

## THE EU REFERENDUM

— WHY YOU  
SHOULD VOTE

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**ON THURSDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE, THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) REFERENDUM WILL TAKE PLACE. IT WILL DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THE UK SHOULD REMAIN IN THE EU. THE REFERENDUM WILL PROVIDE A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE UK, AND IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL DECISIONS IN BRITAIN FOR A GENERATION.**

**OF COURSE IN THIS REFERENDUM AS IN ALL ELECTIONS EVERY VOTE IS EQUAL, EVERY VOTE IS COLOUR-BLIND. OPERATION BLACK VOTE (OBV) SEEKS TO EMPOWER AND ENCOURAGE MILLIONS OF BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BME) VOTERS TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE AND ENGAGE IN THIS CRUCIAL DEBATE.**

**IN A CLOSELY FOUGHT REFERENDUM THE BLACK VOTE COULD BE A DECIDING FACTOR.**

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# IMMIGRATION

The issue around immigration has perhaps been the biggest single driver for this referendum.

The Shengen agreement, to which the UK does not belong to, allows free movement for all EU citizens. Whilst Britain has an opt-out clause, countries within Shengen can travel more easily to the UK and visa versa. It is estimated that over 2 million Europeans from within the EU live in the UK. It is equally true that over 2 million British citizens live abroad in EU in countries such as Spain and France.

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## LEAVE

Those wishing to leave the EU argue we have no control over our borders and that the number of EU citizens, particularly East Europeans is putting too great a strain on our social services.

## REMAIN

Those wishing to remain argue that European migrants pay much more in than they take out, and that Brits equally enjoy the benefits of being able to live, work or travel abroad easily.

# TRADE

Trade has become a global phenomenon with blocks forming to leverage greater power both internally and externally. The European single market is the largest in the world with access to an 11.5 trillion pounds a year trading market, but it comes at a price and a raft of legislation that many don't like.

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## LEAVE

Those arguing to leave believe that the UK is a powerful industrial nation that could easily negotiate trading deals with any country in world that would better favour the UK, without the enormous multibillion buy-in that membership demands.

## REMAIN

Those for remaining argue that the EU is an important trading bloc for Britain, with 45% of UK exports going to the EU, compared to just 7% of EU exports which come to the UK. They also argue leaving would mean that negotiating new trade deals could take years to complete.

# EMPLOYMENT

There are a number of key arguments around employment in the EU debate, including: How many jobs are dependent upon the UK's trade with EU countries, both directly and indirectly; EU employment law, and the EU nationals working here in the UK.

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## LEAVE

It is argued that the working class have suffered greatly due to the numbers of EU nationals coming to the UK, not only taking jobs, but also pushing wages down. Brexiters also argue that employment law has strangled the growth of British businesses with its 'red tape'.

## REMAIN

The remain camp contest that there are some 3–4 million jobs that are dependent on EU trade, and that the biggest fall in wages is more to do with the 2008 global financial crisis than migration. In regards to EU law they argue, that without it British workers would be weakened regarding the statutory rights to holiday and sick pay, maternity/paternity leave, and regulate workers hours.

# BRITAIN'S COST OF EU MEMBERSHIP

In the last financial year the Government had an expenditure of around 750 billion pounds of which around 10 billion is our contribution to the EU. Of that 10 billion pounds the UK receive rebates of around 5 billion pounds, so the final sum is closer to the 5 billion pounds.

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## LEAVE

The leave camp point out that the 35 million pounds a day savings by leaving the EU could be spent on much-needed hospitals, schools and roads. Furthermore, they argue that they could quickly renegotiate trade deals, as trade partners would not want to lose UK business.

## REMAIN

The remain camp argue that whilst we pay a net 5 billion pounds to the EU, the trade benefit amounts to around 80 billion pounds, or the equivalent to 3 thousand pounds per household per year. Senior financial figures have warned that the UK would almost definitely fall into recession if we left.

# SECURITY

The terrorist attacks in both Paris, and Brussels have heightened the Brexit debate around security.

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## LEAVE

The leave camp argue that the free movement of people makes our UK borders porous and leaves us vulnerable to terrorist attacks. They claim that thousands of EU nationals have travelled to Syria and Afghanistan to train in terrorism.

## REMAIN

The remain camp argues that in almost all the recent terrorist attacks the attackers were nationals from that country. Furthermore, they claim that by leaving, the UK would not be sharing security information within the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.

# IDENTITY

The sharing of national sovereignty has always been a double-edged sword; If we are more European are we less British the arguments goes. Are we run by unelected 'foreigners' or expanding shared values?

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## LEAVE

The leave campaign argue that the EU mission is to ultimately become a political Super State, with one governing body, much like the United States of America. And in doing so the UK would not only lose its distinctiveness, but also its autonomy.

## REMAIN

The remain group would argue that Britain's identity remains distinct, but is also enhanced by a sense of a broader European identity with shared common values that helps other EU nations buy into progressive ideas, whilst ensuring that the UK does not renege on its own responsibility to protect areas such as employment and human rights.



# BME SPECIFIC CONCERNS

Amongst BME communities up and down the country similar conversations and arguments are being played out around this EU debate. However, there are some distinct BME issues that are being raised and discussed.

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## LEAVE

Those in the leave camp argue that BME workers have been disproportionately affected by the influx of EU migrant workers. Furthermore, why should BME communities want greater ties with European countries, with the rise of the far-Right race hatred groups right across Europe, and some very close to home such as France?

## REMAIN

Those in the remain camp, argue that it is structural and institutional racism that holds back BME individuals getting decent jobs in the UK, not EU migrant workers. And regards to far-Right groups, they claim that there is an inaccurate conflation between the rise of the far-Right and EU institutions. They go on to argue that it is the EU institutions driven by UK race equality activists and MEPs that has been the driver for race equality legislation across EU states.

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# WHAT NEXT?

THESE ARGUMENTS OBV HAS HIGHLIGHTED ARE BUT A SNAPSHOT OF THE MYRIAD OF DEBATES GOING ON AROUND THE EU REFERENDUM. AND WHILST ARGUMENTS ARE FINE, YOUR VIEWS ARE WORTHLESS UNLESS YOU ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE BY 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, AND VOTE ON THE 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE. **HERE ARE SOME OF THE PRACTICALITIES.**

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## THE REFERENDUM QUESTION – 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE 2016

Below is a copy of the referendum question as it will appear on the voting form. Everyone eligible to vote can give a 'Yes' or 'No' answer to a question. Whichever answer ('Yes' or 'No') gets more than half of all votes cast has won the referendum.

**SHOULD THE UNITED KINGDOM REMAIN A MEMBER OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION OR LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION?**

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**REMAIN A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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# HOW DO I VOTE?

## TO VOTE IN THE REFERENDUM, YOU MUST BE REGISTERED TO VOTE.

If you aren't registered to vote, or you are not sure if you're registered to vote, visit [www.eureferendum.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.eureferendum.gov.uk/register-to-vote). If you aren't able to use the internet, go to your local library or council offices, and ask for assistance to register to vote.

You must register to vote by midnight on **Thursday, 9th June**. If you wish to apply for a postal vote, the deadline is 5pm, Wednesday 8th June.

## WHO CAN VOTE IN THE EU REFERENDUM?

You can vote in this referendum if you are registered to vote in the UK, are 18 or over on 23rd June 2016 and are:

- A British or Irish citizen living in the UK, or
  - A Commonwealth citizen living in the UK who has leave to remain in the UK
  - A British citizen living overseas who has been registered to vote in the UK in the last 15 years
  - An Irish citizen living overseas who was born in Northern Ireland and who has been registered to vote in Northern Ireland in the last 15 years
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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.eureferendum.gov.uk/what-is-the-eu](http://www.eureferendum.gov.uk/what-is-the-eu)

[www.openeurope.org](http://www.openeurope.org)

[www.strongerin.co.uk](http://www.strongerin.co.uk)

[www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/campaign](http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/campaign)

[www.euromove.org.uk](http://www.euromove.org.uk)

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-32810887](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-32810887)

[www.theweek.co.uk/eu-referendum](http://www.theweek.co.uk/eu-referendum)

**WWW.OBV.ORG.UK**

our future is in our hands

