

Paterson: Leave is the safe option

One bright spot in what hasn't been a particularly encouraging week for "leave" campaigners was yesterday's speech by Rt Hon Owen Paterson entitled *The future of Europe*

Mr Paterson spelt out what both "leave" and "remain" would look like in 2020. "Remain" would not be a vote for any sort of status quo. "To remain is a leap in the dark, It is a commitment to an undefined relationship to a completely new country", he emphasised. "You may not like the EU you have got now. you will like the new one even less." He went on to mention how the Eurozone countries were determined to forge ahead with closer political union. This would leave the UK out on a limb, not part of the Eurozone but sufficiently interlinked that "it is inevitable that its decisions will have an impact on us." Paterson goes on to question the validity of the Cameron deal and calls it "the worst of both worlds" adding that "The Prime Minister's second-tier 'associate membership' or 'special status' is an ill-defined sham.."

He goes on to warn us not to repeat the mistake of the 1975 referendum. "Don't be fooled again" – a message the electorate needs to be told over and over again.

By contrast, Leave is called "the safe, bright, optimistic choice" and Paterson goes on to explain why. Following on from the Obama visit and the focus on the trade issue, he points out that "The EU is a lousy negotiator of free trade deals. It moves as fast as the slowest lame donkey in the caravan – the deal with the US is holding up a deal with China, in turn holding up a deal with India. Free from the EU we will be able to strike our own bilateral deals as other countries like New Zealand do." He points out the often overlooked role of global

organisations in world trade.

However the issue on which Paterson provides far more detail than most other recent politicians on the “leave” side is how we would leave. He rightly points out that withdrawal is a process not an event and life on the day after we leave won’t be that different from before. “We can leave the political arrangements of the Union and still enjoy access to the market”, he points out. Yes indeed, Mr Paterson. You have hit the nail on the head. We cannot jeopardise our access to the EU’s Single Market. It needs replacing with something better in the long term, but it is too important a market for our exporters to be put in jeopardy during the post-Brexit period.

A few more speeches by leading pro-leave politicians on these lines are sorely needed.