

The wrong lady

Such has been the frenzied level of debate about the merits of withdrawal from the EU this past week that all but the most ardent political anoraks may well have been tempted to switch off.

It is important, however, that anyone aspiring to see our country regain its independence keeps abreast with the debate, even though there have been so many barbs traded in recent days that it is impossible to summarise every development on this one website.

Two particular issues need addressing. The first concerns the threat by some French ministers to scap the Le Touquet Treaty, which alllows the UK to implement border controls in France. It's hardly surprising that the Mayor of Calais doesn't like this arrangement, as this has led to the creation of the so-called "jungle" on his doorstep. It's also no surprise that an ambitious minister like Emmanuel Macron should jump on the bandwagon and threaten that France could (note the word "could", not "would") pull out of the treaty if we withdrew from the EU.

The Le Touquet treaty was seen by both governments as the least bad way of addressing a situation which neither country really wanted. Its abolition wold be in no one's interests. If the French were to allow refugees to pass unhindered to an independent UK, we could repudiate the 1951 Convention on the Treatment of Refugees (and the 1967 Protocol), and also the European Convention on Human Rights, which would allow us to send them straight back on the next ferry or shuttle.

M. Hollande and his government want us to stay in for domestic reasons as much as anything else. He is not a popular president and a UK withdrawal would encourage Marine le Pen's *Front National* to exploit Hollande's unpopularity and offer

France an in/out referendum. Also, her party would be have been keen to exploit opposition to the Le Touquet Treaty, so it pays for Macron and co to claim this space first, even if all they intend to do is huff and puff.

A more serious issue is the claim by Philip Hammond that he intended to “smoke out” the Leave campaign and show that no independence scenario on offer is economically viable. In many ways, it is good that he has raised this issue so early in the campaign, as it gives us time to tighten up our act.

Predictably, the EEA/EFTA route, or rather the use of Norway as template, was a prime target. As always, the BBC provided a willing Norwegian whinger, this time in the shape of Erna Solberg, Norway’s Prime Minister, who said she would like her country to be in the EU because it “lacks influence”. The BBC, as always, spoke to the wrong woman. Solberg, like most of Norway’s political élite, is still wedded to the idea of EU membership, even though the majority of her coutrymen and women are not. She is therefore prepared to lie, keen to avoid Brexit as it would finally kill off any chance of her country ever joining the EU. The BBC should have instead spoken to Helle Hagenau of the Norwegian *nei til EU* campaign (depicted above), who wold have pointed out that Norway DOES have influence in the framing of EEA legislation, even if it does not have a final vote.

You will be able to hear Helle speak at our annual Rally on May 14th, but before then, you can read two helpful leaflets she and her team have written (See [here](#) and [here](#)). Furthermore, Anthony Scholefield has produced a detailed comparision of EEA membership and Norway’s relationship with the EU which features in our Referendum Review and which gives the lie to any sense that Norway has a worse deal by being out of the EU.

Norway has full representation on international bodies; it has to implement less than 1/3 of EU legislation – i.e., anything marked “EEA relevant” and if it refuses to do so, it cannot

be taken to court by the ECJ. Of course, using this option as a template for a newly-independent UK would require us to accept free movement of people. This isn't popular with some "leave" supporters, but it's still better than Cameron's so-called "deal" as we could invoke Articles 112-113 of the EEA agreement unilaterally rather than having to ask permission for all the other countries and we could keep these articles in force for as long as we want.

Furthermore, advocates of the EEA/EFTA route only see it as a stepping stone. fully admitting that it isn't ideal in the long term. When other supporters of "leave" say that we could do better than Norway, they are quite right, but reaching that point will take time. We need a safe route through the exit door first. For anyone wishing to find out more about the most detailed exit plan written thus far, you are welcome to attend the launch of the Leave Alliance on Wednesday 16th March. The strategy to be unveiled will answer all the issues which the "remain" camp have raised and thus enable us to concentrate on attacking the dodgy deal which our dodgy Prime Minister is trying to sell us as a full revision of the country's EU membership. It is nothing of the sort and the country needs to be made aware of this.