

THE EUROPEAN UNION

WRONG IN PRINCIPLE! WRONG IN PRACTICE!

WRONG IN PRINCIPLE...

The European Union (EU) is a new nation, emerging from the former trade based European Economic Community (EEC). This change is a political dream that is a move in the wrong direction. Across the world the obstacles to global trade, travel and communications are being removed. National boundaries are being relaxed. In this era of cheap international travel and global trade and communications we should become more 'international' rather than introduce a new set of borders and a new nationalism.

WRONG IN PRACTICE...

Even if it was desirable to create a new European state the model used for the EU is entirely wrong. It is an undemocratic bureaucracy, more akin to the old Soviet Union than a modern democracy.

The EU is a politician's dream. Emotionally the EU can sound a good idea. Due to this fact arguments in its favour can be put quickly. For example, the 'working together for a common future' type of message sounds snappy and positive. The opposing arguments are mostly logical and of the 'well it calls itself a parliament but it isn't really a parliament because nobody needs to take any notice of it and ...' variety which are difficult to get across quickly. However, if the facts are exposed the logic of the arguments against the EU are overwhelming. What follows are a few of these facts...

The EU is a bureaucratic nightmare. A major feature of the EU is that it attempts to regulate everything. The tide of red tape that has engulfed Europe is well documented. EU legislation affects every aspect of its citizens' lives. Currently over 27,000 EU 'Directives' exist and as an example there is one in particular that regulates the Export of Duck Eggs and is itself 27,000 words long!

UK trade is not dependent on the EU. Fans of the EU often claim that 'the UK does more trade with the EU than the rest of the world'. As with many statistics this figure is not what it seems. The first thing is that 80% of the UK's economic activity is internal – only 20% deals with exports and imports. Secondly the figure quoted above is for 'visible' trade (manufactured goods etc.) - it ignores 'invisible' trade (City of London financial services etc.). If you add in the invisible trade then 20% of overseas trade averages out, over the years, as 9% with the EU and 11% with the rest of the world.

The story does not end there however. This 9% includes container trade going to the port of Rotterdam and most of this trade is on route on out of the EU to the rest of the world. The result is that the actual figure for the UK's trade with the EU is about 6.5%. Finally, over the last ten years, this 6.5% of UK trade has resulted a £150 billion deficit with the EU.

The upshot of this is that the UK (a) pays £11 billion a year (£1.3 million an hour) for membership of the EU (enough to build 110 new hospitals each year), (b) has had its economy hamstrung by EU red-tape and (c) is now handing over its sovereignty in the name of political union - all for the sake of 6.5% of its economic activity which is completely unprofitable!

This also explains why the UK would not suffer economically if it pulled out of the EU. Any trade sanctions the EU imposed would cost the continental countries far more than they would cost the UK as the continentals profit more from the trade than we do.

EU membership costs the UK 500 new hospitals a year. The Institute of Directors issued a detailed 50 page report in 2000 on the costs of the UK's membership of the EU entitled 'EU Membership - What's the bottom line?'. This report concluded that the net cost of the UK's membership of the EU is a minimum of 1.75 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product or £15 billion per year. Even the Single Market (which Gordon Brown and Tony Blair claim is responsible for ten of thousands of jobs) comes out neutral in effect - its benefits are outweighed by the costs of its rules and regulations. This is only the middle position however. If you compare the current situation with that of the UK if it withdrew from the EU, the report calculates that this cost is in fact about £25 billion or 3% GDP because, among other things, there wouldn't be the cost of enforcing all the other EU laws and red tape. Looking the other way. If the UK went on to participate in the Euro single currency then the cost to the UK goes up to more than £50 billion or 6% of our GDP.

These numbers are colossal and are a conservative estimate. To put this into perspective £50 billion is one and a quarter times the entire annual NHS and Social Services budget. £50 billion would allow the UK to abolish VAT altogether or build five hundred new NHS hospitals a year.

In 2004 the think tank Civitas (www.civitas.org.uk) came to roughly the same conclusion putting the annual cost of the EU to the UK at £40 billion.

The EU is not democratic. In a democratic country the power of government is spilt between those who draft the laws (the 'executive'), those who approve the laws (the 'legislature') and those who ensure that people abide by the laws (the 'judiciary'). These three elements act as checks and balances against each other. In the EU this is not the case. The executive (the Commission) is all powerful, the legislature (the Council of Ministers and European Parliament) is a toothless rubber stamping body and the judiciary (the European Court of Justice) is a political, policy making arm, of the executive. It 'fills in the gaps' in the laws as well as enforces them. In theory the Council of Ministers is the supreme body in the EU but in practice the real decisions are made before the Council meets by an international body of EU civil servants (called 'COPEREPE'). Legislation proposed by COPEREPE is then 'nodded' through in a meeting of the Council of Ministers that usually lasts for a few hours.

It's not a Parliament! The European Parliament (EP) is made up of members elected by constituencies in each member nation. It is intended to promote the illusion that the peoples of Europe are directly represented and the EU is democratic. However, the EP is really a parliament in name only; most of its decisions are 'advisory' and are then ignored!

The EU does not provide grants. Whenever money is granted by the EU to projects in the UK no mention is ever made of the fact that this money originates from UK contributions in the first place. Proportionally the UK only gets back about £3 for every £5 of the £11 billion or so that we pay to the EU every year.

The EU has destroyed the UK's fishing industry. The EU's common fisheries policy must be the classic example of the failings of the EU type of bureaucratic government. Apart from the fact that it is completely unfair from our point of view (Britain provides 70%-80% of the fishing waters, but gets less than 10% of the fish quota, in monetary terms), it is also an ecological disaster.

SAY 'NO' TO EURO NATIONALISM - SAY 'YES' TO A GLOBAL FUTURE!

Fish Quotas were ostensibly invented to conserve fish by restricting the number of each species a fisherman could catch. Unfortunately, fisherman cannot tell what type of fish they have caught until they are brought up in the net, by which time the fish are usually dead. So the reality is that millions upon millions of dead fish are thrown back to pollute the seas.

'In the North Sea discards of haddock may exceed what is retained from a single trawl; the global estimate for 1985 was 460 million discarded individuals, whereas landings amounted to 500 million. In the Bay of Biscay/Celtic Sea discards of hake were estimated at 130 million individuals, for a landing figure of 110 million'

(European Commission, mid-term CFP Review, 1991)

Years after this report was published EU fishermen still have to throw back fish caught that are *the wrong type*.

The EU will become a police state. The European Union is pressing ahead with proposals for a common European Union legal system known as "Corpus Juris". This will dramatically alter the principles under which our legal system operates. Age old principles that were enshrined in the Magna Carta in 1215 will be swept away. The accused will not be assumed innocent until proven guilty, there will be no trial by jury, no right to silence, no Habeas Corpus, and no more will the prisoner's ordeal be limited to the one trial. The EU Public Prosecutor will be empowered to retry the accused again and again for the same offence. Combine this with the EU legal opinion that 'criticism of the EU, its institutions or its leading figures' was akin to blasphemy and could therefore be legally punished (issued by the advocate-general of the European Court of Justice, in case C-274/99) and the fact that members of the new EU police organisation, Europol, have been granted lifetime immunity from prosecution (they are literally above the law) and we have nothing less than the foundations for a police state. The human rights group Statewatch (<http://www.statewatch.org/>) has described the EU's moves in this area as a 'war on freedom and democracy'.

The EU is not a Free Trade Zone. The EU is now the most heavily regulated market in the world. Far from just sweeping away national restrictions the EU has implemented, by its own admission, thousands of its own directives (these are 'high level' diktats) and associated legislation. These tie up European businesses in red tape and impose heavy costs that make them uncompetitive in the world markets.

The UK has different Trading patterns from the rest of the EU. The UK does, on average, just over 50% of its business with the world outside the EU. The continental countries trade mainly with each other. The UK is a major oil producer and its economy is therefore affected by the price of oil. The continental countries are not major oil producers. The City of London is a major world finance centre with no equivalent on the continent. The UK's method of debt finance, in particular the use of building society mortgages for house purchase, is radically different to the continental countries. All these and other factors mean that the UK is always out of step economically. Membership of the Euro or harmonisation of business regulations, taxation etc. will therefore always bring the UK in line with the continent and not the other way round, damaging the UK's businesses in the process. A recent example of this is the UK Art Auctions market which is now in decline as a result of a new regulation which has driven the business outside the EU.

EU 'Big' government kills 'small' businesses. The EU likes to pretend that it consults businesses in the relevant sectors before

introducing legislation. Unfortunately this usually means that it listens to the representatives of organised big business and not to the views of the less well organised small businesses. The ensuing legislation therefore hits small businesses harder than big ones. For example, the legislation concerning the standards for abattoirs was as a result of consultation with the Federation of Fresh Meat Wholesalers, representatives of the large industrial abattoir companies. As a result the legislation helped the big companies, who wanted to export their goods and could afford the start up costs to apply the new standards to their factories, but bankrupted the small companies. The knock on effect was that this has probably also added to the spread of Foot and Mouth disease as livestock has to be moved further to the fewer, large, abattoirs.

The UK doesn't need the Single Currency. The UK is not currently a member of this new currency and we have been promised a referendum on the issue before any decision to join is made.

The benefits touted for the Euro in the UK are the benefits of reduced trading costs across Europe. The main benefit that is quoted in continental European countries is, however, that the creation of a single currency is the next major step towards political union. The UK government is in fact the only EU government that believes that the Euro will save money. The other member governments believe that it is a necessary price to pay for moving towards a new federal European nation.

One of the benefits of having multiple currencies is that it allows adjustments between economic areas when different rates of growth occur in different areas. If this adjustment does not exist then, for example, interest rates set for one area currently booming may further cripple another area that is in recession. This even happens in an area as small as the UK. Eddie George, when he was the Governor of the Bank of England, once admitted that the Bank was setting the UK's interest rates for the benefit of the South of England where he was concerned about the financial sector, even though this may result in the loss of manufacturing jobs in the North of England.

The EU is a threat to peace and stability. A claim frequently made by supporters of the European Union is that the EU and membership of the EU is a force for stability that will reduce the chance of wars occurring. This ignores two facts.

Firstly it has been NATO, an alliance of independent nations, that has kept the peace since the Second World war. The EU has had no role in this at all.

Secondly the EU is all about defining a new nation and a new national identity for Europe. It is a new nationalism. If you look around the world at the wars under way, most of them are as a result of disputes about national identity (Yugoslavia was a classic case in point). For EU politicians to meddle with what are in the main free, happy and stable western democracies in the name of the dream of 'European Union' is a dangerous insanity.

The EU is undermining our government. The EU has divided up the UK into 'regions'. These regions will have their own government and will be funded from and answerable to Brussels, bypassing our Westminster parliament. As with much EU legislation our government is not keen to advertise its EU origins in case it generates adverse publicity. The first 'regions' were set-up under the title of 'devolution' (i.e. Scotland, London etc.) but 'miraculously' followed the plans drawn up by the EU back in 1996. The 2004 North East referendum exposed this process for the sham it is. The NE conclusively rejected the concept of an elected assembly but we were then told that the regionalistion process would continue regardless.