

## Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter bringing aspects of the current debate on the EU referendum to a wider public view. SECEN supports the need to continue to reform the European Union from within rather than destroy everything that has carefully been constructed since the Second World War for peace, security and prosperity in Europe.

This edition starts with the five points which Dan Hannan MEP published in the local press last month for leaving the EU in which he also invited the electorate to sack him! This piece, contributed by **Richard Ashworth MEP**, substantively answers these points, not least pointing out the real net total amount paid by the UK annually amounts to half the sum suggested by Dan and other Brexiteers..

SECEN Deputy Chairman, **Mark Titterington**, has provided a thought provoking piece in which he sets out in more detail his views from the point of view of the business community on the forthcoming referendum. Despite having every reason for disliking the EU, his commitment to the idea of the European Union has been strengthened in adversity. To that end, he has joined others in calling on the 'leave' campaign to provide a more compelling and detailed vision of what life will be like outside the EU.

Lastly, I have contributed a piece entitled "EU democracy exists but it is not like Westminster". It explains that the EU is based on the principle of shared sovereignty, something to which Michael Gove is implacably opposed. Then rereading the original statement he made when announcing his intention to back Brexit, it struck me that there were a number of points which merited clarification. Many comments leave the impression that he has no idea of how Brussels works or has little recognition of the real world outside the UK. It would be helpful if he has the time to reply to them before the referendum takes place on Thursday 23rd June.

I hope you find these contributions informative and – along with our relaunched website [www.secen.uk](http://www.secen.uk) – will help you in making your own decision on whether to support the UK remaining in the EU.

James Elles, Chairman



### Remaining in the EU is not 'too great a risk for Britain'

By Richard Ashworth MEP

Last month, Dan Hannan wrote to the Henley Standard inviting voters to back the campaign to leave the European Union and, consequently, to sack him as an MEP. He argued that remaining in the EU is too great a risk for Britain because the terms on offer will mean that the country is dragged into more bailouts, more crises and more expenses. He set out 5 reasons for so doing: here are counter arguments to his points.

1). *“Our money, our priorities. Our annual tribute to Brussels now stands at £18 billion a year gross. If we kept that money at home, we could give the entire country a two-thirds cut in council tax or we could build and equip 200 state-of-the-art hospitals. To put it another way, during the last Parliament, we saved £36 billion through the entire domestic cuts programme yet, over the same period, we gave Brussels £85 billion. The EU, in other words, wiped out our*

## What's in the papers?

Anna Soubry writing in the Daily Telegraph says [Brexit is a gamble we cannot afford](#)

Financial Times comment piece on why [Brexiteers must stop dodging the big question](#)

Philip Stephens asks [Why the Brexit crowd want to silence Obama](#) in the Financial Times

General Sir Michael Jackson tells the Daily Mail his [view](#) on the EU referendum

**Note: some of these links are to articles which require a subscription to view them**

## Videos

Robin Niblett talking about the US perspective on Brexit [Watch video](#).

Damian Green MP says we are safer and more secure in the EU [Watch video](#)

Laura Sandys talking about why she is campaigning to remain in the EU [Watch video](#)

Interviews at SECEN Conference on UK in Europe, January 2016 [Watch video](#)

Plus many more videos at <http://secen.uk>

## Don't miss

**7pm, Saturday May 14**  
SECEN Chairman James Elles debates with Dan Hannan MEP on the EU referendum

Cumnor House School  
Theatre,  
Danehill,  
RH17 7HS

**Thursday 23 June**  
Referendum on UK membership of the EU

***entire austerity savings twice over.”***

The figures quoted above are gross and as a result are misleading. If you look at an independent assessment of our net contribution at [Infacts](#), the annual net total contribution amounts to £9 billion or about £190 million per week. It's also just 1-1.5% of the UK's total tax revenues. To put this even more simply, **it's just 50p per day per person in the UK**. This is hardly an onerous charge for a vital European peace dividend.

***2). “The EU is out of date. In the digital age, we are no longer defined by our geography. We have links, in other English-speaking and common-law nations around the world - nations that, unlike the EU, are growing economically. In 1980, the 28 EU states accounted for 30% of the world's economy; today, it's 17% and falling.”***

As citizens, we may not be defined by our geography today, but nations certainly are. Almost half our trade is still done with other EU nations. Indeed, the EU is growing around 1.5% per annum with some states outstripping this rate. In 1980, the US accounted for 28% of the world's economy; today it's 15% and falling. Does Dan wants us to disengage from the US as well? The West as a whole is shrinking in global influence against the rise of Asia and China in particular and now is not the time to abandon ship. Western solidarity to maintain an open global multilateral system has never been needed more.

***3). “Keeping Britain secure. Outside the EU, we can control our immigration policy. More passports are checked at Britain's borders than at those of the other 27 EU states put together. The former secretary-general of Interpol, Ronald K. Noble, describes the Schengen zone as “an international-passport free zone for terrorists to execute attacks on the Continent and make their escape.”***

this point is irrelevant to us in the UK because of the simple fact that our country does not belong to the Schengen zone. Even so, it's important to be aware that measures are being taken to tighten up the EU's external frontiers and to identify everyone who enters the European Union. What is more, the pressing need for daily cooperation with European friends and partners on intelligence and security is mostly done through the EU.

***4). “Recovering our democracy. If the EU were just about international co-operation and trade, no one would have a problem with it. The trouble is that it regulates things that have no conceivable cross-border dimension: the power of our electrical appliances, the frequency of our bin collections, the way we open a bank account, the tax on sanitary products. Our laws should have precedence on our own territory and we should be able to hire and fire the people who pass them.”***

Being in the EU involves us in sharing sovereignty in specific sectors (not defence for example) to enable EU institutions to pass European laws. But there are 751 people who have been elected to the European Parliament from all the 28 Member States with the clear mandate to keep an eagle eye on, and scrutinise the activities of, the 'bureaucrats in Brussels', which ensures democratic accountability. Unfortunately, not all MEPs prioritise these chores and instead join others like UKIP to campaign to leave the EU. It's an irony that these people enjoy generous allowances to do things other than the mandate that they were given by their voters.

***5). The safer choice. After the failure to grant Britain different terms, it is now clear that the EU can't be reformed from within, voting to stay in is like remaining on a conveyor-belt whose far end we can't see. The Schengen and euro crises are getting worse - one reason that the Government was in a rush to hold the referendum at the earliest possible date. Staying in means more risk and more cost. It's safer to take back control.”***

I believe that this is deliberately misleading. The EU responded to all the four points raised by the Prime Minister. It cannot be laid at their door if he did not ask for other items to be covered. Besides, he did manage to get a specific exemption for Britain from the implications of the Treaty clause on ever closer union, meaning that the

conveyor- belt analogy is not relevant for Britain. Remember too that the UK referendum lock means that any decisions on our future relations with European partners will be subject to a referendum in the UK. Thus the UK is perfectly capable of determining its future within the EU.

In conclusion, this is a referendum about the future of our country, not about whether one individual remains an MEP or not. After 16 years as an MEP with a generous allowance and salary, Dan is perfectly entitled to resign himself: he does not need any help, such as making the UK leave the EU, for that to happen!

*The content of this article was first published in the Henley Standard on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2016 and has been edited for this newsletter.*



## Business requires more answers

By Mark Titterington

**As the referendum campaign begins in earnest, businesses across the country will be deciding whether the deal negotiated by the Prime Minister in Brussels goes far enough to secure their support for Britain's continued membership of the EU.**

In my view, business is often conservative on questions like these. It likes stability and is more certain of what it knows than what it doesn't even when it does not always like what is on offer. And there has been much for business to gripe about Brussels over the past couple of decades. Burdensome rules and regulations have had a detrimental impact on productivity, competitiveness and innovation. But the EU has also delivered much for British business, particularly through the establishment of the single market, strong competition rules and, more recently, a more robust approach to better regulation. Today, around 3.5million British jobs are dependent on our EU membership and the country enjoys more than 50% of its trade with the continent, benefiting hugely from that single market.

If it wants to win the business vote, the 'Leave' campaign will have to answer basic questions about what the relationship with the EU looks like in the event of Brexit. Bluff and bluster isn't enough. My guess is that almost any replacement EU trade deal would involve significant budgetary contributions and acceptance of the cherished principle of free movement of people. These are precisely the points which those campaigning to leave wish to be free from and yet both Norway and Switzerland have had to accept them in return for access to EU markets.

Of course the EU would want to conclude a trading deal with the world's fifth biggest economy but it is unlikely to drive anything less than a hard bargain on these points. To do otherwise, would be to invite other EU countries to follow suit and whilst the unravelling of the whole enterprise might please some we ought to remember what Europe looked like 75 years ago.

So we may get concessions in sectors like the automotive and aviation industries but I'm far less certain about sectors like financial services – one of the key drivers of our economy – because the EU has every incentive to try to capture that for itself.

And what about international trade agreements? U.S. interest in the UK is largely based on it being an attractive place from which to do business in the EU. Would Brexit really leave the UK in a better position to secure a trade agreement more advantageous than the one being negotiated today by Brussels and Washington? I think President Obama emphatically answered that question during his recent visit. And then there is India. The collective might of the EU - the world's biggest economic area – has yet to unlock free access to India's markets and it is surely worth asking the question whether the UK alone could do it.

I don't think it is engaging in 'project fear' to ask for answers to these questions or for the 'Leave' campaign to provide a more compelling and detailed vision of what life will be like outside the EU. Until it does, I'm not sure it's worth a leap into the unknown however imperfect Mr. Cameron's deal might be.



## EU democracy exists but it's not like Westminster

By James Elles

**We are fated to live in turbulent and unpredictable times, closely resembling in many respects the 1930's. The worst has so far been avoided, but any semblance of normality is absent. One of the most telling statistics is that the interest rate of the Bank of England has been stuck at 0.5% for over 80 months. This has never happened before since the Bank was established in 1692.**

Seen in this uncertain economic context, with the rumblings of Russian imperialist revival in the Crimea and the rise of China in the East, it is a time for caution before taking major decisions which will affect our country like UK withdrawal from the European Union. The European institutions have their origin following two gigantic world wars during the last century, both starting in Europe. Sharing sovereignty in specific areas enables Europeans to work together for common goals, preventing for ever the recrudescence of raw nationalism on the European continent. Finding a collective solution, however slow or difficult, adhered to by all, will be more effective than a country by country one. A team approach is stronger than an individual one.

Member States can regain sovereignty if they wish, in our case by reversing the House of Commons' decision to introduce the European Communities Act, signed in 1972. Should this step be taken by the UK following the referendum vote, all the old nationalisms will undoubtedly begin to reappear, with untold consequences.

Arising from the statement by Michael Gove made explaining why he is backing Brexit, it seems that he has no idea and no interest in finding out how Brussels works. This leaves me wondering if he knows what he is campaigning to withdraw from. Here are 6 points where clarification from Michael Gove would be greatly appreciated before the referendum vote on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June:

### **1). Major decisions taken by elected representatives:**

He says that, "*Laws which govern citizens in this country are decided by politicians from other nations who we never elected and can't throw out.*" This is not true. Laws in the EU are proposed by the European Commission, but are made jointly by the Council and the European Parliament with our elected representatives serving in both bodies. The Commission can also be thrown out by the European Parliament, as happened in March 1999, following the discharge – for which I was rapporteur – being declined for the EU budget.

He has then regrettably amplified his distaste more recently for the EU institutions by calling the European Parliament a 'mock Parliament'. This comes no doubt from a lack of knowledge of what the European Parliament does, having a larger lobby corps today in Brussels than in Washington DC. Perhaps we should, like Jeremy Clarkson suggests (Sunday Times, March 2016), take the campaign to Brussels for openness and accountability. We will be surprised to see just how active many MEPs are in pursuit of their democratic tasks.

### **2). EU system is like the US system: separation of executive from legislature:**

Along with others in the Brexit camp, he says "*we are still subject to an unelected Commission which is generating new laws every day*". Sorry, but this is a massive error of understanding. In contrast to Westminster, the EU system is similar to the US system of Government with a separation between the executive and the legislature. The US Cabinet is unelected, chosen by the US President, forbidden by the

constitution to be Members of Congress. They are then confirmed by lawmakers in the US Senate. In Europe, EU Commissioners are proposed by the Member States (also unelected), but they cannot enter office until they have been approved in European Parliament hearings. Why is the US a great democracy for Brexiteers, but the EU system totally anti-democratic?

### **3). One rule instead of 28 national ones:**

He also complains about the intrusiveness of EU rules. Not only does he choose examples in his statement which are in reality perfectly justifiable, but he omits to point out that many EU decisions are directives, allowing for flexibility in their application across Member States. Regrettably, British ministers have frequently allowed their civil servants to gold plate these regulations to the detriment of British businesses and individuals. And, by the way, all these rules will – in the first place - have been approved by British officials.

### **4). Major decisions are still taken by EU Member states where the principle of shared sovereignty does not apply:**

He joins other Brexiteers in complaining about the degree to which the EU is a constraint on ministers' ability to do things. He should remember a comment by his fellow Brexiteer, Boris Johnson, who rightly pointed out in an article that leaving the EU would not change the current situation where major decisions are already in the hands of the U.K. Government, for example, for road, rail, airport or digital infrastructure investment. Does he deny that around 98% of the U.K. tax intake is still spent by British authorities?

### **5). Regional blocs are the structures of the future, enabling the ability to create global rules for a global market place**

Along with other Brexiteers, he says that *"the EU is an institution rooted in the past and is proving incapable of reforming to meet the big technological, demographic and economic challenges of our time"*. I don't think that the Swedes or the Finns, global leaders in 4G and 5G, would agree with his statement. Nor would the thousands of researchers who work in big forward-looking projects with EU backing recognise his statement that it is an analogue Union in a digital age (not least as the major legislative challenge of the current Commission is to produce draft laws to create a Digital Single Market across the EU by 2020).

Furthermore, we live increasingly in a global economy needing a global approach to rules. Countries across the world are moving towards regional integration as a means of leveraging their joint power in determining global trade rules. As an example, at the recent WTO Conference in Nairobi in December, the final deal was thrashed out by the US, India, China, Brazil - and the EU. How will leaving the EU improve our chances to create such global rules?

### **6). Germany is the economic leader in Europe but manages to do this within the EU. Why cannot Britain retain its ability to be successful within the EU rather than outside it?**

Lastly, he rightly says that our country has more Nobel prizes than any European country along with more world-leading universities. He also argues, rightly, that our economy is the most dynamic in Europe and has the greatest *"soft power"* and global influence of any state. So, if we have succeeded so well within the EU, why do we have to go through all the upheaval of leaving if it gives us today the benefit of both worlds?

## **Feedback**

If you have comments on this newsletter or anything else, please go to our contact page on our relaunched website at [www.secen.uk](http://www.secen.uk).