

More University bias

After reporting the appalling bias of Dr Tony Arnold of Birmingham University, we have recently been sent another illustration of the way our universities are trying to manipulate the student vote. Our correspondent has requested anonymity, so the identity of the university in question has been withheld.

In this instance, the culprit was the Vice Chancellor, no less. *"I have been speaking out on the benefits that being part of the EU brings to us,"* he wrote. *"This view is shared by the national representative body for universities, Universities UK. We take this position because we recognise the enormous value of the partnerships: the free movement of talented students and staff through EU-funded schemes such as Erasmus and the access to the research community and sources of research funding that membership of the EU can offer."*

Then follows some statistics: *"More than 125,000 EU students study at UK universities and 15% of academic staff working at UK universities are from other EU countries. This is hugely beneficial nationally to the success of the UK's knowledge-based economy and to our success as a leading research and teaching institution. It is also invaluable in enabling the creation of the diverse cultural, social and intellectual mix here at the univeristy of Xxxxxxx. Here at Xxxxxxx, in the past five years, 18% of our research funding has come from European sources and this has supported more than £58 million of research activity here. "*

This is rather a distortion of the picture. No one is suggesting that withdrawal from the EU means withdrawal from the Erasmus scheme. A quick glance at the flags on the home page of the Erasmus website indicates that several non-EU countries participate. Why shouldn't an independent UK continue to support it too? This also applies to wider co-

operation with universities, not just within the EU. Any idea that leaving the EU means that the UK will pull up some sort of academic drawbridge is a caricature of the reality.

What is more to the point is that, as with so many other pro-EU statements, the Vice Chancellor's statement does not even touch on the EU's *raison d'être*. It is a project to create a federal superstate. The benefits (or otherwise) to our universities of EU membership are very secondary issues compared with whether we want the democratic institutions of our nation to be hollowed out and, to quote Ken Clarke, our Westminster Parliament reduced to "just a council chamber in Europe."

Still considering that the recent government booklet makes no mention of the critical subject of sovereignty, can we be suprised that a leading academic has adopted the same strategy? Europhiles will talk about anything except what the EU project was been designed to do.

Across the Channel, a few people on the Continent are prepared to be honest about the objective of the EU, but such openness looks to be very much the exception here.