

# That speech six months on

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In David Cameron's speech to the Confederation of British Industry last November, he set a benchmark for his negotiations with the EU. The reasons for the current "fear" campaign becomes apparent if you compare Cameron's stated objectives an what he actually achieved.

Here are a few examples:-

**"...reducing the pressures that we face through immigration."** It soon became apparent that any hopes of any exemption for the UK from the "free movement of people" principle was going to be a non-starter. The best Cameron could achieve was to claim to have agreed an "emergency brake" on welfare payments to new migrants. All this amounts to in reality is availing ourselves of a 22-year-old provision written in the European Economic Area Agreement, fiddling with minor provisions in existing EU law which now need European Parliament approval and which can be overturned at a drop of a hat.

**"...making sure we're out of an ever-closer union."** We already have opt-outs from both Schengen and the Euro – the two motors of ever-closer union. Did Mr Cameron's "deal" strengthen those opt-outs? Not according to many legal experts. The Lawyers for Britain group says that "Ever Closer Union" will remain in the treaty and the summit deal makes no difference to the UK's legal obligations."

**"....proper fairness between those in the eurozone and those out of the eurozone."** Similar issues apply here. In a speech last month, Owen Paterson MP said "if we Remain, we will be excluded from the very "top tables" in Brussels where the key decisions are taken by Eurozone members. They call it a "lasting settlement" in which "Continued allegiance would be required, but political engagement would be reduced."

Mr Cameron did make one statement with which we would agree:-  
**"Some people seem to say that really Britain couldn't survive, couldn't do okay outside the European Union. I don't think that is true. Let's be frank, Britain is an amazing country. We have got the fifth biggest economy in the world. We are a top ten manufacturer, growing steadily strong financial services. The world wants to come and do business here, look at the record of inward investment. Look at the leaders beating a path to our door to come to see what's happening with this great country's economy."** Absolutely! However, we haven't heard anything anything remotely as positive as this from him recently. He warned that Islamic State and Vladimir Putin would both welcome Brexit. Big deal. So would John Howard, the former Australian Prime Minister, who said that he would have voted for Brexit. Cameron also recently warned of the threat of war if we vote to leave.

However, when he said that **"If I can't achieve them {i.e., these objectives}, I rule nothing out"**, it was obvious that this didn't include campaigning to leave the EU, for he completely misrepresented the safest exit route and one which would have achieved all his objectives, the Norway option:-

**"They pay more per head into the European Union than we do."** WRONG! One study suggests that Norway pays £1.66 per head of population per annum to access the EEA. Our net EU contribution is much higher, over £100 per head of population per year.

**"They don't have a seat at the table to determine what the rules are."** WRONG! Norway doesn't have a final vote, but it is consulted in the framing of EEA-relevant legislation, so it DOES have a "seat at the table". Furthermore, it only has to apply barely 25% of all EU legislation. The rest, not marked EEA-relevant, doesn't apply .

**"It is not a good deal."** But it is vastly better than EU membership. Norway is outside of the Common Agricultural and

Common Fisheries policies, it is not subject to the European Court of Justice. if the Eurzone or an EU Member state got into financial difficulties, Norway wouldn't have to pay a single øre, but we would.

In summary. Mr Cameron came back with nothing of any substance. Given that polling suggested that many swing voters would base their final decision on how successful his negotiations were, he knew that he had to divert attention away from his failure in Brussels. With no sign of the Leave side building up a lead, in the polls, maybe it's time to return the focus of the referendum campaign to this dodgy "deal."