

## Is Sarkozy preparing to bid Britain au revoir?

*There are indications that French political opinion is beginning to recognise the practical necessity of allowing Britain a looser relationship with the EU*

Is the French political class becoming increasingly reconciled to allowing Britain a new relationship with the European Union, having decided that the costs of having us in as a full member far outweigh the value of the UK's budget contribution? Valéry Giscard d'Estaing implied as much in a radio interview on 27th June when he spoke of the need for granting Britain a special status ("*un statut particulier*") - that might ultimately come to resemble that enjoyed by Norway and Switzerland.

He has since elaborated on his views in a magazine interview (see next page) in which he describes a profound change of British attitude towards the EU - a development which he suggests can be seen as "interesting and positive". The prominent French broadcaster Bernard Guettaz has also been exploring this prospect on the radio programme *France Inter*, the approximate equivalent of the *Today* programme.

### Further Integration

Nicolas Sarkozy, the new French President is clearly aware that his repeated demands for further political integration, greater economic protectionism and the preservation of the CAP present big problems for the new British Prime Minister - whatever interpretation is placed on such matters by our new europhile Foreign Minister David Milliband and his equally europhile colleague, the

Minister for Europe Jim Murphy.

Sarkozy is a young politician in a hurry. He is also a Gaullist. Britain stands in the way of his plans. It may well be that his attitude towards Britain is similar to that of his political hero. At the famous Paris press conference in 1963 at which de Gaulle renewed his 'non' to British entry he declared:

*England is...insular, maritime, linked through its trade, markets and food supply to very diverse and often distant countries. Its activities are essentially industrial and commercial, and only slightly agricultural. It has...very marked and original customs and traditions. In short, the nature structure and economic context of England differ profoundly from those of the other States of the continent...It is foreseeable that the cohesion of all its members, who would be numerous and diverse, would not hold for long and that in the end there would appear a colossal Atlantic Community under American independence and leadership which would soon swallow up the European Community.*

### Face Value

It is interesting to note that instead of taking de Gaulle's words at face value at the time many people in Britain thought that they reflected a petulant refusal to share the leadership of Europe with Britain and that he was being insulting and perhaps even childish. It was even argued that his reluctance to let us in was evidence

that we would benefit from joining. In retrospect it can be seen de Gaulle was a better judge of our interests than Britain's own political leaders. He took it for granted that because Britain was different from Continental Europe in so many ways it would be bound to be permanently at odds with its European partners, however compliant and short-sighted Britain's political leaders might be.

So it has proved. But if de Gaulle's words were true then they are even more true today. De Gaulle, unlike his successors, genuinely believed in a *Europe d'états*. Today's European elites believe in a unitary European state. The relationship is therefore more fraught than it would have been if de Gaulle's dream had been realised and it will go on being fraught until there is a fundamental change.

### Hyperactive

With France taking over the EU Presidency less than six months from now, it would not be surprising if the hyperactive Sarkozy took up Giscard's proposal as a way of stamping his mark on European developments and of further marginalising the pesky "*Angliches*".

How ironic it would be if the process of British withdrawal was initiated by the French! But wouldn't it be better by far if we started to move towards the EU exit door under our own volition, rather than waiting for Sarkozy to bid us *au revoir*.

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# The British have undergone a profound change of attitude, says Giscard

*While the rest of Europe pursues political integration Britain will seek a new special relationship with the EU, predicts the former French President*

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former French President and, more recently, President of the EU Convention which resulted in the draft EU Constitution signed by Tony Blair and other EU leaders in October 2004, was interviewed by the French weekly magazine *Le Point* dated 5th July 2007. The topic was the outcome of the EU summit of 23rd June and the revived EU Constitution and appeared under the headline

"The British no longer want European integration".

The key extracts are:

**Le Point:** *Clearly, there's a problem with the British....*

**Giscard:** The underlying debate [at the summit] brought out a reality which I had already perceived during the last two or three years: a profound change in the attitude of the British vis-à-vis Europe. They have moved from their traditional position, of asking themselves whether it was in their interests to take part in the process of European integration, to one of conviction: that it is not in their interests to take any further steps in that process.

This change has taken place in public opinion but also in financial and economic circles. Before, there was of course a part of British opinion faithful to the British way of life and to the alliance with the USA. But there was also another part of British opinion which saw Europe as an opportunity

for their country. This second strand of opinion has weakened: the UK has deliberately made the choice of [embracing] globalisation.

Having made this choice, European integration appears from now on to the British as an obstacle, a brake, a source of complications. We saw this clearly during the [summit] negotiations: the British said no to everything that could be said to be in the direction of European integration, or insisted on opt-outs. This attitude signals a new phase, which, for me, is interesting and positive because it leads to an examination of the way in which the UK participates in the process of European construction.

No one thinks the UK will join the eurozone or the Schengen system. From now on there's strong British exceptionalism in the EU. Should that worry us? I don't think so. Rather, it's a clarification - not a matter of concern. However, we need to find a structure that reconciles this new British position with the undoubted desire of other European countries to press ahead with integration.

**Le Point:** *You say that the change in British attitude is quite recent, but they've never been particularly "European"....*

**Giscard:** What, historically, was the objective of British diplomacy? It was to make sure that the EU didn't organise itself too efficiently, but also to be present in EU institutions so as to

make sure the system wasn't against British interests.

On certain occasions in the past, the British thought that the building of "Europe" was compatible with British interests. That was so under the Conservative administrations of McMillan and Heath. It was also so under Labour with Blair, at least at the beginning. Blair said he wanted to put the UK "at the heart of Europe". That period's over.

**Le Point:** *Should there be a special relationship ["statut particulier"] for the UK?*

**Giscard:** We need to work out with the UK some practical arrangement. Intellectually, it's fairly easy; in practice, it's more complicated. The approach could be as follows. In everything to do with the market economy and intergovernmental cooperation, the British would be involved. When it comes to political integration, the British, if they wanted, could stay on the fringes. The problem is institutional. How, in this scenario, could they take part in the European Parliament? How could they vote, and on what policies, in the Council of Ministers?

So we can readily conceive of a Europe in which there's a large group of countries - not just an inner core but almost all the others - pursuing integration. And that one country prefers a special relationship.

## Join the Downing St protest

Readers can add their support to the growing clamour for a referendum on the "Reform Treaty" by signing up to a 10 Downing Street on-line petition (<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/EU-treaty->

NON/) The petition reads as follows:

"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to guarantee that the British people will be permitted a binding referendum on any and all

attempts to resurrect the EU "constitution" (and any or all of its content) regardless of nomenclature."

Deadline for the petition is 31st January 2008.

# Charter of Fundamental Rights: why the opt-out will prove worthless

*Even if the 'legally binding' protocol negotiated at the June EU summit were clearer and more precise it would not achieve what is claimed for it*

In our analysis of the Draft Mandate to the forthcoming Inter-Governmental Conference - the document which emerged from the June EU summit - we suggested that the opt-out from the Charter of Fundamental Rights would not represent the inviolable "red line" that the Government claimed (*eurofacts*, 6th July). This view is shared by a wide number of analysts, commentators and think-tanks both in Britain and continental Europe.

However, British ministers seem undeterred by the discovery that almost everyone seems to disagree with them. Speaking in the House of Commons on 11th July, Jim Murphy, the Minister for Europe offered the following solemn assurance:

*"... on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, we secured a legally binding protocol that was specific to the UK and applicable to the British courts and to the European Court of Justice. The protocol confirms that a binding charter will have no new impact on UK domestic law and will create no new powers for the EU to legislate. In particular, the charter will not extend the ECJ's or national courts' power to challenge or reinterpret UK employment and social legislation, nor will it change the rights that we*

*already apply in the UK through the Human Rights Act 1998.*

On the same day EU vice-president Margot Wallstrom said that the Charter will apply to large parts of British law, despite UK Government claims that the opt-out will prevent this.

*"Citizens will be able to claim before the courts the rights enshrined in the Charter," she said. "The Charter will be binding for the European institutions, and also for member states when they implement EU law, even if it does not apply to all of them."*

A senior European Parliament source, close to negotiations on the new EU treaty, told the *Telegraph* on 12th July that MEPs are planning to sponsor early challenges to Britain's opt-outs. *"We are going to make sure that this issue is constantly before the European Court of Justice," he said. "There is 30 years of EU jurisprudence to say there can be no two-tier system of European rights."*

The Commission's legal service estimates that British opt-outs to the charter are "limited" and the *Telegraph* quotes one legal source saying that "the opt-out is potentially very thin". The wording of the opt-out from the Charter of Fundamental rights is vague. But even if it were crystal clear it is very doubtful that it could achieve

its purported purpose. This is because the European Court reinterprets treaty provisions in order to expand the powers of EU institutions, and believes that it is part of its responsibilities to do so.

As Martin Howe has pointed out, the opt-out on the Social Chapter negotiated at Maastricht was rapidly undermined by the abuse of health and safety powers under the Treaty to bypass the UK's veto on the Working Time Directive. This abuse was sanctioned by the Court (see *eurofacts* for 6th April 2007).

For as long as we remain subject to EU law and consequently to the Court's reinterpretation of the Treaties, no treaty provision defining or limiting the powers of Europe can ever be safely relied on - simply because it will be reinterpreted by the Court, over time to expand those powers still further.

Consequently Mr Murphy's assurances to the House of Commons will almost certainly prove to be worthless. To the extent that the strictly limited and temporary protection afforded by the Opt-Out is understood in Westminster and Whitehall it must be seen not as a means of national self-protection but as a kind of self-deception.

## Treaty changes designed only to sell document

*"As for the changes now proposed to be made to the constitutional treaty, most are presentational changes that have no practical effect. They have simply been designed to enable certain heads of government to sell to their people the idea of ratification by parliamentary action rather than by*

*referendum... .*

*"Apart from a brief, last-minute postponement (designed to buy off Polish opposition) of the introduction of a new system of qualified majority voting, the remaining adjustments to be made to the treaty signed in 2004 - but still not ratified by nine member states*

*- are essentially presentational and have no perceptible legal effect."*

Dr Garret FitzGerald, former Irish Taoiseach and leading member of the international European Movement, writing in the *Irish Times* on 30th June, 2007.

## Treaty terms set in concrete

*"We do have a clear, precise and detailed mandate handed down to us. We believe that the conditions and guidelines are set out to us in that*

*mandate. We will be sticking strictly to the terms we have been given."* "Portugal's Europe Minister, Manuel Lobo Antunes speaking in Lisbon on

28th June about his government's intentions in relation to the EU's so-called "Reform Treaty" after Portugal took over the rotating EU presidency.

## Peer condemns the 'great betrayal'

**Lord Waddington:** My Lords, while not expecting the noble Baroness to agree with those who regard the signing of this treaty as a terrible betrayal, particularly when there is going to be denial of a referendum, does she acknowledge that the Irish Prime Minister has said that it contains 90 per cent of the constitution that was rejected by the electors of Holland and France? Does she further agree that it will certainly turn out to be a great betrayal if the opt-out from the charter and the political declaration regarding foreign and security policy are found to be valueless in the face of the determination of the European Court to further an ever-closer union? Is not the charter already being given effect to? Does not the Government realise that the European Union some time ago

issued an edict, DOC COM(2005) 172, requiring the charter to be enshrined in all European legislation? Does the noble Baroness not realise that the British Government have agreed to the setting up of an agency to monitor the operations of this charter, which the Prime Minister says that he has managed to opt out of? Has not the Prime Minister signed up to supporting actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity the common foreign and security policy? How can a non-legally binding declaration exempt us from that obligation so far as foreign policy is concerned, to which the Prime Minister has signed up?

**Baroness Amos:** My Lords, I say to the House and to the noble Lord, Lord Waddington, that I have absolutely no

problem with the guaranteeing of fundamental rights, freedoms and principles for the British people. We have done that through the Human Rights Act. I hope that the noble Lord will agree that, over many years, these rights are already enshrined in British law and we should be very proud of that. Fundamental rights, freedoms and principles are guaranteed by the Governments of the member states in accordance with national law. That is what we, the British Government, have done. Successive British Governments have felt that that is important. But there was no statement of rights binding the European Union. The charter is a statement for the Union.

Source: House of Lords Hansard 25th June, 2007

## EU fraud costs a million euros a day

**T**he EU is losing approximately one million euros a day as the result of fraud according to figures released by the EU Commission earlier this month.

In 2006 the Commission recorded 12,092 "irregular transactions" of which it calculates 2,050 were the result of fraud involving a total sum of 323 million euros (£218 million).

The total value of transactions affected by "irregularities" was up by 11.5 per cent on 2005.

Under EU law member states must report suspected fraud or other abnormalities involving EU cash. But

when presenting the inaptly named Report on the "Protection of the Communities Interests and the Fight Against Fraud", Siim Kallas, the EU vice-president for administration and audit said that some countries were not taking fraud seriously while others were slow in reporting cases. This suggests that the actual sums lost are even greater than those suggested by the report which in any case only covers irregularities worth over 10,000.

The report shows that the total number of irregularities increased in agriculture, cohesion and pre-

accession funds and decreased in the case of structural funds and so-called 'own resources' - i.e. funds collected by member states on behalf of the EU such as customs duties.

It also shows that the proportion of fraudulently acquired funds recovered by the Commission fell from 37 per cent in 2004, to 33 per cent in 2005 to 27 per cent in 2006 - which suggests either that the fraudsters are becoming more ingenious or the Commission staff even more incompetent in protecting our money, or a combination of both these things.

## Economic consequences of immigration

**T**he economic consequences of immigration - which in the case of Britain has grown massively as a result of EU enlargement - are widely regarded as being beneficial, a view shared by all of the major political parties and most opinion formers. This view is challenged head on by Anthony Scholefield in a monograph which is to

be published shortly by the Social Affairs Unit.

Scholefield, a frequent contributor to *eurofacts* argues that while immigration increases a nation's GDP it must inevitably reduce wage levels and per capita income. He suggests that only immigrant workers who bring £141,000 of capital per head, who

make no foreign remittances and have at least the mean average skills of indigenous workers can possibly benefit Britain in economic terms.

*Warning: Immigration Can Seriously Damage Your Wealth* by Anthony Scholefield is available from the June Press price £6.00 + 10% p&p (see back cover).

# Outlook for EU states ranges from bleak to catastrophic

*Europe is the only continent on the planet that will suffer a drop in its working-age population over the next four decades, and, consequently, a drop in its GDP*

A country's economic future must inevitably depend on the activities of the economically active part of the population. A good proxy for the productive potential of the population is "WAP" - working-age population - defined by the UN as those aged 15 to 64: the proportion of the whole population whose work and incomes provide for children at one end of the spectrum and for old-age pensioners at the other. This section of the population accounts for the bulk of an economy's consumer spending.

In developed countries the association between changes in GDP and WAP is quite strong; less so in developing and poor countries. The just-published projections of WAP from the UN are a useful "broad-brush" predictor of where export growth is likely to come from after 2015.

What the figures show is that with the exception of Sweden and a handful of offshore English-speaking islands the outlook for the EU ranges from the bleak to the catastrophic. The principal policy implications of this situation for the UK should be clear: any attempts to ensure that the British economy converges with those of the EU or to alter the bias of our trading relations in favour of the EU will be profoundly mistaken and entail immense opportunity costs.

The facts are these:

■ In future, EU countries, with one or two exceptions, will be shrinking export markets for the EU (Table 1). Europe is the only continent on the planet that will suffer a drop in its working-age population ("WAP") over the next four decades, and, consequently, a drop in its GDP and in its propensity to import. All other continents will experience growth in their WAPs by

**Table 1 EU-27: Working-Age Population (15-64): Change 2005 - 2050:**

Ranked by Growth (+) or Decline (-)		
Country	'000	%
UK	+1294	+ 3.3
Ireland	+ 872	+ 30.9
Sweden	+ 321	+ 5.4
Cyprus	+ 154	+ 27.1
Luxembourg	+ 149	+ 48.5
Malta	(30)	(10.8)
France	(170)	Negl.
Estonia	(250)	(27.3)
Denmark	(262)	(7.3)
Finland	(367)	(10.5)
Slovenia	(480)	(34.2)
Latvia	(556)	(35.0)
Belgium	(669)	(9.8)
Lithuania	(750)	(32.2)
Austria	(826)	(14.6)
Netherlands	(874)	(7.9)
Slovakia	(1156)	(30.0)
Greece	(1546)	(20.7)
Portugal	(1609)	(22.7)
Hungary	(2027)	(29.1)
Czech R.	(2308)	(31.9)
Bulgaria	(2588)	(48.4)
Spain	(5494)	(18.4)
Romania	(5925)	(39.4)
Italy	(9352)	(24.1)
Poland	(9785)	(36.4)
Germany	(13644)	(7.5)
EU-27 total	(57878)	(17.5)
EU-26 (EU-27 less UK)	(59172)	(20.4)

*Source: World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision: Medium Variant: United Nations*

2050.

■ Although EU-26 (the EU 27 less Britain) will lose 59 million of WAP by 2050 (more than the entire present WAP of Germany), EFTA will gain WAP over this period. So will NAFTA: 67 million in WAP by 2050. The "swing" in WAP between EU-26 and NAFTA by 2050 will be 126

million (59 + 67 million) in favour of NAFTA (Table 3).

■ The 54-country (ex-British) Commonwealth will gain almost a billion in WAP by 2050, of which its most populous member, India, will account for over 400 million. After India, Nigeria (118 million), Pakistan (104 million) and Bangladesh (78 million) are the Commonwealth countries with the next biggest increases in WAP.

■ By 2050, the working-age population of the Commonwealth will be well over nine times as big as that of EU-26, and account for 37 per cent of global working-age population (Table 3).

■ With the exception of the UK, Ireland and Sweden, all other significant EU-27 member-states will experience shrinkage in WAP by 2050. By 2050, the UK's WAP will increase by 1.3 million, Ireland's by 0.9 million and Sweden's by 0.3 million (Table 1).

■ By 2050, UK WAP will be almost the same as Germany's. (Today, German WAP is around 40 per cent bigger than the UK's.) In 2050, German, French and British WAPs will be almost the same (Table 2).

■ Shrinkage in WAP in most East European countries which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, as well as in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, is projected to be somewhere between disastrous and catastrophic. Bulgaria will lose 48 per cent of its WAP by 2050; Russia will lose 43 per cent (Tables 1, 2 & 3).

**Continued on p.6**

Country	2050	2005	Change
Germany	41613	55257	(13644)
UK	41028	39734	+ 1294
France	39657	39827	(170)
Italy	29515	38867	(9352)
Spain	24343	29837	(5494)
Poland	17112	26897	(9785)
Netherlands	10137	11011	(874)
Romania	9119	15044	(5925)
Sweden	6229	5908	+ 321
Belgium	6160	6829	(669)
Greece	5940	7486	(1546)
Portugal	5491	7100	(1609)
Czech R.	4937	7245	(2308)
Hungary	4935	6962	(2027)
Austria	4816	5642	(826)
Ireland	3696	2824	+ 872
Denmark	3319	3581	(262)
Finland	3133	3500	(367)
Bulgaria	2758	5346	(2588)
Slovakia	2695	3851	(1156)
Lithuania	1577	2327	(750)
Latvia	1032	1588	(556)
Slovenia	925	1405	(480)
Cyprus	723	569	+ 154
Estonia	667	917	(250)
Luxembourg	456	307	+ 149
Malta	249	279	(30)
EU-27	272262	330140	(57878)
EU-26 (EU-27 less UK)	231234	290406	(59172)

*Source: World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision: Medium Variant: United Nations*

Grouping	WAP in 2005 million	WAP in 2050 million	Change in WAP million	Change in percentage
EU-26 <sup>1</sup>	290	231	(59)	(20%)
EFTA <sup>2</sup>	8.3	8.6	+ 0.4	+ 5%
NAFTA <sup>3</sup>	289	356	+ 67	+ 23%
Commonwealth <sup>4</sup>	1228	2163	+ 935	+ 76%
India	704	1116	+ 412	+ 59%
Turkey	48	63	+ 15	+ 31%
USA	201	248	+ 48	+ 24%
Russia, Ukraine & Belarus	142	89	(53)	(37%)
Japan	85	52	(33)	(38%)
China (ex-HK)	929	860	(69)	(7%)

<sup>1</sup> EU-27 less the UK  
<sup>2</sup> EFTA comprises Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein  
<sup>3</sup> NAFTA comprises the USA, Canada and Mexico  
<sup>4</sup> Includes one NAFTA member, Canada, and two EU-26 members, Cyprus & Malta

*Source: World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision: Medium Variant: United Nations*

# Reform Constitution: How to win the battle for a referendum

*Marc Glendening of the Democracy Movement argues that only a broadly based campaign can succeed in forcing MPs to honour their commitments*

The intellectual battle to establish that the new EU 'Reform Treaty' is in essence the same as Giscard's apparently defeated Constitution has been won hands down - but unless we can develop a campaign of concrete action to prevent its ratification through Parliament we will lose the political war. The stakes are enormous because the new treaty will keep article IV-447 from the Constitution which enables the EU to incrementally self-amend important sections of the treaty in the future without the terrible inconvenience of seeking the consent of member state parliaments and electorates.

The campaign to prevent this possibly last significant - upfront - transfer of powers to the EU requires two strategic dimensions. The first features a 'naming and shaming' of MPs from all parties who are now planning to renege on the promise to their constituents not to ratify the Constitution before a referendum had been held. At the last general election the three major parties, as well as their smaller counterparts, all committed themselves to consult the public first. Anti-referendum MPs such as Ken Clarke did not specifically inform their local electorates that they dissented from their respective parties' national, official positions.

The second strand of the offensive involves the development of messages designed to motivate a large section of the electorate to believe that this new treaty, and the EU issue in general, is of relevance to their own lives. The reason that the EU-sceptical movement has collectively failed over the past thirty years to prevent Britain's slow political dismemberment has been that we have not been able to communicate lines of argument that have convinced the vast majority of voters that the loss of Britain's political independence really affects their lives. Successive governments have thus surrendered

powers to Brussels secure in the knowledge that voters would not punish them at the ballot box.

When Tony Blair initially set his face against consulting the people on the original Constitution, the Democracy Movement (aided by many activists from other pro-referendum groups, including Mehr Demokratie from Germany) approached all MPs and demanded to know if they would commit to voting for the referendum amendment that a group of rebel Labour MPs led by John Cryer were planning to submit when the government presented its legislation. In addition to virtually all Tory, Liberal Democrat, Unionist and Scottish and Welsh nationalist MPs, forty two Labour MPs signified their intention to vote against the government. In April 2004 Blair then announced the first of New Labour's U-turns on the issue.

## Local targeting

Now we have to start the same process all over again. On the plus side, only 36 Labour backbenchers are now required to support a referendum motion in the Commons for Gordon Brown to be defeated. On the downside, the Liberal Democrats are now prevaricating on the issue and refusing to define where exactly they stand. Plus, a handful of Tories are planning to vote with the government.

The DM will shortly start the process of distributing two million leaflets across the country as part of its *Gordon, Don't be an EU Cheat* campaign that will invite voters to write to their local MPs. In addition, the DM head office will write to every MP informing them that we are setting up a website that will inform their constituents where they now stand. Those politicians planning to ratify the treaty without a referendum will then

be targeted locally. With only a swing of 2 per cent away from the government required for the prime minister to lose his majority, many currently anti-referendum Labour MPs are going to be put in a tricky position (as will their equivalents from other parties). Posters and leaflets will be distributed in the relevant target constituencies outing the local MP as a 'Referendum Cheat'. Local voters will be able to download these materials from our website and will be encouraged to visit their representatives at their local surgeries. Public meetings will be organised to which the referendum cheats, as well as their prospective rival candidates, will be invited to come and articulate their various positions on this issue. A mass lobby of parliament will be organised if and when the Bill ratifying the treaty is presented.

Running side by side with this 'micro' level drive, the EU-sceptical movement needs to develop 'macro' level arguments that brings the EU issue alive for the majority of mainstream voters that we have so far failed to persuade to take political action. For example, this will involve identifying issues that are touched by the new treaty, such as energy, transport, civil liberties, health, foreign policy and public services, and spelling out the potentially detrimental effects of extending the EU's control of these areas could have for all our lives. The government will again resort to the Euro-MaCarthyite tactics it has employed before in an attempt to portray pro-referendum opposition as the sole preserve of 'the right'. This is why our campaign must be politically broad based and why therefore it is really encouraging to see trades unions such as Unison, the RMT and GMB coming out against the new Constitution treaty.

# Echoes of an old trade war

By Jack Straw

In this book Vivian Linacre, President of the British Weights and Measures Association, champions the cause for continuing the use of Customary measurements in our daily lives and stemming the further encroachment of the metric system. This is not so much an intellectual argument as the echoes of the struggle between Great Britain and France for the domination of the world's trade in the 19th Century.

Most of the book is dedicated to examples of Customary measures (formerly called Imperial units) from every walk of life with explanations as to why they are better adapted to everyday usage than their decimal based equivalents, together with a range of supportive comment from literature and the Bible.

The author defines Customary weights and measures as those whose units of account reflect the needs of every day usage by mankind and which operate with the duodecimal system. The advantage of the duodecimal system is that 12 has factors 2, 3, 4 and 6 whereas the decimal system using base 10 has only factors 2 and 5. The author declares that the duodecimal system is inherent in nature and cannot be abolished! He goes on to say the sexagesimal system of base 60, which is the basis for our measurement of time, and the binary system, are compatible with the Imperial measures and therefore fit the definition of Customary measures.

Linacre tries to explain why the Customary measures found in similar form throughout the world, are so enduring. Although their usage can be traced back some 3,000 years, it is not possible to explain how they evolved

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## The General Rule

### A Guide to Customary Weights and Measures

By Vivian Linacre

The Squeeze Press  
Pbk 208 pp

Available from *The June Press*  
Price £12.99 + p&p  
(see back cover)

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since the earliest evidence shows them to be complete systems that had their origins in prehistory. Numeracy and geometry were well developed and the people of that time were capable of such feats as measuring the circumference of the Earth to within a close approximation of the actual figure.

### Erroneous Premise

Customary units of length, volume weight and velocity were not invented concepts but originated thousands of years ago. And here your reviewer wonders if Linacre has his tongue in his cheek: Metricists, he posits, don't understand that customary measures were passed down by the ancients to be adopted by the Anglo Saxons. They are not the product of a construction by a revolutionary mob based on an erroneous premise barely 200 years ago.

The metric system drew its strength from its association with the cultural and political upheaval that fuelled the French Revolution. It was adopted as a political weapon with which the French revolutionaries were going to impose the new republican culture over the rest of the world. The principle of metrication found favour in the nascent United States but was rejected because it proved impossible to design a metric calendar or rational subdivisions of the day.

But the main rivalry existed between France and England about who was going to set the international standards; modernists versus traditionalists.

Enter the dark forces of Brussels who in their eternal quest for conformity demand that one and all should adopt the Metric system. The adherence to the Imperial system of weights and measures by Great Britain and the USA gives the UK an unfair competitive advantage over the other members of the European Union in their dealings with the US. The ancient measures are declared illegal as trading standards (although they have recently received a welcome reprieve).

If the political aspects become too tedious there is still much enjoyment to be had from the descriptions of some of the measures and their inter-relationships. For example take the Anglo Saxon rod of 79.2 inches which is exactly double the true measure of the metre at 39.6 inches equalling 1/10,000,000 of one half of the circumference of the earth and hence coinciding with the 12 hour clock!

## Europeans see US as threat to peace

Europeans consistently regard the United States as the biggest threat to world stability, according to a survey carried out in June by Harris Research for the *Financial Times*. This shows that 32 per cent of respondents in five European countries regard the US as a bigger threat than any other state. Only 5 per cent single out Russia, despite increased tensions between Moscow and the west.

In the US itself, North Korea and Iran

are seen as the biggest risks.

The level of European concern about the US has remained broadly consistent over the past year. In 11 previous polls dating back to July 2006 the proportion of respondents considering the US a threat to stability has ranged between 28 per cent and 38 per cent.

Inhabitants of Spain are most concerned about the US, with 46 per cent of respondents naming America as

the biggest threat.

European poll respondents - who also come from France, Germany, Italy and the UK - are increasingly concerned about China, which 19 per cent perceive as the biggest threat, up from 12 per cent last July.

Meanwhile, 17 per cent identify Iran as the biggest threat, 11 per cent Iraq and 9 per cent North Korea.

# Pan-European parties come one step nearer

*Political parties operating in more than one member state are seen as the way to weaken the bonds of nationhood*

The European Federalist's dream of creating pan-European political parties came one step nearer last month when the Commission adopted a proposal that would allow the funding of what it described as "European political foundations".

The proposal amends the existing regulation on political parties and their funding which was adopted in 2003 and is said to have been inspired by what is officially known in Brussels as the "period of reflection" (i.e. the period during which the Commission and the Council reflected on the French and Dutch rejections of the draft EU Conclusion and evidently came to the conclusion that the voters had made a mistake).

A total of ten trans-national political parties already receive funding which is administered by the European Parliament, but so these remain largely alliances of national parties. So far only one party - the Greens - has actually produced a common programme which would apply across all member states. Earlier this year a budget of 10.4 million was established to fund parties operating at the European level.

The reference to "foundations" in the

revised regulations suggests that there will be an attempt to create research and campaigning facilities for the use of Federalist candidates ahead of the 2009 European parliamentary elections - which will give them the clear advantage over other candidates.

Welcoming the revision, Margot Wallstrom the vice-president responsible for Institutional Affairs and Communication Strategy, said: "*The development of the activities of political parties together with the creation of European political foundations is part and parcel of building a real European public sphere*".

## Political Will

Trans-national parties have long been seen as a means of accelerating the process of integration. Article 191 of the Maastricht Treaty states: "*Political parties at the European level are important as a factor for integration within the Union. They contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union*".

This was subsequently codified in the draft Treaty establishing a constitution

for Europe - and like so much else in that document has been rescued by the Commission.

In 2004 25 eurosceptic MEPs led by Daniel Hannan petitioned the European Court of Justice arguing that the regulations put parties which did not wish to join European groupings at a financial disadvantage and consequently contravened the EU's stated values of pluralism and democracy. But their petition was rejected eighteen months later.

In europhile circles there is evident impatience with the fact that fully fledged pan-European parties are not emerging quickly enough. An article in the on-line European foreign affairs magazine *cafebabel* states: "*The constitution is not enough. If the EU is ever to be opened up to its citizens, political leaders must be open to pan-European projects...in reality the political alignments of the Old Continent remain woefully nation bound*".

Publicly funded pan-national parties are clearly seen as the means by which national parties can ultimately be crowded out and the bonds of nationhood consequently destroyed.

## EU is new kind of empire, says Barroso

*"We are a very special construction unique in the history of mankind. Sometimes I like to compare the EU as a creation to the organisation of empire. We have the dimension of*

*empire..."*

*"There is a principle of good faith. It is inconceivable that an agreement [on the draft Mandate to the IGC] that was agreed unanimously in June is*

*reopened now."*

Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the EU Commission speaking in Brussels and quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* of 11th July 2007.

## Who cares about democracy?

The growing number of British citizens who are concerned about the unaccountable and increasingly authoritarian character of the European Union do not, it seems include David Milliband, the new British Foreign Secretary. This is clear from an

interview he gave to the *Financial Times* on 9th July:

*"All I wanted to say about Europe is that I've been convinced for years that the greatest challenge facing the European Union is about delivery*

*rather than about internal democracy; that the route to respect in European hearts is through delivery, that it's the delivery deficit rather than the democratic deficit that should be the focus of our attention."*

# LETTERS

Tel: 08456 12 12 65 Fax: 08456 12 12 75 email: [eurofacts@junepress.com](mailto:eurofacts@junepress.com)

## The Irony of Laeken

Dear Sir,

How ironic that the sordid deal struck at the June EU summit should have begun at Laeken.

As your readers may remember the declared aim of the Laeken European Council in December 2001 was to bring the EU closer to its citizens.

The Laeken Declaration which emerged from the meeting began by stressing the need to lift the veil of secrecy from the EU's decision-making processes and went on to recommend systematic action to remedy the democratic deficit. It stated: "... they [European citizens] feel that deals are all too often cut out of sight and they want better democratic scrutiny..... citizens also feel that the Union is behaving too bureaucratically in numerous other areas. In coordinating the economic, financial and fiscal environment, the basic issue should continue to be proper operation of the internal market and the single currency, without this jeopardising Member States' individuality. National and regional differences frequently stem from history or tradition. They can be enriching. In other words, what citizens understand by 'good governance' is opening up fresh opportunities, not imposing further red tape. What they expect is more results, better responses to practical issues and not a European superstate..."

The Laeken conference set in train a process which led to the creation of the Convention on the Future of Europe which in turn led to Giscard's draft Constitution, the substance of which has been preserved in the Draft Mandate.

How is it that a process which had the avowed purpose of increasing

transparency, accountability and of strengthening the single market is likely to have exactly the opposite effect? What better example could there be of a deal that was cut out of sight of ordinary people and over which they will be effectively denied a say?

For anyone who has closely followed the history of the European project these will seem naïve questions to pose. The die was cast long ago; no one should be surprised at the outcome.

What is remarkable given the deep scepticism of the British about these matters is the ability of ministers to lie about the nature of what was agreed at the June summit without facing a much greater degree of public and media hostility. The British people have a habit of awakening late in the day to dangers to their liberty. On this occasion the likelihood is that they will awake far too late to take action.

A.G. DYSON  
Surrey

## Tory Opportunity

Dear Sir,

The Conservatives have a golden opportunity to seize the initiative for a referendum.

Imagine the scenario. It's Prime Minister's question time and Gordon Brown, in response to a question on the new EU Treaty, says that there is no need for a referendum to be held, announces that the due process implementing the Treaty, will be introduced in the next session of Parliament. David Cameron responds with "*I am pleased to inform the Prime Minister that we on this side of the House, will oppose any Act which would allow the Treaty to have effect in the United Kingdom without the will of the people. Recognising that*

*Parliament is Sovereign, when elected to Government at the next election we will offer the people a referendum and repeal the Act of Ratification if they vote against implementation of the new Treaty*". Possibly an election winner for the Conservatives? Frank Field MP for Birkenhead, believes "*such a move would probably be very popular, particularly among Labour voters*". (Hansard Col.29 25th June).

HARRY RANDALL  
Dorset

## Cost of Regional Assemblies

Dear Sir,

As your readers may know, there are eight Regional Assemblies in England; these are unelected and represent an additional tier of government.

Under the Freedom of Information Act I have been carrying out research into the costs of these assemblies.

The replies I have received from the chief executives show that the total cost amounts to £26,421,457 in 2005-6 although it should be noted that no allowance has been made for the cost of index-linked pensions of employees.

At a time when our armed forces are stretched and a private soldier earns less than a policeman I would suggest that this a complete waste of money - particularly as the aim of the assemblies is to replace elected County Councils and to by-pass Parliament as part of a political strategy conceived in Brussels.

Public sentiment is allowed no part in this matter: there was a referendum on regional government in the North East and voters had recorded a decisive no vote. Yet, extraordinarily, the North East Regional Assembly is still in existence!

GRAHAM ALLT  
East Sussex

*The next issue of eurofacts will appear on 7th September  
We wish our readers an enjoyable summer break*

# MEETINGS

**Get Britain Out**  
(formerly The Anti-Common  
Market League)  
01787 376374

Friday **27th July**, 7.00 pm

“The EU: Is it time to withdraw?”

**Gerard Batten MEP, UKIP**  
**Richard Laming, Secretary to The**  
*European Movement*

**PUBLIC MEETING**  
The Counting House pub (upstairs)  
50 Cornhill, London EC3V 3PD  
(close to Bank Underground Station)  
**Admission Free**

**Democracy Movement**  
(Southeast Sussex Branch)  
01424 848964

Tuesday **11th September**, 7.30 pm

**Roger Helmer MEP**  
**Lynn Riley, British Declaration of**  
*Independence*

**PUBLIC MEETING**  
Lansdowne Hotel, King Edward's  
Parade, Eastbourne, East Sussex  
**Admission Free**

**The Freedom Association**  
(Sussex Branch)  
01424 736880

Saturday **15th September**, 6.30 pm

(The Inaugural Event of Sussex Branch)

“Battle for Britain”

**John Gouriet, Founding Campaign**  
*Director, TFA*  
**Simon Richards, Campaign Director,**  
*TFA*

**PUBLIC MEETING**  
(The Inaugural Event of Sussex Branch)  
The Mistral Bar/Restaurant, The  
Sackville, De Lar Warr Parade, Bexhill-  
on-Sea, East Sussex TN40 1LS  
**Admission £14**  
**TFA Members £12**  
(Includes a buffet super)

**Conservative Party**  
**Fringe Meeting**  
**Blackpool**

**Freedom Association**  
0845 833 9626

Tuesday **2nd October**, 1.00 pm

**Speakers to be announced**

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Grand Theatre, 33 Church Street,  
Blackpool  
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## DIARY OF EVENTS

**2007**

UK Parliamentary Recess Begins **26th July**

Lib-Dem Party Conference Brighton **15-20th September**

Labour Party Conference Bournemouth **23rd-27th September**

Conservative Party Conference Blackpool **30th Sept-3rd Oct**

UK Independence Party Conference Excel Centre, Docklands London **5-6th October**

UK Parliamentary Recess Ends **8th October**

France takes over EU presidency **1st January**

Sweden takes over EU presidency **1st July**

European Parliamentary Elections **June**

## USEFUL WEB SITES

**Better off Out Campaign**

[www.betteroffout.co.uk](http://www.betteroffout.co.uk)

**British Declaration of Independence**

[www.bdicampaign.org](http://www.bdicampaign.org)

**British Weights & Measures Assoc.**

[www.bwmaOnline.com](http://www.bwmaOnline.com)

**Bruges Group**

[www.brugesgroup.com](http://www.brugesgroup.com)

**Campaign Against Euro-Federalism**

[www.caef.org.uk](http://www.caef.org.uk)

**Campaign for an Independent Britain**

[www.cibhq.co.uk](http://www.cibhq.co.uk)

**Democracy Movement**

[www.democracymovement.org.uk](http://www.democracymovement.org.uk)

**EU Observer**

[www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com)

**EU Truth**

[www.eutruith.org.uk](http://www.eutruith.org.uk)

**European Commission (London)**

[www.cec.org.uk](http://www.cec.org.uk)

**European Foundation**

[www.europeanfoundation.org](http://www.europeanfoundation.org)

**European No Campaign**

[www.europeannocampaign.com](http://www.europeannocampaign.com)

**Foreign Affairs**

[www.foreignaffairs.org](http://www.foreignaffairs.org)

**Freedom Association**

[www.tfa.net](http://www.tfa.net)

**Global Britain**

[www.globalbritain.org](http://www.globalbritain.org)

**Global Vision**

[www.global-vision.net](http://www.global-vision.net)

**June Press (Publications)**

[www.junepress.com](http://www.junepress.com)

**Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign**

[www.lesc.org.uk](http://www.lesc.org.uk)

**New Alliance**

[www.newalliance.org.uk](http://www.newalliance.org.uk)

**Open Europe**

[www.openeurope.org.uk](http://www.openeurope.org.uk)

**Regional Assemblies**

[www.regionalassemblies.co.uk](http://www.regionalassemblies.co.uk)

**Speak Out Campaign**

[www.speakout.co.uk](http://www.speakout.co.uk)

**Sovereignty**

[www.sovereignty.org.uk](http://www.sovereignty.org.uk)

**Stewardship**

[www.stewardship.org](http://www.stewardship.org)

**The People's "No" Campaign**

[www.thepeoplesnocampaign.co.uk](http://www.thepeoplesnocampaign.co.uk)

**United Kingdom Independence Party**

[www.ukip.org](http://www.ukip.org)

**The European Question and the National Interest**

by *Jeremy Black*. **£16.99**  
A leading historian's interpretation of Britain's relations with EU/EC/EEC.

**A Democratic Europe: An Alternative to the EU**

by *Richard Body*. **£10.00**  
Sir Richard lays out the case for a truly democratic European Union as opposed to an undemocratic super power.

**The Great Deception:**

**Can the European Union survive**

by *Christopher Booker & Richard North*. **£10.99**  
This book is the most comprehensive history of the EU.

**Living in a Fascist Country**

by *Vernon Coleman*. **£15.99**  
The disappearing freedom and privacy.

**Hard Pounding: The Story Of The UK Independence Party**

by *Peter Gardner*. **£9.99**  
An inside story of the rise of UKIP.

**The Bumper Book of Government Waste**

by *Matthew Elliott and Lee Rotherham*. **£9.99**  
An exposure of the huge levels of waste in Britain and the EU.

**Disappearing Britain**

The EU and the death of Local Government by *Lindsay Jenkins*. **£14.99**  
The detailed Brussels agenda for the break-up of the United Kingdom.

**The Missing Heart of Europe**

Does Britain hold the key to the future of the Continent? by *Thomas Kremer*. **£11.99**  
Can nation states flourish? A European businessman's view of the impact of divergent national cultures.

**The General Rule**

A Guide to Customary Weights and Measures by *Vivian Linacre*. **£12.99**  
The author reflects the needs for imperial units in every day usage.

**Iran The Clash of Ambitions**

by *Houchang Nahavandi*. **£16.95**  
A history of the people and influences that have formed the Iran of today. It has a history of integrating invaders.

**Warning:**

**Immigration Can Seriously Damage Your Wealth**

by *Anthony Scholefield*. **£6.00**  
Scholefield argues that while immigration increases a nation's GDP it must inevitably reduce wage levels per capita income.

**Corruption - The World's Big C**

Cases, Causes, Consequences, Cures by *Ian Senior*. **£12.50**  
Senior shows how corruption in the EU is becoming worse and why the UK should not sign up to the proposed European Constitution.

**Videos**

**Britain On The Brink**

by *Sanity*. DVD or VHS Video **£5.00**  
Latest film starring Christopher Booker, Christopher Gill, John Bingley, Lindsay Jenkins, Ian Milne & Vladimir Bukovsky.

**Better Off Out! Okay What Next?**

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