

Remaining contradictions about Parliamentary sovereignty

I believe in Parliamentary sovereignty, subject to the ultimate sovereignty of the British people. In recent debates some have sought to suggest that those who favour Brexit, who made the case for restoring the sovereignty of the British people and their Parliament, now no longer reflect this view because we wish to limit Parliament's role in the Brexit process.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Parliament reasserted its sovereignty vis a vis the EU by offering UK voters a vote on whether to stay or to leave the EU. The government on behalf of Parliament made it clear in a leaflet to all voting households that we the people would make the decision. When we leave the EU Parliament will once again be able to exercise the people's sovereignty over all government issues, freed of the ultimate jurisdiction of the European Court and the EU Council.

When the voters made a decision which a majority of MPs did not agree with Parliament had to make a choice. Should it honour its promise to the British people, or should it seek to overturn the decision of the people? Wisely Parliament decided to implement the wishes of the people by voting strongly in favour of sending the Article 50 letter notifying the EU of our intention to leave on 29 March 2019 in accordance with treaty law. In a General election voters reaffirmed their view on the EU by voting overwhelmingly for the two main parties who both promised Brexit and rejecting the main party that offered a second referendum or a stay in option. The Commons followed up by approving the EU Withdrawal Bill.

Some in Parliament seem to think Parliament can keep on changing its mind on this matter. They seek a further Parliamentary vote with the intent of overturning the decision of the British people and contradicting all the previous votes in Parliament on this topic. I urge Parliament not to do this. It would be difficult for the world to take the UK seriously if its Parliament kept changing its mind about whether to leave or remain in the EU. It is difficult to see why Parliament rightly thought it should honour its promise to voters in 2017, only to alter course in 2018. If after filing to leave and undertaking negotiations over the process of leaving the UK announced it wished to reverse this process, the EU would be entitled to be difficult insisting we stick to our Article 50 letter or they could demand a high price for agreement to rejoin. It would also drive a mighty new wedge between people and Parliament with people angry that their wishes had been ignored.