

Why young people should embrace Brexit

There is no greater gift that we can pass on to our children than the gift of living in freedom.

I was born into a free country. I valued the democratic traditions, the rule of domestic law, the ability to fire the government through the ballot box, the right to voice a view and debate what was wrong.

I watched with growing apprehension as the decision to join a common market morphed into the wholesale loss of our freedoms.

We surrendered the right to make our own decisions about what taxes to impose, what laws to pass, what tariffs if any we should impose on our imports and how the government should spend the money it has raised. The European Court struck down our duly enacted legislation, made us repay corporation tax to large companies, and often found our country in violation of their wishes.

The decision to leave the EU changes all that.

Today, in the EU we are not allowed to remove VAT from female hygiene products as Parliament would like to do. We have to place taxes on a wide range of green products from insulation to boiler controls, that Parliament would like to abolish. We have to impose high tariffs on a range of foodstuffs coming to us from the Commonwealth and the wider non EU world, making food dearer and punishing developing countries. We see our fishing grounds run down under an EU policy that manages to be harmful both to the fish and to our fishermen. We have gone from being a large exporter of fish prior to joining, to be a net importer.

Leaving the EU gives us all the chance to change things for the better.

Where we like an EU law or regulation we can keep it. Where an EU law or tax is unjust or damaging we can amend or remove it.

Young people will be particular beneficiaries of the change leaving generates. It will create great opportunities for enterprise, for creativity, for better government. It will strengthen the voices of the young and give more power to their votes. They will inherit a political system which allows them to shape or dismiss the governments that rule. We are not turning our backs on Europe. There will still be plenty of joint working, cultural exchanges, movement of people to visit, learn, shop and invest in each other's countries.

Just look at the opportunities it will offer us for more and better jobs. There will be big scope to replace imports with domestic food and industrial products. This will provide opportunities for well paid jobs and for establishing new businesses. If the EU opts for tariffs and other barriers as they seem to want, our farmers will supply us with more of our own food, and our car factories will produce more of the cars we chose to drive.

Just look at the opportunities it will offer to improve our laws and make our government bend more to the popular will. We will be able to spend the £12bn a year we currently send to the EU and do not get back will help in many ways. We need to debate more how we should spend this Brexit windfall, whilst reminding our government we do not want to go on sending money to rich countries in the EU once we have left. Education and health are priorities which we can spend more on once we have left.

Above all where young people see an injustice or want to follow a cause for a better country they will be able to do so safe in the knowledge that we have the powers here at home to adopt the remedy. Where today the answer is so often Brussels will not allow us to do that, tomorrow once out we will be able to do as we wish.

Freedom is heady. It teems with opportunity. Let us unite in confidence that when the UK is a free country again, it can also be a better country as a result.