

# Nothing is rosy in the “Remain in the EU” camp

Talks of a split in the “Leave” camp following the launch of two competing pro-withdrawal organisations, [leave.eu](#) and [vote.leave](#), in recent weeks is not exactly the sort of news those of us supporting independence from Brussels want to see splashed all over the media. Of course, there is a long way to go and many alliances will be made before the official “Leave” campaign receives its *imprimatur* from the Electoral Commission.

On Monday 12th, however, it was the turn of the “Remain” campaign in the spotlight and it wasn’t a particularly impressive show. The main speaker at the launch of *Britain Stronger in Europe* was Sir Stuart Rose, the former Chairman of Marks & Spencer. Being a businessman, he talked much about trade – the world’s largest free trade area, the significant volume of exports to the EU and so on. We were told that “a range of experts” linked three million jobs to our trade with the EU. Hang on, haven’t we heard this canard before?

This is a defence not of EU membership but of the Single Market which, of course, we would still have access to if we replaced our EU membership with membership of the single market. *Flexcit* proposes that through EEA and EFTA, the European Free Trade Association, we would still have access to the Single Market but would not be subject to the European Court of Justice or to the EU anti-competitive tariff walls. We could negotiate our own trade arrangements and would not be compelled to put every piece of EU legislation onto our statute books – a real win/win situation. For the umpteenth time, there would be no job losses. Jobs would increase as our exports outside the EU accelerated beyond the current 63% of our total exports.

A pre-released version of the speech contained several references to supporters of withdrawal as “Quitters”, but for some reason, Mr Rose did not actually use the term in the speech. He also stated that Britain’s EU membership was worth “around £480 million a year” to each British household. A few hours earlier, he had said £450 per year. *Confusion worse confounded!* The real cash direct cost paid by the UK will be £13.5 billion+ (Over £400 per second.)

Furthermore, what’s wrong with quitting something in favour of something better? Did anyone deride AFC Bournemouth, Norwich City and Watford as “quitters” when they gained promotion from the Championship to the Premier League? Let’s face it, even by Rose’s admission, the EU is not the Premier League. He said lots of good things about our country and there were Union Jacks all over the place at the official launch, but by contrast, he admitted that the EU was deficient – in need of reform. That has, however, been steadfastly been refused for over years. Indeed, the EU just grabs more and more power away from the member states. Lisbon was the last straw.

What is particularly sinister about Mr Rose’s decision to spearhead the campaign is that, until recently, he appeared to be somewhat less enthusiastic about the EU. A few months ago, he said it was nonsense to suggest businesses would quit Britain if it was not in the EU. Today, however, he played the fear card, talking of withdrawal as a “leap into the unknown”. What is unknown about functioning as a sovereign independent state once again? We did very well until 1973 and the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan are still working very well without being part of a supra-national empire. Did Singapore take “a leap into the unknown” when it was expelled from the Malaysian Federation in 1965? Perhaps, but it has never looked back – its citizens enjoy greater prosperity and freedom than their Malaysian counterparts.

The European project, an attempt to weld a group of very diverse nations into a single political entity, is is the leap

into the unknown – and one which has already caused immense suffering in countries like Greece Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland.

The other speakers weren't particularly impressive either. Baroness Brady, a Tory peer and successful businesswoman said that, "we cannot cope on our own in a very tough market." What an unpatriotic, negative loser! We are the sixth largest economy in the world. The idea that we need those kindly Brussels bureaucrats to hold our hand in this big, frightening world because we are so incapable on our own is, frankly, risible.

Of course, for big businessmen like Sir Stuart Rose, who have benefitted from the pool of cheap EU labour, the EU has been a good thing. The army of lobbyists in Brussels have done much to oil the wheels of the EU machinery in favour of the big multi-nationals, but it hasn't done much for the rest of us. And herein lies the weakness of the "remain" message. Rose speaks nonsense. A patriot is someone who feels positive about their country, not a negative loser.

The "leave" camp has many excellent arguments for leaving. The CIB and other like-minded groups are the true, positive patriots, with an exciting vision for our country's future.

Photo by NHS Confederation

