

## Why won't so many in the media ask questions of the EU?

For a year many in the media have recycled old tired materials from the referendum. They have invented something called soft and hard Brexit and have gone on and on trying to find weaknesses in the UK government position, and trying to shift the negotiating aims. They have failed to show impartiality by doing the same to the EU. Why aren't they ringing round their contacts in other member states governments and business and finding out their differences on what the EU wants? Why don't they analyse all the different claims and protests the EU Commission has made, and set them against the views of individual countries? You could make a programme about all the varied claims for large sums of money which seem to have no legal basis whatsoever.

So far what has been fascinating about the rest of the EU debate is how unlike the UK media and Commission briefings it has been. I have not heard the Irish government say they think high tariffs on Irish agricultural products into the UK is a price worth paying to teach us a lesson. The Dutch government do not say they want their farmers to pay tariffs or stop supplying us with all that market garden produce and all those flowers. The German government has been noisier about how the UK must not gain from leaving, but has fallen short of saying a 10% tariff on cars is a good idea. Why don't the media do more interviews to establish what are the economic and business interests of the rest of the EU? And why don't they say the UK offer meets their needs far better than the Commission's general idea of punishment for the UK which would mean more punishment for the rest of the EU given the balance of trade. In a world where the UK was forced by the EU to accept high tariffs on agricultural trade, the UK would gain the option of buying cheaper product elsewhere by cutting tariffs or growing more at home where we are able to, which the EU under their own rules would not be able to do.

The UK right from the beginning said we wanted to reassure all EU citizens living in the UK they are welcome to stay. In turn we would need the same reassurance for UK citizens living in the rest of the EU. Why didn't the media put more pressure on the EU to agree to just this decent and sensible approach? Why did the EU want to delay, and want to propose changes to a sensible arrangement? I have never thought the EU would end up forcing UK pensioners out of their homes on the Costa Brava, so why not say so immediately? I am glad that the EU now agrees this issue should be one of the first to be tackled. I hope they will not continue to make pawns of people living abroad, and look forward to the media directing their questions to the EU over this.

The UK also made clear in its Article 50 letter of withdrawal that it accepted the EU view that you cannot stay in the single market and Customs Union when you leave the EU. This letter and supporting policy was backed overwhelmingly by the Commons when it was debated and voted. It was also placed in the Manifestos of the Conservatives and Labour who went on to get

82% of the vote in the election. Maybe the media should recognise this.

In summary the people decided to leave the EU. The last Parliament voted overwhelmingly to leave the EU and sent the letter which means we are leaving the EU. The aims for the future relationship are straightforward and cross party. We seek continuing tariff free trade on a similar basis to today, and many collaborations, joint investments, student exchanges, tourism and the rest as close neighbours should. This is not the UK begging favours. It is commonsense, in their interests as much as ours. What's stopping them sorting out the detail to back this up?