

## Give thanks for:

- » The peace and cooperation that has existed between European nations since the end of World War II.
- » The Church's growing unity and shared vision for evangelism and Christian involvement in each of the 28 EU member countries.
- » Our democratic freedoms that allow us to vote about this important issue.

## Please pray:

- » That the outcome would be according to God's will.
- » For both sides to explain their arguments clearly, so that people can make an informed decision on polling day.
- » That media coverage of the ongoing debate will be balanced and fair to all parties.
- » For many people to attend church-based and other community election meetings and for the discussions between opposing sides to be courteous and helpful.
- » About the aftermath of the vote – for reconciliation between both sides and wisdom for the Government moving forward.

**'Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans ... In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.'**

*PROVERBS 16: 3, 9 (NIV)*



## EU: Pros and Cons

So now we know. June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016 is decision time for voters in the UK as we will go to the polls in the European Union (EU) referendum. The campaign, now a few months old is already proving feisty. Amidst all the differing claims, CARE has distilled some of the key facts and figures from both sides to provide you with a starting point as you think about which way to vote. We don't hold an official position. But given the serious nature of the referendum, we think it is useful for all of us to consider the key arguments as we prayerfully seek to make a decision.



### Key arguments for remaining in the EU

- Two of the UK's biggest trading partners, Germany and France, are in the EU and trade flourishes with those countries because the UK is a fellow member state, benefiting from the free trade deals the EU has negotiated. These trade deals also means the EU enjoys profitable trade with 50 plus countries globally. This benefits the UK economy which in turn, benefits British people. Because the UK is part of the EU, we can take advantage of these deals. But leaving would mean renegotiating our own trade deals, which would be costly and time consuming. It would also be wrong to assume other leading economies would happily sign up instantly to a trade deal with the UK.
- Another key argument is that the EU is the UK's main trading partner, worth more than £400billion a year to the UK economy. 52 per cent of all UK trade in goods and services goes to the EU and 61 per cent of small business exports go to the EU. But all this would be lost if we left the EU, which would seriously harm the UK economy.
- According to advocates of Britain's EU membership, up to 1 in 10 UK jobs are linked to the EU in some way or another. This means millions of workers across the UK are in a job that is connected with the EU. It would be foolish to put these jobs at risk.
- The city of London is considered one of the top finance capitals in the world but leaving the EU would put that in jeopardy. Paris and Frankfurt are two cities who could look to replace London. But whereas Germany has a strong manufacturing sector and can survive the fact Frankfurt is not the leading financial capital, the UK economy is heavily reliant upon the financial sector and has been since the mid-1980s, making the impact of leaving the EU and London's subsequent diminished status much more serious. There is also a risk foreign manufacturing firms who have bases in the UK will move to within the EU to take advantage of the EU trade deals should the UK decide to leave.
- Dozens of former army chiefs have warned leaving will put the UK's security at risk. At the moment, British intelligence services enjoy privileged access to data sharing within the EU. This arrangement, would cease if we left the EU. By being able to share intelligence so closely, it strengthens our ability to defend ourselves from terrorism and other breaches of our national security.
- By pooling sovereignty, the UK is able to exercise more global influence as part of the EU. They will point to the view of American President Barack Obama who



has publically said he wants the UK to stay part of Europe. Being part of the EU then makes us stronger as we can exercise more influence as an EU member than if we were alone.

- Leaving would be a step into the unknown. There is no way of knowing what leaving would actually mean for the UK. Therefore it is better to stay and work towards reform, than leave and risk our economic future.

### Key arguments from the Leave side

- The EU is nowhere near as transparent as it should be. While the European Parliament is elected, the European Commission is not. The problem here is that the Commission wields considerable power and influence yet is not held properly to account. The UK Parliament therefore does not exercise full and sovereign control because EU laws have to be followed by EU member states. This erosion of our national sovereignty means we should vote to leave in order to reassert the supremacy of the UK Parliament.
- While the UK might vote in the Council of Ministers but voting records show this vote is simply ignored. One report suggested in Cameron's first five years, his government was unable to stop a single EU measure being passed. If we leave the EU, our views on key issues will no longer be routinely ignored because true power and sovereignty will instead be transferred back to the UK Parliament.
- Another thorny issue but one that is nevertheless central to the Leave side is the question of immigration. The latest migration figures (February 2016, ONS Quarterly Statistics) showed net migration was 323,000 in the year up until September 2015. As part of the EU, the UK does not have enough control over its own borders. This is not about opposing immigration. But we should be able to control the number of people who come in. Until that control is regained, stopping the flow of migrants will not be possible.
- Then there are all the other countries who have made such a success of going it alone. Norway, for example, is not part of the EU but still enjoys trade deals with EU member states because they provide resources other nations need. Switzerland is another country in Europe that is not part of the EU but still enjoys bi-lateral trade agreements with member States. If these countries can prosper outside the EU, there is no reason why the same can't be true for the UK.
- Being an EU member brings financial responsibilities. Even though the UK has a rebate, the billions of pounds given to the EU project is unacceptable and leaving would allow that money to be invested at home. In 2015, the UK contributed £13billion to the EU. This money could be better spent within the UK. Some sources suggest in the next three years, the UK could be forced to pay even more to the EU.
- There is a push within the EU to introduce an EU armed forces. This is a threat to the excellence of the UK's own armed forces which are widely regarded across the globe. This push for an EU wide army is alarming and leaving would ensure the British military is protected.
- Britain is part of NATO and it is this worldwide coalition of international partners that keeps the UK safe, not the EU. Since our NATO membership is not dependent on being part of the EU, the Leave side will say it is wrong to claim leaving would be a security risk.

Under Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, (which came into force December 2009 and to which the UK is signed up) a nation who withdraws from the EU must then negotiate terms of leaving with the remaining states in a process that last for up to two years. No-one really knows exactly what that negotiation would look like, but the consensus leans towards the fact it will take considerable time.

### Conclusion

All of us need to consider prayerfully what decision we will make. Certainly we think you should engage with this referendum experience. For many voters, this will be the first time they have had the chance to have their say on the UK's EU membership. In due course we will be providing pieces from both sides which we will host here on our website. Where we can, we will also point to useful articles from both sides of the debate that we think will help inform your view.



