to receive any comments you would like to make in response to the newspaper's letter. In addition, I should be pleased for any proposals you may have – in addition to action already taken and offered by the newspaper – which could help to resolve this matter, which is the Commission's main aim. I would be more than happy to explore any suggestions you might have in this regard.

I look forward to hearing from you. Please do not hesitate to give me a call to discuss.

Yours sincerely



Scott Langham  
scott.langham@pcc.org.uk

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# THE DAILY MAIL

Telephone: 020-7938 6125/6127

Fax: 020-7937 3981

*Northcliffe House,  
2 Derry Street,  
Kensington,  
London, W8 5TT*

Mr Scott Langham  
Press Complaints Commission  
Halton House  
20/23 Holborn  
London EC1N 2JD

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18 APR 2008

**Your Ref: 081278**

17 April 08

Dear Mr Langham,

Thank you for your letter with details of the complaint by Mr Moszczynski representing the Federation of Poles in Great Britain.

I am sorry to see that our coverage of Polish immigration into this country has upset him and his colleagues in the Federation. I have written to him in the past and I regret that my letter has not answered his concerns.

I should make it clear at the outset that the Daily Mail is not anti-Polish, or indeed anti-any immigrants. We have frequently pointed to the benefit this country gains from immigrants and acknowledged the debt many of our services owe to them.

We would like to enter a period of more understanding and less controversy with our Polish readers. I am sure we would be happy to work on this in a positive manner and I will make a note on our data base and speak to those most concerned, giving them the Federation's contact numbers so that they can be invited to comment, when appropriate.

Our concerns have always been with the Government of Great Britain, which appears to have lost control of our borders, have lost control of illegal immigration and have failed to make proper social provision for those who come here, quite legitimately, expecting to participate in society and enjoy the benefits, if they qualify, of our welfare and NHS system. They have also seriously underestimated immigrant numbers with consequent strain on all.

A very large proportion of the biggest wave of immigrants this country has experienced since, and including, the Norman invasion, come from Poland. It is unsurprising therefore, that there will be more stories about them than about others from other countries.

The Federation may not appreciate that the Daily Mail is a robust "middle market" newspaper, appealing to an intelligent and mainly middle class audience. They are not the sort of people to read the paper and go out on the streets "Pole bashing". Indeed they are remarkably tolerant and remarkably generous. They are the people who raised over £17million pounds to help the sufferers of the Tsunami around the Indian sub

continent and Indonesia two Christmases ago. And continue to donate their hard earned cash to the good causes we espouse.

The Daily Mail is not the Times. Nor is it The Sun. Our headlines are more robust and to the point than the Times. They are not sensationalist like the Sun. We always try to make them accurate but we would vigorously defend our right to publish them- always bearing in mind that they should be and are read in conjunction with the article below. We also vigorously defend our right, in a free society, to write about immigrants and immigration as they impact so clearly upon our readers.

It is not possible for me to examine every story in the extensive file submitted as they go back too far - to 2006 in fact.

Our journalists deal with several stories every day. Probably as many as 6,000 in any one year. Not everyone is able to produce notes and sources for a story which they handled a year ago!

Nevertheless I will try to tackle some of the concerns raised.

For example our story October 11<sup>th</sup> 2007 by our respected political reporter "Immigrants here for good: Half Poles plan to stay in UK" was based on a report from Reuters, the internationally recognised agency. That read;

**Poles in UK split on whether to return home**  
**Wed Oct 10, 2007 1:51pm BST**

**WARSAW (Reuters) - About 15 percent of Poles living and working in England and Ireland do not want to return home, while 30 percent have not made up their minds, a study showed on Wednesday.**

**The Mig Research study of Polish migrants, about one million of whom are estimated to be in Britain, showed 13 percent were planning to stay abroad temporarily, for up to six months.**

**Of the remainder, 13 percent planned to spend two years abroad, 17 percent five years and 12 percent more than five years.**

**About 2 million people left the ex-communist state after it joined the European Union in 2004, seeking better lives and wages in richer Western EU members.**

**Most of those who left were young people complaining about poor job prospects in Poland, which was battling unemployment levels of about 20 percent and slow economic growth.**

**Experts say the emigration of mobile and well-educated Poles is fuelling a shortage of skilled labour in the booming economy.**

**Ahead of the early parliamentary election on October 21, main parties have sought support among expatriate Poles.**

**Poles living in Britain are generally seen as more likely to support the opposition centre-right and pro-business Civic Platform (PO), studies show, while Poles in the United States are seen to be more conservative.**

There seems to be no reason why we should not discuss other figures in the public domain just because they were not included in the Mig study, and you will notice it was Reuters who introduced the 1 million figure. The suggestion that many who have not made up their minds are likely to stay is not unreasonable and backed by other researchers.

I fail to see why headlines saying half the Poles who have come here may stay can be construed as either critical or negative. If there is any implication beyond what the words say it is that those Poles who are here are comfortable, perhaps even welcomed by the community in which they live, have found work and find this country offers a life better than that in their native land.

The story quoted as being on 26 November 2008 – I think 2007 – with the picture of Poles queuing. The Federation claims they are queuing to vote in elections and that we said they were queuing for visas. There was nothing “malicious” about our caption in our paper which did not mention visas. Our caption said they were queuing for passports for their babies. I enclose a copy for you to see. This picture and the caption material was sourced by the agency London Media who supplied us with the information in the caption. At this distance I am not able to find out who was correct. I am prepared to annotate the cutting to say that the Federation says they were queuing to vote.

Unfortunately our website did make the mistake complained of and I have had the offending caption removed as it is clearly inaccurate, The operative concerned has since left our employment.

Again the March 6th 2008 story about Swans – I can find no reference to this story in the Daily Mail newspaper on that date – or indeed anywhere in this newspaper on any date. However I have found it on our website. It was taken, not from the Daily Mail, but from the Evening Standard. I enclose a copy.

As far as I can see it is a straight forward story by a senior reporter quoting an eye witness. While I cannot answer for the Evening Standard I see no sign that the story has been challenged.

Nor can I follow the objection to it. While it is correct that two Poles are mentioned living nearby they are very fairly quoted as saying “We don’t eat the swans. We just stay here at night and we work during the day.” There is absolutely no implication that those who ate the swans were Poles.

However as the complainant finds it objectionable I have had it removed from the website archive. I cannot, of course, act in any way for the Evening Standard.

The suggestion that the Poles are the whipping boys for our political agenda because they are white and that we do not write stories about immigrants from elsewhere are unsustainable. The Mail pulls no punches no matter whence people come or whatever the colour of their skin happens to be.

As I say we are happy to try harder. We are happy to correct any significant inaccuracies of fact in our stories if we hear about them promptly. And we are happy to hear what Polish people have to say. Our letters pages are always open to people with a sensible point of view or disagreement and regularly runs a feature which gives both sides of any topical argument.

I apologise for the length of this reply but I wanted to make it clear that we take this complaint very seriously indeed and are eager to clear up any misunderstandings.

However we cannot detect any breaches of the Code in our newspaper coverage and any blemishes in our website have been and will be corrected or removed and the website editors will be warned to be more careful what stories they quote.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Esser', written in a cursive style.

Robin Esser  
Executive Managing Editor