

# EUROPE ON THE DOORSTEP

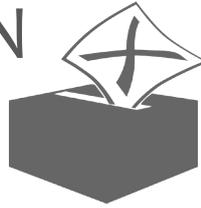


a briefing by

Richard Corbett MEP

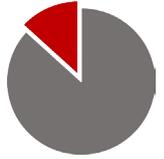
key issues and hot potatoes

## THE EUROPEAN UNION IS A KEY ISSUE IN THE UK POLITICAL DEBATE



**JOBS** Some **4 MILLION BRITISH JOBS** depend on our access to the EU — the world’s biggest single market. That’s why most British companies, from small businesses to major exporters, as well as trade unions, are such vocal supporters of our EU membership. **FAIRNESS** The **COMMON MARKET HAS COMMON RULES** to protect consumers, workers and the environment. It’s not an unregulated free-for-all, nor should we let it become one. **REFERENDUM** Although Cameron is presenting the referendum as a decision about his particular agenda for the EU, in fact the vote is really on **BRITAIN’S ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP** of the EU — not on Cameron’s “reforms”. The Out campaign has had years to prepare and is funded by UKIP millionaires, supported by the hard right of the Tory party and our overwhelmingly eurosceptic press. **REFORM** Genuine reform is not about treaties or gimmicks, it’s about **IMPROVING, CHANGING AND UPDATING POLICIES**. This is what negotiations in Brussels are about, week in, week out. But we need a government willing to engage and argue our corner effectively. **POLICIES** Just as with local councils and national governments, what the EU does can turn out badly. When that happens, **POLICY NEEDS REFORM**. Some particularly bad policies have been the common agricultural and fishing policies — they’ve now been partly reformed but still need further change. Some **GOOD EU POLICIES** have been on environment and climate change, and they can be further improved. **MIGRATION** Most migration into Britain is from outside the EU, so it’s completely up to us how we manage it. Within the EU, there’s an almost exact balance between the number of Brits living abroad and other EU citizens here. And **EU MIGRANTS ARE A MAJOR BOON TO OUR EXCHEQUER**, contributing 34% more in taxes than they cost us in benefits and services combined. There have been **CASES OF ABUSE**, which we must crack down on, and cases of employers exploiting migrant labour to undercut local wages and conditions. **WE COULD SOLVE THESE THROUGH NATIONAL LEGISLATION**. We could also tackle benefit tourism, to the extent it exists, by lengthening the qualification period for benefits. **BUDGET** The entire EU budget is just 1% of GDP, compared to 40% spent by national governments. Britain’s net annual contribution is about £84 per person, but the **ECONOMIC GAIN IS ESTIMATED BY THE CBI AS £3000 PER FAMILY**. **RED TAPE** Common rules aren’t necessarily a burden on business. When we get them right, Europe-wide rules are an exercise in **CUTTING RED TAPE**, replacing 28 divergent sets of national regulations with a single agreed rulebook for our single market. **BUREAUCRACY** Contrary to myth, the European Commission is small (no larger than Leeds City Council). Its role is to **WRITE THE FIRST DRAFT** of legislative proposals, and implement whatever national governments and Parliament then jointly decide. **EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS** The Court has nothing whatsoever to do with the EU. It’s an **INSTITUTION CREATED BY BRITAIN** and others in the 1950s as part of the entirely separate Convention on Human Rights, which was made part of our national law by the UK parliament. **PEACE** We created the EU **OUT OF THE RUBBLE OF WORLD WAR II** because we knew we had to find a better way to manage our mutual interdependence. In today’s uncertain world, the zone of peace and security created and maintained by the EU is more crucial than ever. John Hume famously described the EU as **“THE WORLD’S MOST SUCCESSFUL PEACE PROCESS”** — no wonder it was awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize!

Since 2002 we’ve made 13.2% of new UK laws at European level.



New laws must be agreed by both ministers from national governments and elected MEPs.

mostly or entirely national

- HEALTH
- EDUCATION
- TAX
- FINANCE
- FOREIGN POLICY
- DEFENCE
- CRIMINAL JUSTICE
- POLICE
- TRANSPORT
- ENERGY
- FAMILY LAW
- SCIENCE
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- CONSTITUTION

We only act at European level in specific areas where every EU country has already agreed that acting together is better than acting separately.

mostly European

- ENVIRONMENT
- TRADE
- FISHING
- AGRICULTURE
- WORKERS’ RIGHTS
- CONSUMER LAW
- TECHNICAL STANDARDS

### Doorstep EU



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