

What kind of Remain did Remain voters vote for?

Throughout the referendum campaign Remain advocates refused to discuss the current state and the future path of the EU. Many of those I debated with declined even to defend the current EU, saying it had its faults and they wished it to be reformed. I found few willing to defend the Common Fisheries Policy, the drift to common taxation through EU VAT, company tax rules and special taxes, the policy on animal husbandry, the Maastricht budget rules and austerity and much else of the current EU. Had we enjoyed a proper debate on the current and future EU I suspect more would have voted Leave. For those passionate Remainers who write in here I am offering them a chance today to write about their favourite subject, why we should stay in the EU. Here are some possible futures of the EU. Which did they have in mind when they voted to keep the UK in membership?

1 "Ever closer union". Do they accept the main aims of the EU, to create a full monetary, social, economic and political union? When do they think the UK should join in properly, by joining the Euro, the core of the current Union? Do they accept that the Euro with or without UK membership will need a bigger and better transfer union to help the poorer countries in the Euro? Do they support a bigger EU budget to bring that about? Do they welcome more EU based taxes to pay for Union policies? Do they welcome a common defence and security policy? Should UK armed forces be part of European forces and accept command from the EU?

2. If they wish to avoid some features of ever closer union, how would they secure the necessary opt outs as the Union proceeds with a fuller budgetary and political union? How realistic is it for the UK to be round the budget table for the general EU budget but not round the table for the Euro area budget? At what point does the opt out from the currency cease to be an opt out from the budgetary consequences of the Euro? What would the UK have to do if there were another financial or banking crisis in the Euro area? How far can the UK allow defence industrial integration go before it is no longer an independent nation for defence purposes?

3. Are there any limits to government expansion and legal creep which characterise the advance of the EU? Do advocates accept that the more ECJ decisions there are, the more regulations and directives there are, the more we are governed by the EU institutions and the less scope our Parliament has for independent action and lawmaking. The EU has a doctrine of the occupied field. Once it passes a directive or regulation, it then has power in that area and can override national parliaments. Recently the EU has for example taken over much of the regulation of the new social media and digital industries which are crucial for our future. Surely at some point there has to be greater recognition in the democratic system of the big transfer of power which is occurring, with strengthened democratic control over the EU Commission and the European Court of Justice, which is an activist court with a political mission.