

Eddie McGrady MP (South Down)



Tuesday 9th December 2008

HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: ID/C/McG/3/08

Mr Yiannis Thoedorou  
Ofcom  
Riverside House  
2A Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HA

Dear Mr Thoedorou

RE: Ofcom Consultation on Public Service Broadcasting

With regard to the above consultation I believe that some of the recommendations put forward put at risk the high quality public service television we receive in Northern Ireland from both the BBC and UTV.

In particular the option of a single licence for Channel 3 across the UK is something I strongly oppose. UTV has delivered high quality news for many years. It is highly valued by the audience and its place in Northern Ireland's broadcasting future should be guaranteed. Indeed without UTV, we believe that the BBC service would not be as competitive as it currently is.

A UK-wide licence would be detrimental to the viewer and take local accountability away from programme makers. A single licence would not benefit viewers as it would potentially lose all the regional strengths and lead to a homogenised service across the UK.

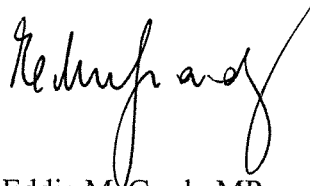
A single licence would lose audience in the devolved nations and actually make the provision of public service content for these nations less viable rather than more viable. I would argue that the sense of ownership a locally accountable and branded service provider adds to the audience loyalty is something that a single licence holder could never achieve.

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While I understand the commercial difficulties facing all ITV licence's, there should be a bare minimum of five licences proposed for the future, those being Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England and the Channel Islands.

Yours sincerely

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

Eddie McGrady MP