



Report

'Building bridges for a successful campaign to stay in the EU'

Friday 17 October 2014 at Europe House, London SW1

David Cameron in his January 2013 Bloomberg speech promised an In-Out referendum on the UK's continued membership of the European Union (EU) should the Conservative Party form the next government. Since then, the possibility of an EU referendum has risen up the political agenda, and the risk of the UK leaving the EU, or BREXIT, is now real.

This conference, which attracted 115 participants including senior representatives from the three main political parties, *European Movement UK* (EM) activists from across the UK, unions, business, officials, diplomats, journalists, academics, and students, focused on the current political debate on the EU, the different messages needed to appeal to and means of reaching different voter segments, and brainstorming about the shape of a possible cross-party, cross-institutional referendum campaign to stay in the EU.

The UK electorate is considerably more diverse compared to that in the 1975 referendum. For example, ethnic minorities now comprise 13% and a rapidly growing segment of the population. Different messages need to be designed to appeal to each group and different communication channels need to be used to reach each. For example, social media is widely used by youth whereas letters are a good way to reach older voters.

The EU debate is no longer dominated by the three main political parties, not least given the emergence of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) as a major force advocating withdrawal from the EU. Any pro-European campaign needs to involve the Green Party, Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, some Northern Irish parties and stakeholders such as business, unions, consumer and environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The conference took place at a time when UKIP continues to make electoral breakthroughs while (arguably paradoxically) YouGov polling shows public support for staying in the EU is at its highest in two decades. Although most voters don't want to withdraw from the EU, many do want EU reform. Only a hard core of 25% want to leave the EU, whether it is reformed or not. Pro-Europeans should therefore neither panic nor be complacent. One third of voters are switchers who should be amenable to the strength of pro-European arguments.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

The past three decades have witnessed the growth of multi-party politics in the UK. Many have left the Conservative Party for UKIP, and Conservative Party is split down the middle on Europe. Within the other main political parties, 17% of Labour, 5% Liberal Democrats, and 69% of UKIP supporters want to leave the EU. Supporters in other parties (the Greens, Plaid Cymru, and the SNP) also strongly favour staying in the EU.

Chasing UKIP's agenda is unlikely to help the Conservative Party in the long term. In the short term, to maintain party unity on the contentious subject of Europe, David Cameron has offered what some term as 'two rounds of blackmail': firstly, to the other 27 Member States: accede to our demands, or we'll leave the EU (his 15 March 2013 article in the *Daily Telegraph* is the best indicator of his key demands for a renegotiation but these are not detailed lest his party over-debates, even splits, on the issue); and secondly, to the British people, he presents the matter as a choice between his vision of Europe or no Europe.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in coalition have had mixed success in achieving their differing EU objectives. In the case of the 2011 European Union Act, Liberal Democrats

took their eye off the ball. In the case of the civil service Balance of Competences Review on whether the European Union operates in the right areas, the Conservatives took their eye off the ball. Regarding Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), 35 of the 132 measures, notably the European Arrest Warrant, were opted back into by the Coalition on 10 November.

Towards a referendum in 2017?

In spite of the widespread belief that we are rapidly moving towards a referendum, a renegotiation of the UK's relationship with the EU and a subsequent referendum is not inevitable. Any renegotiation and referendum are dependent on the outcome of the 2015 General Election. The Labour Party, if successful, whether as a majority government or in coalition, has indicated it would not convene a referendum in the next Parliament unless there was a transfer of sovereignty. The case for staying in the EU nevertheless needs to be made and widespread support for our continued membership needs to be mobilised.

Some regard Labour's decision not to back a referendum as dangerously painting it into a corner, but others believe this allows Labour to argue that it is focusing on the issues that matter to most voters, notably the cost of living, National Health Service (NHS) and education and skills crises. It also allows Labour to argue that it is not jeopardising the economy, for example threatening flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the UK and a sterling crisis, which Conservative and UKIP commitments to a referendum could do. Others argue it is better to have a referendum rather than let the EU membership debate drag on. They argue the UK hasn't had a referendum on the EU in forty years and we need to 'lance the boil'. However, any vote in 2017 to stay in is unlikely to silence Eurosceptics. Differences between parties on whether or not to convene a referendum gives voters the choice at the General Election, where some believe key decisions about the country's future are more appropriately made. At that point, it will be clearer whether the electorate shares some politicians' obsession with a referendum and BREXIT.

Although 70% of UK voters say they want a referendum on the EU, polls show the public want a referendum on practically any issue. Therefore how an issue ranks in voter priorities is a more salient measure of whether or not the matter is of transcending national importance suitable for a referendum. As Europe regularly ranks anywhere between 9th and 15th in voter concerns, there is a gulf between the importance which many Conservative and UKIP supporters, and voters at large, attach to the EU issue. Thus Labour is not promising a referendum on Europe, whilst UKIP seeks to link immigration (ranked the number one issue in public concerns in a November Ipsos Mori poll) with EU membership.

The experience of other countries which have convened EU referenda in the past decade provides lessons for a possible UK referendum. French and Dutch referenda killed the EU Constitutional Treaty in 2005 whilst the absence of a referendum in the UK has contributed to internecine warfare on the EU within the Conservative Party. In the Dutch referendum, the pro side lost because their campaign was organised too little, too late; there was little cross-party co-operation, and anti-politics sentiment made international arrangements unpopular. The campaign involved conflicting and some absurd messages including an excessive emphasis on fear. Nevertheless, Denmark and Ireland both won concessions for being awkward and convening referendums – 'being a pain' in the EU works. Although pro-Europeans have been slow to mobilise in the UK, some expect the pro-European case will eventually emerge as more motivated and co-ordinated than in the Netherlands and Ireland.

The role of national politicians and Parliament

It is the role of national parliamentarians, and Ministers in particular, to make the case for our continued membership of the EU. Selling the EU to UK citizens is not the EU's job. For example, the European Commission is neutral on a referendum, and it recognises any decision is a matter for the UK people. Leading tabloids have played a major role in fanning popular distrust of the EU. Euroscepticism has grown as leading politicians have not

rebutted false or inaccurate arguments and reports. Perceived short term political advantage over Europe has prevailed over the longer term national interest.

The public hardly ever hears a politician support the EU without mentioning the word 'reform'. Such pronouncements do not make the case for the EU and focus more on what is wrong, rather than what is good, about it. 'Reform' means different things for different politicians. Eurosceptics know their reform demands are impossible to achieve and thus offer a red herring which is tantamount to BREXIT. Yet much reform can be achieved within existing structures, notably enhancing the role of national parliaments. For example, before a Minister goes to Brussels, s/he should be questioned by the EU Scrutiny Committee in the House of Commons, as in Scandinavian countries. All too often a Minister returns from an EU meeting criticising a collective decision to which s/he is party. When one hears a Minister blaming Brussels, the Minister is not doing his/her job. *Each faceless Brussels bureaucrat is matched by a two faced politician!* EU issues should be mainstreamed and not ghettoised in parliamentary EU Committees and infrequent questioning of the Prime Minister after his participation in European Councils. Parcelling out EU business to other Select Committees, such as the economy and energy, would enhance knowledge of the EU within Parliament.

Most of David Cameron's likely demands for a renegotiation would appear to be achievable through domestic measures and do not require Treaty change. The one exception appears to surround the immigration issue. EU membership involves a non-stop reform process, not a one-off renegotiation as David Cameron has suggested. The EU rarely legislates in new fields, and if it does, it only does so with the agreement of Member States.

Eurosceptic parliamentarians are obsessed with outdated perceptions of national sovereignty. Sovereignty not exercised at the national level is not lost, but pooled at the international level to be more effectively exercised in today's global economy. Eurosceptics forget, or conveniently ignore, that in modern democracies, sovereignty belongs to the people. Sovereignty of the people therefore can be greater if exercised within the EU, rather than outside it. Politicians and opinion formers need to update their definition of how sovereignty in the modern world works, instead of setting up straw men like the EU for personal political advantage based on misrepresentation of the issues and public ignorance.

However the Clegg-Farage 2014 European Parliament election campaign debates show the messenger has to be widely perceived as trustworthy. The best messengers for the EU are real people rather than Eurocrats, parliamentarians or academics. Authenticity is important as well as the messenger's tone of voice. UKIP politicians have the gift of plausibility and speaking the people's language, and Pro-Europeans must do so as well.

Lessons from the Scottish Independence referendum

There are a number of lessons from the 18 September 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. Inter alia people can be politicised if the issue obviously affects them. Once engaged, voters are prepared to consider complex arguments. The Scottish debate was not just conducted between elites, but in pubs and town halls, and the turn out was very high. The older were mostly against independence and turned out. The young were largely for independence but their turn out was lower than average. Nationalists gained a 1-2% advantage from having the 'yes' option.

The strength of Alex Salmond's appeal was that independence could deliver whatever voters wanted to change. The Better Together No campaign to stay in the UK emphasised primarily the negative economic consequences of leaving the UK and failed to present Scottish voters with a positive vision. When opinion polls turned against the No campaign in the weeks immediately before polling day, only then was the positive case and emotional appeal for staying in the UK made. Most Scottish voters, like voters in Quebec, at the end of the day deemed independence not to be worth the risk, and pulled back from the brink.

There is likely to be a huge difference between the Scottish referendum and any EU referendum. There is not the same level of understanding and engagement on the EU issue.

For many, any EU referendum would not be as emotive as the Scottish independence referendum, although the economic and political consequences of a UK withdrawal would be far-reaching. Business can learn from the difficulties experienced by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) during the Scottish referendum campaign.

Any EU referendum needs to be won in particular in England which has 84% of the United Kingdom's population. Not surprisingly the SNP's Nicola Sturgeon has argued a general UK vote to leave should not override a majority vote to stay in the EU in any of the three other parts of the UK. Given perceptions of individual national identities and interests, any campaign to stay in will need different messages in different parts of the UK. For example, the European Regional Development Fund's INTERREG and open borders with the Republic have benefited Northern Ireland enormously, and would not want to be lost.

KEY ISSUES

Immigration

The pro-European cause should win any EU referendum. However if it loses, it will be because a convincing case for free movement within the EU has not been made. UKIP has successfully linked immigration to EU membership in the minds of many and in so doing has forced the Conservative Party to take a tougher line on the issue. The British Social Attitudes to Immigration survey in 2013 found 2% believed immigration should be increased a lot, 2% wanted it increased a little, 17% wanted it to remain the same, 21% want it reduced a little, and 56% want it reduced a lot. Those wanting immigration a major reduction is up from 39% in 1995 and 49% in 2009. The better educated are more positive towards immigration. Those over 55 (and more likely to turn out at elections) are less favourable towards immigration given perceived threats to national identity, pressure on social infrastructure etc. British Future research ahead of Romanian and Bulgarian accessions found messages on making free movement work which secured broad majority support, with a focus on managing real world pressures well, while welcoming migrants who come to contribute.

Some see restrictions on immigration as the wrong solution to the wrong problem. The immigration issue has hijacked the national political debate and is diverting political energy away from addressing real issues such as health, housing, unemployment and education whose remedies are domestic rather than external. Furthermore, restricting free movement from the rest of the EU will not stop immigration as EU flows account for only a third of immigrants. Lastly, there are roughly an equal number of British expatriates resident elsewhere in the EU. If the UK leaves the EU, would expatriates have to return to the UK?

Immigration can also be usefully be placed within the context of the EU's core four freedoms of movement of goods, capital, services and people. A Member State cannot restrict free movement without potentially prompting an unpicking of the EU package, i.e. might other Member States consider restrictions on UK exports or limit FDI to the UK?

Most studies on free movement (e.g. the 7 November 2014 University College London study) find EU migrants have made a positive contribution to the UK economy and the government's revenues. Migrants are overwhelming here to work. According to Department of Social Security (DSS) statistics (2011), only 2.5% of job seeker claimants are EU nationals (incurring a negligible cost to the UK taxpayer). Furthermore, immigration statistics can appear exaggerated. For example, foreign students could usefully be taken out as they are predominantly temporary residents who create considerable employment in UK academic institutions and local economies. Universities UK is therefore launching a campaign advocating the importance of EU membership for the UK's universities.

Such studies and arguments are however unlikely to persuade those who perceive immigration has a negative impact. In parts of the country (e.g. Boston) and certain economic sectors (e.g. construction), high immigrant concentrations can place pressure on local employment, social services, and housing. Domestic policy responses, such as greater funding for services and grants for areas most seriously affected, merit further consideration.

Regulation

In the public discourse, the EU is regularly portrayed as interfering in UK domestic governance. Yet regulation in the UK is among the lightest regulated of Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed economies. The same supposedly onerous EU regulations have not prevented the German economy from performing well over the years, and exporting six times more to China than the UK. Furthermore, the UK Government Balance of Competences Review broadly concluded that the division of responsibilities between the UK and EU bodies was approximately correct.

Leaving the EU would mean the UK, like Norway, would be unable to influence EU regulatory decision-making, and its ability to benefit from the Single Market's one set of rules across 28 countries would be jeopardised. UK politicians should not underplay the international influence the UK exercises by being part of the EU. For example, with the exception of bankers' bonuses, the UK national interest has almost always prevailed in financial services legislation. Outside the EU, the UK would become a regulation taker rather than a regulation maker, and the UK would still have to enact many EU rules. The possibility of leaving the EU, and the resulting uncertainty, even now may be deterring FDI into UK.

Instead, the UK should continue to pursue reform actively from within. The more versus less Europe is a false debate. The UK, and indeed other Member States, need less rule-making in some areas (e.g. some business regulation, especially for smaller firms) but equally more common policies in some areas (e.g. in energy to reduce costs and to stand up to Russia).

UK global leadership

The key word to attract many older voters is leadership. UK citizens are proud and patriotic and this sentiment has to be encapsulated within pro-European arguments. However, people will not fall in love with Europe if pro-Europeans, for example, drape themselves in the EU flag. The 2012 Olympic spirit could offer some lessons for a pro-European campaign. Leaving the EU would emasculate the UK as a leading middle-ranking world power. *It is better to lead in Europe rather than leave it.*

Hitherto pro-Europeans have failed to articulate a new and positive vision for the UK both globally but especially within the EU. The EU is surrounded by instability, notably the crisis in the Ukraine, chaos in North Africa, and wars in the Middle East. The UK needs to rekindle the bulldog spirit of the past as part of an EU standing alone upholding the values of democracy and freedom. After all, the UK championed the EU's Eastern 2004 enlargement.

Eurosceptics should be portrayed as defeatist – are they running scared of engaging and standing up to others in international fora? The UK has founded and been influential in many international organisations such as the United Nations and NATO. The UK needs to be greedy rather than defensive, insular and lacking in international ambition. The UK should be winning in the world and not walking away from it. It is therefore ludicrous to minimise UK influence in the EU.

VOTER SEGMENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The disaffected

The typical UKIP voter is not so much anti-Europe as anti everything. They are disgruntled, disappointed, distrustful, dissatisfied, and disbelieving. Most people do not have the faintest idea what the EU and its institutions do. Many are therefore vulnerable to UKIP's emotional misinformation.

The disaffected include many elderly and/or less skilled in particular who inter alia have been adversely affected by the recent financial crisis; are more vulnerable to pressures on social and transport infrastructure, and/or find change difficult (e.g. from the changing composition of their neighbourhoods, new legislation such as legalising gay marriage etc.).

There are arguments which don't work with the disaffected even if they are true: 1. they are misinformed and do not have the facts (any suggestion that the disaffected may be less intelligent will be perceived as insulting); 2. EU rules on free movement can't be changed (though the ability to study and work is attractive to many youth); 3. immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits, and 4. high EU immigrant flows is just scare-mongering (e.g. the high levels of Bulgarian and Romanian immigration have not materialised).

There are however messages which might work: 1. we can choose to stay/leave the EU – people like choice (however polls show voters would like referenda on any number of issues); 2. think of the future of your children and grandchildren.

Pro-Europeans need to acknowledge and address the anxieties of the disaffected such as high youth unemployment, overcrowding, pressures on housing and social infrastructure and attempt to delink them from the EU membership debate. Among economic sectors, the UK's fishermen have traditionally been anti-EU. They need to be reminded that many do export material amounts of their catches to the rest of the EU and that these markets would disappear if the UK left the EU.

Youth

Youth and ethnic minorities are in general likely strong sources of support for the UK's continued EU membership. Pro-Europeans have to make a particular effort to embrace and mobilise both groups, as Eurosceptics are less likely to be able to do so successfully.

Young people want opportunities. The ability to travel, study and work elsewhere in the EU is important for them – wars are just history. For university students and the more skilled, Europe is their oyster. Those who have experienced Europe, whether through travel, higher education and/or work, are more likely to be pro-European. Most youths, who are more used to diversity, are generally likely to regard immigration as less of a threat.

However, the young are not a homogeneous group. Those left behind, the less skilled (hairdressers, construction workers etc.) and unemployed, are more likely to question 'what's in the EU for them'? These groups are unlikely to benefit from pan-European experiences such as the ERASMUS higher education exchange programme, but all the same have to be appealed to. Possible messages such as leaving the EU will not improve their situation, and Eurosceptics do not provide a model for their future may help communicate the EU case.

Although youth are more likely to favour continued EU membership, they are less likely to vote *inter alia* as they are more transient. A major challenge therefore is how to register them and to increase their turnout at elections. To do so, new means of communication, notably social media, are essential. Joint campaigns with those advocating electronic voting, voting at supermarkets and even mandatory attendance at elections can also help.

EU 27 citizens resident in the UK and UK expatriates

The terms of reference of a possible In-Out EU referendum and who is entitled to vote is not known. *New Europeans* therefore focuses much of their work on the 2.3 million EU 27 citizens resident in the UK, roughly equal to the UK expatriates living elsewhere in the EU.

Although we are all EU citizens, there are gaps in eligibility to vote in national elections in many Member States. Many EU 27 nationals resident in the UK (other than those from Cyprus, Gibraltar, Ireland and Malta) currently would be unable to vote in any EU referendum. Only 15,864 of the estimated 2.2 million UK nationals living elsewhere in the EU are registered to vote in UK national polls. The pro-EU side risks losing considerable sources of support if these 4 million people are not registered to vote, and are not mobilised.

Currently, a Conservative Parliamentary backbench bill could disenfranchise those living abroad for more than 15 years, but Labour and the Liberal Democrats may not support this. It is important for pro-Europeans to stop the 15 year rule, preferably before the next election, as it could have a material effect on the result of a possible EU referendum.

Business

The business community is not homogeneous, but its opinion on continued EU membership is overwhelmingly in one direction: TheCityUK found 82% of City firms wanted to stay in the EU as do 92% of motor manufacturers. 78% of Confederation of British Industry (CBI) members overall, including 77% of the CBI's smaller members, want the UK to stay in the EU. Most Institute of Directors (IOD) members think the UK should stay in the EU – only 6% advocate withdrawal under all circumstances. Surveys find only 16% of businesses think the UK economy would improve if the UK left the EU.

Most businesses in London want to stay in. Those outside are more evenly split. A common perception amongst Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is that if they don't export, BREXIT would not affect them and regulation would be less onerous. Although 95% of firms don't export, smaller firms would suffer indirectly from the loss of supply chains with larger exporting firms and a slowing, perhaps even shrinking, economy if the UK left the EU. A possible exchange rate crisis, higher interest rates and higher inflation resulting from BREXIT would benefit few businesses. Furthermore, by staying in EU policies (such as competition policy) can help safeguard the interests of smaller firms.

If the pro-EU camp wants to ensure business is onside, it must talk of reform, especially with regard to regulations which can have a disproportionate effect on smaller businesses. Low growth and the threat of deflation in many EU Member States does not help the case for staying in the EU. However, the new EU Commission has made good proposals to encourage growth in EU Member States, where the power to reform economies largely lies.

Business for New Europe (BNE) actively advocates the positive business case for the UK's continued EU membership. IOD members above all want clarity and certainty about EU legislation and are less bothered by the repatriation of powers which preoccupies some Westminster parliamentarians. Fearing most business will support the UK's continued EU membership, John Redwood MP recently suggested business should be neutral.

Unions

Trade union opinion regularly reflects UK public opinion at large. Trade unions have been a strong supporter of the EU for 25 years (but not previously). EU legislation is often supportive of worker rights, such as the TUPE Directive and most recently in the case of paid holidays (the last time the UK Parliament was responsible for paid holidays, it prevented them). The Trades Union Congress (TUC) is officially undecided on a referendum although the trade union movement rejected leaving the EU in 2012 and rejected a referendum call in 2013. Unionists would be more positive about the EU if many Member States were creating rather than destroying jobs. Unions do not support David Cameron's position on repatriation of rights and a possible referendum. Four million jobs would be put at risk if the UK leaves the EU.

Other groups

Amongst other voting groups, many women tend to be instinctively more pro-EU than men. Men are more moved by emotional arguments and appeals to the UK's past glory. In appeals to women, pro-Europeans should point to tangible benefits such as stronger EU legislation on gender equality and employment rights; protecting women against violence; food, toy and transport safety, and the EU's leading global role in curbing climate change.

Support for the European Union amongst ethnic minorities is under-researched. However, if a EU referendum were presented as a referendum on the behaviour and views of UKIP politicians, it is believed most ethnic minorities might vote to stay in the EU.

Other leading sources of support for continued membership are food producers, consumer organisations, environmentalists, and those favouring more devolution/subsidiarity (e.g. nationalists in Scotland and Wales).

CAMPAIGNING TO STAY IN THE EU

With the three main parties less trusted than in 1975, pro-European NGOs are more likely to play a greater role in any future referendum campaign. While Eurosceptics are well organised and funded, pro-European groups are less so. Unfortunately, many potential backers, particularly in business, are unlikely to commit funds until the outcome of the 2015 General Election is clear. Preparations for a possible referendum need to start now – we cannot wait until 2017. Business and some trade unions in particular need to raise their heads above the parapet soon. Pledging support later may be too late because Eurosceptic groups already are well funded by idiosyncratic donors; electoral laws mean money pledged up front is worth several times more than if pledged later on, and because underfunded pro-European organisations are currently less able to counter Eurosceptics and most media.

The non-partisan *European Movement UK* (EM) is well placed to provide a common neutral space for competing political parties – elsewhere it would be hard to run a cross party campaign, and most notably agree a lead spokesperson(s). The EM has the expertise and ability to be an outlier in the debate and make pro-European politicians appear more centrist - the EM can say and do what others dare not.

The EM also benefits from a long established nation-wide grass roots network. The campaign to stay in the EU will not be won in London but outside it where most of the UK's population reside. The EM needs to build upon its existing national network and grow beyond its white middle income core to reflect the growing diversity of the UK population.

Media activism

Any referendum will be decided by those who don't know much about the EU and the advantages of membership. The bias against the EU in much of the British print media, notably most tabloids, has contributed to the EU's widespread negative image, and has fuelled populist political opportunism. The motives of the media peddling misinformation and xenophobia, whether to increase sales and/or to avoid regulation, must be questioned.

For example, many papers lead the public to believe that the UK is being 'ripped off' in the EU budget. Although amounts are large in absolute terms, the UK contribution is only about 1% of UK government expenditure. The vastly greater macro-economic benefits that EU membership brings the UK economy are regularly overlooked. Accounting irregularities in the EU budget should focus more on the European Court of Auditors (ECA)'s inability to audit Member State national accounts which more often than not are the source of irregularities. The EU budget could be usefully portrayed as an insurance premium. For example, what is the value of no war in Europe to British families in the past 56 years?

The print media is arguably less important than the broadcast media as most people gather their political information from the latter. However as typified by prominent daily press reviews, television and radio appear to take too much of a lead from the tabloid media's reports and their framing of the issues. A greater UK broadcast media space on EU issues is needed. For example, Finland has a weekly Friday television programme on how to make the most of the EU. Giving more prominence to publications such as *British Influence's* daily news review and opinion newsletter on issues related to UK's EU membership is merited.

Pro-Europeans don't complain enough. All media, especially the BBC as a public broadcaster, are sensitive to criticism to a greater or lesser degree. If the media annoys UKIP supporters, they will get a wave of complaints. Pro-Europeans should complain about poor, unbalanced coverage, and/or no coverage. When the media get something wrong, it important to correct it early on as stories acquire legs. In any case, pro-Europeans need to be less reactive and monitor, co-ordinate and initiate news in all media. We should look out for stories which interest the media, have an impact and a positive message. It can be easier to initiate stories and correspondence in local newspapers e.g. EU funding for a local project, a local person who secures a major job in another EU country. Pro-Europeans should try to find a way of communicating with tabloid readers, perhaps mimicking Euro-sceptic scare-

mongering. If the UK leaves the EU would visas be needed to visit Paris? Would continental beer imports cost more? Will EU nationals be less able to play for UK football clubs?

Considerations and possible messages for a campaign

The 115 participants concluded with suggestions and possible messages for a campaign:

1. The messenger is all-important. Voters relate more to personal stories from real people like themselves (e.g. stories of those helped by EU employment and equal rights legislation). 'Authenticity' and the experience of real people is above all what convinces.
2. Pro-Europeans need to focus more on identifying particular voter groups with target messages and tailored means of communicating with each. No voter or stakeholder group is monolithic. Europe can mean different things to different people.
3. Reference to the EU should be minimised – the debate is about Europe, not its institutions (the EU is more than a set of institutions, but popular perceptions have to be appealed to).
4. People dislike being governed by others, especially 'foreigners' (a fear UKIP plays upon). Politicians from other EU countries should not play a leading role in any IN campaign. Nigel Farage says he is prepared for the UK to be a poorer country as the price to regain our sovereignty. Do UK voters want to become poorer so Westminster politicians have more powers?
5. Pro-Europeans need to communicate why Europe is good for citizens as effectively as UKIP's populism argues it isn't. UKIP knows how to play on fear, local difficulties, and emotion. Pro-Europeans should expose Eurosceptics' failure to articulate a convincing viable alternative vision for the UK outside the EU.
6. Many messages do not provide magic silver bullets. The grand old narratives for the EU, notably war in Europe now being impossible, are dated and are not resonating. More modern arguments, such as pointing to lower mobile phone roaming charges and cheaper air travel within the EU, may also have limited appeal (e.g. only to the more affluent).
7. The Scottish referendum offers many lessons for a possible EU referendum. Inter alia people tend to vote for the status quo. This however is not an argument for complacency.
8. Focusing solely on the negative economic costs of leaving is insufficient. Simple broad messages rather a barrage of statistics should be offered. Fear and hard facts will influence some but not all voters. *We have to be in it to win it!*
9. The pro-European cause cannot win without a positive message. Pro-Europeans have hitherto had difficulty communicating a positive vision for staying in the EU. *The pro-European case has to be made to the heart as equally as to the head.*
10. The EU has helped make our country what it is, and we should fear losing it. Some old arguments, notably the EU makes another war in Europe impossible, should not be jettisoned. Rather new arguments should be added to and complement the old arguments, many of which are now taken for granted. *You don't know what you got till its gone!*
11. A campaign should focus on how the EU benefits what people care about, namely jobs etc. Instead of negative messages such as jobs are at risk, positive and emotive messages such as *think about the future of your children and grandchildren* can appeal to older voters.
12. Pro-Europeanism is the patriotic option. Eurosceptics say "we want our country back". Pro-Europeans should say "we want to take our country forward!"

Nick Hopkinson

e-mail: nickhopkinson151@aol.co.uk

This report reflects the rapporteur's own personal interpretation of the proceedings. As such it does not necessarily represent the views of the European Movement UK or the views and policies of any other organisation referred to in this report.