



EUROPEAN MAINSTREAM

‘IN OUR INTEREST: BRITAIN WITH EUROPE’

Robert Buckland MP, Rt. Hon. Damian Green MP, Margot James MP, Jeremy Lefroy MP, Rt. Hon. Sir James Paice DL MP, Neil Carmichael MP, Charles Hendry MP, Sir Peter Luff MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Ottaway MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG QC MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Tony Baldry MP, Richard Benyon MP, Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt MP, Rt. Hon. Stephen Dorrell MP, Tobias Ellwood MP, Ben Gummer MP, Laura Sandys MP, Rt. Hon. Caroline Spelman MP

‘IN OUR INTEREST: BRITAIN WITH EUROPE’

A series of articles by the mainstream of the Conservative Party. We are fundamentally united by our belief that the UK national interest is best served working for changes within the EU, not being marginalised at the fringes. This group believes that the nation would be best served by the Conservative Party campaigning for a ‘yes’ vote in any future in/out referendum.



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UK PROSPERITY

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JOBS, JOBS, JOBS: THE SINGLE MARKET

Robert Buckland MP

For far too long, the domestic debate about Britain's involvement with the EU has focused upon process and procedure. We have sent mixed messages to our European partners about our intentions, and have failed to link the debate to the reality of life for British businesses and communities. As memories of the Second World War and the Soviet threat recede, we need to find a new focus for the EU. I believe that the need to be competitive in a truly global economy should be at the heart of a positive case for the EU.

As the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has said before, Europe has 7% of the world's population, 25% of its GDP and 50% of its welfare spending. The standard of living across Europe is the envy of the developing world, but it could easily slip away if we do not work together to meet the competitive challenge posed by economic giants such as China, India and Brazil. Without reform the EU will grow at just 1.5% per year over the next decade; China is currently growing at 9.5% per year.

EU membership is part of the fabric of life in my constituency

Across Europe we are facing many of the same challenges: how to reform pensions and healthcare in the long term; opening up services to competition; reforming our labour markets; and clamping down on 'gold-plating' regulations. Our greatest focus, however, should be on completing the Single Market. This would give the EU a substantial boost: a single digital marketplace could single-handedly boost Europe's economy by over 4% between now and 2020. Completing the Single Market in energy or in services could do even more to boost the EU's competitiveness in this global era.

Swindon has the highest percentage of foreign-owned firms in the whole country. We look out to the wider world, and many of our local businesses, large and small, trade

daily within the EU. We understand that foreign direct investment and exports are the key to a strong, sustainable economy. The EU's single greatest achievement, the Single Market, was brought into being by British Conservatives. It is this which provides an economic baseload for a country that is facing fierce competition from a fast developing world. As David Lidington has said, since 1992 the Single Market alone increased the EU's prosperity by 1.85% of GDP and created about 2.75 million extra jobs.

EU membership is part of the fabric of life in my constituency. The EU debate must always be a hard-headed discussion about what is best for our economy, our businesses and our families, not some political parlour

game. Withdrawal from a market of 500 million people with a value of about £11 trillion would be a wrong turning for Britain. Let's recognise that when Britain takes a lead in Europe, we get results.

Robert Buckland MP is Member of Parliament for South Swindon and a Recorder of the Crown Court, sitting on the Midland Circuit. He is a member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights and the Commons Committees on Standards and Privileges. Robert is also the Chairman of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, Joint Secretary of the 1922 Committee and the chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the European Union.



A GROWING BRITAIN IN A REFORMED EU

Rt. Hon. Damian Green MP

public in a serious debate about our future, and I believe that we can win not only the economic argument, but also capture the idealism of young people for an outward-looking European future, just as happened in the 1970s. Bring it on.

For the moment, though, we need to start making the basic economic case that we are Better Off In. Of course there needs to be serious reform, and one of the tasks of Conservatives who maintain good relations with centre-right politicians from other European countries is to develop a series of ideas which will benefit all EU Members including Britain when the reform programme is fully formulated.

This will include, as George Osborne pointed out in his January Speech to Open Europe, a new ability for the EU to cope with a European Union where some members are pursuing

dramatically deeper integration than others. This need has already been recognised in countries including Germany and Italy. The Chancellor also made wider points about the benefits for Britain of successful action by the EU. The free trade agreements with Canada, Korea and Singapore point the way to a more prosperous future. Thirteen countries have signed up to Britain's programme for cutting red tape. The most recent budget deal, with a real terms cut for the first time, is not only the sort of policy change which will be supported by British Conservatives, but won support from a wide collation of countries.

There are even more important opportunities ahead which will make Britain more prosperous and which are only available through our membership of the EU. The greatest of these is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). This would be a

I have supported our full and enthusiastic membership of the EU since as a student I campaigned for a Yes vote in the previous referendum in 1975. The broad arguments about greater prosperity and Britain's influence in the wider world from participation in Europe are as strong now as they were then, but we need to make them in every generation, so that people can see their relevance in the vastly different modern world.

This means that I do not agree with those of my pro-European friends who dislike the prospect of a referendum. I welcome the chance to engage the

genuinely historic deal, allowing free trade between the EU and USA, covering economies which account for nearly half of global output and a third of trade flows.

The best setting for Britain's entrepreneurial spirits to flourish is a reformed EU

This is just one reason why an ever-growing list of Britain's biggest and most important employers have publicly stated the merits of membership. From our leading manufacturers, who employ tens of thousands of people, to the wisest voices from the financial services sector, we hear a positive message about the benefits of positive engagement.

These arguments and more will be made by patriotic pro-European Conservatives in the years to come. In the 1975 campaign Margaret Thatcher summed up the underlying argument. She said "The choice is clear. We can play a role in developing Europe, or we can turn our backs on the Community. By turning our backs we would forfeit our right to influence what happens in the Community. But what happens in the Community will inevitably affect us."

It was true in 1975 and it will be true in 2017 and beyond. The best setting for Britain's entrepreneurial spirits to flourish is a reformed EU. Conservatives have a big and important case to make, not just about the need for reform, but about the need for Britain to continue to play a leading role in Europe.

Damian Green is Member for Ashford and was appointed Minister of State for Policing and Criminal Justice in 2012. Damian is also Vice-President of the Tory Reform Group.



TRADING WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS

Margot James MP

A Conservative victory in 2015 will guarantee an in/out referendum within two years. European Mainstream wants to see the UK prosper in a more dynamic and competitive European Union. If that can be achieved, we can be confident that the Prime Minister will have a strong case for Britain's continued membership of the EU.

There is a huge amount of work going on across government on the Balance of Competencies review. The results so far are revealing. And not just in terms of what we want less of from Brussels. When it comes to trade there are gains to be had from a greater commitment to

the Single Market; and more EU trade deals from which the UK benefits.

The Chancellor is right; Britain needs to increase her exports. Government support for exporters is targeted to those companies who are exporting to the growth economies of the world. That is quite right; more help is needed for exporters to markets in Asia, Africa and South America. But almost half our exports are still within the EU. We export almost as much to Germany as we do to the entire Commonwealth.

We will achieve much by our own efforts; the recovery of our manufacturing sector and the powering ahead of our service sector. But when it comes to our EU membership, we must look to the Single Market and trade deals for additional growth.

There is a widely held misconception that the Single Market was only cre-

ated to facilitate business. It was, in fact, created for society as a whole. It is made up of consumers, businesses and a regulator. Outside the US Britain conducts more transactions online per capita than any other country. It is essential to a crucial sector of our economy for the Single Market in the digital economy to be completed.

In 2011 the EU closed on a trade deal with South Korea. Since then UK exports to South Korea have increased by 95%.

The advantages of the Single Market to consumers are not widely understood.

The benefits, in terms of greater consumer choice, cross border trade without barriers and consumer protection should be better communicated.

The Balance of Competencies review consulted widely. In the consultation on the Single Market, business made the point that there are still too many obstacles. Company law and mobility are one of the least harmonised areas and this presents difficulties, especially for SMEs. Business also called for easier complaint systems and greater accountability of those responsible for enforcing the Single Market.

The EU can also help Britain grow exports elsewhere in the world via trade deals that reduce, or eliminate even, non tariff trade barriers. In 2011 the EU closed on a trade deal with South Korea. Since then UK exports to South Korea have increased by 95%.

The EU are currently negotiating trade deals with the US and Japan, amongst others. The attraction to the US and Japan of securing these deals is greater access to a market of 300 million people. The UK would certainly not be able to secure as beneficial a deal on the strength of our own market alone. Together the EU and the US account for 43% of world trade in services. British exports of services would benefit hugely from mutual recognition of professional qualifications and stronger intellectual property protection.

Ahead of a referendum we will need to communicate the benefits of trade deals, and an enhanced Single Market, to the wider public. Business gets it. Every survey of business opinion confirms the vast majority of companies wanting to see Britain remain in a reformed EU. There is a clear need to communicate the economic and so-

cial benefits that these developments will bring to consumers, so the public are able to make an informed decision about Britain's future relations with the EU in three years time.

Margot James was elected MP for Stourbridge in May 2010, having previously served as Vice-Chair of the Conservative Party for Women. In Parliament Margot acts as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Lord Livingston and chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group for Trade & Investment.



WHO CONTROLS UK PUBLIC EXPENDITURE?

Jeremy Lefroy MP

Recently I decided to check who has the most influence on how we spend our £720 billion 2013/4 budget – Parliament and Government (including those of the devolved administrations), or the European Union. Who controls how much the state spends, and how it is spent, is key to determining where power lies.

The largest single elements are pensions, welfare and health, accounting for £331.8 billion (46.1% of all spending). The state pension is now set according to the triple lock (highest of earnings, prices or 2.5%) which was legislated for during this Parliament. Public sector pensions have seen necessary reforms, all carried out by this Government with Parliament's approval. Welfare laws – for instance the cap or

universal credit – are made in Westminster, not Brussels. There are, of course, arguments over entitled to benefits by citizens of EU countries, but those disagreements account for a small proportion of the total cost.

Then there is the NHS, brainchild of Bevan, not Brussels. No-one in the EU has copied it – nor have we been required to dismantle it. Legislation based on EU directives does affect it. However I cannot think of much that we would not have introduced anyway, with perhaps the exception of the European Working Time Directive – and even then it was, as so often, the UK Government's manner of implementation rather than the Directive itself which have caused some problems.

Education accounts for another £57.1 billion (7.9%). Much as I like the International Baccalaureate (a British invention, developed in Cardiff), the A level system has stood firm against (non-existent) threats from the Abitur or indeed any other examination system.

As for defence (£41 billion – 5.7%), the decisions to cut the size of our regular army to 82,000, to increase reservists, to build two aircraft carriers and to continue developing the replacement for Trident – all were taken by UK ministers and endorsed, sometimes reluctantly, by Parliament. The EU is an insignificant player in defence and will continue to be so while its Member States (with a few honourable exceptions including the UK) fail to devote sufficient money to defence it.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (£ 30.1bn – 4.2%) decides how it wishes to allocate its budget to local authorities. It does not do so under instruction from an EU Commissioner. An additional £36.1 billion (5.0%) is raised and spent locally by councils.

The devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (£53.1bn – 7.4%) are responsible for their own budgets and would no more brook interference from Brussels than they would from London.

¹ All figures are from the 2013 Budget Red Book, except where stated.

Although the Home Secretary (£8.4bn – 1.2%), Justice Secretary (£7.5bn – 1.1%) and Foreign Secretary (£1.9bn - 0.3%) seem to spend a fair amount of time in discussions – and even the odd argument – with the EU, they are firmly in control of their own budgets.

The main commitments of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (£16.7bn – 2.3%) are research and skills funding, universities, the Post Office, the Technology Strategy Board and the UK Space Agency. It is the UK Government, with the approval of Parliament, which decides where spending should be directed – for instance, to support the Post Office network or to create the Regional Development Fund and Green Investment Bank.

Primary characteristic of being a free, independent state is the ability to set our own budget...our membership of the EU does not prevent us from doing this

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (£2.3bn – 0.3%) has more to do with the EU than most cabinet ministers. The Common Agricultural Policy is a fairly inefficient way of keeping some of our farmers in business – but we would still be making an equivalent of Single Farm payments, at least to our smaller farmers, whether or not we were in the EU. Of DFID's budget (£10.7bn – 1.5%), about 10% is handled by the EU and the European Development Fund. My experience of this work is mixed. The DFID select committee constantly questions the EU's aid to upper middle income countries and we should continue to do so.

Debt interest accounts for £49.5 billion (6.9%) as we continue to borrow another 6.8% of GDP this year, ignoring the supposed 3% EU cap on budget deficits. That is our decision.

There is, of course, our contribution to the EU budget (2013 - £13.9 bn gross; £8.6 bn net – 1.9%; 1.2%). The EU budget remains too high and we must continue the work begun last year of cutting it. But would our public finances be very different if we were not in the EU? It does not seem so. A primary characteristic

of being a free, independent state is the ability to set our own budget, control our revenues and expenditure and run a large deficit if Parliament so decides. Our membership of the EU clearly does not prevent us from doing any of this.

2 'European Finances 2013' (Treasury: Nov 2013).

Jeremy was elected as Member of Parliament for Stafford on May 6th 2010. Since entering parliament he has been elected to the International Development Select Committee and is also chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases. He also chairs the APPG on Tanzania.



REFORMING THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL

Sir James Paice MP

When we entered Government in May 2010 we inherited a policy that all subsidy to farmers should stop immediately; a policy which was not only potentially disastrous to our own industry but one which had no chance whatsoever of being adopted in the EU so that proclaiming it simply served to exclude the UK from any serious discussion about reform. That is not to say that public funding shouldn't cease but it should be over a sensible timetable and be done in conjunction with real measures to help the industry adjust.

By adopting that more reasoned approach we got back into the debate

at Agriculture Council even though many other Ministers did not agree. The real issue though was whether the proposed reforms of the CAP used the opportunity to change farming to meet the global challenge or retreat back to the protectionist approach of the past; using CAP funds to prop up literally millions of very small farmers especially in Eastern Europe. In other words is it an economic policy or a social one? Whatever it is it cannot be sustainable in the long term. We cannot go on spending nearly 40 % of the EU budget on it. Heads of Government led by David Cameron did reduce the budget but not by much and regrettably in its detail it was an especially bad deal for the UK.

It would have been far better to set out on a path of restructuring; encouraging many to give up and helping others to invest and become more competitive. Sadly the Commission's proposals

Whatever [the CAP] is, it cannot be sustainable in the long term. We cannot go on spending nearly 40 % of the EU budget on it.

failed on all counts. The fact that the final agreement was not far off the original proposals says nothing about their suitability but much more about the power of initiation and the impossibility of getting real agreement between 27 Ministers. The move from historic payments to an area based system will take six years meaning that in all the countries still to adjust (i.e. all of them except England and Germany) farmers will continue to receive a payment based on what they did in the year 2000/2001. More importantly there

POLICY

was no shift of money from direct payments towards targeted support for the environment and investment for competitiveness. In short the reform has achieved very little and in the run-up to the next round in 2020 we will still be having the same stagnant debate.

The lesson from all this is engagement at all levels and real priority being given to it ahead of pressing domestic issues. It requires the Treasury to actually see the whole picture rather than simplistic arguments about the rebate and cutting expenditure. They are important but they can be packaged much more effectively in constructive arguments which create the right result rather than just repeating dogma. No-one who has spent so much time in Council of Ministers meetings can fail to see all the shortcomings of the system but unless we actually learn to work the system we cannot achieve the changes we need.

*MP for South East
Cambridgeshire since 1987,
of Sir James' 23 years on
the front bench 17 were on
MAFF/DEFRA issues including
Minister of State for Agriculture
and Food 2010-2012.*

THE UK ABROAD

Energy Security in Europe
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ENERGY SECURITY IN EUROPE

Neil Carmichael MP

Politics

The Prime Minister, in promising a referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union, also signaled his interest in completing the Single Market through ensuring energy becomes properly competitive and flexible. Energy policy is one of the last preserves of the often once nationalised and now normally nationally regulated supply and distribution systems, faltering across Europe without effective competition, connectivity and innovation. Encouragingly, several other Member States, notably Germany, have indicated interest and even support for this specific direction of travel.

This strategy contains within it a striking paradox. To incorporate energy into the Single Market in order bring about downward pressure on prices and a revolution in generation consistent with the challenge of climate change, the apparatus of the market will need to be reformed through more cooperation between states and, to some extent, increased reliance on EU regulation. The strategy is, however, also consistent with the EU Commission's existing attitude to the clunky nature of the existing energy market and worries over excessive reliance on supplies from afar, including Russia's gas. To reform energy as part of the renegotiation package requires a more effective European Union in terms of market reform but also increased subsidiarity, so it is important to understand the drivers behind energy reform.

Impact of Climate Change
Energy Commissioner Gunther Oettinger has noted the emerging role of the Single Market in helping to meet climate change targets as well as securing supply. In the same vein, Climate Change Commissioner Connie Hedegaard has saluted the EU-level target for renewables. The 2030 framework also proposes a new governance system where plans for energy in terms of competition and supply are drawn up by Member States with reference to a common approach. These expressed positions amount to a fledgling attempt to create a common energy policy and do not contradict the Prime Minister's ambitions for energy in a strengthened Single Market although the focus, unsurprisingly in this context, is on technology.

Prices

Competition looms large because of the variance of energy prices across Europe. Virtually all energy prices have increased but some much more than others, not least because energy prices are determined by the wholesale elements – principally generation – and the retail elements, characterised by transmission and infrastructure costs.

To reform energy as part of the renegotiation package requires a more effective European Union in terms of market reform but also increased subsidiarity

Variations between states are largely produced through fluctuations in wholesale prices against different trends in retail performance. To develop a useful competition policy, the component parts of energy must be disaggregated and, where necessary, liberalised. But,

to add further complications, national taxation policies and consumption levels of energy also impact end-user prices and both of these policy areas are the responsibility of the state with embedded attitudes.

A new approach

Several responses to this energy conundrum should be on the table. Ensuring customers can easily switch supplier, making better use of energy efficiency technologies, introduce more benchmarking of network costs, increasing connectivity between states, enabling capital investment in infrastructure and generation, and, perhaps, above all, paving the way for specialisation in generation will all contribute to downward pressure on prices.

Current UK energy policy, formulated in the shadow of becoming a net importer of energy ever since 2004, is already reflecting these priorities. Furthermore, many Member States are, increasingly, making strategic choices about energy

generation in reaction to a combination of climate change policies and concerns over supply. A truly open energy market would release more investment and stimulate increased competition within and between states. This is where the EU could make a really positive contribution to economic growth through reforms promoted and secured by the UK.

Neil was elected in 2010 and immediately he started work on several key policy areas. His interests include Europe, economics, energy and foreign affairs. In 2013 he took the Antarctic Act through Parliament, safeguarding both the Antarctic environment and British interests in the area for future generations.

POWERING EUROPE

Charles Hendry MP



As a Minister sitting at the table in Brussels for a meeting of EU Ministers, it is hard not to marvel that all those countries are there at all.

In my lifetime, most of the countries in the EU have been dictatorships – either within the former Soviet Union, as fascist dictatorships in Spain and Portugal, or a military regime in Greece. Yet within a generation, they have moved to be democracies in the world's most powerful trading block. No economic price can be put on the role the EU has played in locking these countries into a democratic process.

It also provides a forum for addressing in a constructive way some of the issues that could potentially be most divisive, and high on that list is energy.

Energy is not an area of EU competence; it remains a policy area that is set at Member State level. Yet some of the most important benefits to the energy security of the EU as a whole have been driven by the European Commission.

In energy terms, the UK is no longer an island – we are closely connected to mainland Europe through gas and electricity interconnectors. In the winter of 2008-9, the UK faced a near crisis in its gas supplies, not because of something that was happening on our own doorstep, but because of the gas dispute between Russia and Ukraine. Supplies to countries in eastern Europe via Ukraine were disrupted and even though we had a cold spell of our own,

gas was still being pumped OUT of the UK in order to help deal with shortages of supply a thousand miles away.

The UK led Europe in opening up its energy markets and allowing freer competition

However, for consumers the focus is often less on long-term security than on the price of gas and electricity today. The UK led Europe in opening up its energy markets and allowing freer competition. Many European countries have been resistant to such change – millions of consumers in the UK get their electricity from French or German companies, but no consumers in France or Germany get theirs from British companies.

The EU's Third Energy package is a big step forward in opening up markets to competition. It will drive the opening up of those markets in a way that will benefit consumers across Europe and it could never have happened without the overriding objectives of the Single Market.

Of course, there will always be areas where we are less keen to see involvement (such as the proposed Regulation on offshore drilling, which could have undermined our own safety regime had it not been changed) but energy in Europe is more secure today because of the strategic actions the EU has facilitated, and that must be good for consumers and businesses alike.

Charles Hendry is MP for Wealden. He was Energy Minister from 2010-12 and Shadow Energy Minister from 2005-10, holding the portfolio for longer than anyone else. He is currently the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the Caspian and a Visiting Professor at the University of Edinburgh.



EUROPEAN DEFENCE AND OUR NATIONAL INTEREST

Sir Peter Luff MP

The European Union should not acquire a defence identity - but continuing membership of the EU is profoundly in the interests of our security and our defence industries.

Our national defence requirements should continue to be met through NATO, through strategic alliances with countries that share common ambitions and understandings, through occasional “coalitions of the willing” and, where necessary, through unilateral action. The creation of new mechanisms or structures would be a costly diversion and add nothing to national security.

So must the UK be the country that says “no” on all matters of European defence? In fact there is an important role for the

Commission which the UK should welcome and even champion. We have a clear national interest in creating as ambitious a Single Market as possible for defence equipment and services, encouraged by the 2009 directive on defence and security procurement, and now incorporated into law in every EU Member State.

We must be clear - there will remain a wide range of defence equipment and services that will need to be met exclusively by United Kingdom companies and nationals, to maintain both our operational advantage and freedom of action. The same will be true for other Member States.

There is, therefore, a continuing need for the celebrated Article 346 exemption to protect the UK’s vital national interest. The market for defence equipment and services is not just another market to be integrated fully into the EU’s general Single Market. Liberalisation can only be accepted as far as it does no damage to our national security.

That said, many states use the Article 346 exemption to protect their industries rather than to protect their national security. The UK, with a large range of industries supplying the defence market at home and abroad, and with a significant number of SMEs, stands to gain economically from a more open defence market in Europe.

As Jay Edwards of Chatham House wrote in 2011, the aim of the directive

“... is to facilitate the development of an EU defence equipment market that will increase industrial competition, reduce duplication and lower prices.”

On the other hand, I suspect that we will need to be particularly vigilant to protect our ability to sustain capabilities. We have already accepted that many items of advanced equipment such as fast jets can only be procured in international collaborations, but their sustainment in time of conflict is a vital national requirement. So, although the UK should generally press for service liberalisation, it must be much

more cautious when it comes to defence support services.

We should, though, be concerned that the Commission, wrongly, seems to be developing ambitions to extend its powers to direct decisions in defence procurement.

We have a clear national interest in creating as ambitious a Single Market as possible for defence equipment and services

However, while a more robust approach to Article 346 infringements may occasionally cause the UK some challenge, but overall it should bring greater opportunities for UK companies as they gain access to contracts that would not otherwise have been open to them. The UK needs to advocate a nuanced approach to these issues from the Commission but, ultimately, we

must put our national security first and robustly oppose proposals that would compromise it.

The essence of the Commission's engagement with defence acquisition should be to enforce current rules and to enable pan-European cooperation on major projects. The European Defence Agency can play a significant role here, both in identifying areas of capability shortfalls where European collaboration can help the security of the region, and sustaining industrial entities of sufficient scale to compete with the US giants. Declining or at best stable defence budgets around Europe mean it is unlikely that national champions of the traditional kind can be sustained. The missed opportunity to achieve the merger of EADS (now Airbus) and BAE Systems must illustrate the perils of nationalism.

On the other hand, as defence looks more and more to innovative solutions from non-traditional suppliers, defence procurement policy must be as concerned with the needs of SMEs

as prime contractors. A strong focus on the needs of SMEs must therefore feature in all aspects of any part of EU policy.

In summary, I believe through the intelligent application of Article 346 challenge, through an appropriate competition policy, and through the mechanism of the EDA, we see the right structure for EU engagement in defence acquisition. A modest, incremental approach is needed to ensure effective competition and nothing more.

Sir Peter Luff was elected Member of Parliament for Worcester in 1992 and has been MP for Mid Worcestershire since 1997. He was Chairman of the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee from 2005-10 and Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology from 2010-12.



BRITISH INFLUENCE IN EUROPE AND

Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Ottaway MP

A European issue I feel strongly about, with my hat as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, is the importance of our membership of the EU to maintain our diplomatic influence in the world.

As a leading member of the diplomatic power-houses from the UN to the G8 and NATO, we currently wield a disproportionate influence on world affairs when you consider our population size of just 63 million people. A British exit from the EU today would diminish the EU's diplomatic reach, especially with the USA. This is something Herman van Rompuy recognises, saying the UK's

“military and diplomatic clout is unmatched by other European nations”. But it works both ways. In a world where countries are increasingly banding together to have a stronger hand at the negotiating table, we cannot stand alone. Our diplomatic leverage is far better secured from within the EU – as a leading voice in the world's wealthiest trading block of 500 million people. President Obama reiterated America's long-standing support of our membership of the EU earlier this year when he told Cameron he “values a strong UK in a strong European Union”.

Cameron's Bloomberg speech gave us a course of action which recognises British Euroscepticism but keeps us at the table using our influence. The promise of a referendum in 2017, under a Conservative government, presents a real opportunity and we have to seize it with both hands. However, while we await the outcome of the Balance of

As a leading member of the diplomatic power-houses from the UN to the G8 and NATO, we currently wield a disproportionate influence on world affairs

Competencies Review (to inform the shape of a relationship with the EU that will benefit the UK), there will also be major change across Europe to ensure the survival of the Eurozone. In light of that, we should also be asking the question: is the 'core' of Europe is

BEYOND

committed to ensuring the survival of a multi-tiered Europe; or is it willing to sacrifice that wider, more heterogeneous union on the altar of a single currency? It is in our diplomatic interests to work with our European partners to ensure the former outcome prevails.

Sir Richard was first elected to Parliament in 1983 and has now represented Croydon South since 1992. He has previously been Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment and Vice-Chair of the Conservative Party, and is currently the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.



WORKING TOGETHER ABOARD

Rt. Hon. Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP

In 1996, as Foreign Secretary, I published *A Partnership of Nations*, a White Paper outlining the British approach to the EU intergovernmental conference of that year. It stated that 'the European Union is not the only framework within which we pursue our political and commercial interests, but it is central to our success.' That remains the case today.

Some argue that our interests are better served by pursuing bilateral ties - especially with emerging markets - instead. But having to decide between focusing on bilateral relationships or on multilateral institutions is a false choice: if you neglect one, you are neglecting

the other. Our relationship with the United States is a very good example of this. It does not depend on membership of the EU, but leverage in Brussels gives us leverage in Washington, and vice versa. The same principle applies to many countries across the world. The US would like a strong British voice in Europe, and it is a pipedream to imagine that the United States would welcome the UK leaving the EU and harnessing its destiny to that of the United States.

Where there is unity on policy, deriving from shared objectives, it is very much in the interests of the United Kingdom to use the formidable weight of the European Union

Some worry that as a member of the European Union Britain is inevitably going to be drawn towards conceding a single foreign policy shared with all the other Member States. I do not believe that is likely in the foreseeable future. As the members of the Eurozone are discovering, you cannot have a full monetary union without accepting a much greater degree of political federation and shared sovereignty than was, previously, acknowledged. In the same way, a single foreign policy cannot be achieved in a vacuum.

As long as the Member States of the EU consider themselves to be sovereign states, control their own armed forces and make their own ultimate decisions on war and peace, a single foreign policy cannot be achieved. That is not just the view of the United Kingdom. It is shared by France, by Germany, by Sweden, by Poland, and almost all other Member States.

Not having a single foreign policy does not, however, rule out a common foreign policy in the significant number of areas where the national interests of the United Kingdom and those of other EU states happen to coincide. We already have such a common policy in regard to the efforts to dissuade Iran from pursuing nuclear weapon aspirations. Our positions are very close on Israel-Palestine issues and the same can be said as regards many other regions of the world.

Where there is unity on policy, deriving from shared objectives, it is very much in the interests of the United Kingdom to use the formidable weight of the European Union to drive those policies. It would be foolish to allow our legitimate scepticism about European integration to prevent us working with European colleagues where it makes

sense. It is worth remembering that successive British Governments, unlike the French, have never had any qualms or scruples about accepting the supra national powers and limitations of sovereignty inherent in our being full members of the NATO Alliance. Like NATO, the European Union is part, though only part, of our foreign and defence policy. We need have no difficulties with that.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind is Member of Parliament for Kensington and a former Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary. He is the Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament.

BRITAIN WITH EUROPE

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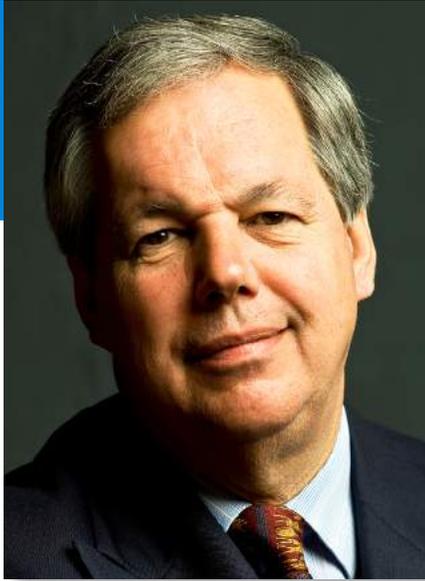
Better Off IN
Rt. Hon. Caroline Spelman MP



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THE EUROPEAN VETO

Rt. Hon. Sir Tony Baldry MP

Those of us who have been around for some time know that we have been here before. Prior to the Single European Act every EU Member State had the ability to veto any EU legislation that they considered to be contrary to their national interest.

The consequence was that EU countries tended to veto any legislation that they considered would be against the specific trade interests of a particular of their economy.

It meant that it was impossible for Europe to benefit from its greatest potential prize – that of a large single trading market.

It was for this reason that no less a Prime Minister than Margaret Thatcher signed up and agreed to the Single European Act, which replaced national vetoes with a general system of qualified majority voting.

In this way Margaret Thatcher recognised that it would make it much more difficult for other EU Member States to obstruct the development of the Single Market.

Most people living in the UK see the Single Market as being the largest benefit of EU membership to Britain, and it would seem somewhat perverse, after all these years, to go back to a system of absolute national vetoes, which would almost certainly frustrate the continuing deepening and development of the Single Market.

No one disagrees that the UK's present relationship with the European Union is not working and needs to change.

Moreover, the UK – which is not in the Eurozone – needs to develop a new and different relationship with those countries that are in the Eurozone.

There have been calls that Parliament should be given the power to veto every aspect of European Union law.

Calls that the House of Commons should be given power to block every and any piece of any new EU legislation.

It would, of course, follow that if the UK Government and Parliament were going to be given the power to veto every aspect of every EU law, then that power would also be given to the Governments and Parliaments of every other EU Member State.

This is why, very sensibly, the Prime Minister has made it clear that he is committed to seeking a new settlement for Britain in Europe and then putting that new settlement to the British people in an 'in out' referendum by the end of 2017.

If National Parliaments throughout the European Union were simply able to pick and choose which bits of European law they would apply and which points they would not, then the European Single Market simply would not work

I am one of the sponsors on the face of the EU Referendum Bill introduced into the Commons by James Wharton and which passed all its Stages in the House of Commons late last year.

For reasons that I fail to understand the EU Referendum Bill appears to be opposed by Labour and Liberal MPs. However, I would be prepared to bet

good money that the Labour Party at least prior to the General Election will support the Conservative Party's position on a Referendum on the European Union.

I suspect they will do so as soon as the Referendum in Scotland is resolved.

I think the simple fact is that the Labour Party can only manage to talk about one Referendum campaign at a time!

Under the new settlement the Prime Minister is seeking, he has made it clear that there should be more powers for National Parliaments, more accountability of the European Union to National Parliaments and greater power over EU decisions.

However, if National Parliaments throughout the European Union were simply able to pick and choose which bits of European law they would apply and which points they would not, then the European Single Market simply would not work and we would have lost one of the greatest benefits of our

membership of the European Union.

The reality is that only the Prime Minister's plans can fix our relationship with the European Union to deliver greater powers to the UK Parliament over EU decisions. Moreover, only the Prime Minister and a Conservative Party are committed to giving the British people their say on our future in Europe in an 'in out' referendum.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Tony Baldry has been Member of Parliament for Banbury for over thirty years, having been elected in the 1983 General Election. He was a Minister for eight years, appointed to Government by Margaret Thatcher and then served in the Conservative Government throughout John Major's premiership. Sir Tony was knighted for political and public services in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2012.



REFORM – I’VE DONE IT

Richard Benyon MP

You can reform the EU. I know, I’ve done it. OK, it was only one area of EU competence but the Common Fisheries Policy was the totemic example of EU failure. Over its lifetime we have seen fish stocks plummet, fewer fishermen and degraded coastal communities. This was because a too rigid one-size-fits-all system of management was imposed from a centralised bureaucracy. When I came into the job as shadow Fisheries Minister I expected opposition to reform from

every EU institution. This was not the case. The Commissioner at the time, Joe Borg, told me the CFP was “a disaster”. When I came into the Ministerial role his successor, Maria Damanaki, was no less scathing. Where there was resistance was in the Council of Ministers. It is lazy to describe the blockers to reform as the southern states and the pro-reformers as

The “Common” part of the CFP is not what was the problem, it was the “Policy” part.

northerners but it is not a million miles off the truth. What worked in the end was the combination

of excellent working between us and key allies such as Germany, the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries. The UK was at the heart of these negotiations many of which went through the night. During the tortuous process that took about three years, I still had to negotiate our annual quotas under the old system. This saw me in a Brussels room at 3 o’clock in the morning discussing mesh sizes of nets used by fishermen targeting haddock off the north west of Scotland. This was a scenario which if Kafka had written it you would have thought, “hang on, he’s gone a bit far this time”. It spurred me on to deliver a meaningful reform that left such decisions to local fishermen and scientists rather than politicians

and officials who are remote from the realities of fishing.

To cut a long story short, we got agreement to a new CFP which localises decision making, ends the unacceptable discarding of perfectly edible fish and which sees a legally binding commitment for all states to fish sustainably. This was achieved despite over 3000 amendments, most of them anti-reform, in the EU Parliament and the complications created by the Lisbon Treaty and co-decision. The Tri-logue process was helped by having a dynamic presidency in the form of the Irish Minister Simon Coveney, a determined Commissioner and countries like the UK supporting them and

driving the reform agenda. There were times that tested my belief in the EU's ability to reform itself but we got there in the end.

Richard Benyon has been the MP for Newbury since 2005. He was Minister for the Natural Environment and Fisheries between 2010 and 2013. He is a qualified Chartered Surveyor and outside Parliament he is a farmer and conservationist



AN ARGUMENT FOR EUROPE

Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt MP

If all goes well, my political career should span two referenda on Europe. I accept I'm fortunate to have voted at all, and believe it is a good time to make the argument for Europe again.

Much has changed since 1975. The world, and Europe, has got much wealthier, as tariff barriers have fallen, and globalization has changed the nature of what business we do, and how. The world, and Europe, has got safer, through a combination of political will, and the end of the Iron Curtain with its nuclear standoff. Problems undoubtedly remain in both areas; economic success is not spread evenly with

accompanying tensions of inequality and movements of people from poor to rich countries, and sophisticated terror from non state actors has replaced the threat from conventional forces.

But the world is making progress, and I believe the EU has played it's part.

I was 21 in 1975. The vote for Europe was associated by my generation with hope and aspiration, inspired by those not too much older who had seen their continent destroyed amidst unspeakable wickedness, and a resolve 'never again', a phrase so much now discredited in so many other areas, but not in relation to war between states in Western Europe. The politics of the EU, together with the hard-headedness of the NATO alliance, has succeeded where so many had failed in the past. The peace of Europe may be discounted by a generation fortunately untouched by the horrors of the past, but it is far from

a negligible gain.

And whilst the imperatives flowing from WW2 may have faded, the UK should never lose sight of just what this, and the fall of the Berlin Wall meant to the peoples of Europe. We have no conception of how the memory of 'occupation' was seared on the memory: we dismiss the arguments on behalf of the EU's role in this at our peril.

We are not going to be a United States of Europe. We don't need to be, and it's not just the British who see this.

But the argument about the future will not be made decisively by the origins of the EU. Vision and aspiration in the UK on the issue have been replaced by the essential nitty-gritty of life, and people will need reminding that the workings of the Single Market benefit them, that the free movement of people's is for them and their children as one generation seeks to work in a huge skilled market, and another seeks retirement where they choose, not where place of birth, however wonderful, confines them.

And the EU needs to change accordingly. The blueprint of the 1950's cannot uniquely be all seeing in a European context, as others need relentless change and adaptation. We are not going to be a United States of Europe. We don't need to be, and it's not just the British who see this. We have proved that sovereignty does not inevitably give way to the nationalism of the past, and that being separate but together actually works.

It is a debate within the EU we are well placed to lead. If we had not been so timid in the past, if worrying about our domestic politics and the impact of Europe upon them had not held back successive Governments, we would have found ourselves leading many states to a new reformed Europe combining greater flexibility with the benefits of a structure which held all within it.

That should be our aim, a Conservative aim, to commit ourselves to working for a political Europe which recognizes the needs of sovereign states within a Europe looking outward and not inwards, and an economic Europe which builds on what we have achieved together in terms of production, quality, value added and a base for the best in the world to make a home here with all the jobs and livelihoods which that entails.

And I hope there will be space for vision too. Our children experience an Internet beyond borders, commerce without boundaries and a diversity of culture within their own shores, within a continent to which they are connected

in every sense. A pride in being British and European, and ensuring the talents of the one make a success of the other, should not be beyond a successful nation which has forever in its existence looked beyond its own shores and contributed so much to the world.

Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt MP entered Parliament for the first time in 1983 for Bury North and since 2001 has been the Member of Parliament for North East Bedfordshire. Following a lengthy and varied front bench career in both Government and Opposition, Alistair was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office May 2010 – October 2013



LEADING IN EUROPE

Stephen Dorrell MP

David Cameron's European policy is very simple. First we need to work with our partners to improve the effectiveness of the European institutions and then we need to renew their mandate by demonstrating that they still command public confidence.

Both elements of that policy are important.

Despite repeated assertions in some quarters to the contrary, there is a decisive majority within Europe which recognizes that the EU needs to change. That doesn't mean the case for change wins unanimous endorsement, or that

everyone agrees on the precise formula for change. Why should we expect that to be the case? It never is.

But consider the counterfactual. How many Italians think everything is working perfectly? Or French citizens? Or Spaniards?

The evidence is compelling that the EU is not changing quickly enough and that continued failure to do so will imperil European living standards – and therefore European social and political stability.

The key point, however, is that Britain has a vital national interest in ensuring that this necessary process of change is undertaken.

There is, in reality, no “drawbridge” option.

In arguing the case for change within

the EU we are arguing the familiar case for a more flexible and outward looking economic culture which recognizes that our living standards rest on our competitiveness in global markets.

But we are also recognizing that what happens on the continent always has had, and always will have a direct effect on our lives. Isolationism doesn't work.

We should be proud of the fact that it is only the Conservatives who are willing to face the truth about Europe

Continental Europe is the second richest market place in the world and it is

22 miles away. The biggest external influence on the performance of the UK economy is the performance of its customers on the continent; under-performance in Europe creates strong headwinds for the UK economy which undermines living standards and imperils social cohesion in the UK.

When we argue the case for improved European competitiveness we are not intervening in the politics of another country; we are securing our core national interest in the success of our customers and partners.

But David Cameron's policy is not just about improved performance in Europe. It is also about securing a decisive vote in the UK in favour of continued EU membership.

We don't seek that vote now, because we agree with the European majority that the structures need to change. We shouldn't defend the current structures because that would be to align ourselves with the opponents of European reform. We should secure

necessary reform and then explain to the voters how the reformed structures will facilitate improved economic performance.

And we should be proud of the fact that it is only the Conservatives who are willing to face the truth about Europe.

Labour and Liberal Democrats shy away from necessary change and are unwilling to confront difficult truths. They prefer to muddle through.

The UKIP solution is remarkably similar. They also imagine a world of easy answers where no difficult decisions are necessary because they are in denial about the modern world.

David Cameron will tell the people uncomfortable truths about Europe and then he will set out to address them.

And when he has done so he will seek their support in an in-out referendum in order to secure the British majority for a realistic view of the world.

It is an old Tory policy – indeed it is at the heart of the Tory tradition.

In the words of Randolph Churchill – we trust the people.

Stephen has been a Conservative Member of Parliament since 1979, first representing Loughborough and then Charnwood. He served as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Secretary of State for National Heritage and Secretary of State for Health in the Major Government, returning to the backbenches from the Shadow Cabinet in 1998. From 2006-07 he was Co-Chair of the Public Service Improvement Group, and since June 2010 has Chaired the Health Select Committee



MANAGING MIGRATION

Tobias Ellwood MP

Migration is a sensitive subject at any time but the recent of transition arrangements with Bulgaria and Romania has seen battle lines drawn between the 'little Englanders' with a seemingly isolationist, anti-EU approach and the 'Open Doorites' justifying an over reliance on migrants to keep Britain working and remain internationally competitive on the left. As with most arguments of the extremes, common sense lies somewhere in the middle.

The unintended consequence of promoting radical solutions such as leaving the EU, will diminish British influence abroad and Britain's international

reputation as a business location of choice. the perception would prevail (indeed be promoted by other competing countries) that Britain, is not open for Business.

Conversely, Labour's 'open door' approach to migration (seemingly supported by the Lib Dems) has had a dramatic impact on Britain. Fuelled not just by Blair ignoring the right to impose a seven-year entry ban on new EU Member States but also (still not fully appreciated), allowing twice as many entrants arriving as from non-EU countries.

Britain today is the product of a rich legacy of (voluntary and occasionally involuntary) immigration; from the Angles, Jutes and Norsemen in the dark ages to the Normans, Jews and Huguenots in the middle ages, Italians and Irishman in the 1800's and more recently: Caribbean and Asians.

Indeed, in the absence of any home-grown candidates, on more than one occasion we invited a (royal) migrant to lead the country.

Since the war European security has improved and Britain has prospered thanks to expanding trade links with Europe. We have championed the case for bringing nations which languished behind the Iron Curtain into NATO and the EU. And we have been one of the creators and strongest supporters of a Single Market. It's in our interests for our citizens and businesses to have full and free access in other European countries.

It's the sheer scale that distinguishes today's migratory flows with our past. Over one million Eastern Europeans entering Britain in the last decade dwarfs any previous spikes in migration – ever. Once here, the ease in which migrants found work was another

Labour clanger. Thanks to the dog's breakfast of our benefits system which meant Britons who gained part time employment ended up worse off. A generation was effectively un-inspired to work, creating a skills gap quickly filled by migrant workers. In the five years leading up to the economic downturn, more than 90 per cent of new jobs went to foreign nationals.

Leaving the EU will diminish British influence abroad and Britain's international reputation as a business location of choice

European Migration is now the EU's Achilles Heel. It must wake up to these migratory flows. Out of date practices governing EU expansion mean disparity between new Member States' income per head and existing states results in many abandoning their own country for a richer one. This is not in the spirit of the Single Market – the EU

should legislate against new entrants gaining full access to other labour markets until their own economic fortunes are growing. Britain, with its increasing ability to influence the EU agenda and lobby behind the scenes (South Korea trade deal, T-TIP, first ever reduction in EU budget, EU patent agreement – all British-led), is well placed to call for such change.

Thanks to this Government, past errors (such as erroneous student visa applications and sham marriage applications) are being rectified. Immigration from outside the EU is at its lowest level for 14 years. The previously dysfunctional Border Agency has been upgraded making it easier to deport offenders and requiring those staying longer than 6 months to pay a visa surcharge to cover any NHS costs. And as recently announced by the Prime Minister, the welfare system will not be accessible to migrants for the first three months- and then only for a maximum of six months, unless they can prove they have a genuine prospect of employment.

Sensible immigration policy should not be determined by fear or knee jerk responses that might damage our international standing. It should be rational, controlled, and in the interests of those who already live here, whilst also providing an illustration that Britain is very much open for business.

Tobias is the Member of Parliament for Bournemouth East. Elected in 2005, he became shadow Culture Minister before serving as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Rt. Hon Liam Fox MP, the Rt. Hon David Lidington MP and most recently the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health. He is a member of the Parliamentary Delegation to the NATO Assembly and Parliamentary Advisor to the Prime Minister for the 2014 NATO Summit.



BRINGING DEMOCRACY BACK TO

Ben Gummer MP

colleagues, I doubt one in a hundred people in her constituency would recognize her name, let alone her face. Even if they did, I doubt any more would know what the purpose of an MEP was or what their powers might be.

How can we expect people to have faith in an increasingly powerful institution when they have no idea who represents them there and what it does? This rupture between Europe and the people lies at the heart of what David Lidington has correctly described as ‘a crisis of democracy’ in the Union.

This crisis is a greater threat to the future of the European Union than any other issue on which a Conservative government might seek renegotiation before 2017. Popular support for EU membership is tenuous precisely because, as William Hague put it, ‘people feel that Europe is something that

happens to them, not something they have enough of a say over’.

This is the modern tragedy of the European Union: popular dislike of its structures negates widespread popular support for the reasons why it exists.

Those who believe that constitutional tinkering, such as giving more powers to the European Parliament, miss the point. Although most people agree that we should co-operate with our European neighbours, very few feel

Over the next few months I will be campaigning, heart and soul, for Vicky Ford and her fellow Conservative MEP candidates in the European Parliamentary elections. But I am doing so with an immense amount of frustration. Vicky is an exceptional MEP: she has won campaigns across the Eastern Region, bringing infrastructure spending from Brussels, working on complicated border issues with me, and fighting like a tigress for the UK financial services industry in committee after turgid committee. The woman deserves a medal.

But despite the fact that Vicky is as energetic as the best of my parliamentary

EUROPE

an affinity or allegiance to European institutions. This is the modern tragedy of the European Union: popular dislike of its structures negates widespread popular support for the reasons why it exists.

How, then, to reverse William Hague's dilemma, so that people feel they have democratic control over the European Union, one whose ideals they might – in the abstract – support?

First, we should empower the national political leaders over whom voters have closest control. If it were clear that it was the prime minister, with his colleagues in the Council, who was initiating European-wide legislation, not an unelected Commission, the line of power and accountability would immediately become more clear. Poor legislation would become his responsibility, therefore, and he would be held accountable for it.

Second, we should stop the pretence of a single European demos. Member States should be free to decide who, how and when they send representatives to the European Parliament to scrutinize legislation on their constituents' behalf. Were Vicky Ford a member of the UK Parliament but delegated to go to Brussels, on a dual mandate as it used to be, I can guarantee she would find greater recognition for her efforts there on behalf of her constituents in the east of England.

Both of these proposals are radical. A crisis demands, however, a radical response. Only a Conservative Prime Minister can deliver reform like this.

Ben was elected as Member of Parliament for Ipswich in May 2010. He is Parliamentary Private Secretary to Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education.



'GREEDY FOR BRITAIN' – EU PLUS

Laura Sandys MP

of Europe' as a stated policy would be the first time in modern history that the UK's aim would be to diminish its influence in Europe – an extraordinary retreat from our national interest.

In comparison, it is the Euro-realists who are truly fighting for the future of Britain – we are the real 'toughies' on Europe. We are the ones who find marginalisation at the fringes of Europe unacceptable and undesirable. We are the patriots prepared to fight our corner and win on behalf of the British people.

None of us are under any illusions that one-on-one relationships are easy – never mind with 27 partners. No one should think that it is straight forward to achieve what you want in this multi-dimensional game of chess. Yet we have a great and substantiated reputation as an influential player on the world stage, taking a lead in shaping international organisations – and that includes

Europe too. Let's not forget that the EU has been shaped by the UK. It was Britain that led the way on the Single Market and on Enlargement, and it was this Government that mapped out plans to protect Member States remaining outside the eurozone, secured the first ever cut in the EU Budget, and set out a modern, competitive reform agenda for the EU.

The British people are worth more than UKIP's MINUS strategy – they deserve EU PLUS the rest of the world.

We must not delude ourselves either that other international organisations do not come with serious responsibilities as well. We herald NATO as the perfect 'Tory' organisation, but it would be

Europe is the issue that reverses all stereotypes across the political spectrum. It turns the tough into the defeated, while making the most robust of patriots appear uncertain, even nervous on the world stage. 'Better off Out-ers' appear fearful of negotiating abroad, unable to succeed in getting their way, and instead choose to loudly 'beat their retreat'.

UKIP wraps itself in historical mantels, paradoxically referencing our great history of engaging with the rest of the world as an excuse for withdrawal from our near abroad. However, 'Out

interesting to explain on the doorstep that if Turkey is invaded by Syria the NATO treaty agreement could require British men and women to defend their borders. I'm not sure that even the most committed supporter of NATO would want to put that to the public test. Serious actors in foreign affairs recognise that nothing worthwhile in the big wide world of international agreement comes free. Before we run for the European exit we need to properly weigh up the alternatives. Those who want to do a 'runner' claim that the world is about to open their doors to our goods and services and that our influence will increase. I would love to see evidence of how easy it will be to swap our "disastrous" relationship with Europe for such a harmonious set of alliances with every other country – as long as they are not European!

If you are really a ruthless, self-interested hotshot then you want to be at every top table of every membership organisation that you are able to be a part of. You do not want to back away from those that seem a bit tough to deal with!

For my part I am greedy for the UK, not cautious – I want EU PLUS. I want the 500 million customers that the EU offers PLUS new trading partners and new export opportunities from across the globe. This is not a zero-sum game – in an increasingly competitive world we must go for everything. The British people are worth more than UKIP's MINUS strategy – they deserve EU PLUS the rest of the world.

Some people have a disappointingly defeatist attitude to the UK's status on the world stage – we need to persuade our colleagues and the public that Britain is not a downtrodden country in Europe, but a leading reformer whose voice and interests are frequently dominant. We need have no identity crisis about our membership of Europe or feel that we are in any way diminished by sitting at the top table of the largest trading bloc in the world. We just have a lot of work ahead to help shape a new and ambitious Europe that shares our optimistic, confident and outward looking attitude and delivers true benefits to the British people.

Laura Sandys MP is the Conservative Member of Parliament for South Thanet and the Convenor of European Mainstream. In Parliament, Laura was first appointed to the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee and, until recently, was the Parliamentary Private Secretary to Greg Barker MP, Minister for Climate Change. She is currently focused on consumer policy, energy security, the green economy and our relationship with the European Union.



BETTER OFF IN

Rt. Hon. Caroline Spelman MP

admittedly reveals a lack of enthusiasm for this organ of democracy. As a nation, we do make our own choices within the EU. We chose not to join the eurozone, which worked out well for us.

I am no starry-eyed Europhile. The EU as an authoritative body is certainly cumbersome and sometimes inefficient. A single item on an agenda can alone take over two hours at the negotiation table, as each Member nation feels they should state its view, [relevant or not]. I am sure any Minister who has endured this would agree that there must be a better way to make decisions. I also believe there is huge scope for reform, as some of the Rules my predecessors signed us up to are frankly either duplicate or unworkable. There is a tendency for Ministers to agree to new rules that we cannot be seen to be against. Take the Air Quality directive, which 27 out of 28 Member States are unable to comply with. Only

Malta is not being fined, because it has so few polluting cars. Everyone wants better air quality, but laws begin to look ridiculous if they are largely impracticable. However, even outside of the EU, we would have to draw up rules between neighbouring nations.

The campaign to leave the EU is taking shape. But so is the plan to keep us in. The Prime Minister has declared his commitment to renegotiate our terms of membership, and reform the EU in the process. Last year, he succeeded where no other British PM has done, by capping the EU budget.

I disagree with the argument that we need to leave because the EU is fundamentally undemocratic. It is certainly not true since the European Parliament was given the power of co-decision with the Council and the Commission. We do elect our MEPs, even though the poor turnout for these elections

With reform, that I believe is achievable, the EU can benefit us all hugely. What motivates me more than anything else to fight to stay in the EU is simply for the sake of jobs

The UK does have experience of repealing law from which other EU states could subsequently benefit. As Environment Secretary, I successfully removed almost half of the Regulations on the Department's books as obsolete, which saved business hassle and money in the process. What we need is a new EU Commissioner with the zeal to strip out EU rules that are no longer fit for purpose, rather than introduce new ones as an attempt to leave a legacy.

With reform, that I believe is achievable, the EU can benefit us all hugely. What motivates me more than anything else to fight to stay in the EU is simply for the sake of jobs, especially for future generations. When 50% of our trade is with the other 27 countries of the EU, why on earth would we leave? For the first time in our history, 82% of the cars we produce are exported, with half of those going to EU countries.

139,000 jobs in the car industry depend directly or indirectly on our membership, and we should not be putting them at risk.

The idea of returning to a mythical autonomy as an isolationist state has to be challenged by the reality that we have always had more influence by building alliances, and a trade alliance is the best guarantee for jobs.

Caroline was elected Member of Parliament for Meriden in 1997. Following the General Election in 2010, she was appointed as the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and held that appointment until 2012. Caroline is currently a Vice President of Tearfund, a member of the Joint Committee on Modern Day Slavery, a member of Net Positive, Kingfisher and a member of GLOBE International.



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