

A Manifesto for Britain

Leading, Not Leaving, Europe

Forging a British Vision for the EU

ResPublica & British Influence

Britain has always been a great European power. Using that position, it has stood still higher to become a world power, wielding influence hard and soft to make Britain great, not just for herself, but for the world. But in an act of wanton self-harm Brexit threatens to relegate the United Kingdom from a first to a third order nation. Historically, British influence derived from ensuring that no one power dominated Europe, so that Britain could, with Europe secure, expand its values, institutions and trade across the world. With Brexit, we deny our own legacy and undermine European stability across the entire continent. With Brexit we will destroy the platform on which Britain can maintain and increase its global influence in the 21st century and with Brexit we will undermine the present and future foundations of British prosperity.

To secure our present and guarantee our future, Britain must remain within Europe but for the good of all within the British nation, and all Europeans, we must continue to shape Europe according to British values, practices and vision. In the middle of a destructive negative campaign, we must strike the high notes and craft project hope: a positive compelling vision of British leadership in the European Union.

But hope must be built on firm foundations, we must confront what has gone wrong in order to do right. In light of the uneven benefits of globalisation and market liberalisation and the reality of mass immigration, what we urgently need is a Europe that protects its people while eschewing protectionism. Europe has so far failed to mitigate the worst effects of globalisation, too many across the continent and in the UK face economic stagnation or worse, and too many feel forgotten and culturally repudiated. In consequence a populist and nationalist revulsion threatens to overturn the European Union, an institution that has bequeathed us all both stability and prosperity.

The fatal conflation was that of the common currency with European union. Europe's promise was that its constituent nations could flourish and prosper under a shared cultural and economic aegis and the Euro would deliver on both. But it hasn't, and the current drive for a unitary European state, imposed as a remedy for the ongoing crisis of the common currency, commands no common democratic consent, and risks deep political fracture in many European nations. We believe Britain is uniquely placed to play a leading role in forging an alternate vision that maintains the distinction between EU and Euro membership and that establishes not a single core unhappily dominated by Germany but a dual core of Euro and non-Euro members that delivers on, and speaks to, European democracy, prosperity and security. With Britain prospering outside of both Schengen and the Euro, there is a golden opportunity for Britain to lead and save Europe from itself by suggesting that its position is one that may serve others just as well. Positioning ourselves as the allies of the south and a friend of the new accession nations in the East (after all it was Mrs Thatcher who urged the EU to open itself up to those countries liberated from the Soviet Union) Britain is well placed to once more lead Europe.

The EU Referendum debate has been dominated by negative arguments about costs of staying in or the price of leaving. Without a positive British case to remain, our EU membership is dangerously at risk; and without a long-term British reimagining of the EU, a vote for the status quo will not end the underlying Euroscepticism that holds Britain back on the international stage. What is urgently required is a positive case to remain that describes a new vision for Britain in the EU and crucially a new path for the continent itself.

We therefore propose:



that Britain decides to lead in the European Union. Britain has for many centuries made multiple sacrifices to ensure that Europe lives under freedom, democracy and the rule of law. Britain must restore a visionary dynamic approach to Europe in matters military, diplomatic and commercial, driven by our values and those of our allies. There must be an end to sullen recalcitrant membership and dull irrelevant drift.

This Manifesto sets out a positive case for Britain's membership of the EU. It outlines 14 policies that will help the UK to flourish within a new, British-led Europe.

Security

We propose:

The West extends from America to Europe and Britain is its bridging link. As such it is vital that Britain projects and magnifies its values of peace, security and civility through America, the Commonwealth and the European Union

Europe is threatened on both its Eastern and Southern border. An increasingly dangerous and emboldened Russia has exposed the pitiful conventional defences of many allies. A lethal form of Islamism risks taking hold across a broad swathe of North Africa and the Middle East, causing vast migrant flows and enormous regional instability and domestic terrorist incidents on an unprecedented scale. NATO is ill-equipped to deal with threats below a conventional 'total war' situation, Europe is highly vulnerable to asymmetric threats and at present lacks the capacity to confront them. Europe faces a large security gap which must be filled. The only organisation with the potential cohesiveness and institutional credibility and convening power to counter these continental wide threats is the European Union. But the EU lacks military acumen and leadership.

As the leading military power within the EU, Britain is best placed to help develop a coherent EU military policy that seeks to shape the world rather than merely react to it. To do this, the UK must embrace this responsibility and view itself as orchestrating and encouraging a European wide defence and security upgrade. Specifically, Britain should argue for the following:

1. **Enshrining in EU law a defence spending target:** For decades now NATO has encouraged its European members to make good their commitments to spend 2% of GDP on defence. As the UK is one of only 4 EU members to meet this target, and given the rising threat of terrorism and pariah states, WE PROPOSE to enshrine this 2% commitment on defence spending in EU law. Such an increase together with ensuring the principle of interoperability applies, would go a long way to improving security in Europe. It would require member states to increase military expenditure. It would also be a more appropriate, nation-led alternative to the concept of a 'European Army'.

2. Deploy British troops on Europe's Eastern border: Since the start of the Cold War, British troops have been stationed in Germany. The original aim of this deployment was to ward off the threat of an expansionist Soviet Russia, but as recent actions in Ukraine and Crimea have demonstrated, the threat from the East has increased not diminished. While these troops are due to return to the UK by 2020, the 20th Armoured Brigade is still stationed in Germany. Given the rising threat from Russia, WE PROPOSE that this brigade be stationed in Eastern Europe, most probably in Poland, to send a strong message of solidarity to our EU partners. This would not replace the rotating battalion Britain has recently committed to providing on an ad hoc basis to the region, but would instead represent a more permanent and meaningful contribution to ensuring European security.

3. Establish new Charter Cities in the Middle East and North Africa to support refugees: Since the onset of the Syrian and Libyan conflicts, over three million people have been displaced. Many of these refugees have made their way to Europe, which has had fatal consequences for too many of those who make the journey and has created huge economic and cultural anxiety in host nations. An ideal solution to this mass movement of peoples would be to contain and diminish the region's instability. WE PROPOSE founding new 'Charter Cities' in the more stable countries in the wider conflict areas to provide 'safe zones' that are not refugee camps but transformative places for escaping families. These new cities could help to resettle families in neighbouring countries without the need for mass migration to Europe. These cities should have preferential trading rights with the European Union and be the recipient of multiple educational and training opportunities. The EU is clearly the perfect body to co-ordinate, fund and oversee such initiatives.

4. Fund Rescue Centres for orphaned children escaping war zones: UNICEF currently estimates that at least two million children have been displaced due to the Syrian and Libyan conflicts, and 95,000 orphaned children have applied for asylum in Europe since last year. David Cameron recently and rightly announced that Britain will do its part on supporting these vulnerable children by taking in 3,000 unaccompanied children. But given the vast numbers still requiring asylum, Britain and Europe needs to do far more. Rather than ask these children to undertake a perilous journey to Europe or abandon them to their fate, WE PROPOSE that the EU should establish Rescue Centres in refugee and reception camps to relocate vulnerable children from conflict zones, or migrant centres to Europe and set up a pan-European adoption agency to house, shelter and nurture them.

Prosperity

We propose:

that Britain reforms the European Union to ensure that the European economy becomes more flexible, outward looking and globally competitive, that it is more active in negotiating international trade deals, and that its spending priorities are better aligned with the needs of the 21st century. Given British leadership there can be an end to economic and political stagnation

The economic case for remaining in the EU is clear: 3 million jobs are linked to trade with the EU; our universities, banks and manufacturers rely heavily on EU markets and draw much of Europe's best talent to our shores; and our close economic ties with the EU are worth an average of £3,000 to each household in Britain.

Yet, while there are clear benefits to membership, significant costs are also accrued from centrally imposed regulations and wasteful, bureaucratic institutions. Added to this, intra-EU migration has its own socioeconomic cost. A new settlement for EU needs to be devised that both respects the principle of subsidiarity and mitigates the effects of wide spread worker migration.

1. Complete the Single Market: Sometimes the most obvious policy is the best policy. Some 80 per cent of the British economy is in services. Britain has persuaded all EU member states to create more jobs and growth through completing the single market. WE PROPOSE that the Business Secretary leads on the opening up of the energy, financial services, capital, digital, transport and general services markets. EU countries import services equivalent to 32% of all world trade in services: this is a more valuable market than the US which imports only 10% of world trade in services. Since services provide 79% of all UK exports completing the single market in services alone would be enormous gain to British GDP.

2. Reduce the EU regulatory burden on British businesses: The British government operates a 'one-in, two-out' rule for business regulations. This states that, where there is a cost to business from complying with new regulations, the Government must reduce the overall cost of regulation by £2 for every £1 imposed. Unfortunately, this rule does not apply to EU Regulations and Directives. WE PROPOSE that this rule should now be extended to non-UK engendered regulation and the Government should lobby to have such a rule introduced across the EU, which would reduce the overall costs of doing business in the continent and get the bureaucracy to help tame the bureaucracy.

3. Permit groups of nations within the EU to draft multilateral trade deals: One of the great attractions of the EU is its ability to design multilateral trade deals on behalf of all members. TTIP is a good example of how the EU is attempting to do just this with the USA. But the economic needs of member states may not align across all 28 nations. With trade discussions that involve market liberalisation, some nations may want to go beyond the current EU position which can often be one of stagnation and drift as EU wide agreements can be blocked by other nations that oppose international trade. WE PROPOSE Britain should argue that the long established European principle of 'enhanced cooperation' be also applied to trade deals such that if a required number of nations be found that want to proceed more quickly to trade agreements they can.

4. Initiate a root and branch review of European Competition policy and ask if it is fit for purpose against new standards. In the meantime, strengthen European Competition policy by introducing a time limit of one year on abuse of market dominance cases. World competition policy has gone to sleep and is increasingly incapable of recognising and combating the new, especially tech driven, forms of monopoly and market dominance that now constrain much innovation and inhibit the wider forms of ownership that all proper democracies should seek. European competition policy has forgotten its roots and now focuses reductively on consumer welfare, unfortunately just focusing on price creates a pro-monopoly environment where market dominance and going to scale can be used to justify monopolistic outcomes by cheap prices. We need an analysis of total not just consumer welfare, the recognition that competition law needs to promote production as well as consumption, that innovation and plurality of provision should be central and that distributional effects (who benefits from market dominance or merger) should also be added to the new asks of competition policy. A good place to start would be in market dominance cases where adjudication and judgement can take years, as with Google for instance. Mergers under EU law are normally decided upon in six months, we see no good reason that market dominance cases should not have a limit of one year for decision. Justice delayed is justice denied and for too long competition law has been the monopolists' friend. At a European level this must now cease.

5. Introduce an EU Education Passport based on an Erasmus Plus vision to boost skills and productivity via European exchange: The Government has rightly made it a priority to close Britain's 'productivity gap'. Part of the answer is investing in our people, enhancing their skills and training and pushing British workers higher up the value chain. Our European neighbours excel in multiple fields and we need to learn from them and bring their skills home. The current Erasmus scheme run by British and European Universities is hugely successful with participants 50% less likely to be unemployed than non-participants. WE PROPOSE a massive breadth and depth expansion of this programme to an 'Erasmus Plus' offer for our people, including a broadening to vocational and non-academic specialist training and apprenticeships and a deepening of the Erasmus programme to include lifelong learning and those taking postgraduate degrees. Such a scheme would open the benefits of a European education to all.

6. Utilise EU funds to build UK homes for European workers: A core element of the EU's founding Treaty is the free movement of workers. Of the 28 member states, the UK is second to only Germany in the number of EU workers it takes in every year, at 268,000. Yet, such large scale migration puts a real strain on host countries. WE PROPOSE that EU structural funds be redirected to help member states cover the cost of housing these EU workers where there is a significant and long term impact on housing prices and demand as there is in the UK. This would obviously help Britain where we still struggle to build enough homes. Using EU funds in this way would, by reducing the burden of EU workers on housing, also ensure that citizens of the host nations are more receptive to EU immigration, since EU migrants would now bring with them funding to help build homes in the UK.

Society

We propose:

that equal importance be given to society as well as the economy in European affairs. In pursuing the goal of integration Europe has stressed economics and largely ignored society and culture. It is little surprise then that the efforts to unify Europe economically are now being culturally resisted across multiple axes. The EU is not simply about business it is also about principles and the foundational role of Western values in what we say and do.

The EU is not just a single market. It plays a vital role in protecting and promoting our shared values such as freedom of speech, respect for human dignity, sexual equality, the rule of law and respect for democracy – crucially, it does so in a complex and increasingly dangerous world, where these values are routinely ignored or despised.

However, despite these common bonds, the EU is often seen as a distant organisation by those it seeks to govern. In Britain this in part is due to successive UK governments failing to prioritise European affairs as central to British interests. But it is also in part due to the distance between EU institutions and communities in the UK. More needs to be done to both prioritise the EU as an issue of national importance and to democratise EU institutions.

1. Create a Secretary of State for European Affairs: With many British laws made in Brussels, and much of our foreign policy co-ordinated at the EU-level, the importance of the European Union to the domestic and international affairs of the UK is steadily increasing. In order to grant the EU greater importance and status in UK policy making, WE PROPOSE that a Secretary of State role be created to represent these interests at the highest levels of government. Such a role would not require a new department, but would ensure that a representative of government responsible for European affairs attends cabinet and can help to create a cross-departmental pro-active government response to European policy development.

2. Grant Parliament control of EU negotiations and treaty deals: Too often, the terms of EU treaties or trade deals are decided behind closed doors. Both Houses of Parliament possess select committees to scrutinise the EU in a reactive fashion, but there is little involvement of Parliament in the initial stages of negotiations, as happens in Denmark. Under the Danish Model, prior to EU negotiations, the Government must outline its proposed negotiating position to the Committee. If there is a majority on the Committee against this position, the Government is required to change direction. WE PROPOSE this model be adopted in the UK, and indeed across the whole EU, where it would promote subsidiarity and empower national parliaments.

3. Make secondment to the EU mandatory for all Civil Service Fast Streamers: The UK has perhaps the world's most prestigious public servant training scheme in the form of the Civil Service Fast Stream. But while this scheme enables Whitehall to attract the best and brightest, there are currently few opportunities for those on these schemes to gain experience at the EU level. Given that the UK is under-represented in EU institutions, such a lack of opportunity is unfortunate. To ensure that Britain is better represented in Brussels, and to ensure that our civil servants possess experience at the EU, WE PROPOSE the Fast Stream should require its applicants spend a significant amount of time on secondment to the EU.

4. Build a direct and local constituency link for MEPs: A criticism often levelled at MEPs is that they are detached from their constituents. They are mostly based in the European Parliament and preside over constituencies that are far too large to be considered 'local'. In order to strengthen the bond between MEPs and their constituents, and to increase the power of localities against the centre, WE PROPOSE MEPs should each have a smaller and specific constituency that they alone represent – as MPs currently do. As it stands, MEPs collectively represent large regions comprising dozens of parliamentary constituencies, dividing these regions into smaller units would both boost local democracy and empower communities.