

# Ten answers to ten questions

The “Remain” camp will be seeking to probe all the “leave” campaigns and to pick holes in their strategies. However, there is only a finite number of questions they can ask. *British Influence* has probably covered most of them in a recent 10-point challenge to us all. Here, below are their questions with replies from Dr Richard North, which show that a well-thought-out leave strategy is on the one hand essential, but on the other, fully able to address our enemies’ challenges.

## **1. What would the Eurosceptic ideal arrangement between the UK and the EU look like and how realistic is it possible to achieve?**

There is no ideal arrangement. We have never pretended that there was one, and it is facile even to suggest that there should be one. Essentially, after nine treaties and more than 40 years of political and economic integration, there can be no optimum or “ideal” mechanism for leaving the EU.

Nor is it possible or even advisable to specify precisely which arrangement might be best or most realistic for the circumstances, when the outcome depends on negotiations between parties. We thus suggest a series of options in our Flexcit plan, any one of which, if adopted, will permit a trouble-free exit as part of an overall process which involves six measured steps to freedom.

The real issue then is whether it is possible to develop a good working relationship with the EU once we have left it. The answer to that is an unequivocal yes, with every reason to believe that this would be beneficial to the UK and EU member states.

## **2. Every successful arrangement with the EU to allow countries outside of it access to the Single Market has included freedom**

**of movement – how would we arrange access to the Single Market without agreeing to freedom of movement?**

Under the options available to us, we would compromise on freedom of movement for the purposes of retaining access to the Single Market, pending a longer-term resolution. We recognise that Brexit is a process rather than an event, and the immediate goal of leaving the EU is best served by the continued adoption of freedom of movement, to allow for a staged exit.

In the interim, we would take such measure as are permitted under current agreements to restrict migrant flows, by administrative and other means. This would include dealing with non-EU measures which permit or facilitate third-country immigration.

**3. Article 50 stipulates a two-year timeline for exiting the EU. However, the Swiss deal with the EU took almost ten years to agree. How would we avoid any post-Brexit arrangement taking as long as the Swiss deal did?**

We do not endorse the “Swiss option”. The reason we propose the EFTA/EEA (“Norway”) option is that it is a well-established off-the-shelf option and the best for a rapid exit, within the two-year Article 50 period.

Should the Norway option not be accessible, there are other off-the-shelf options available, allowing considerable negotiating flexibility. There are no good reasons, therefore, why negotiations should not be completed within the two-year period.

**4. Won't the commercial interests of the remaining EU countries take precedence for them over giving Britain “a good deal” post-Brexit?**

Article 50 prescribes that Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with the departing State, setting out the

arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union. International law and the rules of the Union require that the negotiation shall be carried out in good faith.

Within the framework of the negotiation, we are conscious that the legitimate concerns and needs of all parties must be respected. We also understand that the Union cannot, for its own purposes, offer the UK a better deal that it could secure through membership of the EU. Our plan, therefore, sets realistic objectives and ones which do not prejudice the survival of the EU or the commercial interests of its members.

**5. Won't the two-year (at minimum) period post-Brexit period see Parliament completely tied up in renegotiation with the EU to the detriment of all other legislation?**

The Article 50 negotiation is a matter between the European Council, with the European Commission, and the Member State government. Parliament is not directly involved in the negotiation.

We would expect Parliament to approve the Government's negotiating mandate, and to be informed as to its progress. There would also be some merit in the Houses establishing a joint, cross-party select committee to review and advise on the negotiations, and to report occasionally to both Houses. Any final agreement would also require the approval of both Houses, and possibly a referendum, which would also have to be authorised by Parliament.

The burden thus imposed, in total, would not be substantial and would be well within the capability of Parliament to accommodate without the allocation of any further resources.

Further, as a point of information, the UK would not formally leave the EU until the negotiation had been concluded, or the two-year period expired.

**6. Without the weight of the Single Market behind us, how will Britain avoid being in a poor bargaining position with countries like China, should they wish to come to the bargaining table in the first place?**

As regards existing trade deals, the UK will be in no worse position outside the EU than it will be in. It can rely on the legal assumption of continuity to ensure that it will continue to trade with third countries on the same basis as it did before it left.

As to trade generally, the “big bang” trade deals such as TTIP belong with the dinosaurs. They are expensive and time-consuming to negotiate and rarely deliver the benefits they claim.

The greatest growth in international trade is being achieved through innovative, flexible agreements such as the Partial Scope Agreements – and their equivalents which deal with technical barriers to trade – plus “unbundled” sector- and product-specific agreements, cast on a regional or global basis, without geographical anchorage.

The UK, freed from the encumbrance of the EU and the need to work within the constraints of 28-member “common positions” will be better able to partake in these innovative mechanisms, and improve its trading position far beyond that afforded by old-fashioned trade deals.

It would also be in a better position to broker deals between non-state actors, where growth potential is high, without being held back by the lethargic bureaucratic procedures of the EU.

**7. How could voters be persuaded that the more radical alternatives to EU membership wouldn't bring radical economic and political change with it that would disadvantage them?**

Political realities suggest that the more radical alternatives

would not arise. In our plan there are various fallback positions, some of which are sub-optimal for the time being, but hardly radical.

In any event, post-exit we will see the restoration of democratic controls over the legislative and treaty approval process. We expect Parliament to resume its historical function of reflecting the will of the people, and thus ensuring that undesirable and unasked-for changes are avoided – unlike at present, where the will of the people can be overturned by the undemocratic institutions of the European Union.

We do, however, recognise that there are weaknesses to our democratic system – in addition to those brought about by our membership of the EU – and thus propose as part of our exit plan reforms which will strengthen democratic control, and thereby better ensure that the wishes of the people are respected.

**8. Are those who wish Britain to leave the EU proposing open borders – or even significantly relaxed visa restrictions – with all Commonwealth countries, including some developing countries with massive populations, and in some cases large scale internal political problems, such as India, Pakistan and Nigeria?**

In our plan, we do not propose open borders – or even significantly relax visa restrictions – with any Commonwealth or any other third country. We would, however, seek to include mutually beneficial visa arrangements in any new trade deals, over which we would retain total control.

**9. During the two-year negotiation period that starts with the triggering of Article 50 post-referendum, wouldn't there be a large incentive for an unprecedented amount of EU citizens to emigrate to the UK while it was still legally possible?**

Since our plan retains freedom of movement provisions, there

would be no need for any citizen of any other EU Member State to make any special arrangements in seeking residential status in the UK as their rights and responsibilities will be largely unaffected by the UK leaving the EU. We expect EEA rights to be maintained.

However, it would be perfectly legitimate within the context of the Article 50 procedure, to negotiate a side deal on an intergovernmental basis, temporarily removing or modifying reciprocal establishment and citizenship rights, to pre-empt and thereby prevent migration surges.

#### **10. Are proponents of Brexit willing to remove a crucial aspect of the Northern Ireland peace process and risk Scotland leaving the UK in order to leave the EU?**

We think British Influence does a great disservice to all the players involved in the Northern Ireland peace process by pegging its success on the EU. Ultimately, devolution is helping to create a distinct governing body separate to London which will do more for peace.

As to Scotland, ironically, we would ask ten questions not entirely dissimilar to those pitched by British Influence. Those who say Scotland would break the Union should also read our Brexit plan in that they will find that breaking away from the UK is as politically and technically tricky as the UK leaving the EU.

The EU will likely reform on the basis of a two speed Europe to address the necessity for more economic governance over the eurozone. That is an inevitable consequence of currency union. Scotland using the pound means full separation is not a political reality. Thus, in most respects Scotland is as independent as it is ever going to be (give or take).