

## Winning the referendum

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If there is a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU what is the current state of opinion and what are the essential issues that will motivate a vote to leave?

There have been a number of polls in recent times, some showing a majority to stay in and others showing a majority to leave. For analysis, I examine the questions of two of the best known firms of pollsters.

These are based on the questions:

a) For YouGov: *"If there was a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, how would you vote?"* The alternatives offered were: *"To remain in the EU"* or *"To leave the EU"*

b) For Ipsos-MORI: *"If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the European Union, how would you vote?"*

Both these questions are useful as they have been asked in the same form for many years. In the course of the YouGov polls throughout 2014, there was almost level pegging at 40% on each side.

However, the questions are misleading in that the issues in the referendum will not be what is implied in both these questions – that the choice is between staying in the EU broadly as it is (probably with some minor reforms negotiated by David Cameron) and otherwise exiting abruptly into an undefined future. Neither of these propositions are true.

Ipsos-MORI in their 11-14th October 2014 polling asked a further

question offering four alternatives (see reference \*).

Analysis of these shows that there are four blocks of opinion:

a) Those who want closer integration – 14%.

b) Those who want broadly the same relationship as at present – 29%.

c) Those who want a return to an economic community without political links – 34%.

d) Those who just want out – 17%.

It is absolutely obvious that those seeking withdrawal need to win both the vast majority of those who want a return to an economic community without political links and some of those who want the same relationship as at present.

Relying on the group that wants to leave the European Union altogether is only to attract 17% of the electorate (all the percentages are excluding the six per cent of 'Don't Knows'). Of course, in the 'squeeze' question – remain or get-out – the get-out attracts some of the other groups, making its total 40%.

Because of the status quo and inertia effects in referendums, that is the tendency in referendums throughout the world for the electorate to vote for the status quo, the withdrawalists need to be looking at a poll lead of 15-20% at the start of the campaign to be sure of victory.

Plainly the group who wants to remain part of an economic community without political links must be offered this which means the offer of staying in the Single Market

without all the political links, that is to say, EFTA-membership to be sought and EEA membership to be maintained. This is an existing, workable, off-the-shelf solution to the key aim, exiting from the political and judicial side of the EU.

This is not enough! Inroads must be made into the group who want the relationship with the EU to remain as it is at present.

The EU, as set up, has an ongoing integration process at its heart with thousands of employees working precisely on this, it is essential to convince most of this group that their wish is unrealisable and is simply not on offer.

It needs to be clearly and repeatedly stated and demonstrated that the integration or (power grab) process is continuing and will continue. It is part of the EU DNA.

First, attention should be drawn to the repeated treaties which have turned the Common Market into the European Union. All of these have been a one-way transfer of power always with assurances by British politicians that they do not mean very much.

Then attention must be repeatedly focussed on what integration measures are in the pipeline today and over the next few years.

- The British financial contributions will rise to a much higher level.

- More mass immigration is planned, for example, David Cameron flew to Istanbul a few weeks ago to hasten Turkey's entry to the EU and

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Juncker's plan to 'promote mobility'.

- The chaotic accounts, off balance sheet liabilities and implied liabilities in the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank and the EU itself are likely to impact on the British taxpayer as the eurozone crisis returns.

- Juncker's 'Agenda' for the next five years, set out in his speech of 15th July to the European Parliament, contains further integration proposals. Among these are:

- ▶ Massive spending proposals;
- ▶ A new European Energy Union;
- ▶ Europe to be number one in renewables;
- ▶ Single Supervisory Mechanism and Single Resolution Fund for the banks (that is, bailing out foreign banks);
- ▶ A Capital Markets Union;
- ▶ 'Promoting' labour mobility;

▶ A Commissioner with special responsibility for the Charter of Fundamental Rights;

- ▶ Common asylum policy;
- ▶ 'New European policy' on legal migration;
- ▶ 'A stronger Europe when it comes to foreign policy'.

While withdrawalists cannot hope to capture all the votes of the block of opinion that wants to stay in the EU 'as it is', it must be repeated constantly that their desire is not on offer. Politicians who generally find it difficult to confront hard choices also must be confronted with the real choice.

The choice is between more financial contributions, more EU control, more immigration, more spending and an adventurist and dangerous EU controlled foreign policy in much of the world on the one

hand and a clear offer that saying 'No' means staying in the Single Market via the EEA which will take all the 'business' concerns out of the debate and jobs and the economy will not be affected but all the political and judicial structures of the EU will be jettisoned.

There is also a final argument to make. We need to stress that Britain can have a great future in the world if it acts globally. The 'stay in' option must be clearly shown to be an option to 'get in deeper'.

Perhaps a thought for the electorate to consider is the old Chinese proverb:

*'Fool me once, shame on you,  
Fool me twice, shame on me.'*

Reference

\* <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/political-monitor-oct-2014-EU-charts.pdf>. (See page 5)

## China's surplus economy

According to the Chinese state news Agency Xinhua, China's trade figures for 2014 show that exports rose 6.1% compared to 2013, while imports rose just 0.4%.

Meanwhile, China's December 2014 trade figures are up 9.7% and imports down 2.3% from the previous year. This result in a 304.5bn yuan (£32.34 bn) surplus for the month.

These figures came as a surprise as analysts had expected exports to rise by 6.8% and imports to fall by more than 7%.

[Maybe, the UK government should take lessons from the Chinese about how to run the economy.]

Meanwhile China has now overtaken the US as the leading Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

country for the first time since 2003.

According to the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development, last year foreign firms invested £84.8bn (\$128bn) in China.

The growth in China's foreign investment benefitted the services sector as manufacturing slowed.

Globally, foreign investment fell last year by 8% to a total of \$1.26 trillion.

## EU wants more information and taxation from motorists

The EU is currently taking another look at road pricing.

Consideration is now being given under the well-worn phrase of harmonisation a road pricing scheme to apply throughout the EU. This will involve the use of every vehicle being monitored and charged for every mile it travels.

The idea currently under consideration will use GPS to spy on

every vehicle.

This will require that all vehicles are fitted with a GPS system and furthermore it may well mean that the state will require bank and driver details in order to process payments quickly.

Whether this tax will be levied directly by the EU instead of the EU Member State has not yet been clarified.

This further intrusion by the EU into the lives of its so-called citizens would result in yet more information being stored by the state. Furthermore it could very easily then result in extra charges being made for rush-hour travel or maybe the use of certain types of road without the requirement to consult or even ask those who must pay this charge or maybe even the national government itself.