

Can Cameron be trusted?

Do we really believe the leader of the Conservative Party David Cameron on his promise to hold an IN or OUT referendum on British membership of the European Union (EU)?

On Wednesday 23rd January Cameron made his long awaited speech about Britain's status in the EU.

In his speech he said the next Conservative manifesto in 2015 will ask for a mandate from the British people for a Conservative government to negotiate a new settlement with our European partners in the next Parliament. Further more, the Conservatives would hold an In/OUT referendum before the end of 2017, if the Conservatives win the next General Election in 2015 and after he had tried to re-negotiate the terms of British membership of the EU.

Cameron restated his belief that Britain should remain in the EU and warned that a No vote taking Britain out of the 27-country bloc would be "a one way ticket, not a return". He also thought that "Britain's national interest is best served in a flexible, adaptable and open EU and that such a EU is best with Britain in it". Adding that he would "campaign... with my heart and soul" for a Yes vote on the new UK-EU settlement.

The so-called repatriation of powers that he wanted were not included only that he would consider environmental, social policy legislation as well as criminal law and that "it is neither right nor necessary to claim that the integrity of the single market, or full membership of the EU requires the working hours of British hospital

doctors to be set in Brussels". He also voiced support for greater involvement of national parliament in EU lawmaking, describing them as the "true source of real democratic legitimacy and accountability in the EU".

In a nod to the public Cameron noted that:

"There is a growing frustration that the EU is seen as something that is done to people rather than acting on their behalf. And this is being intensified by the very solutions required to resolve the economic problems."

"People are increasingly frustrated that decisions taken further and further away from them mean that their living standards are slashed through enforced austerity or their taxes are used to bail out governments on the other side of the continent".

"Public disillusionment with the EU is at an all time high" in Britain and insisted that it is "time to settle the European question in British politics... People feel that the EU is heading in a direction that they never signed up to. They resent the interference in our national life by what they see as unnecessary rules and regulation. And they wonder what the point of it all is".

William Hague has told MPs, the Conservatives have a "clear vision" for the UK's future role in Europe, as they debated the party's pledge to hold a referendum on its membership and that "fresh consent was needed from the public for a new settlement" with the EU.

Is Cameron really serious? well he

pretends to understand the public disquiet but is adamant that the UK should stay in the single market and reading between the lines even if he cannot repatriate powers he will still campaign for the UK to remain in the EU. The question then arises is this simply a way to keep quiet the eurosceptic side of his Party and to trick eurosceptic voters in general, especially supporters of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) into voting for the Conservatives at the next election just to get the Conservative Party re-elected in 2015.

The future for UK exports and by definition jobs, is not through an EU single market which restricts and increases the costs of exporting to the rest of the world, especially as most of our exports are in fact outside the EU (55%). Furthermore, UK exports outside the EU are growing while those in the EU are shrinking and the UK balance of trade with the EU creates a net loss while the trade with the rest of the world creates a profit.

Nigel Farage leader of UKIP said the speech is an attempt by Cameron to "get UKIP off his back", and that "If Mr Cameron was really serious about renegotiation, then he would invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which is the only mechanism that exists within the treaties to take powers back".

Meanwhile, the usual Pro-EU politicians Kenneth Clarke and Peter Mandelson have launched a new group that supports EU membership. The group called "British Influence" which as one would expect has received full publicity from the BBC.

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EU Court of Auditors Report

Extract from the 2012 annual report by Marta Andreason MEP

The annual report of the European Court of Auditors for the year 2011 which shows an error rate (irregularity, including fraud) of 3.9 per cent. This meant that for the 18th year in a row they could not give the accounts a clean bill of health.

Alarming in the policy areas of Rural Development, Regional Funding and Research, the frequency of error - the number of irregular transactions appearing in the auditors' sample - is around or in excess of 50 per cent.

Research, the EU's political baby was worst affected, followed by Agriculture, which forms the largest portion of the budget. And yet the European Institutions want even more money for 2013. This continuing failure of financial management should be registering in Downing Street by

now. A whole generation has grown up to voting age without seeing an EU with a clean bill of health.

As a member of the Budgetary Control committee I took the opportunity to question the Agriculture commissioner when he was invited to explain why the "error rate" in his policy area had increased significantly. He told me, staggeringly and somewhat brazenly, that he was not overtly concerned with regularity as long as projects such as roads had been built. He added that most of the "errors" were not fraud and that in any case they "recovered" the money.

How do they "recover" the money? The national government is sent an invoice for the wrongly paid grant. If the money has vanished, this means that the taxpayer in the member state

foots the bill twice!

When I pressed him on this he told me that this was fair as the agricultural subsidies are under "shared management" with the member states.

This is the reality of how the EU treats your money: waste and 'error' are accepted as the way things are. The trouble is that it is something which is perceived as happening in Brussels and it is easier for the government to ignore the problem than tackle the issues head on.

Instead of dealing with the fraud, the European Commission has opened negotiations for 2013 with a demand for an increase of almost 7 per cent in the payments budget for 2013.

Marta Andreason is an MEP for UKIP.

How to save jobs French style

Plans by the car-maker Peugeot Citroen to restructure their company have been suspended by an appeal court in Paris. The ruling followed complaints made by Faurecia, a parts-supply subsidiary.

The reason given was that they had failed to consult some of its employees.

The plans which involve the loss of 8,000 French jobs and the closure of a Paris factory are controversial in

France. However, despite this ruling the company has said it will continue to negotiate cuts with the unions even though the court ruling will delay any implementation of job losses.

Emerging nations' top 100 firms

On the international stage companies from the emerging economies are expanding at a faster rate than the familiar multinational that we are used to.

A new report by the Boston Consulting Group has identified 100 firms it has said are reshaping global

industries and eclipsing traditional multinationals from Europe and the USA.

These 100 firms combined had a better record of growth in jobs and are financial success than most of the New York S&P 500 index.

The report went on to say that most

of these firms are unknown in the West.

This begs the question why so much effort and hope for future economic growth in the west is being targeted at the membership of the EU's single market, thereby ignoring the growing emerging markets of the wider world.

German economy slumps

In 2012 the German economy grew by 0.7 per cent, this is a sharp drop on the previous year, preliminary figures show.

The growth rate in 2011 was 3.0 per cent, the 2012 figure suggests that the

economy contracted sharply in the 4th quarter.

The federal statistics office Destatis said; "In 2012, the German economy proved to be resistant in a difficult economic environment and withstood

the European recession".

Many analysts now think that the German economy will enter recession itself, should that happen the support for the euro and by definition the eurozone area could drop even further.

European Parliament costs soar

Cost of European Parliament soars to £1.332 billion per year, £838 million more than Westminster (MEPs cost £1.79 million each).

The appallingly high running cost of the European Parliament has been exposed in a written reply to a question put to the Government by independent Labour Peer, Lord Stoddart of Swindon.

The Government was asked for comparative costs between the European Parliament and Westminster. In his response (8th March 2012), Lord Sassoon, Commercial Secretary to the Treasury, confirmed the 2011-12 cost of the European Parliament at £1.332

billion compared with £494 million for Westminster, including both the House of Commons and the Lords.

Lord Stoddart also asked for costs per member to be included in the figures. In 2011-12, MEPs cost a colossal £1.79 million each compared with just £0.59 million per member of the House of Commons. Peers cost a mere £0.13 million.

Lord Stoddart, commenting on the Government's reply said: "These are eye watering figures that make Westminster look like very good value for money. The European Parliament costs £838 million per annum more than the combined cost of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

The Government is constantly on the look-out for ways to save money to reduce the deficit. It should take a serious look at its contribution to the cost of running the European Parliament! This is an institution that does not hold proper debates and whose members cannot even introduce a Private Members Bill. It merely acts as a rubber stamp for the unelected European Commission's legislative proposals. The number of MEPs has risen from 736 to 754, since these figures were produced, so even these huge figures fall short of the real cost!"

These figures are for 2011-2012, it will be interesting to see the latest figures when they become available.

Time to reform the European Parliament?

Derek Stirling

As we can see from the article above the costs of running the European Parliament are to say the least excessive.

Although the costs need to be reduced the real problem with this parliament is that it is only a parliament in name. Maybe the europhiles should make it a real parliament in other words to actually make laws and not just rubber stamp them. To do this requires a radical change;

1. The MEPs on it should represent the views of the country that elected them to office.

2. The current system of groupings in the parliament that make them eligible for further funding should be stopped.

3. All laws should be proposed by the MEPs or the leaders of their country's and discussed thoroughly and

then voted upon with a minimum of each member being allowed to talk for at least 15 minutes if he or she so wished.

4. All the minutes of these discussions and the voting information should be clearly recorded just like the "Hansard" version used in the UK parliament.

5. A clear majority voting system should be used were new laws would require the parliament to have at least 80 per cent of its MEPs present and to be passed by a majority vote of at least 60 per cent of those present before any laws could come into force.

If these rules were adopted by the European Parliament the so-called democratic deficit currently visible in this parliament would be at an end and it could describe itself as a "Democratic Parliament". This way the

electorate would be more focussed on voting in MEPs because the person they elect would be in a position to actually represent their views and aspirations.

The Prime Minister and Presidents of the member states would be able to offer new rules and regulations to the Parliament for the MEPs to scrutinise. This way these leaders would no longer be in a position to make back room deals - which their electorate know nothing about. Furthermore the unelected bureaucrats would be removed completely from the process of governing.

How many of the 27-member states leaders - if these changes were implemented - would be so keen to force their electorate who have had very little say so far, to remain in this new country called the EU?

EU car sales fall

According to the regions's biggest carmakers, in 2012 the level of new car registrations fell in the EU by 8.2 per cent, making this the lowest level since 1995.

The European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, 12.05 million new registrations were recorded across the 27 EU countries in 2012.

Spain, France and Italy had a double digit decline in car sales, while the UK was the only major market to increase growth with levels up 5.3 per cent from 2011.

Au Revoir, Europe

Ian Milne

David Charter is Europe Correspondent of *The Times*. He went to Brussels in 2006, stayed there for five years and is now based in Berlin. In his Introduction, he says: *“as the new European Union takes shape, a British referendum on continued membership seems inevitable”*.

The book starts with an account of how the EU began and how it has developed until now. He quotes Britain’s first post-war Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, dismissing the “so-called Common Market of six nations” by declaring *“Know them all well. Very recently this country spent a great deal of blood and treasure rescuing four of ‘em from attacks by the other two”*. Describing the EU’s incessant self-aggrandisement, the author remarks that it was not the Brits but the voters in two founding member-states, France and the Netherlands, who decided in 2005 that *“they needed a grand constitution, well, like a fish needs a bicycle. The EU could not rest and found a fresh policy mission – combating climate change. Emissions targets were seized upon in Brussels as a galvanising force with which Europe could discover its purpose in a new century and lead the world out of carbon darkness and into the renewable light”*.

Britain, says Charter, *“has been distancing itself from the core activity of the EU ever since the single currency was devised and now finds itself, I believe, in the process of leaving a European project that it never firmly embraced”*. He quotes a senior UK civil servant as saying: *“If you ask British negotiators in Brussels what is the single most frequent question they will pass to their colleagues in London, it is ‘can we live with this?’ Not ‘do we like it?’ or ‘is it any good?’*. We Brits never bought into the European ideal: we just (so far) put up with it.

***Au Revoir, Europe:
What if Britain left the EU?***

by David Charter

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Charter asserts that *“Britain’s Europhiles have been defeated.....they have failed to make the argument for ‘ever closer union’; they have failed to prevent an overbearing bureaucracy from giving Brussels a bad name; they have failed to win popular approval for the EU, or win the argument for its ultimate goals – philosophically, economically or politically; they have failed to follow the dream of Europe’s founding fathers with a convincing vision for the future...For Britain’s pro-Europeans, only the scale of their defeat remains to be settled”*.

Chapters 1: “Sovereignty Shared”, 2: “Towards a Referendum”, and 3: “The Balance Sheet” are eminently fair summaries of the last 60 years of British engagement with “Europe”, including the endless duplicity which has infected all Westminster political parties during that time.

Chapter 4: “Direction of Travel”, describes the absolute determination of not just the leaders of Germany and France but of many smaller Eurozone states as well to go through to the bitter end: of a fully-fledged unitary state called “Europe” with an army, an intelligence service, a single treasury, a single seat at the United Nations and single everything else. Tomorrow’s EU will be radically different from today’s, with or without the UK.

Chapter 5: “Repatriation” is a thorough balanced account of what the

word means to elements in the Conservative Party on the one hand, and to everyone else in Berlin, Paris, Brussels and the other Eurozone capitals on the other hand. The author, like this reviewer, predicts *“the likely failure of an extensive reorganisation”* (in other words ‘repatriation’) *“[which will] trigger even greater disillusionment with the European project and confirm the grounds for divorce between London and Brussels. The country will then be faced with repatriation on an altogether different scale – a wholesale reordering of our relationship with the EU”*.

Chapter 6: “Another Way?” discusses some of the alternatives to full EU membership, including the now-familiar Swiss, Norwegian and Turkish options. Charter points out that Brussels is “cutting up rough” with the Swiss *“to make the whole bilateral free-trading partnership paradigm a lot less attractive to any potential takers. Who could they have in mind?”* Charter also notes that *“quitting as a full [EU] member but staying inside its customs union would severely curtail one of the biggest supposed advantages of leaving in the first place – the unfettered ability to strike new trade deals around the world”*. It is for this reason, says Charter, that UKIP (and this reviewer) *“advocate a complete break from all forms of associate membership of EU systems”*.

Chapter 7: “Old Friends”, examines UKIP’s position: post-withdrawal, of re-orienting British trade to the Commonwealth, a grouping that, in the words of Nigel Farage, which Charter quotes, *“represents a third of the population of the globe, where they speak English, have common law, are our real friends...”*. Charter also examines in some detail the idea that, outside the EU, the UK should consider joining NAFTA (the free trade arrangement presently involving the

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Au Revoir, Europe

Continued from page 4

USA, Canada and Mexico). Meanwhile, the European Commission itself has noticed that, in its own words: “By 2015, 90 per cent of economic growth will be generated outside Europe, with one third alone in China”, and is busy signing trade deals with ever more non-EU countries (Singapore being the latest). None of the possible post-withdrawal partnerships Charter moots for the UK in this chapter would be trouble-free, but a million miles better than being a colony of Brussels.

Chapter 9: “Independent Britain”, looks at how the UK would fare outside the EU under a number of headings: Jobs, Climate Change and Energy, Investment, Financial Services, Transport, Farming, Immigration, Fishing, Education and finally Peace. Admirably even-handed,

Charter examines the pros and cons of being “Out”, concluding that there are a few good things that the EU has made happen: low-cost air fares for example, that it would be desirable to retain. Each of the areas he considers is complicated and “difficult”; post-exit negotiations will obviously not be a bed of roses; but nothing that determination and effort cannot overcome.

The final chapter is titled “Looking Back”. Charter asks us to imagine what life will be like for us Brits outside the EU in 2023, a year when Romeo Beckham has been chosen for the England football team, the UK has just applied to join NAFTA, and Boris Johnson is still PM. Outside the EU, he suggests, the UK will still be closely involved in many areas with the new fully-federal Europe over the water:

there will have been messy compromises, and the UK will have had to accept still making some financial contribution (like Norway and Switzerland today) to Brussels. “The situation that Britain will have ended up with outside the EU,” suggests Charter, “will be curiously like that created for the Channel Islands in 1972 ahead of UK accession – participation in the single market for goods but not directly for services.... But, in an era of slow but inexorable decline for Europe in global economic terms, the divorced partners recognised that they still needed each other....the familiar pattern of frequent arguments, muddles and joint initiatives that has always marked Britain’s relationship with the continent continued unabated. It was not adieu. It was au revoir, Europe.”

EU budget trickery

Following the EU budget negotiations for 2013 that Cameron and other heads of government were involved with, the European Commission announced that it was short of funds for the 2012 budget. It asked for and received a

supplementary budget, this amounted to €9 billion to cover the shortfall, the British taxpayers’ share of this was approximately €1 billion euros.

So what is the point of these budget negotiations if at the end of the year the Commission can just ask for and

receive further funds to cover excess spending to the agreed budget expenditure?

The answer is simple, it makes politicians able to pretend to their electorate that they have power over the EU budget.

American pressure

The USA clearly do not understand how the EU actually works.

The US EU affairs secretary, Philip Gordon, said “We have a growing relationship with the EU which has

an increasing voice in the world, and we want to see a strong British voice in that EU”.

As a member of the EU the British voice is irrelevant as it only accounts for 12 per cent of the voice of the EU

and that will diminish as the EU tries to expand.

If the US expects the EU to be a force for good in the world then it had better look again at its foreign policy, as the EU is a budding EUSSR.

Icelandic bank compensation ruling

The Icelandic government has been cleared by a European Court of failing to guarantee minimum levels of compensation for savers in the collapsed Icesave bank, mainly UK and Dutch savers will be affected by this ruling.

In 2008, the Icesave bank run by the Icelandic Landsbanki, collapsed alongside all of the banking system of Iceland. This resulted in the governments of both the Dutch and UK savers being bailed out by their own governments.

The UK government has been trying to get back from Iceland’s government all of the money it paid out to the UK savers in an act of good faith. This ruling may well prevent this from happening at a cost of £2.2 billion to the UK taxpayers.

LETTERS

Tel: 08456 120 175 email: eurofacts@junepress.com

UK parliament discusses Gay marriage

Dear Sir,

It is good to see that our politicians are much more interested in the rights of those who wish same sex marriage, than the economy.

How can anybody take seriously politicians who devote so much time to discussing and voting on small issues while the national economy is in such a mess?

Why not discuss how to create more jobs, recover tax from those companies that are using tax loopholes or even what powers should the UK try and repatriate from the EU!

However, there will be an upside for families that wish to avoid inheritance tax by marrying younger members of their family simply to pass on their wealth untaxed.

SALLY BARTON
Northumberland

Political trust

Dear Sir,

For a long time now we have been told by Chris Huhne, a former Lib-Dem minister that he was innocent of the charge of speeding. He has now dropped this suggestion, why did it take him a number of years to come to this conclusion?

The fact that any MP takes so long to decide such an easy question, explains why politicians are held in such low levels of trust by the electorate. How can we trust them on important issues of state if they cannot tell the difference between driving a car and being a passenger? As for Nick Clegg, his judgement of people suitable for the position of a minister with all the extra powers and influence that gives them is to be generous just none existent.

Chris Huhne's decision to resign as an MP is admirable but rather late in the day. The resulting by-election in Eastleigh Hampshire (28th February)

will at least give the constituents of that area the chance to elect another MP of what ever party they wish to represent them. However, how can they be sure that the next MP won't behave badly? The sad answer is that they just cannot.

PETER SMYTH
Bristol

Scare stories

Dear Sir,

The General Public from Branson downwards believe; (1) That 50% of UK trade is with the EU and (2) Much of that could be lost.

This scares and influences them.

It is essential to (1) expose this inaccuracy of the 50% claim and (2) assure people that trade with Europe would be secure irrespective of UK/EU relations.

LORD KILCLOONEY
House of Lords

EU officials want financial immunity

Dear Sir,

On Tuesday 5th February a strike by EU officials over pay shows just how out of touch they are.

The reason for their strike is that a number of countries including Germany, the Netherlands and the UK - want deeper cuts in EU officials' pay to fit in with national austerity programmes.

What did the trade unions say? That if the reductions go through "[EU] institutions would no longer be able to perform their tasks of designing, drawing up and implementing future policies".

Furthermore, EU commission spokesman Antony Gravili on Monday 4th February said; if you count Merkel's perks, such as her Bundestag diet or special Christmas vacation pay, she pockets about €25,000 a month. "Not one EU official, including all their allowances, gets more than

Chancellor Merkel, including all her allowances," he noted. This was because of an article in the German newspaper *Die Welt* on Sunday 3rd February that said "thousands" of senior EU officials who earn a basic salary of €18,370 a month get more than German Chancellor Angela Merkel (€16,359).

However, EU officials also get perks, such as a 16 per cent "expat allowance" and around €1,000 a month for private school fees for each child.

The real sadness is that while member states are freezing or cutting the salary of their electorate, the EU officials with the help of their trade unions, consider they should be paid on a par with world democratically elected leaders and should be unaffected by the plight of the EU citizens. Furthermore it may be a good thing if the institutions of the EU would no longer be able to "perform their tasks of designing, drawing up and implementing future policies" and allow the member states to control their own futures.

SIMON DAVIDSON
London

Referendum games

Dear Sir,

Here we go again, promises of an EU referendum, but not now and only after another election. It is always the same when you mention the EU that politicians play games with the electorate. This same electorate that has to pay the true costs of EU membership in the extra costs of food and the membership fee. Added to this is the extra costs on industry caused by the regulations and directives that are forced upon the UK by the EU.

The UK exports world-wide are also subjected to these same conditions, these reduce the competitiveness and add to the costs of UK exports.

DAVID RICHARDS
Oxford

MEETINGS

Bruges Group
020 7287 4414

Wednesday **27th February**, 7.00 pm

Terry Smith, *Chief Executive Officer of a major City of London business*

PUBLIC MEETING

Committee Room 10, The House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA

Admission Free

Gresham College
020 7831 0575

Thursday **28th February**, 6.00 pm

"Will there be a shortage of spending power?"

Douglas McWilliams, *Mercers' School Memorial Professor of Commerce at Gresham College*

PUBLIC MEETING

Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn, London EC1N 2HH

Admission Free

Gresham College
020 7831 0575

Tuesday **12th March**, 6.00 pm

"Enoch Powell and the sovereignty of parliament"

Vernon Bogdanor CBE FBA, *Emeritus Gresham Professor of Law*

PUBLIC MEETING

Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2

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PUBLIC MEETING

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Gresham College
020 7831 0575

Tuesday **16th April**, 6.00 pm

"Tony Benn and the idea of participation"

Vernon Bogdanor CBE FBA, *Emeritus Gresham Professor of Law*

PUBLIC MEETING

Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2

Admission Free

DIARY OF EVENTS

2013

UK Parliament Recess Begins **26th March**

UK Parliament Recess Ends **15th April**

Lithuania takes over EU Council Presidency **1st July**

2014

Greece takes over EU Council Presidency **1st January**

Italy takes over EU Council Presidency **1st July**

2015

Latvia takes over EU Council Presidency **1st January**

USEFUL WEB SITES

British Declaration of Independence

www.bdicampaign.org

British Gazette

www.britishgazette.co.uk

British Weights & Measures Assoc.

www.bwmaOnline.com

Bruges Group

www.brugesgroup.com

Campaign Against Euro-Federalism

www.caef.org.uk

Campaign for an Independent Britain

www.freebritain.org

Democracy Movement

www.democracymovement.org.uk

EU Observer

www.euobserver.com

EU Truth

www.eutruth.org.uk

European Commission (London)

www.cec.org.uk

European Foundation

www.europeanfoundation.org

European No Campaign

www.europeannocampaign.com

EU Referendum Campaign

www.eureferendumcampaign.com

Freedom Association

www.tfa.net

Global Britain

www.globalbritain.org

Global Vision

www.global-vision.net

June Press (Publications)

www.junepress.com

Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign

www.lesc.org.uk

New Alliance

www.newalliance.org.uk

Open Europe

www.openeurope.org.uk

Regional Assemblies

www.regionalassemblies.co.uk

Sovereignty

www.sovereignty.org.uk

Statewatch

www.statewatch.org

Team

www.teameurope.info

The EU Referendum Pledge

www.eupledge.com

The People's Pledge

www.peoplespledge.org

The Taxpayers' Alliance

www.taxpayersalliance.com

United Kingdom Independence Party

www.ukip.org

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