

Ralph Miliband Programme “Progress and its Discontents” public lecture

## The EU: friend or foe for progressive politics

Caroline Lucas

MP for Brighton Pavilion and former Leader of the Green Party

London School of Economics and Political Science

Thursday 3 March 2016

Check against delivery

---

### PRELIMINARIES

Thank you for your invitation to speak here today.

It's a great privilege to have been invited to give a lecture in honour of Ralph Miliband, and I hope that, **as such a committed internationalist**, he'd approve of the subject of our discussion tonight.

This feels like a **very timely moment** to be considering the role of the EU, and Britain's relationship to it.

These fundamental questions are brought into sharp focus by the unfolding of what looks increasingly like a humanitarian disaster, so very close to home.

The refugee crisis across our continent is deepening day by day.

There are desperate scenes barely a hundred miles from here at Calais, and 16 hundred miles away, on the border between Greece and Macedonia.

These events cause us to reflect on the kind of people we are and the kind of European Union we want to build.

And so, with the sideshow of David Cameron's renegotiations out of the way, we can debate the real issues at the heart of the question of whether we stay or go.

### PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

Perhaps there was never going to be a good time to hold a referendum on British membership of the EU.

Certainly for those of us who want to see an open, progressive European Union.

A Union based on the rule of law and human rights.

Diverse and inclusive.

A Union with solidarity between each constituent nation – and between their citizens.

Offering us a future for our children as good as the one our parents fought to build for us.

And harnessing the energy, talent and strength of 500 million people to work for a better world for us all.

For those of us who want that kind of European Union, what we see at the moment can be hard to swallow.

Take the way that Greece has been treated over its debts.

Of course, there was responsibility on both sides.

There always is.

But the humiliation of that nation, the bullying of a democratically-elected government, is troubling.

It rekindles the fears of the left in the 1960s and 1970s, that the European Economic Community, as it then was, would prove to be nothing more than a rich man's club, a way for the bosses to exploit the workers and prevent the creation of a socialist state.

A few on the left have even talked about leaving the EU in the hope of building a fairer society outside.

I have to say that this idea is perhaps hearts talking more than minds.

I see no evidence that the British people are currently held back from fulfilling a more progressive political and social agenda by the European Union.

Quite the opposite.

But in any case, it conflates the **two great challenges we face in Europe.**

**The first is political.** The Council of Ministers, representing the 28 member states, is the prime source of power in the EU.

It currently has a majority of right-wing members, and consequently the policies of the Council, and of the Union, lean to the right.

If we want to change that, we have to work with like-minded parties across Europe to elect progressive parties and so change the direction of the Union.

But just because now, in 2016, we have the wrong leaders, it doesn't mean we should abolish the institution; any more than we should give up on our own Parliamentary democracy just because we currently have a reactionary Conservative government in office.

In the same way, I am immensely frustrated by the failings of the United Nations.

I disagree with its policies on a whole range of issues, from its war on drugs to its support for globalization.

But do I think that Britain should leave the UN? Of course not.

Beyond the current policies of the EU lies a deeper truth:

We need to work with our partners in Europe to deal with issues of common concern: thousands of issues, some large and some small, covering everything from climate change and refugees, to transport infrastructure and the licensing of medicines;

And the only institution through which we can do this is the European Union.

So how it is we are about to hold a referendum?

**Because of the second great challenge we face in Europe:** how to make it relevant to people once more – not just in Britain, but across the continent.

We in Britain are at one extreme when it comes to alienation from European politics; but we are also part of a trend.

Confidence in the EU has fallen amongst the people of all of its member states.

All too often, it's not seen as being on their side.

What was once an institution with an idealistic and inspiring mission is more often seen as interfering, or irrelevant, or dominated by vested interests.

Just as the collapse in trust in Parliament here in Britain is on the one level justified, and on the other, is deeply damaging for democracy, so too in Europe.

So we must pursue steadfastly two objectives at the same time – **building momentum for progressive reforms on the one hand, and defending the principle of the EU on the other.**

That is the challenge we now face in the coming referendum.

## THE REFERENDUM

And as we consider that referendum, it feels right to start by reflecting on how we got here.

After all, this process is already turning out to be a monumental distraction from some pretty serious issues that our country faces.

A stalling global economy. Climate change. The war in Syria. The refugee crisis. The future of the NHS. The dismantling of our welfare state.

In my own constituency in Brighton, the terms of our membership of the European Union is, for many, simply not an issue – certainly not when compared to health, or housing, or social services – and the connections between the future of those sectors and our membership of the EU is seldom made.

The same is true across the country. When people are polled about the major issues facing Britain today, Europe is still behind poverty, housing and education – and that despite all the media coverage about the EU referendum in recent weeks, creating a sense of crisis.

If you ask people if they want a referendum on Europe, many of them say they do.

That's natural.

If there are decisions to be made, wouldn't we all want to have our say?

But if they had the chance, people would like referenda on lots of issues. Whether or not to replace Trident.

Bringing the railways back into public ownership.

Even a return to capital punishment.

Yet we are not offered a referendum on any of these issues.

Only Europe.

## **REASONS FOR THE REFERENDUM**

Why is this?

The easy answer is that it's all down to the fundamental fault lines on Europe in the Conservative Party and David Cameron's inability to manage them.

In other words, we've been pushed into this referendum by a cadre of political extremists on the Right of British politics, for whom our country's membership of the EU is an all-absorbing obsession.

It's the easy answer because it's true.

But it isn't the whole story.

It's also right that we should have a say over our membership of an institution that has such a significance influence over all of our lives.

And whatever the short-term self-interested reasons for the Government promising this particular referendum, there is still a lot of good that could and should flow from it.

That includes the opportunity to turn the dire political disengagement with the EU into a genuinely popular and grassroots debate in villages, towns and cities across the UK about Europe and what it means to our lives, just as happened with the Scottish referendum.

As I said, the British people have fallen out of love with the European Union.

They – we – have done so for many reasons.

But at the root of it is the way in which the EU has drifted away from its founding principles.

And it's time to put that right.

We can see this by looking back to the last referendum on Europe, in 1975.

Two-thirds of the British people voted to stay in.

Only a third to leave.

And let's kill the myth that we didn't know what we were voting for in 1975.

The Treaty had the same terms and conditions as now. It spoke of an ever-closer union.

It includes qualified majority voting and the four freedoms of movement, including granting the right for any citizen of the EU to work in any other country.

And it was absolutely clear that there was to be a European Court to ensure that European laws, to which we all agreed, were actually followed in practice by everyone, including us.

The debate in 1975 was frank and honest.

Read the speeches in Hansard and you will see endless references to sovereignty, and the primacy of European law.

So what has changed since then?

Part of it is down to 40 years of biased and often hysterical coverage in the media.

And of politicians seeking always seeking to push the blame for all their unpopular decisions onto Brussels.

But there is also a need to restate what Europe is *for*.

To return to those founding principles.

## **PEACE**

First and foremost is peace.

The European Union was founded to make war in Europe unthinkable.

And it's worked.

We have grown up and grown old within a Europe that has enjoyed the longest period of peace since the time of the Roman Empire.

The risk is that we take that huge achievement for granted.

The EU is not an abstract project born of idle philosophising in continental thinktanks.

The imperative to share sovereignty in Europe, and so ensure economic competition does not again spill over into conflict, was built on the blood and bones of Europeans killed in the disastrous first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The EU is built on the mistakes of Europeans; it is a pragmatic response to our failure to manage the disruptive forces of nationalism and industrialisation.

The majority of the world will go through a similar transformation in the coming decades.

Europe offers a salutary lesson to them of the cost of failure, and a practical model of how cooperation can bring peace and mutual benefits between even the most historic of enemies.

And we now need Europe to be united more than ever.

Across our continent, we face the strains of unemployment, poverty, inequality, and political and social alienation.

We have threats from terrorism, from the effects of conflict in Syria and elsewhere.

And we need to find ways to live within our environmental means, without the over-consumption of precious finite resources.

The leaders of Europe can hardly be said to have risen to these challenges with any great imagination or effect.

The EU should, and could, deal with migration better but this is not the fault of too much “Europe” but too little cooperation.

It was not a problem which could be solved by NATO. NATO is vital instrument for deterring aggression from hostile countries, but is incapable of building peace and preventing instability.

And this crisis is changing Europe.

If we do not tackle the causes of migration, as well as the symptoms, we risk seeing a continued rise in populist and xenophobic political forces across Europe.

Forces that would undo the gains of the past 70 years which have made the EU a global beacon of human rights, democracy and tolerance.

And consider the alternative.

Nation states working solely for their own self-interests.

Politicians blaming neighbouring states – or their own minorities – for their national woes.

Of course, we have plenty of national rivalries, of discrimination and scapegoating, already.

From the humiliation of Greece to the abject spectacle of refugees chased from country to country, we have plenty of examples of a lack of community spirit.

**But at least we have a framework for managing these tensions.**

And – more importantly – we have a competing vision, a more positive vision, in which nation states collaborate within the EU to solve their shared problems.

The success of the European Union is the cornerstone of our own national security.

If we leave, we’re putting that at risk.

Europe is not, historically, a very peaceful place.

It would be sheer folly to think that armed conflict cannot return.  
It must have seemed just as unlikely during the Edwardian years.

And yet we are but a few short months away from the centenary of the battle of the Somme, where hundreds of thousands of lives were squandered in Flanders.

In the same way, we cannot ignore the dangers of a return to totalitarianism and fascism in Europe.

Our first line of defense is the rule of law and the recognition of fundamental human rights.

It is in our national interest to promote this throughout Europe, as well as throughout the rest of the world.

We cannot know what dangers lie ahead.

But we can be sure that a strong and stable European Union, with Britain as an active and positive participant, provides the surest guarantee of our national security.

## **FOUR FREEDOMS**

The mechanism adopted by the founders of the European Union to bring about peace was a simple one.

The more that the nations of Europe traded together, worked together, and lived together, the more that conflict would become unthinkable.

And, by dismantling the barriers within Europe, the more that the economies of each nation would thrive, so helping to eradicate poverty and unemployment – the breeding ground of totalitarianism.

And so we have the four freedoms of movement within the European Union.

These mean that you or I or any other British citizen has the right to live and work anywhere in the European Union, to provide goods and services on equal terms with everyone else, and – if you are lucky enough to have any capital – to move that as well.

### **This is a wonderful gift.**

One that millions of us benefit from.

British students broadening their horizons as they study in Munich or Warsaw.

British workers enjoying a different culture in Copenhagen or Barcelona.

And British pensioners retiring to the sunshine of Spain or Cyprus.

And it's hardly surprising if our fellow European citizens come here to enjoy those same freedoms too.

They have been coming for years.

But not – let's be honest – so they can enjoy the incredible largesse of Britain's welfare system under Ian Duncan Smith.

They come because Britain – despite the views expressed in certain national newspapers – is a welcoming and open country.

It has an amazing culture.

And above all, coming here to work is a chance to learn English – the international language of choice.

In a way, the UK is like an enormous language school.

And do we really want to close that down?

In the year when we are celebrating the life of William Shakespeare, and reflecting on the contribution that English makes to our position in the world, our influence, the promotion of our values, it would be an extraordinary move.

Of course, when people move from one place to another, it can cause pressures on public services.

That's true whether they are moving from Leicester to London just as much as from Krakow to Coventry.

That's not to say that the free movement of people has always functioned smoothly.

Community cohesion can become strained, especially when change happens quickly, and especially when the government is cutting to the bone, budgets for schools, public services, and affordable housing.

Some employers are happy to undercut wages and pay less to migrant workers.

But that's not a reason to criticize workers who're understandably worried about their jobs.

When that happens, it's usually because of unscrupulous employers or agencies who illegally pay less than the minimum wage, or place migrant workers in tied housing deducted from their wages, or cut corners on health and safety – knowing they are unlikely to complain.

These are things that are entirely in the hands of our own government to legislate against, inspect, and enforce – and it's time **they** did more.

**Our** role as progressives is to expose and undermine the poisonous and divisive anti-immigration rhetoric of UKIP.

Their warped mythmaking on migration won't be beaten by winning this referendum alone – it will be beaten when politicians are brave enough to stand up to the myths and lies they spread – and promote fair, alternative solutions to genuine concerns.

And because of the economic benefits that EU citizens from other member states bring to our country, we should have plenty of resources to direct to where they are needed – schools, health centres, housing and so on.

More also needs to be done to ensure that those areas under greatest pressure retain more of the financial benefits themselves – some have talked of this as a migration dividend.

And we need a serious strategy that ensures migration is more evenly spread across the UK – thus ensuring free movement can better benefit everyone.

Of course the significance of this referendum for those EU nationals living here is profound.

Many have been here for decades; they pay billions into the exchequer and contribute hugely to the richness of our communities, yet they are being denied a vote in the referendum.

That's why progressives must make a stand for them – and campaign alongside them for Britain to remain in the EU.

No case for the EU is complete without making clear just how much we value the contributions of our fellow Europeans to our country.

They are our doctors, our nurses, our shopkeepers, our plumbers, our teachers, our professors, our builders.

They – indeed I refer to many of you here today – are our friends, you are our neighbours.

Failing to make clear just how much we value you bring part of our national story would be a dereliction of our duty as progressives.

So to facilitate the integration of people who move, we need investment in public services.

Sadly, however, we have a government that does not believe very much in public services.

In fact, which positively delights in the perceived failings of our services, so that they can use underfunding and mismanagement as an excuse for privatization.

We also have a government that likes to run all its services from Whitehall, rather than give local authorities or other public bodies the freedom to make their own decisions about priorities.

The result is that services do not keep pace with need.

But that's not the fault of the European Union. It's something we can and should put right at the next election.

## **SOVEREIGNTY**

And I am referring, of course, to the General Election.

Because that's still where the real power lies in Britain.

Whether it's the economy, or taxation, or defence, or education or health or crime or housing, the decisions are taken by the British government and parliament.

Nor is the jackboot of the European Commission quite the threat to our national way of life that you might think from glancing through the pages of the Daily Express.

We still drink our pints of beer, and eat our milky chocolate and our sausages. Road signs are still in miles, not kilometers.

Of course, being in the European Union does put some constraints on the decisions that we can take as a country.

That's because we have agreed to stick to a set of rules.

Rules that we want other countries to follow.

And we have agreed that, when there are disputes, there should be a single court, free from national control, to decide on those disputes. And with the power to enforce the rules.

Again, there is nothing sinister or surprising in this.

It's what we signed up to in 1973.

And in 1975, the British people voted two to one to continue to accept this obligation.

We in Britain are the first to complain if others flout the rules.

We can't pick and choose, or you have anarchy.

When this was debated in 1975, the most compelling answer came from Edward Heath.

Sovereignty, he argued, was something for Parliament to use wisely on behalf of the British people.

If that meant sharing sovereignty with other countries, for the benefit of Britain, then that was the right thing to do.

And of course, it was always in the power of Parliament to take back that sovereignty.

In a way, the debate about sovereignty is a complete distraction. Of course Britain was, is and will always remain a sovereign state.

Because we have, and always will have, the right to leave.

To quote Margaret Thatcher – not a thing I do every day – this was how she summed up the question of sovereignty during the last referendum.

*"We could not be considering taking the country out of the Community unless Parliament were still sovereign."*

Those words are every bit as true today as they were when she was campaigning to stay in Europe.

So why, when it comes to Europe, is there this endless talk of sovereignty?

We don't hear much about it when it comes to NATO, the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation and a host of other international bodies.

Yet arguably membership of NATO, which overrides Britain's sovereignty about whether to go to war or not, is a far greater commitment than anything to do with the EU.

And it's one of the ironies of the current debate that the same people who often cry the loudest about national self-determination, would embrace the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP, most tightly– which constitutes a massive surrender of sovereignty, with none of the safeguards built in to the European Union treaties.

## **THE ALTERNATIVE**

And this question of sovereignty also highlights the absurdity of the position of those campaigning to leave the EU.

Essentially, they want the benefits of access to the EU single market, but without having to abide by the rules, freedoms and responsibilities that go with it.

But the truth is, to sell into the EU, you need to follow the rules.

The only difference is, if you are also a member of the EU, you get to help write those rules as well.

So Norway, Switzerland and other countries outside the EU can't pick and choose what rules to follow.

To suggest the UK could do this is simply misleading.

And to sell into the EU, you also need to make a financial contribution.

Norway and Switzerland both do this – hundreds of millions of euros a year to help fund roads in Romania and broadband in Cornwall.

So to suggest the UK would save on its net contributions by leaving the EU is also misleading.

This is why the Leave campaign are so careful never to explain what would actually happen if we did leave.

What kind of relationship they would end up with.

But that has to be a critical question, when the time comes for us to cast our votes.

Some leavers suggest we can, in effect, stay within the European Economic Area.

But that would mean continuing to follow the EU rules, and contribute to the EU budget.

The only change would be that we would give up the right to influence those rules.

Others say we would become entirely independent of the EU, and instead trade with the rest of the world.

They talk a lot about the emerging markets of the Far East and the success of Singapore.

But that would mean turning our backs on our nearest neighbours, and trying to forge new economic and political relationships with countries half a world away.

And make no mistake, those relationships – if we were able to create them – would come with obligations and expectations.

China is the dominant economy in the Far East. We've already seen how, when China opens up for businesses, it expects a lot in return.

Those who want us to leave the EU and forge new relationships with the Far East need to be open about this.

What new obligations, or even loss of sovereignty, will this bring?

Will leaving the EU and hitching our wagon to Communist China make Britain safer, or richer, or more independent?

## **THE LEAVERS**

So, at the very least, there is a lack of a collective vision of what the future would hold for Britain outside the EU.

It means we have Boris Johnson arguing that we should vote to leave so we can have a better deal for staying in. A truly inane position.

And we also have many within the Leave campaign who have an agenda of their own.

They want to leave, not on principle, or for the good of the country: but rather so they can strip their fellow citizens of the many fundamental rights that membership of the European Union gives to them.

Do you think the industrialists and financiers bankrolling the Leave campaign are all signed up to replacing European law with equivalent protection from Westminster?

Of course not.

They see in the referendum a chance to push Britain firmly back into the past.

From the right to time off when you have children, to making sure our beaches are free from sewage, this is a chance to wipe away decades of progress in one go.

Leaving the EU is a charter for exploitation – of our environment, and of us as citizens and employees.

And that's before we consider the other dangers of leaving the European Union.

The Good Friday Agreement has brought a level of peace and cooperation to the North of Ireland that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago.

It has succeeded in large part because of our ever-closer relationship with the Republic of Ireland, in turn fostered by our shared membership of the European Union.

Yet that relationship, and even the Good Friday Accords, would be destabilised if we left the EU.

And the United Kingdom itself might not survive a vote to leave.

What was remarkable about the last referendum was that almost every community in Britain voted to stay in.

It was a unifying decision.

But there is every sign that, this time around, if some parts of the country vote to leave, others – and above all Scotland – will vote to stay.

It is not alarmist to talk of the risks involved in this referendum

Those who want us to leave do so all the time.

The favoured phrase is 'the end of a thousand years of British history'.

Well, if we have a split vote in on June 23rd, then we may indeed see the end of Great Britain.

That is why the challenge we face in the referendum campaign is not only to win.

We must aim to win big.

The pro-European campaign in 1975 won 66% of the vote.

We might not repeat this in 2016.

But we must aim for more than just making it over the finishing line with 51% of the vote.

The clearer the victory, the easier it will be to move on from this sterile debate on membership, to the real issue of how we can build the kind of Europe that we want.

## **CONFIDENCE IN EUROPE**

We could have so much more influence with our European partners if we were ourselves more positive about what we can achieve together.

Not surrendering – as the jingoistic newspapers and politicians would have it.

But seeing where we are stronger together, and having the confidence to advance and not retreat: advancing in the confidence that we can find common ground, and allies, and we can negotiate effectively on behalf of our country.

Look at what has already been achieved on environmental policy – an area which, given the cross-border nature of pollution – demonstrates so clearly not only what we gain from our EU membership, but what we stand to lose.

It's difficult to see how we'd tackle air pollution from coal and cars, marine pollution, or climate change by going it alone.

The jewels in the crown of environmental protection in the UK and across Europe are the Nature Directives.

These are underpinned by a principle that is more important today than ever: the need for a level playing field across Europe to prevent a 'race-to-the-bottom' - where member states and multinational corporations seek to gain competitive advantage by destroying the natural environment.

On climate change, much as the Paris climate agreement does not go far enough, if you listen to representatives from Small Island States - some of the poorest countries with the most to lose from climate change - they'll tell you that working with the EU was key to getting the crucial 1.5 degree climate goal into the final agreement.

EU level action also provides a vital space for more radical solutions to develop and become mainstream - whilst they're still on the periphery of UK politics.

The Circular Economy package, for example, has the potential to be truly ground-breaking by driving a revolution in both consumption and production.

And we urgently need to confront the unsustainability of our entire political and economic systems pursuing short term GDP growth above all else.

Our best chance of making the shift to prioritising **quality** of economic activity rather than **quantity** is to do so in conjunction with other EU countries.

And we should not be afraid to see areas where the EU can do more.

Instead of surrendering to the destructive forces of untamed globalization, we should see the EU as a vital tool for ensuring that the international economy is not our master but our servant.

This isn't Brussels interfering in our national life.

This is about forging partnerships with other countries to ensure that governments and peoples take the decisions, not international investors and lobbyists.

If Brussels is the best forum for that, then so be it.

For those who want to leave – who believe we can't get the deals we want from the EU - let me suggest that they try and recover a bit of British courage.

Have a bit more faith in British values.

Look a bit more closely at British history.

I'm not one for national tub-thumping.

But Britain has something unique to offer to the rest of Europe, just as we have a lot to gain from each and every other member state.

We shouldn't be afraid to make the most of that.

That doesn't mean signing up for a United States of Europe.

It means using the tried and tested structures of the European Union to allow the countries of Europe to work more closely together on areas where that brings mutual advantage.

## **EVER-CLOSER UNION**

Which brings me to the final principle at the heart of the European Union. One which seems particularly to stick in the throats of those who have agitated for so long for us to leave.

Ever-closer union.

If you look at the actual Treaties, ever closer union is about people – not political institutions or governments.

And ever closer union is explicitly about subsidiarity - making decisions as locally as is sensible.

If you read the actual text, it's very clearly not about centralising power in Brussels.

I quote: "the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen".

At the risk of becoming philosophical, I think this idea is about a recognition that the closer we are – as people, and as societies and nations – the better;

And yet, paradoxically, that we will always remain different and so will never reach a state of complete union.

It is a never-ending journey in which we grow closer, yet retain our essential qualities.

A union rooted in diversity.

It is, I think, a rather beautiful idea, particularly in the context of a Europe lying in ruins in 1945.

It is, perhaps, the kind of thing that a Gandhi or a Mandela might have said.

And the fact that it came from some apparently dull men in suits does not mean it loses its radical force.

## **LOVING EUROPE**

If Britain opts out of this aspiration towards an ever-closer union, it will make no practical difference.

But it will, perhaps, cement in people's minds that idea that the European Union is no more or less than a trading agreement:

A way of helping individuals and corporations make money, with some additional rules on social and environmental impacts to keep people like me quiet.

And if that is how it is seen, then it is our fault: we who believe that the EU can be so much more than this.

We have failed to articulate a vision for Europe that is positive and – critically – is about the things that matter most to people.

Let me take just one example of this.

Imagine, for a moment, that you are a citizen of the state of Texas. And imagine too that the United States did not have the right of free movement.

Think of the limits this would impose on your life.

Your employer might have factories or offices in other states – but you wouldn't have the right to go and work there.

Your children couldn't think of studying at a university elsewhere in the US, say at Yale or Harvard.

Or moving to San Francisco to broaden their minds or to Hollywood to break into the movies.

You couldn't even retire to Florida.

In reality, as a Texan, you have all these rights within the United States.

And yet you could hardly describe Texas as lacking in independence or self-confidence.

## **A POSITIVE EU VISION**

So let's think about the kind of vision that could rekindle people's enthusiasm for Europe.

To help them see it more than just a remote trading block.

One in which Europe enhances people's lives, offers freedoms to them and to their children.

The British people have not closed the door on Europe.

There's even some openness to greater involvement from Europe, where this makes sense.

For example, in a recent survey, 70% of people in Britain thought that the EU had a role to play in guaranteeing minimum standards in social protection.

This, then, is the task for those of us who believe in progressive politics.

We have to reimagine the European Union.

Not just in terms of institutional reform – the increases in democracy, transparency and accountability, though that matters too - but in terms of what it can do to help people live better lives.

It is a task we have hardly started.

Which is why the referendum is such a chance for progressive politics.

We have the chance to talk about what Europe could be.

A leader in pioneering attempts to live more lightly on the planet, in ways that don't cost the earth.

Post Paris, Europe is uniquely placed to be a pathfinder for the transition to sustainable development, taking on a role as leader and facilitator of a global response.

Not because Europe is uniquely enlightened, but because Europe has learnt the hard lessons from bloody conflict on the need to put limits on power and gain the benefits of pooling sovereignty.

Investing in sustainable local economies, in renewable energy and energy efficiency, that provide millions of decent, long-term jobs across the EU, rather than competing to lure multinationals with inward investment grants.

Prioritising the art of peace-building, deploying the soft power that has been the hallmark of building the Union.

Protecting all employees in Europe from unfair practices such as zero-hours contracts, so that bad practices in one country do not become an excuse to drive down standards everywhere else.

A minimum wage right across the EU – not the same in every member state, but a floor of standards so that basic needs can be met right across the continent.

The referendum debate must be more than an arid debate about how much we pay in and how much we get out.

It is more than a transactional calculation.

This must be the time when we reignite people's belief that Europe can be a force for good once more, in the world and in their own lives.

Of course, we will have to rebut the myths and scaremongering.

And we will have to spend time challenging the idea that we will thrive as a country if we go it alone.

But we shouldn't base our arguments for staying in Europe on fear of the outside.

It must be a positive statement of the value to us all of being a part of Europe.

## **WRAP-UP**

A week or so back I was talking to a friend of mine about the referendum. He said this.

“I’m British, but I’m also a citizen of Europe. I’m still not sure what that means. But I don’t want it taken away from me or my children.”

That is our challenge.