

A two-tier EU? The sooner the better – we've nothing to fear

The prospect of exclusion from the inner councils of Brussels has always been used by federalists as a means of promoting greater integration. It is an empty threat

While rabid federalists – led, regrettably, by Lib Dem MEP Andrew Duff – try to amend the flawed Lisbon Treaty to make it referendum-proof and permit the almost automatic transfer of sovereignty to the EU, some Europhiles are being encouraged to fear that the Brussels response to the eurozone crisis is going to result in what is referred to as a two-tier EU.

The worry among the EU-inclined political classes in non-euro countries such as Poland, Denmark and Sweden (and it has been voiced in the UK) is that attempts to shore up the doomed single currency through greater financial, economic, fiscal and political integration among its 17 members will result in a dramatic loss of influence on EU policy of those countries sensible enough to steer clear of the euro so far.

Indeed, although the populations in Denmark and Sweden do not want the euro, their centre-right coalition governments are suggesting that they must embrace it so as to avoid being locked out of EU decision-making. How long will it be before UK federalists will be suggesting that we will only be “saved” if we join the euro

and harmonise? All this, of course, plays to the underlying agenda of the European project, which is to create a continent-wide superstate.

As President Klaus of the Czech Republic pointed out recently:

“By using the economic and financial crisis of 2008-2009 and the subsequent crisis of the euro in 2010 – still continuing – it gave them [EU leaders] a wonderful excuse to get back to pushing forward with the further deepening of European integration.

“The Brussels summit on 25th March was not about anything else but the further integration of Europe towards fiscal union. Sooner or later, this will be followed by other developments. Where an EFU [European fiscal union] has been agreed, an EPU is the final stage – European political union.”

Of course, raising the fear of “exclusion” has always been a favourite propaganda tool of the Eurocracy in its mad drive to destroy national sovereignty. Governments across Europe too weak or too lacking in confidence (or competence) to risk standing on their own feet have been bullied into the anxiety of being left outside the the Euro-core. Yet in truth, it is a fear without foundation – at least

in the case of the UK. As *eurofacts* has made blindingly obvious, we derive no benefit from EU membership and, in fact, from almost every point of view, we would be better off out.

So let them construct their two-tier Europe. Let those countries that want to jump aboard the sinking ship of the euro and embrace economic and political union get on with it. The UK will not notice the difference, since we have little influence in the councils of Brussels anyway – as the farrago of “common foreign policy” towards Libya has shown.

We simply need to make it clear that we will not participate in the bail-out of crumbling euro economies, that we care nothing for the European Central Bank, we will not submit our budgets for scrutiny and we will not brook any fiscal or economic harmonisation.

The federalists are wrong. With the growing tide of Euroscepticism across the continent, any greater integration will serve to hasten the demise of the EU. The “inner tier” trap for its unfortunate members will ultimately bring the house down. If we lack the courage to pull out now, we must at least remain firmly in the outer tier: withdrawal will be done for us.

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How they plan ‘federal’ political parties

A subscriber to eurofacts asked us to explain a proposal that foreign political parties should be allowed to take part in any UK referendum on Europe. In fact, this is just the start of a federalist plan presented to the European Parliament to create transnational political parties to promote the EU and fight elections

On 8th February this year, the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament submitted for debate a report aimed at a further weakening of the nation state by creating and obtaining public finance for pan-European political parties to fight EU elections.

Here are some extracts from the report, beginning with the committee’s rationale for “reform”:

It is of the utmost importance that the European political parties that promote democracy in the Union are awarded a common and uniform legal status. The adoption of a European statute based on the EU law seems more important than ever for the parties in order to achieve their respective goals. The European political parties should possess a legal personality in order to bridge the wide gap between the fiscal treatment of the European political parties and that applied to the European Institutions.

The rapporteur strongly welcomes the establishment of a special and uniform European legal form for the European political parties for the reasons especially of organisational and fiscal convergence...

The legal personality and the common European statute of European political parties will further give space to the adoption of a transnational list of Members of the European Parliament... Creating a transnational party system is yet difficult but currently the circumstances are more mature than before. The first step should be the legal personality and the European statute of the European

political parties with the step of the adoption of a transnational list of MEPs to be elected to follow...Funds for European political parties should be approved by means of an award decision with the procedure being streamlined...

The motion submitted for debate:

Notes that political parties – and their linked political foundations and political institutions – work in a parliamentary democracy as “conveyor belts”, helping to shape the political will of citizens, drawing up political programmes, training and selecting candidates, maintaining the dialogue with citizens and enabling citizens to express their views;

Notes that the European political parties, as they stand, are not in a position to fully play this role because they are merely the umbrella organisations of national parties and not directly in touch with the electorate in the Member States;

Is convinced that authentic legal status for the European political parties and a legal personality of their own, based directly on the law of the EU, will enable the European political parties to act as representative agents of the European public interest;

Takes the view that the European political parties should interact and compete in a three-level approach: regionally, nationally and internationally; considers that in a period of crisis, it is of the utmost importance for political parties to be efficient and productive at both EU and Member State level;

Stresses that interaction of the European political parties involves the

adoption of a transnational party list; points out that without legal status there can be no prospect of adopting a transnational list of candidates for Parliament;

Is of the opinion that the creation of an additional constituency for elections to the European Parliament, formed of the whole territory of the European Union, and the setting up of transnational lists with candidates drawn from several Member States campaigning throughout the EU, would present a unique and “tailor-made” opportunity for the European political parties to be in the European public eye and get closer to European citizens;

Is therefore of the opinion that it would be helpful to create a new Title in the Financial Regulation dedicated especially to, and tailor-made for, the funding of European parties.

And on the specific subject raised by our subscriber, the committee, Points out that since 2008 European political parties have been entitled to use sums received as grants for “financing campaigns conducted... in the context of the elections to the European Parliament”... further points out, however, that they are prohibited from using these sums for financing “referenda campaigns”; considers that the reason for this is probably a concern that European parties and foundations could interfere in the domestic affairs of Member States; believes, however that, if European political parties are to play a political role at EU level, they should have the right to participate in such campaigns [on European issues].

Attractions of the EFTA option

A new publication from The Bruges Group discusses in detail what it considers to be the UK's easiest option for a life outside the EU. Entitled *EFTA or the EU*, the paper is written by Hugo Van Randwyck, a man with vast experience in industry and commerce who has carried out a range of studies investigating the various relationships Britain might have with its European neighbours.

This is the Executive Summary from the paper:

MORE JOBS are needed and switching to membership of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is the easiest option for creating one million new jobs. Membership of EFTA will also allow for the UK to become more democratic.

EFTA is the European Free Trade Association, established in 1960, with Britain as a founding member, as a simple free trade area, where decisions are made by consensus, involving simple rules, and allowing each country to run its own affairs.

Britain left EFTA in 1972 to join the EEC (the European Economic Community), which went on to

become the EU (European Union). EFTA is still going, and going strong. EFTA countries include, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Lichtenstein, and they all have good trading relations with countries in the EU, and in fact are involved in "decision shaping" in the EU. The unemployment rates of the EFTA states have been around 2 per cent to 4 per cent, even during the recession. EFTA states Norway and Switzerland have given their people a say, through referenda on whether to join the EU or keep their current arrangements. On all occasions the EU was rejected.

There are two options for being a member of EFTA and trading freely with the countries in the EU. The first is EFTA/EEA. EEA is the European Economic Area, which gives members, free movement of: goods, services, capital and people. The EEA is economic not political. Britain is already in the EEA. The other option is an EFTA/bilateral agreement, which Switzerland has, which is a series of agreements covering goods, services, capital and people movement, and took from 1992 to 2002 to negotiate and then implement.

This paper favours the EFTA/EEA option as the option that would give the most benefits in the shortest possible

time, and likely get the most votes in a referendum, and be the easiest to implement, since Britain is already in the EEA it would only take weeks to implement.

What would be the benefits of joining EFTA?

The changes would include:

- New regulations per year: EFTA = 300, EU = 1,000-plus;
- Financial Contributions: EFTA = £3.9 billion, EU = £6 billion and rising;
- Running own farming again, i.e. No Common Agricultural Policy;
- Running own fisheries, i.e. No Common Fisheries Policy and return of the UK's fishing waters;
- Full responsibility for Justice and Home Affairs.

So how would the new jobs be created? A reduction from 1,000 to 300 regulations per year is a 70 per cent reduction. Since EU regulations are estimated at 5 per cent of GDP, this would be comparable to a massive tax cut on business, equivalent to about 3.5 per cent of GDP for businesses and other organisations; thus making exporters competitive in more sectors.

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To obtain the full paper EFTA or the EU, visit the Bruges Group website at www.brugesgroup.com/EFTAorTheEU.pdf

Big Brussels could soon be watching you

THE GOVERNMENT has revealed that it is considering making the personal details of UK air passengers available to the police forces of the EU member states. Following proposals by the European Commission, telephone numbers, addresses, credit card details and email addresses could be handed over.

Responding to a written question from independent Labour Peer Lord Stoddart of Swindon, Baroness Neville-Jones, Minister of State at the Home Office, confirmed that after Parliamentary scrutiny and discussions with the devolved

administrations, "the Government will consider whether they wish to opt in to this measure".

Lord Stoddart, said: "I am astonished that the Government has not rejected the idea out of hand. The wholesale handing over of people's private addresses and credit card details to police forces in 26 member states, in the vague hope that the information might be used to combat terrorism, is utterly irresponsible. How could the security of such information ever be guaranteed after it has been so widely circulated?"

The proposal was outrageous, Lord Stoddart added.

Budget 2011: snippets from the small print

What has changed in the period between Chancellor George Osborne's Budget of June 2010 and the plans he announced last month – and what are the prospects for spending, debt and growth?

AT THE MACRO LEVEL, there are still no “cuts”. Government spending is forecast to rise year after year, though slowly, from £710 billion in the financial year 2011-12 to £764 billion in the financial year 2015-16 ¹.

THE annual difference between the amounts of Government spending and Government receipts, the “deficit”, is projected in Osborne II to be slightly lower for the 2011-12 year, £121 billion, than in Osborne's 22nd June 2010 Budget (“Osborne I”) ².

BY THE financial year 2015-16, in Osborne II, the national debt (public sector net borrowing) is forecast to be £1,323 billion (69.1 per cent of nominal GDP), slightly worse, by £7 billion, than forecast in Osborne I ³.

NATIONAL DEBT is forecast in Osborne II to increase year on year from £888 billion in March 2011 to £1,323 billion in March 2016 ³.

IN OSBORNE II, defence spending is forecast to shrink from £38 billion in financial year 2010-11 to £33.4 billion in financial year 2014-15 ⁴.

IN OSBORNE II, Foreign and

Commonwealth Office spending is forecast to shrink drastically, by 43 per cent, from £2.3 billion in the financial year 2010-11 to £1.3 billion in the year 2014-15. This massive cut presumably reflects a conscious decision by the Coalition to outsource more and more of British foreign policy to the EU's “External Action Service” ⁴.

IN OSBORNE II, spending on international development is forecast to increase by 52 per cent, from £7.5 billion in 2010-11 to £11.4 billion in 2014-15⁴.

IN OSBORNE II, over the seven-year period 2009-2015 inclusive, world GDP is forecast to grow on average at 3.7 per cent p.a., compared with 0.9 per cent p.a. for eurozone GDP⁵.

THE WRITER calculates that, if eurozone GDP is assumed – generously – to account for 15 per cent of world GDP, the average rate of growth in the GDP of the world outside the eurozone is 4.2 per cent p.a., in other words 4.7 times faster than the GDP of the eurozone.

IN OSBORNE II, market gilt rates are forecast to increase by more than a

third, from 3.8 per cent in the financial year 2010-11 to 5.1 per cent in the year 2015-16 ⁶.

IN OSBORNE II, the euro/sterling exchange rate is forecast to change very little from its current devalued rate of approximately £1 = €1.16 ⁶.

DESPITE the substantial devaluation of sterling in 2008, Osborne II forecasts no significant reduction in the balance of payments current account until 2015 ⁵.

References

Budget 2011, HC 836:
www.hm-treasury.co.uk
>Home>Budget>2011Budget Documents>
“2011budget_complete.pdf”.
References below are to this document.

- 1 Table 2.3, p 47
- 2 Charts 1 & 2, p 6
- 3 Calculated from Table 1.3 on p 24 1
- 4 Table C.2 on p 91
- 5 Table C.1 p 90
- 6 Table C.2 p 91

Ian Milne

Director, Global Britain

How the EU is getting it wrong on farm and food prices

NORFOLK farmer and East of England MEP Stuart Agnew has accused the EU of contradictory policies creating major increases in costs for British farmers. In a European Parliament debate, Mr Agnew said that while food prices were rising, farmers in many sectors, including pig meat, beef, sheep meat and eggs, were seeing a drop in the value of their produce while their costs were rising steeply. Other sector prices were either unchanged or showing only

marginal increases. He said many farmers “will either succeed in claiming higher prices from the retailers or they will cease production.” The EU response was to make it “unnecessarily expensive to import non-GM soya beans and to “charge farmers a global warming levy on their electricity bills.” Mr Agnew added that the EU policy of increasing public subsidy of organic farming “will lead to a reduction in food supplies.”

Stopping this bizarre European court

Gerard Batten MEP argues it is time for the Prime Minister to put his money where his mouth is and take a simple step to remove us from the remit of a body whose decisions, he says, make him ill

Prime Minister David Cameron has made much of his opposition to the European Convention on Human Rights and the increasingly bizarre decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. Most recently Mr Cameron has said that certain of its decisions made him “physically ill to contemplate”.

The whole issue of Britain’s membership of the Convention would seem to be in question in Mr Cameron’s mind. He gives the impression that he wants to do something to rectify the situation: perhaps, withdraw from the Convention, repeal the Human Rights Act? That remains to be seen, but there is something concrete, simple and immediate that he can do to alleviate the situation.

The European Union intends to

accede to the European Convention of Human Rights now that it is a legal entity (a de facto political state) in its own right. Article 6(2) of the Lisbon Treaty states, “*the Union shall accede to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*”. Article 218(8) of the of the TFEU states, “*the Council shall act unanimously for the agreement of the accession to the Convention.*” The key word is “unanimous”.

The legal documentation necessary for the EU to accede to the Convention is being drawn up and should be completed by the end of June. It will then be submitted to the European Council (heads of EU member state governments) for a vote.

If it is adopted then Britain will be further bound and enthralled to the

Convention by our membership of the EU. Mr Cameron can prevent this by the simple expedient of ensuring that the UK votes “No”, so that under the unanimity rule it could not then be adopted.

When the matter comes before the Council after June Mr Cameron can put his money where his mouth is, and perhaps move up from politician to statesmen. Will he do it

I wrote to him on 7th March laying out the situation. The *Daily Express* printed the story on 8th March. I suggest that as many people as possible write to Mr Cameron asking him to ensure that the UK Government votes “No”. We can then see how sincere he is and whether he has any real will to protect our country from the EU.

Gerard Batten is UKIP MEP for London

EP tries to tip bond market over sovereign debt

In the desperate attempts to come to grips with the sovereign debt overload that threatens to bring down the euro, the European Parliament is trying to rig the bond market by creating an alternative to the big three rating agencies that influence what interest rates are paid by countries with failing economies.

The Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee is proposing the creation of European rating agencies, presumably in the hope that they could be persuaded to pitch their analyses of national debt prospects to be more generous than those of Fitch, Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s.

At the same time, Socialists on the committee want to go further and

legally reduce the ability of the big international credit rating agencies to make judgements as to the level of interest rates that should apply to the sovereign debt of various countries.

The committee is also exploring ways of making it possible to make agencies legally responsible for their ratings and to force them to explain them.

Its resolution calls on the Commission to identify ways in which the agencies could be held liable under member states’ civil law. The document suggests that all registered credit rating agencies should assess the accuracy of their past credit ratings and make their assessments available to supervisors, and that the European Markets and Securities Authority should be

empowered to conduct unannounced checks on those assessments.

The committee wants greater transparency about the ways in which agencies arrive at their opinions and proposes that more documentation be provided to supervisors. It asks the Commission to investigate the possibility of requiring the use of two obligatory ratings – of which, naturally, “the more conservative one would serve for regulatory oversight”.

As the debt crisis worsens and the Eurocracy fumbles and fiddles in its habitual failure to reach agreement as to what should be done, the usual response seems set to come into play: change the ground rules and hope the problem will go away.

Why euro's prospects are even dimmer

After they created the mess with the eurozone's fiscal problems, the big countries came up with a "solution" – a bailout fund for rescuing the defaulted states, although bailout of bankrupt countries is illegal under the current legislation of the EU. Now a change in the Lisbon Treaty is being put forward, aiming at legalising the bailout fund, the so-called ESM (European Stability Mechanism).

The rescue fund itself (ESM) will have a capital of €700 billion. The initial proposal was to allocate the capital on a formula based on population and GDP – meaning that the poorest countries would pay the most as a share of GDP, while the richest would pay least. It was only after strong opposition by the new member states that a small and temporary concession was made. During the first 12 years of eurozone membership for the countries with less than 75 per cent of average GDP, the weight of population will be 12.5 per cent instead of 50 per cent.

However, even under the new system the poor countries will pay more as a share of GDP, and this problem will be exacerbated after the 12-year transitional period. Twelve years are not enough for the poor to become rich.

Rather paradoxically, the poorest members of the eurozone will pay the most as a share of GDP – and this money will save some of the richest countries in the EU such as Ireland, Belgium, Spain, etc. It will be even more paradoxical if poorer countries enter the eurozone – such as Romania, Bulgaria and Latvia. The poorest will come to the rescue of the richest!

The financing mechanism of the ESM is in no way linked to the risk of one

country needing assistance. In fact, the countries with the smaller government debt such as Estonia and Bulgaria (which are least likely to default), will pay most as a share of GDP in the rescue fund. That is, the allocation of capital is not only unjust to the poorer countries – it punishes the prudent countries, which have to increase significantly their debts in order to contribute their share to the fund.

At the same time, the countries with the largest government debt will pay the least. For example, the share of Bulgaria in a 50-50 weight of population and GDP is about €6.1 billion – or about 17 per cent of GDP. Countries such as Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and Finland will have a 3 per cent to 5 per cent share of GDP. In practice, this is an "entry fee" for membership of the eurozone, i.e. an additional criterion to the candidates.

It is unclear why the ESM is being established, when the International Monetary Fund can adequately fulfil this role. Moreover, the rescue fund of the eurozone is being used for political goals, for example the pressure by France against the low corporate tax in Ireland.

But the ESM financing is not the only problem. In parallel, the pact for the euro is being developed and the countries outside of the eurozone were not invited to the discussions in any way. Despite this, there is a huge political pressure on them to announce that they "voluntarily" join the pact for the euro.

Apparently, the pact for the euro breaches the principles of equality in the EU, because the opinion of the new member states was not taken into consideration. It is also being used for

imposing policies that are harmful to the poor states and detrimental for achieving high economic growth.

The pact for the euro includes coordination and harmonisation of taxes, which has nothing to do with the stability of the euro, and is promoted mainly by France with its wish to prohibit low taxes.

We already have experience with the harmonisation of indirect taxes, which demonstrates clearly how the same minimal rate is appropriate for a rich country like Germany, but it is extremely heavy for a poor country as Bulgaria.

For a German, a 30-40 cent tax on a litre of fuel is negligible, while for a Bulgarian this is a huge sum with an average salary of €300 a month. It is not coincidental that the high excise duties on fuel and cigarettes create problems with smuggling and the grey economy in the poor countries.

In short, both the ESM and the pact for the euro are a real burden for the poorer EU member states and they significantly decrease their incentives to join the eurozone.

The new member states are gradually taking Sweden's route. According to Eurobarometer surveys, the popular support for joining the eurozone is dwindling in these countries, while trust in local currencies is rising (especially if it's a stable one as in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic).

Georgi Angelov

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This edited extract from a policy brief series is a product of the European Policies Initiative of the Institute, www.eupi.eu

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UK referendum on Electoral Reform (AV) **5th May**

Poland takes over EU Council Presidency **1st July**

2012

Denmark takes over EU Council Presidency **1st January**

Cyprus takes over EU Council Presidency **1st July**

2013

Ireland takes over EU Council Presidency **1st January**

Lithuania takes over EU Council Presidency **1st July**

2014

Greece takes over EU Council Presidency **1st January**

USEFUL WEB SITES

British Declaration of Independence

www.bdicampaign.org

British Gazette

www.britishgazette.co.uk

British Weights & Measures Assoc.

www.bwmaOnline.com

Bruges Group

www.brugesgroup.com

Campaign Against Euro-Federalism

www.caef.org.uk

Campaign for an Independent Britain

www.euro sceptic.org.uk

Democracy Movement

www.democracymovement.org.uk

EU Observer

www.euobserver.com

EU Truth

www.eutruth.org.uk

European Commission (London)

www.ccc.org.uk

European Foundation

www.europeanfoundation.org

European No Campaign

www.europeannocampaign.com

EU Referendum Capaign

www.eureferendumcampaign.com

Freedom Association

www.tfa.net

Global Britain

www.globalbritain.org

Global Vision

www.global-vision.net

June Press (Publications)

www.junepress.com

Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign

www.lesc.org.uk

New Alliance

www.newalliance.org.uk

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www.openeurope.org.uk

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www.regionalassemblies.co.uk

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www.sovereignty.org.uk

Statewatch

www.statewatch.org

Team

www.teameurope.info

The Taxpayers' Alliance

www.taxpayersalliance.com

United Kingdom Independence Party

www.ukip.org

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The European Superstate
by David Brown. **£6.99**

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Britain Abolished

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Bloodless Revolution

by Vernon Coleman. **£4.99**

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