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Adam Baxter
Ofcom
Riverside House
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Thursday, 05 February 2015

Dear Mr Baxter

Consultation on the list of major political parties for elections

I confirm that the following is the formal consultation response by the Scottish National Party that Ofcom can publish.

It is our belief that the SNP should be designated as one of the "major parties" in Great Britain for the coming General Election, as well as within Scotland, on a position of equality alongside the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties. We regret that Ofcom did not include this option even on a consultative basis in this exercise.

Since the opening of the Ofcom consultation, ITV and BBC have changed their stance and accepted that the SNP, along with other political parties previously excluded, should be included on an equal basis in their televised election debates. It would therefore be appropriate for Ofcom to redefine its list of "major parties" on a GB basis accordingly.

The Ofcom consultation document states that "very few opinion polls relate individually" to Scotland. In fact, there is a substantial body of recent polling evidence specific to Scotland, including material published since the consultation document was released - all indicating the significance of the SNP and our potential vote on a UK-wide basis.

For example, in recent weeks, the Survation and Ipsos MORI Scotland polls in Scotland show substantial double-digit leads for the SNP, which has been a consistent finding across different pollsters since the referendum:

<http://survation.com/new-scottish-voting-intentions-for-daily-record-shows-desire-for-snp-in-government/>

<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3514/SNP-remains-in-dominant-position-as-election-approaches.aspx>

In addition, the detailed constituency polling by Lord Ashcroft Polls indicates that these very high Scotland-wide opinion poll ratings for the SNP would, on current levels of support, translate into substantially increased representation in the next House of Commons for the SNP:

<http://lordashcroftpolls.com/2015/02/scottish-battleground/>

We would also draw your attention to the fact that the SNP is now the UK's third largest political party with over 93,000 members, and the only political party in the UK to hold a majority government.

In conclusion, we believe that Ofcom should have included the SNP in the list of "major parties" on a GB-wide basis as a basis for consultation - as well as of course continuing to be defined as a major party in Scotland - and that such a redefinition of the SNP's status by Ofcom would reflect the reality of the political process in 2015 in Scotland and across the UK.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Murrell', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

PETER MURRELL
Chief Executive