

Cameron, spin and EU migration

Yesterday's *Daily Telegraph* featured an article claiming that our Prime Minister had secured "a major victory in Brussels." "David Cameron secures tougher immigration restrictions on new EU numbers" said the headline. Has he finally persuaded the other 27 members of the EU to confine one of the Single Market's cherished "four freedoms" – the free movement of people – into the dustbin?

Far from it. All the Prime Minister had succeeded in accomplishing was an agreement for tougher "transitional measures" when a country joins the EU. In other words, there will be a longer break between a country joining the EU and the westward trek of substantial numbers of their population. This, to put it bluntly, is something of a pyrrhic victory. No new countries are expected to join the EU before 2020, by which time David Cameron may not be Prime Minister anyway – indeed, the UK may have voted to leave by then, in which case the whole issue may be irrelevant.

Furthermore, the combined population of Serbia, Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro, all of which aspire to EU membership, amounts to a mere 17 million – less than the population of Romania and less than half the population of Poland.

So Cameron has done nothing either to end the principle of free movement of people nor to address the massive problems that the last 10 years of EU migration is causing. For Downing Street on Wednesday to say that the tiny concession he has wrung from the Commission was a "success" is pure spin.