

The EU bill or leaving present

The government has been very clear that it will pay what we owe. It seems equally clear we only owe the regular contributions up to the date of departure.

Those who argue we will have to pay something more are arguing for an ex gratia payment or leaving present. We received no credit or down payment when we joined to reflect all those liabilities the existing members had signed up to, so we owe nothing for future liabilities when we leave.

Those who say you don't leave a restaurant without paying the bill are right. But once you have left the restaurant you do not have to pay for other people's meals who are still dining, nor do you get sent a bill later for the staff pensions.

Were Ministers to want to go beyond just paying what we legally owe they will need new primary legislation. Ministers in the UK do not have the power to give our money away to other governments or institutions without an express legal power from Parliament to do so.

The 9 month delay in sending the Article 50 letter has already cost us around £9bn of extra net contributions or ££15bn of gross contributions. Those who wish to delay our exit are wanting UK taxpayers to have to pay more to the EU.