



Party Policies on Europe at General Elections Since 1970

Summary

This House of Lords Library Briefing provides extracts from political party manifestos since 1970 charting the various positions taken on Europe over the last five decades. It includes manifesto commitments from the main UK political parties. It also includes extracts from the Scottish National Party's (SNP) manifestos from the 2015 general election onwards. The SNP became the third largest party in the House of Commons at that election.

Following the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1958, both Conservative and Labour governments sought to open negotiations about possible membership. However, it was Edward Heath's Conservative Government that led the UK into the then EEC, passing the European Communities Act in 1972, which passed its Commons third reading with the support of 69 Labour MPs (who defied their party whip), the Liberal Party and 20 abstentions.

During the period from 1970 to 2015, the manifestos of the Conservative, Labour and the Liberal/Liberal Democrat parties all contained a commitment to the UK's continued membership of the EEC/European Union (EU)—with varying degrees of emphasis. The exception was the 1983 Labour manifesto which committed to withdrawal. Since the late 1980s, the SNP campaigned for an independent Scotland to be an EU member in its own right.

Following the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, in which a majority voted for the UK to leave, both the Conservative Government and the Labour Party in Opposition supported the UK's withdrawal from the EU. In the 2017 general election, these two parties included commitments to negotiate this withdrawal in their manifestos. Both the Liberal Democrats and the SNP supported the UK's continued membership.

Recently, there has been interest in what positions parties would take on Europe were there to be a general election before 2022. This briefing provides some historical context.

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1970

Conservative	<p>If we can negotiate the right terms, we believe that it would be in the long-term interest of the British people for Britain to join the European Economic Community, and that it would make a major contribution to both the prosperity and the security of our country. The opportunities are immense. Economic growth and a higher standard of living would result from having a larger market. But we also recognise the obstacles. There would be short term disadvantages in Britain going into the European Economic Community which must be weighed against the long-term benefits. Obviously there is a price we would not be prepared to pay. Only when we negotiate will it be possible to determine whether the balance is a fair one, and in the interests of Britain. Our sole commitment is to negotiate; no more no less [...] A Conservative Government would not be prepared to recommend to Parliament, nor would Members of Parliament approve, a settlement which was unequal or unfair.</p>
Labour	<p>We have applied for membership of the European Economic Community and negotiations are due to start in a few weeks' time. These will be pressed with determination with the purpose of joining an enlarged community provided that British and essential Commonwealth interests can be safeguarded. This year, unlike 1961–63, Britain will be negotiating from a position of economic strength. Britain's strength means that we shall be able to meet the challenges and realise the opportunities of an enlarged Community. But it means, too, that if satisfactory terms cannot be secured in the negotiations Britain will be able to stand on her own two feet outside the Community.</p>
Liberal	<p>In Western Europe we want the closest possible political unity. We see Britain's joining the common market as part of this unity. The Common Market is an exciting experiment in the pooling of national sovereignty in the economic sphere. It can be the forerunner of a similar unity in foreign policy and defence. Liberals advocated Britain's applying to join at a time when it would have been very much easier than now. The Labour and Conservative parties would not listen though they both subsequently came around to this view when in office. Liberals continue to believe that satisfactory terms can be obtained for British entry.</p>

February 1974

Conservative	<p>Every aspect of world affairs underlines the need for a Europe which is united and can carry the maximum weight in the councils of the world. Whatever our internal differences, we must increasingly learn to speak strongly with one voice which can be heard among the greatest powers, and which can play its part in the evolving mutually beneficial policies towards the rest of the world [...] this is what membership of the Community is about. It means increasing economic strength for each member and above all the certainty that there will be a partnership instead of rivalry and no more wars having their origin in Western Europe [...]</p> <p>Renegotiation of the Community in the sense of reforming its practice and redefining Britain's place in it, is a continuous process, which can only be conducted from within, and which we are already playing a full part. Renegotiation in the sense of British withdrawal, which is what sections of the Labour Party seeks, would be a disaster for which future generations would never forgive us.</p>
Labour	<p>Britain is a European nation, and a Labour Britain would always seek a wider co-operation between European peoples. But a profound political mistake by the Heath Government was to accept the terms of entry to the Common Market, and to take us in without the consent of the British people. This has involved the imposition of food taxes on top of rising world prices, crippling fresh burdens on our balance of payments, and a draconian curtailment of the British Parliament to settle questions affecting vital British interests. This is why a Labour Government will immediately seek a fundamental re-negotiation of the terms of entry [...] An incoming Labour Government will immediately set in train the procedures designed to achieve an early result and whilst the negotiations proceed and until the British people have voted, we shall stop further processes of integration, particularly as they affect food taxes [...] the right to decide the final issue of British entry into the Market will be restored to the British people.</p>
Liberal	<p>Liberals have always insisted on the duty of Britain to play a leading role in transforming Western Europe from warring rivalry into a united community, hence our consistent support for British membership of the Common Market. Furthermore, it is only as a full participant of in the world's largest trading entity that we can hope to solve our chronic balance of payments problem and at the same time develop</p>

the political unity that will guarantee peace and free us from the spectre of domination by the super powers. We deplore the delay in joining the Common Market for which Conservative and Labour Governments were equally to blame [...] the present Common Market structure is not what we voted for and the Liberal representatives in the European Parliament have lost no opportunity to point the way in which we feel the Community should develop. Liberals are thus effective but constructive critics of policies of the Common Market.

October 1974

Conservative	All recent governments of this country have concluded that membership of the community is essential for British interests. These decisions were not lightly taken. They were preceded by the prolonged study of the facts. The terms secured by the last Conservative Government were supported by those members of the previous Labour Government most qualified to judge them. The country's long-term interests should not now be sacrificed to short-term party interests.
Labour	Our genuine concern for democratic rights is in sharp contrast to the Tory attitude. In the greatest single peacetime decision of this century—Britain's membership of the Common Market—the British people were not given a chance to say whether or not they agreed to the terms accepted by the Tory Government [...]The Labour Government pledges that within twelve months of this election we will give the British people the final say, which will be binding on the Government—through the ballot box—on whether to accept the terms and stay in or reject the terms and come out.
Liberal	In the world sphere we are essentially internationalist. We oppose narrow, self-interested policies by nations or power blocs. We welcome the opportunity to transform the European Economic Community into a Liberal, outward looking federation of free people with sovereignty, pooled in respect of vital political and economic tasks, but with equally clearly defined powers and responsibilities for constituent states and regions.

1979

Conservative	<p>If we wish to play our full part in shaping world events over the next few critical years, we must work honestly and genuinely with our partners in the European Community. There is much we can achieve together, much more than we can achieve alone. There are some Community policies which need to be changed since they do not suit Britain's—or Europe's—best interests. But it is wrong to argue, as Labour do, that Europe has failed us. What has happened is that under Labour our country has been prevented from taking advantage of the opportunities which membership offers [...] the frequently obstructive and malevolent attitude of Labour ministers has weakened the Community as a whole and Britain's bargaining power within it [...] the next Conservative government will restore Britain's influence by convincing our partners of our commitment to the Community's success.</p>
Labour	<p>At this election, Labour will, once again, be the only major political party to offer the British people the prospect of bringing about fundamental and much-needed reform to the European Economic Community (EEC). We are concerned to ensure that Greece, Portugal, and Spain receive an early welcome into the Community. This enlargement of the Community will provide an opportunity to create a wider and looser-grouping of European states, thus reducing the dangers of an over-centralised and over-bureaucratic EEC. We aim to develop a Europe which is democratic and socialist, and where the interests of people are placed above the interests of national and multinational capitalist groups, but within which each country must be able to realise its own economic and social objectives, under the sovereignty of its own parliament and people.</p>
Liberal	<p>In Europe we support a stronger and more democratic Community. Our long-term aim is a federal Europe based upon democratic institutions and an equitable sharing of economic and social burdens. This involves working towards economic and monetary union and more effective regional and social policies to overcome unemployment and deprivation. It also means a commitment to the strengthening of the European Parliament. Only such a parliament, elected by proportional representation, can provide democratic political solutions to Europe's problems and make nationalist solutions as irrelevant as they are dangerous.</p>

1983

Conservative	<p>[...] the creation of the European Community has been vital in cementing lasting peace in Europe and ending centuries of hostility. We came into office determined to make a success of British membership of the Community. This we have done. Our first priority in 1979 was to cut our financial contribution to the Community budget to a fairer level [...] We have stood up for Britain's interests, and substantially reduced our net contribution [...] we shall continue to try to shift the Community's spending priorities away from agriculture and towards industrial, regional and other policies which help Britain more. We shall continue both to oppose petty acts of Brussels' bureaucracy and to seek the removal of unnecessary restrictions on the free movement of goods and services between member states [...] The European Community is the world's largest trading group. It is by far our most important export market. Withdrawal would be a catastrophe for this country.</p>
Labour	<p>Geography and history determine that Britain is part of Europe, and Labour wants to see Europe safe and prosperous. But the European Community [...] was never devised to suit us, and our experience as a member of it has made it more difficult for us to deal with our economic and industrial problems [...] The next Labour government, committed to radical, socialist policies for reviving the British economy is bound to find continued membership a most serious obstacle to the fulfilment of those policies [...] British withdrawal from the Community is the right policy for Britain—to be completed well within the lifetime of this parliament. That is our commitment. But we are also committed to bring about withdrawal in an amicable and orderly way, so that we do not prejudice employment or the prospect of political and economic co-operation with the whole of Europe. We emphasise that our decision to bring about withdrawal in no sense represents any weakening of our commitment to internationalism and international co-operation. We are not 'withdrawing from Europe'. We are seeking to extricate ourselves from the Treaty of Rome and other Community treaties which place political burdens on Britain.</p>
Alliance	<p>The Alliance is wholly committed to the continuing UK membership of the European Community. Membership has increased our political influence with our European neighbours and in the world beyond. Continued membership is also unequivocally to our economic advantage. The community is by far Britain's largest trading</p>

partner, with over half our exports going to community countries or countries with whom they have free trade agreements [...] Withdrawal, to which Labour is committed, would have a highly destructive effect on exports and hence jobs. We would also lose a great deal of foreign, particularly US investment which has come here because we are in the Community. The Alliance advocates further development of the Community and new common policies. At the same time however, there is a great deal wrong with the structure of existing policies, and we will take the lead in putting things right.

1987

Conservative	This Government has taken Britain from the side-lines into the mainstream of Europe. But being good Europeans does not prevent us from standing up for British interests. The agreement we negotiated on the Community budget has saved Britain £4,500 million since 1984 [...] Britain has led the way in establishing a genuine common market, with more trade and service moving freely across national boundaries. We will campaign for the opening of the market in financial and other services and the extension of cheaper air fares in Europe. We will also continue to work with our European partners to defend our own trading interests and press for freer trade among all nations.
Labour	Labour's aim is to work constructively with our EEC partners to promote economic expansion and combat unemployment. However, we will stand up for British interests within the European Community and will seek to put an end to the abuses and scandals of the common agricultural policy. We shall, like other member countries, reject EEC interference with our policy for national recovery and renewal.
Alliance	The European Community must be the basis of a united Europe which has common policies on trade, technology and social policy, and encourages Europe's scientific and industrial development. We believe that Labour's negative attitude to the European Community, and the obstructiveness of Mrs Thatcher's Government, not least vetoing the proposed European Community programme for co-ordinated research and development, is short-sighted and unconstructive. In a world of super-powers, Europe has to speak with a united voice.

1992

Conservative	The Conservatives have been the party of Britain in Europe for 30 years. We have argued when argument was necessary; but we have not wavered nor changed our views. We have ensured that Britain is at the heart of Europe; a strong and respected partner. We have played a decisive part in the development of the Community over the past decade. It was a British initiative which launched the single market programme and our insistence which reformed the Community's finances. Britain has promoted cooperation on foreign policy and in combating terrorism. Britain has also persuaded partners to welcome new countries who apply for Community membership. The Maastricht Treaty was a success both for Britain and the rest of Europe. British proposals helped to shape the key provisions of the Treaty including those strengthening the enforcement of Community law defence, subsidiarity and law and order.
Labour	The Labour government will promote Britain out of the European second division into which our country has been relegated by the Tories. Our first chance will be the United Kingdom's six-months' presidency of the Community, starting on 1 July [1992]. We shall use that presidency to end the Tories' opt-out from the social chapter, so that the British people can benefit from European safeguards. We will also use our presidency to help ensure that poorer countries are not disadvantaged as a result of the single market. We shall play an active part in negotiations on economic and monetary union.
Liberal Democrat	Liberal Democrats will take decisive steps towards a fully integrated, federal and democratic European Community. We believe that by sharing sovereignty and pooling power, Britain and its partners will be better able to achieve common goals for the economy, the environment, society and security than by acting alone. Our aim is to create a citizens' Europe in which power lies as close to the citizen as possible.

1997

Conservative	<p>The government has a positive vision for the European Union as a partnership of nations. We want to be in Europe but not run by Europe. We have much to gain from our membership of the European Union—in trade, in co-operation between governments, in preserving European peace [...] A Conservative government will seek a partnership of nation states. Some others would like to build a federal Europe. A British Conservative government will not allow Britain to be part of a federal European state [...] We will argue for a flexible Europe which fully accommodates the interests and aspirations of all its member states and where any new proposals have to be open to all and agreed by all. We will not accept other changes to the Treaty that would further centralise decision-making, reduce national sovereignty, or remove our right to permanent opt-outs.</p>
Labour	<p>Britain, though an island nation with limited natural resources, has for centuries been a leader of nations. But under the Conservatives Britain's influence has waned [...] Our vision of Europe is of an alliance of independent nations choosing to co-operate to achieve the goals they cannot achieve alone. We oppose a European federal super-state. There are only three options for Britain in Europe. The first is to come out. The second is to stay in, but on the side-lines. The third is to stay in, but in a leading role. An increasing number of Conservatives, overtly or covertly, favour the first. But withdrawal would be disastrous for Britain. It would put millions of jobs at risk. It would dry up inward investment. It would destroy our clout in international trade negotiations. It would relegate Britain from the premier league of nations. The second is exactly where we are today under the Conservatives. The BSE fiasco symbolises their failures in Europe. The third is the path a new Labour government will take. A fresh start in Europe, with the credibility to achieve reform [...]</p> <p>Any decision about Britain joining the single currency must be determined by a hard-headed assessment of Britain's economic interests [...] in any event there are three pre-conditions which would have to be satisfied [...] first the Cabinet would have to agree; then Parliament; and finally the people would have to say 'Yes' in a referendum.</p>
Liberal Democrat	<p>Britain's interests can only best be pursued through constructive participation in an enlarged European Union. Our vision is of a European Union that is decentralised,</p>

democratic and diverse. A strong and united Europe, but one that respects cultural traditions and national and regional identities. In seeking to reform the EU, our priorities are to:

Give the British people a say. Reform that fundamentally changes Britain's place in Europe should only proceed if it has the explicit support of Britain's people. If there is any substantial change in Britain's relationship with the EU, the British people must give their consent through a referendum.

Make EU institutions more democratic and accountable. We will give the House of Commons a more effective role in scrutinising European policy. We also want the Council of Ministers and the European Community (EC) Commission to be more accountable to the elected European Parliament. We will introduce a fair and proportional voting system for British Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in time for the 1999 European Parliament elections.

Make EU decision-making more efficient and effective. Europe cannot effectively enlarge without improving its decision-making. We therefore favour the wider application of majority voting. But we will keep the veto on all issues relating to the constitution, budgetary matters and regulations on pay and social security. We support the use of the 'double majority', especially on matters such as foreign and security policy. Each member state must retain the unfettered right to make its own decisions on the commitment of its national troops.

2001

Conservative	<p>The guiding principle of Conservative policy towards the European Union is to be in Europe, but not run by Europe. We will lead a debate in Europe about its future, promoting our own clear and positive vision. The European Union has, with the prospect of enlargement, reached a fork in the road. Down one route lies a fully integrated super-state with nation states and the national veto disappearing. The Government is taking us down this route. The alternative is a Europe of nations coming together in different combinations for different purposes and to differing extents. In other words, a network Europe. If Britain leads the debate, we can make this alternative a reality.</p>
Labour	<p>Unlike the Conservatives, we see Europe as an opportunity not a threat. Because we participate fully, we are able to work with our partners to shape an EU agenda that advances our national interests. We will put democratically elected national governments in the driving seat of EU policy. Our ten-year goal is to work with our partners for Europe to have the most competitive knowledge-based economies in the world. We hold to our promise: no membership of the single currency without the consent of the British people in a referendum.</p>
Liberal Democrat	<p>Liberal Democrats are firm supporters of the European Union, but as critical members of the European family, we are also firm on its failings. We believe that the EU offers the best means of promoting Britain's interests in Europe and in the wider world. Nations acting together can achieve more.</p> <p>The EU must have the resources and powers to act in areas where problems cannot be solved at a national level. But it should stay clear when European action is not necessary.</p> <p>Europe needs a new agenda for reform. Liberal Democrats are determined that Britain should lead this reform. We want a Europe where the interests of people not bureaucrats come first; a Europe that seeks to empower people, not impose upon them; and where European institutions concentrate on what they do best.</p>

2005

Conservative	<p>Conservatives support the cause of reform in Europe and we will co-operate with all those who wish to see the EU evolve in a more flexible, liberal and decentralised direction. We oppose the EU constitution and would give the British people the chance to reject its provisions in a referendum within six months of the general election. We also oppose giving up the valuable freedom which control of our own currency gives us. We will not join the euro. In a reformed Europe, the restrictive employment laws of the social chapter will have to give way to more flexible working. We will ensure that Britain once again leads the fight for a deregulated Europe by negotiating the restoration of our opt-out from the social chapter.</p> <p>The common policies on agriculture and fisheries are unsustainable, damaging to free trade and conservation, and waste huge sums of money. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) needs further and deeper reform. And, because fisheries would be better administered at the national level, we will negotiate to restore national and local control over British fishing grounds. We are determined to ensure national control in this area. We will also build on the success of enlargement, making Europe more diverse by working to bring in more nations, including Turkey.</p>
Labour	<p>We are proud of Britain's EU membership and of the strong position Britain has achieved within Europe. British membership of the EU brings jobs, trade and prosperity; it boosts environmental standards, social protection and international clout. Since 1997 we have gone from marginal players, often ignored, to leaders in the European Union. Working hard with Labour MEPs, we are determined to remain leaders. Outside the EU, or on its margins, we would unquestionably be weaker and more vulnerable.</p> <p>The EU now has 25 members and will continue to expand. The new constitutional treaty ensures the new Europe can work effectively, and that Britain keeps control of key national interests like foreign policy, taxation, social security and defence. The Treaty sets out what the EU can do and what it cannot. It strengthens the voice of national parliaments and governments in EU affairs. It is a good treaty for Britain and for the new Europe. We will put it to the British people in a referendum and campaign whole-heartedly for a 'Yes' vote to keep Britain a leading nation in Europe.</p>

**Liberal
Democrat**

Membership of the EU has been hugely important for British jobs, environmental protection, equality rights, and Britain's place in the world. But with enlargement to twenty-five member states, the EU needs reform to become more efficient and more accountable. The new constitution helps to achieve this by improving EU coherence, strengthening the powers of the elected European Parliament compared to the Council of Ministers, allowing proper oversight of the unelected Commission, and enhancing the role of national parliaments. It also more clearly defines and limits the powers of the EU, reflecting diversity and preventing over-centralisation. We are therefore clear in our support for the constitution, which we believe is in Britain's interest—but ratification must be subject to a referendum of the British people.

2010

Conservative	<p>The European Union has done much to reconcile the painful division of Europe and to spread democracy and the rule of law across our continent. But it should not rest on those achievements. European countries need to work together to boost global economic growth, fight global poverty, and combat global climate change.</p> <p>The European Union has a crucial part to play in enabling the countries of Europe to meet these great challenges of the 21st century. A Conservative government will play an active and energetic role in the European Union to advance these causes. We will stand for open markets, and a strong transatlantic relationship; for an EU that looks out to the world, and that builds strong and open relations with rising powers like China and India. And, like every other Member State, we will fight our corner to promote our national interests.</p> <p>We believe Britain's interests are best served by membership of a European Union that is an association of its Member States. We will never allow Britain to slide into a federal Europe. Labour's ratification of the Lisbon Treaty without the consent of the British people has been a betrayal of this country's democratic traditions. In government, we will put in place a number of measures to make sure this shameful episode can never happen again.</p>
Labour	<p>We are proud that Britain is once again a leading player in Europe. Our belief is that Britain is stronger in the world when the European Union is strong, and that Britain succeeds when it leads in Europe and sets the agenda for change. Sullen resistance and disengagement achieve nothing. Stronger competitiveness must be Europe's economic priority. Europe will only grow and prosper if it is dynamic and knowledge-based, with excellent universities, competitive companies, and thriving start-ups, underpinned by a modern infrastructure of digital communications and low-carbon transport. The EU should strive to improve the regulatory environment, in particular for small and medium sized business. But we reject any attempt to renegotiate or unravel social rights for the British people, and believe that economic strength and social protection go hand-in-hand—a modern EU must enhance competitiveness and growth while guaranteeing security and fair rights at work [...] On the euro, we hold to our promise that there will be no membership of the single currency without the consent of the British people in</p>

a referendum. We support the enlargement of EU membership to include Croatia, and believe that all Western Balkan states should open negotiations on EU accession by 2014—one hundred years after the start of the First World War.

Liberal Democrat

Liberal Democrats believe that European co-operation is the best way for Britain to be strong, safe and influential in the future. We will ensure that Britain maximises its influence through a strong and positive commitment. But just because Europe is essential, that doesn't mean the European Union is perfect. We will continue to campaign for improved accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. Working together, the member states of the EU have a better chance of managing the impacts of globalisation, such as cross-border crime and environmental pollution. [...]

The European Union has evolved significantly since the last public vote on membership over thirty years ago. Liberal Democrats therefore remain committed to an in/out referendum the next time a British government signs up for fundamental change in the relationship between the UK and the EU.

We believe that it is in Britain's long-term interest to be part of the euro. But Britain should only join when the economic conditions are right, and in the present economic situation, they are not. Britain should join the euro only if that decision were supported by the people of Britain in a referendum.

2015

Conservative	<p>The EU needs to change. And it is time for the British people—not politicians—to have their say. Only the Conservative Party will deliver real change and real choice on Europe, with an in-out referendum by the end of 2017.</p> <p>The EU is too bureaucratic and too undemocratic. It interferes too much in our daily lives, and the scale of migration triggered by new members joining in recent years has had a real impact on local communities. We are clear about what we want from Europe. We say: yes to the Single Market. Yes to turbocharging free trade. Yes to working together where we are stronger together than alone. Yes to a family of nation states, all part of a European Union—but whose interests, crucially, are guaranteed whether inside the Euro or out. No to ‘ever closer union.’ No to a constant flow of power to Brussels. No to unnecessary interference. And no, of course, to the Euro, to participation in Eurozone bail-outs or notions like a European Army.</p> <p>It will be a fundamental principle of a future Conservative government that membership of the European Union depends on the consent of the British people—and in recent years that consent has worn wafer-thin. That’s why, after the election, we will negotiate a new settlement for Britain in Europe, and then ask the British people whether they want to stay in the EU on this reformed basis or leave. [...] We will hold that in-out referendum before the end of 2017 and respect the outcome.</p>
Labour	<p>Labour believes that our membership of the European Union is central to our prosperity and security. It is why we will work to change the EU, so that it operates in the best interests of our country. And it is why we will re-engage with our European allies to protect our national interest after five years of Britain being side-lined in Europe and isolated abroad.</p> <p>Our reforms will help deliver a Europe focused on jobs and growth, not simply more austerity and rising unemployment. Labour will focus on the completion of the single market and tougher budget discipline, including on those items where spending at the EU level can save money at the national level. That means driving reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and a Commission-led zero-based review of spending on EU agencies to reduce waste</p>

and inefficiency. We will not join the Euro, and we will ensure EU rules protect the interests of non-Euro members.

We will also continue to open up EU decision-making, and implement institutional reforms to help build levels of trust among European citizens. We will work to strengthen the influence national parliaments over European legislation, by arguing for a ‘red-card mechanism’ for member states, providing greater parliamentary scrutiny.

Labour’s priority in government will be protecting the NHS and tackling the cost-of-living crisis. It is not to take Britain out of Europe. However, Labour will legislate for a lock that guarantees that there can be no transfer of powers from Britain to the European Union without the consent of the British public through an in/out referendum.

Liberal Democrat

Britain’s membership of the EU is essential for creating a stronger economy and for projecting influence in the world. Millions of British jobs are linked to our trade with the EU, and being in Europe puts us on a more equal footing when negotiating trade deals with global players like the USA and China and in countering security threats. A modernised EU is crucial to responding to the global challenges Britain faces, whether they are climate change, cross-border crime and terrorism, or conflict. If the UK were to leave the EU, trade rules would be made without us, our voice would not be heard in climate change negotiations and our borders would be more vulnerable. There is no doubt the UK would be poorer and weaker if we walked away from our closest neighbours and most trusted allies and left the EU. But that does not mean that the institutions and policies of the European Union are perfect and do not need reform. Liberal Democrats are the party of reform whether that is in Westminster, Holyrood, the Senedd or in local councils and the EU is no exception.

SNP

Opposing withdrawal from the European Union. At least 330,000 Scottish jobs—around one in seven of all jobs—are dependent on our membership of the single market. That is why we will oppose a referendum on membership of the EU. Being part of Europe is good for business and it supports jobs in Scotland and across the UK.

If an in/out EU referendum does go ahead, we will seek to amend the legislation to ensure that no constituent part of the UK can be taken out of the EU against its will. We will propose a ‘double majority’ rule—meaning that unless

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each vote to leave the EU, the UK would remain a member state.

2017

Conservative | If we are going to make sure Britain emerges from Brexit as a strong and united nation, we will need strong leadership and good government: to get the right deal for Britain in Europe, to strike new trade deals around the world and to make sure our economy is strong for the years ahead.[...]

Britain has always been a great trading nation. Trade will continue to be crucial to our future growth and prosperity. As we leave the European Union, we want to negotiate a new deep and special partnership with the EU, which will allow free trade between the UK and the EU's member states. As part of the agreement we strike, we want to make sure that there are as few barriers to trade and investment as possible. Leaving the European Union also means we will be free to strike our own trade agreements with countries outside the EU.

We will ensure immediate stability by lodging new UK schedules with the World Trade Organisation, in alignment with EU schedules to which we are bound whilst still a member of the European Union. We will seek to replicate all existing EU free trade agreements and support the ratification of trade agreements entered into during our EU membership. We will continue to support the global multilateral rules-based trade system. We will introduce a trade bill in the next parliament.[...]

Following the historic referendum on 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom is leaving the European Union. Only the Conservative Party, under Theresa May's strong and stable leadership, can negotiate the best possible deal for our country. In her Lancaster House speech, the prime minister laid out the twelve principles she intends to follow in seeking a new deep and special partnership with the European Union. We have explained our approach in the white paper on the *United Kingdom's Exit From, and a New Relationship With, the European Union*, during the passage of the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act, in the prime minister's letter to the president of the European Council invoking article 50, and in the great repeal bill white paper.

We want to agree a deep and special partnership with the European Union. This partnership will benefit both the European Union and the United Kingdom: while we are leaving the European Union, we are not leaving Europe, and

we want to remain committed partners and allies to our friends across the continent.

The negotiations will undoubtedly be tough, and there will be give and take on both sides, but we continue to believe that no deal is better than a bad deal for the UK. But we will enter the negotiations in a spirit of sincere cooperation and committed to getting the best deal for Britain. We will make sure we have certainty and clarity over our future, control of our own laws, and a more unified, strengthened United Kingdom. We will control immigration and secure the entitlements of EU nationals in Britain and British nationals in the EU. We will maintain the common travel area and maintain as frictionless a border as possible for people, goods and services between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Workers' rights conferred on British citizens from our membership of the EU will remain. We will pursue free trade with European markets, and secure new trade agreements with other countries. We want to work together in the fight against crime and terrorism, collaborate in science and innovation—and secure a smooth, orderly Brexit. And we will protect the democratic freedom of the people of Gibraltar and our overseas territories to remain British, for as long as that is their wish. The final agreement will be subject to a vote in both houses of parliament.

As we leave the European Union, we will no longer be members of the single market or customs union but we will seek a deep and special partnership including a comprehensive free trade and customs agreement. There may be specific European programmes in which we might want to participate and if so, it will be reasonable that we make a contribution. We will determine a fair settlement of the UK's rights and obligations as a departing member state, in accordance with the law and in the spirit of the UK's continuing partnership with the EU. The principle, however, is clear: the days of Britain making vast annual contributions to the European Union will end.

We want fair, orderly negotiations, minimising disruption and giving as much certainty as possible – so both sides benefit. We believe it is necessary to agree the terms of our future partnership alongside our withdrawal, reaching agreement on both within the two years allowed by article 50 of the Treaty on European Union.[...]

We will enact a great repeal bill. Our laws will be made in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, and interpreted by judges across the United Kingdom, not in Luxembourg. The bill will convert EU law into UK law, allowing businesses and individuals to go about life knowing that the rules have not changed overnight. This approach means that the rights of workers and protections given to consumers and the environment by EU law will continue to be available in UK law at the point at which we leave the EU. The bill will also create the necessary powers to correct the laws that do not operate appropriately once we have left the EU, so our legal system can continue to function correctly outside the EU. Once EU law has been converted into domestic law, parliament will be able to pass legislation to amend, repeal or improve any piece of EU law it chooses, as will the devolved legislatures, where they have the power to do so.

As powers return from the EU, we will be able to determine the level best placed to take decisions on these issues, ensuring that power sits closer to the people of the United Kingdom than ever before. We expect that the outcome will be a significant increase in the decision-making power of each devolved administration but we must also ensure that as we leave the EU no new barriers to living and doing business within our own union are created. In some areas, this will require common UK frameworks. We will work closely with the devolved administrations to deliver an approach that works for the whole of the United Kingdom and reflects the needs and individual circumstances of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

As well as the Great Repeal Bill, we will bring forward a number of additional bills to ensure that when we have left the EU there is a clear statutory basis for United Kingdom authorities to exercise powers that are currently exercised through EU law and institutions.

We will not bring the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights into UK law. We will not repeal or replace the Human Rights Act while the process of Brexit is underway but we will consider our human rights legal framework when the process of leaving the EU concludes. We will remain signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights for the duration of the next parliament.

Labour

Labour accepts the referendum result and a Labour government will put the national interest first. We will prioritise jobs and living standards, build a close new

relationship with the EU, protect workers' rights and environmental standards, provide certainty to EU nationals and give a meaningful role to Parliament throughout negotiations.

We will end Theresa May's reckless approach to Brexit, and seek to unite the country around a Brexit deal that works for every community in Britain.

We will scrap the Conservatives' Brexit White Paper and replace it with fresh negotiating priorities that have a strong emphasis on retaining the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union – which are essential for maintaining industries, jobs and businesses in Britain. Labour will always put jobs and the economy first.

A Labour government will immediately guarantee existing rights for all EU nationals living in Britain and secure reciprocal rights for UK citizens who have chosen to make their lives in EU countries. EU nationals do not just contribute to our society: they are part of our society. And they should not be used as bargaining chips.

It is shameful that the Prime Minister rejected repeated attempts by Labour to resolve this issue before article 50 was triggered. As a result three million EU nationals have suffered unnecessary uncertainty, as have the 1.2 million UK citizens living in the EU.

A Conservative Brexit will weaken workers' rights, deregulate the economy, slash corporate taxes, side-line Parliament and democratic accountability, and cut Britain off from our closest allies and most important trading partners.

Labour recognises that leaving the EU with 'no deal' is the worst possible deal for Britain and that it would do damage to our economy and trade. We will reject 'no deal' as a viable option and if needs be negotiate transitional arrangements to avoid a 'cliff-edge' for the UK economy.

The issues that affect our continent now will continue to do so in the future—and Labour will continue to work constructively with the EU and other European nations on issues such as climate change, refugee crises and counter-terrorism. We will build a close co-operative future relationship with the EU, not as members but as partners.

A Labour government will ensure that the UK maintains our leading research role by seeking to stay part of Horizon 2020 and its successor programmes and by welcoming research staff to the EU. We will seek to maintain membership of (or equivalent relationships with) European organisations which offer benefits to the UK such as Euratom and the European Medicines Agency. We will seek to ensure that Britain remains part of the Erasmus scheme so that British students have the same educational opportunities after we leave the EU.

The EU is the UK's single largest trading partner in agricultural produce, with the vast majority of British exports being sold to European markets. A Labour government will end the uncertainty for our farmers and food producers by securing continued EU market access allowing British farmers and food producers to continue to sell their products on the continent.

Labour will also protect our farmers and rural economy by ensuring Britain continues to set the highest standards in food quality and welfare. We will not allow Brexit to be used as an excuse to undercut our farmers and flood Britain's food chain with cheap and inferior produce.

We will drop the Conservatives' great repeal bill, replacing it with an EU Rights and Protections Bill that will ensure there is no detrimental change to workers' rights, equality law, consumer rights or environmental protections as a result of Brexit.

Throughout the Brexit process, we will make sure that all EU-derived laws that are of benefit including workplace laws, consumer rights and environmental protections—are fully protected without qualifications, limitations or sunset clauses. We will work with trade unions, businesses and stakeholders to ensure there is a consensus on this vital issue. A Labour approach to Brexit will ensure there can be no rolling back of key rights and protections and that the UK does not lag behind Europe in workplace protections and environmental standards in future.

The EU has had a huge impact in securing workplace protections and environmental safeguards. But we all know that for many Brexiteers in the Tory Party, this was why they wanted to Leave—to tear up regulations and weaken hard-fought rights and protections.

A Labour government will never consider these rights a burden or accept the weakening of workers' rights, consumer rights or environmental protections.

We will introduce legislation to ensure there are no gaps in national security and criminal justice arrangements as a result of Brexit.

Labour recognises the vital role that cross-border agencies such as Eurojust and Europol have played in making Britain safer and that European arrest warrants have been invaluable. A Labour government will seek to retain membership of these agencies and continue European Arrest Warrant arrangements.

Labour will seek a Brexit deal that delivers for all regions and nations of the UK. We will introduce a 'presumption of devolution' where devolved powers transferred from the EU will go straight to the relevant region or nation. For many people and for much of our country, power can feel just as remote and unaccountable in Westminster as it does in Brussels. So a Labour government will seek to put powers as close to communities as possible.

We will ensure there is no drop in structural funding as a result of Brexit until the end of the current EU funding round in 2019/20. As part of Labour's plans to rebalance and rebuild the economy, we will ensure that no region or nation of the UK is affected by the withdrawal of funding for the remainder of this Parliament. This will also apply to the funding of peace and reconciliation projects in Northern Ireland.

We will also improve engagement and dialogue with the devolved administrations and seek to ensure the final Brexit deal addresses specific concerns. In particular Labour will ensure there is no return to a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and that there is no change in the status or sovereignty of Gibraltar. We will also protect Gibraltar's economy and ensure that its government can continue to create jobs and prosperity in the years to come.

Where Theresa May wants to shut down scrutiny and challenge, Labour will welcome it. We will work with Parliament, not against it. On an issue of this importance the Government can't hide from the public or Parliament.

A Labour approach to Brexit also means legislating to guarantee that Parliament has a truly meaningful vote on the final Brexit deal.

Liberal Democrat

Liberal Democrats are open and outward-looking. We passionately believe that Britain's relationship with its neighbours is stronger as part of the European Union. Whatever its imperfections, the EU remains the best framework for working effectively and co-operating in the pursuit of our shared aims. It has led directly to greater prosperity, increased trade, investment and jobs, better security and a greener environment. Britain is better off in the EU.

Liberal Democrats campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU. However, we acknowledge the result of the 2016 referendum, which gave the government a mandate to start negotiations to leave. The decision Britain took, though, was simply whether to remain in or to leave the European Union. There was no option on the ballot paper to choose the shape of our future relationship with the EU on vital issues including trade, travel or security.

While much remains uncertain about Theresa May's approach, it is now clear that the Conservatives are campaigning for a hard Brexit. This means leaving the single market, ending freedom of movement and abandoning the customs union—even though these choices will make the UK poorer and disappoint many leave voters who wanted a different outcome.

The effects of Brexit are already being felt. The value of the pound has plummeted. Inflation has risen. Growth in the economy has slowed and the Government is already borrowing billions more to fill the gap in lost tax revenue. Young people, who voted overwhelmingly to remain, are being told their voices do not matter. Urgent problems, such as the future of the NHS, are being neglected because of the sheer scale of the challenge posed by Brexit.

A hard Brexit will make all these problems worse. It is the wrong choice for the country. Liberal Democrats will fight to prevent a hard Brexit.

At the end of negotiations there will be a decision on the deal. The Conservatives want the decision to be taken by politicians. Liberal Democrats believe the British people should have the final say.

That's why, when the terms of our future relationship with the EU have been negotiated (over the next two years on the Government's timetable), we will put that deal to a vote of the British people in a referendum, with the alternative option of staying in the EU on the ballot paper. We continue to believe that there is no deal as good for the UK outside the EU as the one it already has as a member.

Every vote for the Liberal Democrats in this election is a vote to give the final say to the British people.[...]

During negotiations, we commit ourselves to use our strength in parliament to press for keeping Britain as close as possible to Europe. Our priorities will include:

Protection of Rights for EU Citizens and UK Citizens:

We will press for the UK to unilaterally guarantee the rights of EU nationals in the UK, ending their ongoing uncertainty. We will call for the overhaul and simplification of the registration process and the requirements for EU nationals to obtain permanent residence and UK citizenship, as the current system is not fit for purpose. We will urge the government, and use our influence with Liberal leaders in European countries, to secure the same rights for UK citizens living in European Union countries.

Membership of the Single Market and Customs Union:

We believe that any deal negotiated for the UK outside the EU must ensure that trade can continue without customs controls at the border, and must maintain membership of the single market, which smooths trade between the UK and the continent by providing a common 'rule book' for businesses and a common mechanism to ensure that everyone abides by the rules.

Freedom of Movement: We support the principle of freedom of movement—to abandon it would threaten Britain's prosperity and reputation as an open, tolerant society. Any deal negotiated for the UK outside the EU must protect the right to work, travel, study and retire across the EU. Any restrictions sought by the Government must take account of the vital importance of EU workers to the British economy, including public services.

Opportunities for Young People: In an increasingly globalised and complex world, it is vital that our young

people are afforded the same opportunities their parents enjoyed to work, study and travel abroad. To that end we will do everything we can to protect Erasmus+ and other EU-funded schemes which increase opportunities for young people.

Defending Social Rights and Equalities: Many important protections such as the right to 52 weeks' maternity leave and rights to annual leave are currently based on EU law, and many of these rights have been upheld at the European Court of Justice. Liberal Democrats will fight to ensure that these entitlements are not undermined.

Maintaining Environmental Standards: The European Union has created the highest environmental standards in the world. We have a duty to future generations to protect our environment and tackle climate change. Liberal Democrats will ensure that everything is done to maintain those high standards in UK law, including the closest possible co-operation on climate and energy policy.

Law Enforcement and Judicial Co-Operation: Europol, the European Arrest Warrant and shared access to police databases have helped make Britain's streets safer. We will fight to maintain maximum co-operation to ensure criminals are pursued quickly and effectively, and police are not frustrated by huge amounts of red tape.

British Business and Jobs: We must protect support for domestic industries such as farming, tourism and the creative industries, as well as regional support for deprived areas. The City of London is Europe's financial capital and must retain its full rights in EU financial markets.

Science and Research Funding: Research is vital for our long-term prosperity, security and wellbeing—but the Leave vote has already started to affect existing and proposed research programmes. We will campaign against any reduction in investment in UK universities and for their right to apply for EU funds on equal terms.

Travel and Tourism: Britain is an outward-looking country with commercial and leisure interests around the world, particularly in Europe. We will strive to retain traveller and tourist benefits such as the European health insurance card, reduced roaming charges and pet passports, all of which are at risk by leaving the European Union.

Respect for the Interests of Scotland, Wales and

Northern Ireland: We will fight to ensure that the priorities and long-term interests of the nations of the UK are fully taken into account during negotiations. We will oppose any moves that threaten the political stability of Northern Ireland. We will also campaign to protect the rights of the people of Gibraltar.

SNP

The SNP believes that if Scotland chooses to become independent, we should be a member state of the EU.

Before asking people to vote in an independence referendum, we will set out the process by which our membership of the EU will be secured in the circumstances that prevail at that time—such as whether or not Scotland has already left the EU as part of the UK.

We will continue, in all circumstances, to demand the scrapping or fundamental reform of the common fisheries policy and support Scottish control of Scottish fisheries, as we have done for many years.

We will also oppose any attempt by the UK Government to treat the fishing industry as a bargaining chip. Having sold out fishing as ‘expendable’ on the way in to the EU, a Tory government must not be allowed to betray it again on the way out.

Given that an independence referendum would happen at the end of the Brexit process, this election also presents Scotland with a more immediate opportunity.

In the months ahead, we must make sure that our interests are not ignored in the Brexit negotiations. A vote for the SNP will make sure that Scotland’s voice is heard.

A majority of people in Scotland voted to remain in the EU—but even many of those who voted to leave have real concerns about the extreme Brexit being pursued by the UK government.

To be taken out, not just of the EU, but also of the Single Market, poses a real and present danger to Scottish jobs—to our farmers and fisherman, our universities, our food and drink businesses and to almost every sector of our economy. Indeed, it has been estimated that leaving the Single Market could cost 80,000 jobs in Scotland.

That is why the Scottish Government published compromise proposals that would keep Scotland in the Single Market, even as we left the EU.

These proposals were rejected out of hand by the UK Government. Despite promising to listen to the devolved administrations, and being prepared to countenance a special deal for the car industry, they refused to consider arrangements that would address the specific needs of Scotland.

However, this election offers people the chance to give the Scottish Government's proposals real democratic legitimacy and make it impossible for the Prime Minister to continue to ignore Scotland's voice.

If the SNP wins the election, it will give us a mandate to demand a place for Scotland at the Brexit negotiating table and the inclusion of the case for our place in the Single Market in the UK's negotiating remit.[...]

Brexit threatens the fundamental rights that people in the UK currently enjoy, including workers' rights, as well as vital social and environmental protections. SNP MPs will hold the Tories to account to ensure that the rights and protections currently safeguarded by EU membership are not diminished after the UK leaves.

We will also seek a cast-iron guarantee from the UK Government that they will seek the consent of the Scottish Parliament under the Sewel convention to the terms of the Brexit Bill.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is enshrined in the Scotland Act 1998, ensuring that human rights are protected by the Scottish Government and all Scottish legislation. The SNP re-affirms its commitment to the Council of Europe, the ECHR and their institutions.

We will fight to protect human rights across the UK. SNP MPs will oppose any attempts by the UK Government to scrap the Human Rights Act and withdraw the UK from the ECHR.

So long as Scotland is covered by trade arrangements negotiated by the UK government, the SNP will call for greater transparency in any proposed international trade

deals following Brexit, with the UK and Scottish Parliaments being given a say.

The benefits delivered by EU funding for Scotland are significant and wide-ranging—supporting jobs, paying for new infrastructure across the country, funding research at our universities, and providing support for our farming and fishing industries. SNP MPs will demand urgent clarity from the UK government on long-term funding arrangements after the UK leaves the EU, and ensure that current funding levels are matched.[...]

Until such time as Scotland chooses to be independent, SNP MPs will support increased powers for the Scottish Parliament. Indeed, the implications of Brexit make it both appropriate and essential that the current devolution settlement is fundamentally revisited, to ensure that the interests of Scotland can be protected.

SNP MPs will seek additional powers. These will include:

Powers that will be repatriated from Brussels to the UK that currently sit within the competences of the Scottish Parliament, like agriculture, fisheries and environmental protection.

Powers to be repatriated in reserved areas, such as employment law, which protect fundamental rights currently enjoyed by the people of Scotland.

New powers, beyond those being repatriated, including, but not limited to immigration; powers to conclude international agreements in areas of the Scottish Parliament's responsibility, and powers that would allow Scotland to meet the regulatory and administrative requirements of continued European Single Market membership.

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