

2. EU / Brexit

Proposer: Andrew Haldane for North West Policy Committee

Summator:

Conference acknowledges that

On 23rd June, in answer to the question “Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?”, the electorate voted by a margin of 51.9% to 48.2% in favour of the option to leave.

Conference notes that

- 1 The nature of the referendum was advisory and therefore non-binding on Parliament;
- 2 The vote for “Leave” represented only 37% of the electorate;
- 3 The majority for Leave was small (3.8%);
- 4 The question as to whether the Prime Minister may legally invoke the implementation of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty without the approval of Parliament is currently the subject of legal challenge.
- 5 That Federal Conference recently re-affirmed Liberal Democrat demands that the UK Government position which would form the basis for negotiations under Article 50 should be approved by Parliament before Article 50 is invoked.

Conference is concerned that

- 1 The referendum represented an unequal proposition between one clearly defined outcome (Remain) and a wholly undefined alternative (Leave);
- 2 That voters may have expressed a preference based on inaccurate and wholly untruthful information presented by the Leave campaign;
- 3 Indications are that implementation of Article 50
 - Could lead to a version of “Brexit” totally at odds with the intention of many who voted in favour of Leave;
 - Will lead to serious, irreparable damage to the UK, European and World economies;
 - Represents a threat to the continued existence of the United Kingdom;
 - Threatens the future of UK citizens living and settled in the EU;
 - Threatens the future of EU citizens living and settled in the UK.

Conference calls for Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians of both Houses

- 1 To bring pressure to bear for the implementation of Article 50 to be subject to the approval of Parliament.
- 2 To take all steps necessary to delay the implementation of Article 50 until such time as a clearer vision of the repercussions of leaving the UK have emerged and a clear UK negotiating position has been established.
- 3 At such a time, to be open to all democratic options, whether parliamentary or otherwise, to address the changed situation.