

# PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Our reference: 081278

04 June 2008

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

Dear Mr Moszczynski

Thank you for your letter of 7 May.

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

As you will see, the newspaper has sought to respond on a number of points you raised in your latest correspondence.

The Commission's primary aim, as I have mentioned previously, is the resolution of all substantive complaints wherever possible. In this instance, the newspaper has repeated its desire for this matter – which encompasses a very large number of articles over an extended period – to be resolved amicably between the parties.

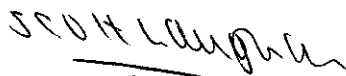
The newspaper's proposals include the removal/amendment of articles on its website; internal guidance in regard to articles involving Polish people; and the publication of (more) positive stories about the UK Polish community. In addition – taking into account your suggestion for an article assessing the role of new and old Polish communities in the UK – the newspaper has offered to publish a (presumably lengthy) letter from you in which you could outline your position in greater detail. In my opinion, this might be an appropriate way to take this matter forward constructively.

If you are amenable to such a proposal, I should be pleased for a draft text for the newspaper's consideration.

If you are unwilling to accept the newspaper's offer, I should be grateful for any additional comments you would like to make before we can decide the most appropriate way forward.

I look forward to hearing from you. Please feel free 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

Rec'd  
9/6/08

**Your Ref: 081278**

3 June 08

Dear Mr Langham,

**Federation of Poles**

Thank you for your further letter about this complaint.

I am sorry that my extensive reply did not totally satisfy the complainants.

It is our sincere wish that we can reach a satisfactory resolution since we have no wish to be regarded as anti-Polish and there is absolutely no advantage to the Daily Mail in being so regarded. Indeed the opposite.

However we clearly have to report on immigration matters and, if a major figure in this debate of intense public interest, expresses an opinion we reserve the right to quote it as we do with any report from an accepted source.

I do not see the Daily Mail's opinion, contained in our Comment Column, being very often accused by the complainants or others, as being anti-Polish. Perhaps if the Federation read the newspaper and not just the website, they would have seen more balance in our treatment of this subject.

I also suspect that the "blogs" on the website associated with our stories tend to influence the website readers and make them think the Mail is more extreme than it really is. However we cannot take responsibility for what others post on the web.

As I say it is difficult to go back too far to discuss the factual content of stories which is why the PCC, rightly, tends to not concern itself with articles which have been published over three months or so in the past.

If we had had complaints about these articles when they were first published we could have addressed the points earlier and dealt with any anti-Polish bias that, it is alleged, might have crept in.

Naturally, in every part of my previous reply, I took into account the Code of Practice to which I referred specifically in my final paragraph.

On the story published 21/3/08 the complainant says the headline "All the Gurkhas or 11 days worth of Poles" is anti -Polish and he can't see why it is there. But, as the PCC always maintains, headlines

are to be read in conjunction with the story which is clearly pro- Gurkha and refers only to the mathematics, contrasting the limited number of Gurkhas allowed to settle in this country with the number from Poland.

It emphatically does not say the Gurkhas are worth more than the Poles nor was it intended to demean or insult the Polish people. It is a statement of unassailable and mathematical fact.

The Polish baby boom again was not intended and did not imply any criticism of the Polish community here. It was a factual account of the strain being put upon the maternity care provided by the arrival of many young Polish people. It recorded the sort of financial burden being put on the taxpayer – all tax payers. While it is true it did not contain the amount contributed by Polish workers here to the Exchequer it also did not contain detail of any other community's contribution.

The Code does not require that such detail is included and it would not be necessary when, for example, writing of the total cost to the Exchequer of providing security protection to Salaman Rushdie, to deduct from it his annual taxation bill for his personal earnings or even that of the Muslim community as a whole.

You will also have seen the report by the Lords Economic Affairs Committee in April that said the total contribution of all migrants to the Gross Domestic Product per capita is about 58p a week – not a huge contribution to the UK population as a whole.

I am unaware that the Daily Mail associates the "East European" influx with race riots as a general rule. If there are, in the opinion of the complainant, such specific examples, I will readily address them.

The same is true of the general charge that we use the word "Poles" in a "derogatory" sense. I will address any specific occasions.

I must repeat that, under the Code, headlines are not normally considered in isolation. They must be read in conjunction with the story.

I do feel that headlines categorised as "derogatory" and "sensationalist" and "inflammatory" are only so in the eyes of the complainants. We do not agree with those subjective judgements.

I cannot find the headline "Many immigrants earning more than their British counterparts" in the Daily Mail newspaper but it was on our website. I must say I cannot detect anything anti-Polish about it.

What is demeaning or critical or insulting about a story based on an official report published by the Home Office which found many immigrants were earning more than their British counterparts? It is factually correct. As was the statement, taken from the report, that immigrants from the new EU accession countries in Eastern Europe, such as Poland, earned less than UK workers. These are facts from an official report, not insults to our friends from Poland.

The story about the need to build 2 million homes to cope with the growing number of immigrants was also a factual story – again on the website, quoting a respected think-tank. It discussed immigrants as a whole and did not specify Polish immigrants. With the official figures on the immigrant population here and those expected to arrive it is obvious this is an extra strain on the building of affordable housing in the UK. There was no particular requirement to run a longer piece detailing the facts that people live longer and that family units are smaller.

*However I am prepared to remove any article on our website or annotate any printed article if there are provable specific inaccuracies. We, like most human beings, are subject to mistakes and inaccuracies from time to time and I would never claim we are infallible.*

Quite clearly the Federation is convinced we have been unfair to them and we are very willing to try to address that.

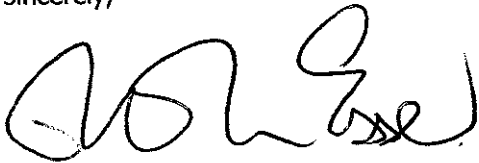
As I said in my previous reply, we will try harder. We will correct any significant inaccuracies of fact in our stories and it will help if we hear about them promptly. We will listen to what Polish people have to say. We will provide relevant reporters with the Federation's contacts so they may be asked for comment when appropriate. Relevant journalists and editors will be warned to guard against any suggestion that the Polish people are being "demeaned".

We have run many positive stories about the Polish community here. We would like to run more.

Our letters pages are always open to people with a sensible point of view or who disagree with something we have published and regularly run both sides of any topical argument.

Perhaps indeed a good letter, setting out a more positive case for those Poles who have come here would also help. I am sure the Editor would look kindly on such a course if the Federation would consider sending us one.

Yours sincerely,

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

Robin Esser  
Executive Managing Editor