**[WHY I AM PRO-EU](http://why-i-am-pro-eu/)**

25/11/2013



I am unapologetically pro-Europe & pro-EU and spend far too much time in Facebook and elsewhere defending why I believe the UK is far better of inside the EU working for reform & improvements than leaving it as the anti-EU brigade would like.  Recently I have been challenged by one of this brigade to say why I am so pro-EU & to stand up and show why I believe what I do.  So, rather than try to do it in a short comment on Facebook, I felt it better that I write a fuller explanation.  
  
The reasons why I am so pro-Europe can be broken down into 3 areas.    
  
First of all, I feel European.  This is no surprise given that not only I am married to a Dutch woman, my father was Dutch & I only need to go back 2 or 3 generations on my mother’s side to see that they came from Eastern Europe.  Even though I was born in London, my ancestry & upbringing make me far more European than is the norm for many other British people.   In addition I lived in Israel for 10 years and this further exposed me to different cultures and far less a small-minded Britisher.  
  
Secondly, there is the historic reason that the last 70 years has seen the longest period of peace in Europe.  Except for the violent breakup of Yugoslavia, there has been no major military conflict in Europe.  Looking back through history, you quickly see that this is the longest period of peace that the continent has ever known.  Even the revolutions against dictatorships (in Greece, Spain & Portugal) have been peaceful as has the breakup of Czechoslovakia.  The only significant outbreaks of violence such as the troubles in Northern Ireland & the campaign for Basque independence have been limited to terror activities and brought to a non-violent conclusion.  While not claiming this is all due to the EU, there is no doubt that because of the greater economic co-operation between countries makes armed conflict between them less likely.  Just look at the current spat between the UK & Spain over Gibraltar, it would be unthinkable that either side would go to war over the issue.  
  
Finally, let’s look why membership of the EU benefits both British business & British workers.    
  
Recent estimates from the CBI put the worth of being in the EU at £3000 per family in the UK[[1]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_edn1) and the Director of the CBI added “Contrary to popular myth, the UK is influential in the corridors of Brussels and will still be as long as we play our cards right.”  Other business leaders agree but are worried that is we leave the UK some of the leading multinational players who have invested deeply in manufacturing in this country may think again about more investment here or, even worse, pull out.[[2]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_edn2)  Altogether the estimate number of jobs in the UK that are dependent on being in the EU is around 3 million.  While no-one is trying to pretend that all these jobs would disappear overnight if the UK pulled out of the EU, it is still a large number of jobs & workers livelihoods to replace so those advocating leaving the EU need to have some firm ideas on how to do this not just relying on the platitudes and hopes that have characterised what they have said up to now.  
  
It is not just big business that benefits from EU membership.  Workers get increased protection under a number of EU directives such as the Working Hours Directive[[3]](file:///C:\\Users\\Leon\\Dropbox\\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx" \l "_edn3" \o ").  Indeed this is one of the reasons some on the right want us out, they claim the cost of these rights are too much for businesses[[4]](file:///C:\\Users\\Leon\\Dropbox\\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx" \l "_edn4" \o ").  Again do we really want to throw away these hard won rights?  Consumers also benefit from our membership of the EU.  If you have been to Spain or Italy on holiday in the last couple of years, you may have noticed that the cost of using you mobile phone has fallen considerably.  This is not because the phone companies are feeling generous but EU directives[[5]](file:///C:\\Users\\Leon\\Dropbox\\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx" \l "_edn5" \o ")forcing them to lower the costs of phoning between countries in the EU.  Another example is how the EU has forced Microsoft to stop bundling up its other products with Windows Operating Systems[[6]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_edn6).  It is because the EU is so large and the single market so big that it can enforce such rules on even the biggest multi-national companies, do we really want to throw this away?  
  
I have written elsewhere on the cost of being in the EU & why UKIP are being misleading on thinking we would not have similar costs to carry on with the EU if we left  (see [UKIP claims are just so much hot air](http://leonduveen.mycouncillor.org.uk/2012/11/21/ukip-claims-are-just-so-much-hot-air/)) so I won’t repeat that here.  In the end we have a choice between being at the table helping to make the decisions and influencing the direction the EU is taking or sitting on the outside and having to apply all those decisions with no say in how they were derived.  Make no mistake;  American PCs are built to EU standards if they want to sell them here, Brazilian cars are designed to EU safety standards  to be sold in Europe, Switzerland is having to change its banking standards to let its banks trade in the EU[[7]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_edn7). The question should be, not can we afford to stay in the EU but how can we afford even to suggest we might leave and throw away our influence?  
  
To conclude, I have tried to show why I am pro-Europe & pro-EU.  I have shown why we would be made to leave the EU and given references to my statements (something I have noticed the UKIP & other anti EU people often fail to do).  I realise it is easy to throw out some simple anti-EU statements, especially if you don’t feel the need to back them up with facts, and that, as with any big organisation, there are many faults in the EU.  To me it would be madness to walk away from being one of the major influences in the largest single market in the world on the basis of some unsupported pipe dreams from UKIP or others.  We need not just to be in the EU but to take the lead in reforms to make it better, to try to bridge the democratic deficit that makes Brussels seem remote, to make the EU work even better for its citizens.    
  
This is why I am in, and why the UK needs to be in.  
  
[[1]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_ednref1) <http://www.scotsman.com/news/uk/eu-worth-3000-a-year-to-every-uk-family-cbi-1-3172088>  
[[2]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_ednref2) <http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/business/Economy/article1344195.ece>  
[[3]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_ednref3) <https://osha.europa.eu/en/legislation/directives>, <http://www.out-law.com/page-2556>,  
[[4]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_ednref4) <http://thirdway.eu/2013/02/12/union-attacks-anti-worker-ukip/>  
[[5]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_ednref5) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24056369>  
[[6]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_ednref6) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union_Microsoft_competition_case>  
[[7]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20I%20am%20pro-EU.docx#_ednref7) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/09/us-swiss-tax-idUSBRE9980IW20131009>