



## Report – Grassroots for Europe Round Table #11 26 January 2021

**Chair:** Irina von Wiese

**Speaker:** David Gauke

**“The Future Relationship with the EU and the political dynamics that will determine that”**

### **Negative points – the scale of the challenge ahead for pro-European groups**

A No Deal had been a real possibility. It would have created such chaos and acrimony, but opportunities for “a closer relationship with Europe” to be advocated sooner than expected. Johnson gambled that T&CA concessions on the Level Playing Field and fishing would be accepted by the ERG to avoid the acrimony and chaos. It paid off and the ERG voted for it. The T&CA prioritises sovereignty over market access.

The majority of the public are not yet feeling the pain of that decision. There are no queues at Dover, through reduced trade volumes and the majority from large companies able to cope with the new regulations. The decline in the UK economy relative to the EU one will take longer to become visible, partly due to Covid-19.

1. The deal is a bad deal and the economists’ predictions are likely to be proved true. This could lead to calls for closer ties but could also lead to calls for greater divergence by the ERG and could lead to greater tensions inside the Conservative Parliamentary Party.
2. The Conservatives identified a re-alignment of UK politics in key areas and exploited that route to electoral success, especially in regions where bashing Brussels is popular –e.g., North Midlands, - these areas are unlikely to revert to Labour. To show that there are benefits to Brexit the Conservatives will seek divergence from Europe for the sake of it. That will be popular with the ERG, but not necessarily consistent with the levelling-up agenda in the constituencies where the party found electoral success in 2019 and needs to repeat it.
3. Labour don’t want to defend the alternative views of the EU because they still hope to recapture those constituencies. (This makes the Pro--European voice and campaign groups very important to those who want to see a closer alignment with Europe.)
4. There will be flare ups in the EU/UK relationships as the T&CA is shown to be thin and has omissions. In these flare ups the UK public will identify with the UK rather than the EU. For example, the story about the restrictions on Pfizer vaccine exports and non-delivery of Astra Zeneca. There will be damage to the Pro-EU cause in these incidents.
5. Those who believe the UK needs a closer relationship with Europe need not enjoy any dysfunction in that relationship, especially if the UK is struggling, we don’t want to see the UK fail. We need to demonstrate that we support UK success.

6. FPTP works against the pro-EU case. Leaving the EU is a mainly Conservative vote but Remain is split across the other parties. About a quarter of the Conservative voters chose Remain, but a fifth feared Corbyn, so still voted Conservative in 2019. The better distribution of the Leave vote across a wider range of constituencies led to narrow wins for Conservatives and created a Parliamentary majority for getting Brexit done, even though more people voted against it.
7. The obvious thing – the effect of artificial intelligence and bots.
8. It is not effective to campaign for full blown Rejoin right now, but to argue for half-way houses which will be achievable, when people realise that the UK is a rule taker. Re-joining the Single Market. May's Soft Brexit had weaknesses, but where we are with T&CA is not good for financial services.

There is a logic that Rejoining will lead to a better outcome, but it would have the following problems to deal with:

- The sense of re-opening everything that has divided the UK over the last five years.
- Would the EU contemplate letting us in? Charles Grant has written about the need for consensus support in UK.
- The EU would not endure another 5 years of intensive re-negotiation about terms. Re-entry might have to be on the EU's terms and include a 65% majority referendum.

#### Positive aspects of the situation for pro-European campaigners

1. Current relationship is very flawed and red tape will hold business back.
2. There is a lot of public sympathy for the people worst affected e.g. fishermen, musicians.
3. If the current situation is allowed to continue, the UK is going to be held back in its prosperity.
4. Demography – a sizeable group of young people who believe in the EU project (not really visible before 2016) will grow, people joining the electorate and the older leave supporting generations will depart.
5. With skill and care that can build up into a movement for change.
6. There won't be so much historical baggage for future generations.
7. There are many circles in our relationship with Europe.
8. The long-term campaign allows for time to develop – Leave took 25 years.
9. The challenge to make the case for “a pragmatic constructive relationship”.
10. The prize to be won is that eventually reality will show that prosperity for the UK lies inside the EU.

It is a long road back to EU Membership, but the road needs to be paved from now. We need to argue against regulatory divergence for its own sake and adopt a pragmatic approach and criticise the ideological one.

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### Campaign Updates, Asks and Links

This time, we have summarised the chat, campaign asks and updates by topic, to make the information more accessible, as follows: *Conservatives, Labour, Erasmus, Events. Campaign Asks, Other Announcements and Round Table Review Snapshot.*

#### Conservatives

**Pro Europa:** What about reframing it from Conservative Remainer to Conservative attached to truth, decency, successful economy?

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/covid-19-vaccine-firms-must-deliver-says-eu-chief/>

**Grassroots for Europe:** And pro-business.

**Pro Europa:** We need moderate centre right. Let's use Europe House as our home for influence.

**Wales for Europe:** Ongoing worrying signs from Wales in terms of a continued move to right for Welsh Conservatives based on some of the Senedd selections and the (re)appointment of Andrew RT Davies as leader. If this is an indication, there's further to go to the right before a (re)turn to the centre.

#### Labour

**Labour for a European Future:** I mostly agree with Will. My view is that Labour needs to make a pitch to Leave voters based on public services, housing, jobs, and for pro-European / open voters by evidencing what it wants to improve on the deal. Right now, its position is that the deal is bad but that it won't change it in government. They are assuming that pro Remain voters won't ditch them in an election - even though they did in large numbers in all three of the 2019 elections (local, European, General). I am confident Labour will shift - but it needs help to do so.

**Another Europe is Possible:** Agree with Labour positioning above. I am also in a Red Wall seat and Labour's commitment to a confirmatory referendum is not the reason Labour lost – it's much more complicated.

#### Erasmus

**Wales for Europe:** Joint statement from Scottish and Welsh Education Ministers:

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/19039802.full-erasmus-statement-scottish-welsh-governments/>

**Another Europe is Possible:** Julie Ward worked directly on the legislative act for Erasmus+. Here is her article that talks about the wider reach of Erasmus:

<https://northeastbylines.co.uk/which-is-more-important-fish-or-the-next-generation-how-the-erasmus-programme-has-supported-our-young-people>

**Women for Europe:** Juliet Lodge set up lot of programmes, liaising with the founder and Celtic campaigners.

**European Movement:** The Young European Movement is looking at Erasmus too and it would be good to connect.

**Pro Europa:** On university engagement, you might want to look at AEGEE - a long standing network across Europe.

## Events

**The New Europeans:** New Europeans did report on problems with EU Settled Status scheme for elderly and vulnerable groups. Both reports are to be discussed by an All Parliamentary Group. See:

<https://neweuropeans.net/event/3479/one-year-dont-make-citizens-pay-price-brexit>  
<https://www.euractiv.com/section/uk-europe/news/british-care-workers-risk-missing-eu-settlement-scheme-deadline-reveals-new-report>

**European Movement in Scotland:** Erasmus event for Scotland and Wales on 8 February:

<https://www.euromovescotland.org.uk/16751-2>

**Voices for a Better Deal:** Upcoming Oxford events –

2 February: European Movement Oxfordshire have David Gauke

1 March: Oxford for Europe have Terry Reinke MEP and Layla Moran MP. See:

[www.oxfordforeurope.org](http://www.oxfordforeurope.org)

**The 3 Million:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/webinar-what-to-expect-for-eu-citizens-rights-in-2021-tickets-136716561917>

**Glasgow Loves EU:** On 8 February Hilary Benn will be the speaker on a lockdown livestream. Can catch it on Twitter @glasgowlovesEU or live on Facebook.

The Glasgow Loves EU back catalogue can be found on YouTube and here:

<https://sites.google.com/view/glasgowloveseu-weareeuropean/lockdown-livestreams>

**The Grid:** All events are in the Grid, the Grid calendar, and the [www.UKPEN.eu](http://www.UKPEN.eu) Key Events calendar.

## Campaign Asks

### **Helen Wales, Wales for Europe – Shared Narrative Project**

Invitation to join a collaborative project, currently in the scoping stage, around campaigning on key narratives or stories to tell about our relationships with Europe – moving from short term slogan campaigns into something with a slow build. Planning for implementation is happening now. Contact Helen if you would like to be involved.

## Other Announcements

### **Fiona Wishlade, Glasgow Loves EU and European Movement in Scotland– The Pledge**

*“As we prepare for this sad day, we in the European Movement in Scotland are united in this pledge: We declare that Scotland is a European country, embracing our common values of peace, democracy, human rights, equality, sustainability and solidarity. The clear wish of the great majority of the Scottish people is that Scotland should be within the European Union. We commit to working to bring this about, whatever Scotland’s constitutional status”.*

### **Jo Pye, Grassroots for Europe – Use of Europe House, London**

I believe any pro-European group can ask Europe House for a room for a meeting without charge. See:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/en/about-us/who\\_s\\_who.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/en/about-us/who_s_who.html)

### **Luke Piper, The 3 Million - Civil Society Mobilisation**

The Brexit Civil Society Alliance did a great report on civil society mobilisation (see <https://www.brexitcivilsocietyalliance.org>). They hosted a seminar around the event which was really helpful, especially on the power of storytelling and celebrity endorsement a la Marcus Rashford.

### **Julie Ward, Another Europe is Possible - Nissan**

Re the story about Nissan new production saved by the deal: no-one was reporting that a main production line was closed down for a week because of problems importing parts from the EU. See:

<https://www.anothereurope.org/>

### **Dr Monica Horten, Grassroots for Europe Round Table Team – AFCO**

AFCO is the Constitutional Affairs committee in the European Parliament (see <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/afco/home/highlights>). Surely the UK-EU deal would be scrutinised by the INTA International Trade Committee? Liaises with DG Trade. Richard Corbett is the AFCO geek.

## Gareth Steel, UKPEN - The Rejoin Register

Happy to discuss one to one how to get involved. The easy thing for everyone to be with is just to mention [www.rejoinregister.org](http://www.rejoinregister.org) at every appropriate opportunity. We have 10-15 years to go - perhaps that is true -- but it's never too early to start!

### Round Table Review Snapshot

Caroline Kuipers presented an excerpt from the circulated report on the Round Table Review. The following potential directions for "Where next?" were raised:

- **For the longer term:** Discussed which tools Round Table participants would find useful: Deep Dive Analysis , e.g., PESTLE, Scenario Planning Workshop, Alliance Building. Do we have the expertise we need? Stakeholder influencers eco map, community building & campaigns workshop?
- **For the shorter term:** Communications Framework, May elections, Erasmus and the under 30's and a pro-EU candidate ask/pledge for local elections.

**Participant's feedback covered:** Continuing dialogue with Europe, the need for UK to guarantee a 65% majority in a new referendum and EU Movement in Scotland have developed a pledge.

## Attendees

Irina von Wiese (Independent - Chair)  
David Gauke (Guest Speaker)  
Will Hutton – Voices for a Better Deal  
Colin Gordon – Voices for a Better Deal  
Paul Lomas – European Movement  
Anna Bird – European Movement  
Richard Morris – European Movement  
Sharon Leclercq-Spooner - Pro Europa  
Nick Crosby - Pro Europa  
Anna Damski - Save British Farming  
Juliet Lodge - Women for Europe  
Helen Wales - Wales for Europe  
Paul Willner – Wales for Europe  
Gareth Steel – UKPEN/Rejoin Register  
Luke Piper – The 3 Million  
Else Kvist – New Europeans  
Richard Wilson – Grassroots for Europe  
Julie Ward – Another Europe is Possible  
Michael Chessum - Another Europe is Possible  
Fiona Wishlade - Glasgow Loves EU  
Rosemary Watt – European Movement in Scotland  
Mike Buckley – Labour for a European Future  
Dr Monica Horton – Grassroots for Europe Pro-EU Round Table  
Caroline Kuipers – – Grassroots for Europe Pro-EU Round Table  
Sarah Dodgson – Grassroots for Europe Pro-EU Round Table  
Jonathan Harris – Grassroots for Europe Pro-EU Round Table  
Jo Pye (Zoom Admin.)

## Apologies:

Dr Mike Galsworthy – March for Change  
Naomi Smith – Best for Britain

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, 23 February 2021 at 5pm**