

Folketingets Europaudvalg

Christiansborg, den 28. februar 2002
Europaudvalgets sekretariat

Til
udvalgets medlemmer og stedfortrædere

**Materiale til brug for mødet med den britiske
Europaminister**

For god ordens skyld skal det understreges, at Europaudvalget får besøg af den britiske **Europaminister Peter Hain** mandag den 4. marts, og ikke den britiske udenrigsminister, jf. info-note I 62.

Til brug for mødet vedlægges til orientering Peter Hains CV og ministerens seneste taler om bl.a. Fremtidens Europa.

Med venlig hilsen

Irli Plambech





Peter Hain, MP

Minister med ansvar for EU, Centraleuropa og det sydlige Europa

Peter Hain blev udnævnt til Europaminister i Udenrigsministeriet den 11. juni 2001. Han blev også udpeget til The Privy Council, Gehejmeråden, i juni 2001. Peter Hain er endvidere den britiske regerings repræsentant ved Konventet om Europas Fremtid.

Peter Hain har tidligere været Energiminister i Handels- og Industriministeriet fra januar til juni 2001 og minister i Udenrigsministeriet fra juli 1999 til januar 2001. Han var viceminister i Ministeriet for Wales, the Welsh Office, fra 1997 til 1999.

Peter Hain er uddannet ved London og Sussex universiteter. Han var observatør ved parlamentsvalget i Nigeria i 1993 og i Sydafrika i 1994. Fra 1979 til 1987 var han medlem af Labours koordinationsudvalg. Han var skolebestyrelsesmedlem fra 1981 til 1990 og medlem af Health Authority fra 1981 til 1987.

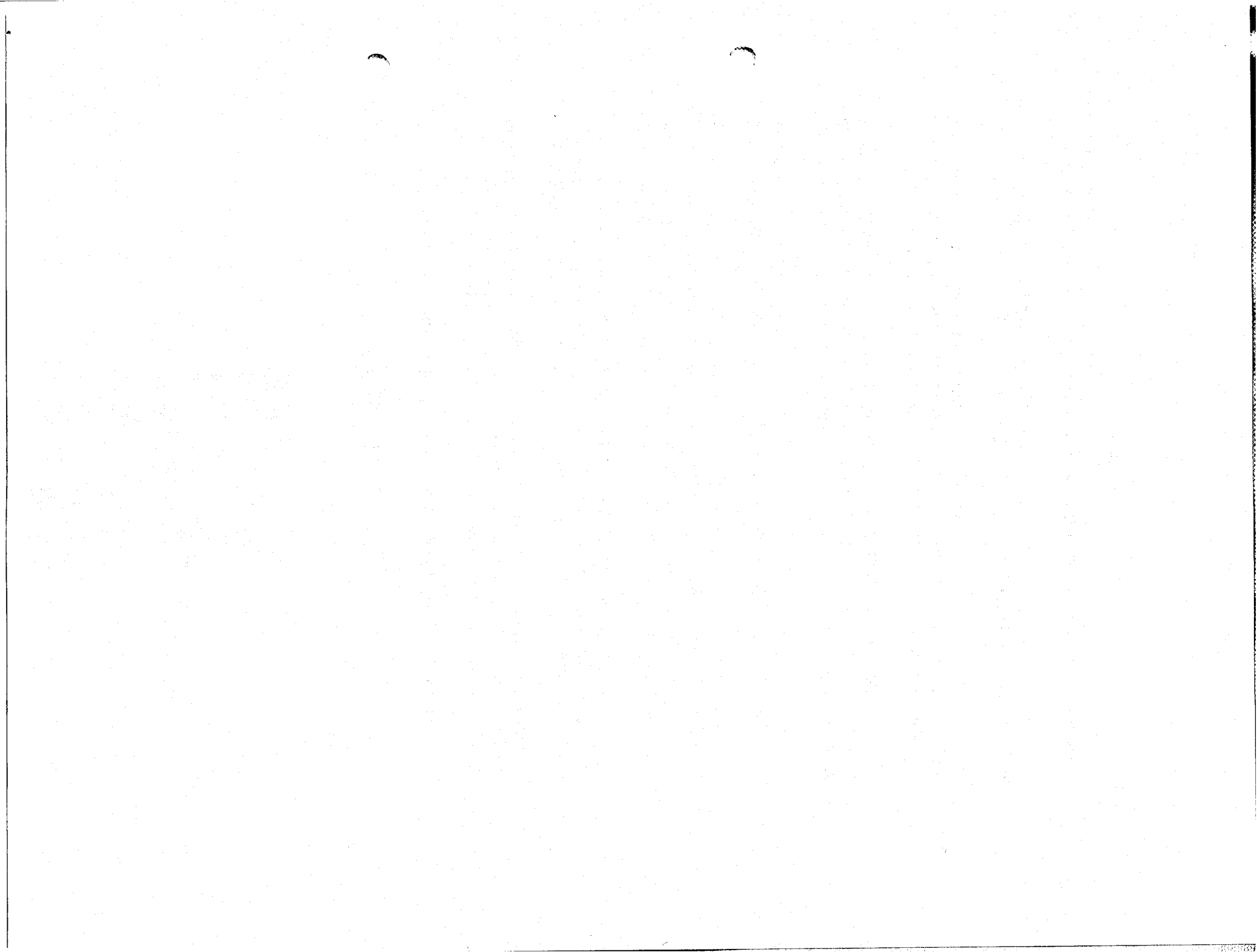
Peter Hain har været medlem af The Labour Party siden 1977 og medlem af fagforeningen GMB siden 1973.

Han blev indvalgt i Underhuset for Labour i Neath kredsen ved et suppleringsvalg den 4. april 1991. Han var indpisker for Labour 1995-1997, skyggebeskæftigelsesminister 1992-1997, formand for bestyrelsen for The Tribune Newspaper 1993-1997.

Peter Hain, som tilbragte sin barndom i Sydafrika, indtil hans familie blev tvunget til at forlade landet i 1966 som følge af hans forældres modstand mod Apartheid regimet, har været aktiv indenfor Anti-Apartheid bevægelsen.

Han er forfatter til 16 bøger, heriblandt "Sing the Beloved Country: the Struggle for the New South Africa (1996) og "Ayes to the Left: a Future of Socialism (1995).

Peter Hain er født i Nairobi, Kenya i 1950. Han har to sønner og bor i Resolven i Neath Valley i det sydlige Wales.



**SPEECH BY FCO MINISTER FOR EUROPE, PETER HAIN, BRUSSELS,
TUESDAY 29 JANUARY 2002**

'THE FUTURE OF EUROPE: TIME FOR A NEW VISION'

A cartoonist has depicted the best case for the European Union: Italians the lovers, Belgians the chefs and British the chauffeurs. The worst case: Italians the chauffeurs, Belgians the lovers and British the chefs. A typically British caricature of cultural diversity in Europe. In reality diversity is something to celebrate. The European Union benefits from its diversity, co-operation and experience.

The debate over the future of Europe is similarly caricatured: between advocates of a 'federalist superstate' on the one hand, and an EU based upon inter-governmentalism on the other. The Laeken Declaration could be read as giving comfort to both caricatures. In fact, the mandate it has given to the Convention should and must allow us to break new ground and find a new way of doing European business, for a new era.

Not before time. Because, despite its enormous success - a success which has confounded the sceptics - the EU as an institution needs a step change. The EU institutions are too remote from the people of Europe. The low turnout in European elections and the loss of the Irish referendum - where the NO campaign won on a slogan 'If you don't know, vote NO' - are salutary calls for change.

The most important question for the Convention to address is: how can we improve the Union's ability to deliver. Because delivery is what matters to the public. Delivery on full employment and competitiveness. Delivery on security. Delivery on the environment. Delivery on human rights. Delivery on democracy and accountability. Delivery on international justice and the EU as a progressive force for global good, not a protectionist club.

Every reform proposal must be judged against this delivery yardstick. Of course we shall have to focus on issues like whether to elect the President of the Commission; or extend Qualified Majority Voting; or redefine competences and re-arrange the three pillars. EU cognoscenti can demand still more power for the Parliament over the Commission or the Council.

But we should set these detailed discussions within the delivery context. Are these ideas going to help the EU to work - an EU of 25 or more, not the one of six countries, for which the institutions were established? Are they going to help an EU which needs actively to consolidate and deepen its democratic legitimacy? Will they strengthen an EU which has fine traditions and impressive values, but which is facing huge competitive challenges globally, and huge threats to world security and stability.

It is time to ask fundamental questions about the future of Europe. Not to rip up the blueprint and start again - we are starting, after all, with a track record of success, not of failure. A track record of peace and stability on a continent where for centuries more

wars were fought than anywhere else in the world. A track record of economic growth and prosperity, which has dramatically raised living standards of poorer countries, thereby also generating increased prosperity opportunities for the rest of us in the single market.

The Convention which opens on 28 February is a new way of doing business. For the first time we have asked what it is that our citizens want the EU to do. I hope that the national governments and the political representatives of Europe will be open minded about their contributions, and that civil society groups will take up the invitation to put forward their ideas through the civil forum.

In the past, whenever the question has been asked about Europe's future, the answer has been the same - more integration. And that road has brought much success.

But the old certainties are gone. We are creating a new Europe, a new European Union.

The end of the Cold War has generated an entirely new Order. Europe is being re-united. Washington is recognising the weight and importance of the EU in a multi-polar world. Russia wants a partnership with the EU. China seeks an intensified relationship with Britain and with the EU more generally. India - in population terms likely to be the biggest knowledge based economy in world within a decade - will emerge as one of the world's genuine superpowers. The developing world is kicking noisily on Europe's door. When the agricultural subsidies in the EU and the rest of the rich world are equivalent to the entire GDP of sub-Saharan Africa, it must surely be clear that the current situation is unsustainable.

Many of the countries about to join the EU see life very differently from the founding fathers of Europe. Many have had only a decade of modern life as sovereign, nation states. It is not surprising that they want to be members of an EU which does not undermine their new statehood. Nor their new democracy: like us they want a vote in a fair and free election to make a real difference locally and immediately, on issues which matter; they want a feeling that you can hold someone to account.

That is partly why we and most of our European partners insist that independent nation states must remain the bedrock of the EU. The EU is simply too big to hold accountable directly and exclusively through MEPs, let alone an elected Commission President.

So the mission of the Convention should be to work out how the EU can explain, popularise and then deliver. That mission must guide each of its proposals for reform.

The Convention could begin by setting out some basic principles:

the EU is primarily a union of the member states.

the EU institutions will have in future only those powers which the member states have agreed to give it;

the member states play a major part in wielding the powers they grant to the EU through their own EU institution, the Council of Ministers; this balance of powers can be altered through changes to the Treaties; those powers and Treaties can only be changed by agreement of the member states, ratified in accordance with their respective national provisions; except where the member states have given the EU exclusive powers to act, the EU will only use its powers when the member states cannot achieve the same objective on their own - the so-called 'subsidiarity' principle; when exercising its powers, the EU will take only the lightest action necessary to achieve the objective - the principle of 'proportionality'.

When exercising its powers, the EU will as far as possible leave it to member states to determine how to achieve the objective; when exercising its powers, the EU will resort to legislation only if alternative methods of co-operation will not achieve the objective; the EU will act where there are cross-border implications.

We could call it the Statement of Principles, and write it into a Basic Law or a Constitutional Treaty. I believe it reflects what is in the Treaties now. But it could form the first article of a new Treaty. A new covenant for Europe, in language we can all understand.

Who will ensure that these principles are observed?

Obviously all the EU institutions, especially the Commission. But the leading role must be reserved for the Council as the focus of the governments' involvement in the EU, and from which the EU derives its essential legitimacy and strength.

The European Council must provide better leadership within the EU. It must be more strategic. It must set an annual agenda. The Council must be more open when it legislates and therefore more accountable. Members of the public must see their Ministers taking decisions in the Council.

Being better led means reforming the current system of 6-monthly Presidencies which is unwieldy, inefficient and weak at giving strategic direction and purpose. According to the Financial Times last week, this is the point at which I propose a 'directoire' or 'European Security Council'. Sorry to disappoint: we have not proposed this. But what we do want is reform to make the Council much more effective. And this should respect the essential equality of its members, big and small, new and old. Directoires are not on my agenda. But what is my concern is that we face the facts. Does anybody think the present arrangements will work when we are 25 or more?

We want the Convention to succeed. But it must remember that the purpose of reform is better to deliver full employment, social justice, civil rights and security for Europe's citizens. The time is right for radical reform. But radical reform with its feet on the ground of the nation state, not its head in the sky of a super-state.

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR EUROPE, PETER HAIN, TO THE
WALES INFORMATION NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE, PORT
TALBOT, FRIDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2002**

When I became Minister for Europe, I promised a practical approach: getting Europe to deliver real benefits, on things that matter to real people.

I also promised an honest debate about Europe, and Britain's place in it. No spin, no slogans. Just the facts about Europe: telling it like it is.

The EU's not perfect - I doubt any of us here would say it is. But what organisation is?

The EU delivers real benefits to Britain. And where we think Europe needs reforming and improving, we should engage positively with our European partners to shape its future and make Britain's goals Europe's goals, not sulk on the sidelines.

REAL BENEFITS TO BRITAIN

The single market is a remarkable achievement: over 370 million people, increasing to 500 million after we expand the EU to take in the candidates from Central and Southern Europe. This means more UK trade, jobs and prosperity.

The Single Market has helped deliver the highest standard of living in European history, the biggest choice and cheapest prices for consumers ever. More than three million jobs in 800,000 companies in the UK depend on it.

We've seen the benefits here in Wales. Seventy-one percent of Welsh goods exports go to the EU. Over 150,000 Welsh jobs depend on this trade. And the Single Market brings inward investment too. About a third of the Welsh manufacturing workforce have jobs as a result of foreign direct investment. Would more than 60 Japanese firms have come to Wales if the United Kingdom was outside the European Union and the world's largest single market? Would they stay here if we pulled out?

The EU has also ensured that the horrors of the Second World War, only two generations ago, seem inconceivable in today's Union. And yet, the 11 September terrorist attack on New York and Washington showed just how vulnerable we all still are. Terrorism knows no frontier posts or border guards.

So it is vital that Britain works together with other nations, especially our neighbours in Europe. The EU responded immediately to 11 September, agreeing a whole raft of measures, from identifying terrorist money laundering and freezing their assets, to sharing intelligence. If the EU's institutions and procedures had not been in place, the response to 11 September in our part of the globe could not have been as efficient and effective.

The EU has also made fighting crime its priority. We've developed co-operation between our police forces, so an officer in one EU country can arrest a wanted criminal on behalf of another EU country. We are setting up a network of prosecutors from each country in Europe, so a magistrate in London can get the evidence she needs from her colleague in Helsinki to nail a drug lord or a bank robber. And our customs officers are stopping drug smugglers, people traffickers and illegal immigrants, thanks to quiet and effective co-operation with other European countries.

On our environment, even the eurosceptics can't pretend that the UK is an island immune to outside influence. We need to work with other countries to ensure clearer skies, purer water, cleaner beaches and a healthy quality of air.

THE NEED FOR REFORM

But there are some areas where it needs to do better. Like the Common Agricultural Policy, for starters. We still spend more of the EU's money on the CAP than on any other single policy. It makes our food cost more than it should. It causes waste. It's bureaucratic. It distorts world markets – hurting people in the third world and getting in the way of a freer trade with the US. And in return for these dubious privileges, it costs the EU more than 40 billion euros – or £25 billion - per year. CAP reform is a top priority for this Government.

Similarly, there is an urgent need for EU economic reform, so that Europe's economy can become the most dynamic and competitive in the world.

The current economic slowdown makes the Lisbon reform agenda even more urgent. Europe must work even harder now, to tackle barriers to business success and job creation. It needs to send a clear signal at the Barcelona Summit next month that it is moving in the right direction, and that the reform agenda is on track. If Europe is truly to find a place in the hearts and minds of its citizens, be they captains of industry or shrewd consumers, then this reform agenda is the acid test.

Third there's a category of areas where things are actually working pretty well, but where we have a lot to do to convince people that this is the case.

BRUSSELS BUREAUCRACY

Like the British public's dear old friend, the Brussels bureaucracy. Yes, there is a Euro bureaucracy: an independent Commission, a Council of the governments, a European Parliament, and an independent Court. But it is smaller than Birmingham City Council. The Commission makes proposals for new laws, but doesn't make the laws. It monitors existing law to ensure the member states all play by the rule so we can be protected too. The big decisions are taken by the Council of Ministers accountable to their own governments, not the Commission. And the biggest of all are taken by the European Council: representatives of democratically elected governments, accountable to their parliaments and their electorates.

Yes, the Commission is a bureaucracy. It isn't elected. And that's right, because, like civil servants, they must be independent, acting for the good of everyone in Europe. Politicise them and they couldn't do that. But they are accountable – to the European Parliament directly and to the Council indirectly. And they are eminently sackable – as the whole Commission found out in 1999.

When necessary – like on the reaction to 11 September - the EU institutions can agree policies quicker than many national governments or legislatures because they have the procedures and institutions in place already. Not bad when you consider all the different perspectives and interests involved. The EU institutions actually get pretty high marks for fairness, efficiency and accountability.

THE SINGLE CURRENCY

A few words on the single currency.

The euro is a reality now. And not just for the twelve member states who signed up to it. Its impact is being felt in the UK, too. In principle, we're in favour of joining. A successful single currency will act as a complement to the Single Market, reducing transaction costs and exchange rate uncertainty on trade within the euro zone.

Price transparency will mean that consumers can see exactly how much products and services cost in different countries. This will bring increased competition, and with it the potential to improve efficiency and productivity, and drive down prices.

But the economic conditions must be right: the five economic tests – convergence, flexibility, investment, financial services, and employment and growth - define whether a clear and unambiguous case for membership can be made.

We will not fudge these tests. They are fundamental. The assessment will be comprehensive and rigorous, and will be completed by June 2003. And if the tests are met, a final decision will rest with the British people in a referendum.

So our policy hasn't changed and won't change. But people in this country are shrewd. If the single currency is a success, if it helps those in the eurozone to attract investment and create jobs, if it provides economic stability and low inflation, then I think that people will think the argument in favour of membership is a strong one.

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Since becoming Minister for Europe, I've appealed for plain speaking on Europe. No spin, no hype, no prejudice. Just a straightforward discussion of difficult but momentous issues.

I've produced clear, plain-language leaflets summarising the EU treaties, European law, the EU's work in fighting crime, and the euro. The issues that matter to ordinary people, and where there's a need for information.

I've also asked my officials at the Foreign Office to ensure that they write and speak plain English about Europe. And I have asked my Ministerial colleagues in other British Government departments to encourage their officials dealing with Europe to speak and write plainly too.

Last but not least, we in government need to work more closely with the whole range of regional EU information centres, NGOs and other interested bodies, to ensure that we support and compliment each other's work.

Governments can't win this battle alone. For people to see the real benefits of the European Union, Europe's institutions and civil servants need to cut through the jargon and the Euro-speak too.

The very low turnout right across Europe in the 1999 European elections showed the big gap between the EU and its citizens. The Irish referendum, to ratify the Nice Treaty on enlarging the EU, showed it too: turnout low, answer no.

Young people are instinctively pro-European. They travel to Paris just as easily as to London. They get by with the language and drink the lager. But ask them about the Council or the Commission or the Parliament and they don't want to know. They are not necessarily hostile, just not engaged.

We need plain language, not Euro-babble, which is understood only by an elite, and virtually unintelligible to a Europe Minister, let alone an average voter. At European Union Summits, politicians and journalists are trapped in a security cordoned bubble talking to each other. Then they talk the same summit-speak to a perplexed and alienated outside world.

We need a new popular language if we are to reconnect the European Union to its citizens, to show that we are in fact talking about the things that really matter – jobs and prosperity, peace and security, social justice and the environment.

We are making progress. At Nice, we agreed to look at simplifying the treaties to make them easier to understand. We're also looking at the need to connect to national parliaments: that's why the Prime Minister has proposed a chamber of national parliamentarians; and why the next intergovernmental conference on the EU's future will consider the place of national parliaments in the EU. And we're looking at the gap between the citizens and the EU itself, which is why we agreed at Nice – for the first time - to consult the European peoples on what they want for Europe before we next take decisions in 2004. And why this Government and this Minister is committed to involving British citizens in the debate.

Don't get me wrong: some of the best efforts to unscramble euro-babble are coming from Brussels itself. In particular from the European Commission, whose White Paper on Governance stressed the importance of using clear simple language on EU issues,

and whose 'Fight the Fog' campaign encourages Brussels professionals to produce understandable text.

But we need still to do more to convey the information that exists simply, and to explain what it means. We need to do more to explain the EU in terms that people can understand. And we need to do more to convince many of them that the EU matters, and that it works for us.

CONCLUSION

This Government has worked hard to make Britain's priorities the EU's priorities. Priorities like the fight against crime and illegal immigration. Economic reform for more jobs and greater prosperity.

The enlargement of the EU, to make us all better off and safer. And European solidarity with the US in rebuilding Afghanistan and prosecuting the new war against terror. And we've scored, by being positive about Europe, engaging again, winning friends, winning arguments. We – and the EU – have a good story to tell. But we need to do more to get the story across.

To communicate the benefits of the European Union to people up and down the country, and convince them that Europe is good for their jobs, their security and their future. That it can deliver on its promises of full employment, equal rights, and an end to injustice and poverty. That it can make a real difference in the lives of real people.
