

## **Bill Cash MP: a message for Amsterdam**

*Bill Cash MP. 17.01.2013*

What is contained in this paper is the basis for a new positive relationship between the European nations. Certainly, it challenges the acceleration towards the federalising of the European system but this has been the cause of most of the problems which Europe is now experiencing such as low growth, riots, youth unemployment rising to over 50% and the rise of the Far Right not to mention the deliberate reduction in the powers of national Parliaments for whose members and whose governments people vote for in General Elections.

There is a determined attempt by the European elite to achieve equivalence between the European Parliament and the national Parliaments. It is impossible for Europe to be conducted on the basis of commensurate powers between the two and certainly not as respects the United Kingdom which must retain the primacy of its own Parliament.

What this paper examines is a means to better trading, more liberalisation, more growth, more jobs, more effective small and medium sized businesses, less regulation, greater opportunities for trading throughout the whole world, less centralisation, less domination by certain countries over others and greater democratic legitimacy and accountability in the hands of the voters and in the hands of national Parliaments.

Put together, all these would amount to greater stability in the European Union which is already experiencing instability and the increasing rise of the Far Right with all the dangers for the future that this contains. The aspirations of the federalists has become self-defeating and a destructive force leading to a compression chamber which has been increasingly generating tensions, disturbances and will soon either collapse or be replaced by a more centralised, less accountable system undermining freedom and democracy throughout the continent.

Freedom of choice in the ballot box and in the market place will lead to greater prosperity in the respective nation states working together for trade and political cooperation but without oppressive and ineffective European government. It is only this freedom which can generate growth which thereby pays for the public sector through reasonable taxation. Through the creation of prosperity, this will provide for the needs of the pensioners and those who genuinely cannot help themselves and those employed in essential public services, without unacceptable, inefficient and costly bureaucracy.

This is not an assault on European cooperation and trade – quite the opposite. It is a call for a new deal based on freedom, democracy and genuine accountability. Certainly we must argue against centralisation and deplore the democratic deficit of current European government. There is a positive way forward and we must pursue it.

European Commission President Barroso's vaunted 'Blueprint' of 28 November last year for a federal system in Europe and the support for this from President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy and the critical mass of Member States, led by Germany, has created a new and accelerated need for a fundamental change in Britain's relationship with the EU. Who governs Britain? This derives from the simple democratic principle of whether we are able to make our own laws in line with the wishes of the voters and what they vote for in

General Elections. This is the key reason why we need a Referendum and ahead of the European elections in 2014.

Directly related to this question is the increased determination by the EU, Germany and the other Member States to accelerate towards a federalised system, reflected in the European institution's assertions referred to in a series of documents from the EU. These include the conclusions of the European Council, which were signed off by the Prime Minister on 14<sup>th</sup> December. President Van Rompuy's final report states in respect of democratic legitimacy and accountability that, whereas the common interest of the EU must be duly taken into account, "yet national parliaments are not in the best position to take [the common interest of the union] into account fully." It goes on to assert in respect of inter-parliamentary relationships that "... further integration of policy making and a greater pooling of competences ... should first and foremost be accompanied with a commensurate involvement of the European Parliament." The Barroso Blueprint states that "The European Parliament and only it, is that assembly for the EU..." What this amounts to is a challenge to the United Kingdom Parliament and its primacy in relation to the United Kingdom, its electorate and the legislation which affects their daily lives, including the Single Market.

This accumulated trend is the key reason why we need a Referendum, and ahead of the European elections in 2014 because of the speed with which these matters are being taken forward within the EU. There should be a mandate referendum, not merely a minimalist referendum preceded by a wish-list for some repatriation. It should address the fundamental change in the relationship needed between the UK and the EU: "Do you want HM Government to negotiate a new relationship with the European Union based on trade and political cooperation?"

The new settlement must also deal effectively with the accumulated problems of the Single Market, now burdened with additional laws and rules which were never originally proposed. It was my fear this would happen under the Single European Act in 1986 which led to me put down an amendment to preserve Westminster sovereignty and which was refused.

We did, after all, agree to the European Communities Act 1972 on the absolute promise in the 1971 White Paper that we would retain the veto not only in our own vital national interest and without any erosion of our essential sovereignty, but also that to do otherwise would endanger the European Community itself. We have, in one Treaty after another, allowed the continuous reduction of the veto to the point of obliterating it into virtual non-existence. We have allowed more and more Qualified Majority Voting so that we are continuously either outvoted or driven into a forced consensus. In relation to Qualified Majority Voting, the Votewatch Europe report of July 2012 showed that the votes cast in favour by the United Kingdom in relation to all possible votes in favour between July 2009 and June 2012 was no less than 90.7%.

The overburdened Single Market is not delivering growth for our economy nor the reduction of our deficit, nor is it providing growth for the economies of the European Union. We cannot reduce our deficit because we cannot grow – and we cannot grow significantly because of EU overregulation. Germany has immense economic power and over the last 3 years has averaged a surplus with the Eurozone alone of €100bn. By contrast, we have a deficit of -£46bn, just under half of which is with Germany. Bear in mind that the German constitution prescribes in Article 23 of their Constitution "...the development of the European Union that

is committed to democratic, social and federal principles ...” The UK Parliament and people are not bound in the same way. We remain one of biggest net contributors to the EU at £8.1bn a year. In addition to making a fortune out of the EU through its export surplus, Germany is the third biggest recipient of EU structural funds, receiving €73bn from Brussels, €8.5bn of which came from the UK contribution.

We are told by Europhiles that EU renegotiation or exit would cut GDP by 2.25% but in fact former EU Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, admitted to the CBI that EU red tape costs about 4% of the EU’s GDP. Furthermore, a Treasury study under the last government reported that the total costs of EU membership amounted to 28% of UK GDP. That consisted of: 7% of GDP on EU protectionism, 12% of GDP on the competition gap with the US, 6% of GDP on EU overregulation, and 3% of GDP on transatlantic barriers to trade.

We are told by scaremongering Europhiles that certain polls showed that many voters think we would be worse off economically if we left the EU. However, the ComRes poll published this weekend shows that 63% want a referendum on “in-out” (17% against); 42% would vote to renegotiate, but not withdraw (with 31% against); 33% would vote to withdraw (42% to stay in). Crucially, 46% disagreed that the UK’s membership of the EU has delivered more benefits than advantages (where just 25% agreed) and 48% (27% against) believe our EU membership has been “a costly mistake”. Labour opposition to a referendum is absurd.

If the UK ends up in a pre-referendum position with relatively minor concessions, the other European countries led by Germany, judging from past experience, will simply go ahead as the 25 of the 27 Member States did with the fiscal compact, despite David Cameron’s refusal to accept it. This would be done either by Treaty or if not, by a new kind of enhanced cooperation. If we veto the new proposed Treaty and they still go ahead, this would merely confirm that we could not possibly be part of such a system. This is not blackmail – it is democratic common sense. It is about freedom and democracy – and the right of the United Kingdom Parliament to make own laws in line with the wishes of the voters, as decided in General Elections.

Successive Governments have allowed this situation to develop. What we need now is a referendum before the negotiations calling for our relationship with Europe to be based on trade and political cooperation, not European government. We would insist on the retention of our Westminster sovereignty, supported by what the cascade of opinion polls in recent years have demonstrated and what the British people clearly want.