

New chairman, new executive

The European Movement has a new National Executive in order to allow two leading parliamentarians to join it.



We are pleased to welcome Laura Sandys as our new Chairman and Richard Corbett MEP as Senior Vice-Chairman.

A vote of thanks was given to outgoing Chairman Petros Fassoulas (now Vice-Chairman); outgoing Senior Vice-Chairman David Grace (now an Ordinary Member); outgoing Vice-

Chairman Richard Laming and outgoing Ordinary Member Dr Alan Bullion (both of whom retain their places on the National Council).

Brendan Donnelly (Treasurer), Geoff Phillips (Secretary), Sarah Leigh (Ordinary Member and Membership Secretary), Karen Clements and Nick Hopkinson (Ordinary Members) continue to serve in their original roles.

In this second issue of the newsletter, you will find articles from our new Chairman, Senior Vice-Chairman, and Membership Secretary. We also feature reports on some of the many major activities in 2014,

including two major conferences convened at Europe House in June and October, a report on the European Movement International Congress in Rome in late November, and reports from many UK branches.

I should like to thank the contributors and Toby Wardman for the new design of the newsletter. Should you wish to contribute in the future, or if you have any comments, please do not hesitate to contact me on nickhopkinson151@aol.co.uk

Nick Hopkinson
Editor

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The European Movement is regaining its stature



Political fashion has left the europhile out in the cold over the past 10 years. It hasn't been easy to get airtime to articulate a case for a stronger and more powerful Britain shaping politics and policy at the heart of Europe.

This is why I admire the European Movement and all its members so much for keeping the crucial European flame alight through the tough times.

But fashions turn, and the European Movement is regaining its stature as a strong voice for the silent majority. Europhiles are again making their case, reshaping our movement to amplify the argument that the UK's future needs a strong voice at the European top table.

Those already at the door marked 'exit' embody a strange combination of defeatism and lack of ambition. They pose as the great patriots, but would any prime minister or British monarch (at least since Elizabeth I refused to marry a continental king) develop a clear policy to reduce the UK's influence in Europe? That is what exit means — a real, substantive reduction in the UK's influence with our neighbours and in our power to shape Europe's policy. I do not see how anyone could think that a UK sitting on the outside would be a more powerful country; that withdrawal from any international club would enhance our international influence; or that

"If we'd had the lack of ambition in the 1700s that some have today, we wouldn't have got as far as the Channel Islands, never mind America and India."

leaving a trading organisation could in anyone's mind reflect an economic strategy that will serve British business and jobs better.

Being part of Europe matters, as you know more than many. It allows free movement, flexibility, a choice of 27 other countries where you can live, work, trade and travel with much greater freedoms than any other group of 28 nations in the world.

We take this for granted. So we must be clear that we are putting at risk real freedoms, not fictional or theoretical freedoms. Freedoms that young people take up when they study abroad, and when hundreds of thousands of pensioners move to Spain.

And this freedom delivers us immeasurable domestic benefits. Free movement fills our seaside towns in summer, while our language schools are packed with European students. Even our fishermen, notoriously eurosceptic, sell their fish in French fish markets — and get better prices.

If there were ever a false prospectus being sold by the outers, it's that small businesses will benefit from withdrawal from the largest economic market in the world. Big businesses can relocate to another European location at the drop of a hat. Multinationals will start to use continental suppliers who they know are up to speed with product standards. The smaller company,

meanwhile, trying to maintain its market within a European supply chain, will have an uphill struggle.

The European Movement believes that together we can achieve so much for the UK through working with other countries. We should be greedy about free trade with Europe, plus the US, plus other countries across the globe. Not, as the bolters propose, the rest of the world *without* Europe. We must secure an 'EU plus' not a 'minus EU' strategy. If we'd had the lack of ambition in the 1700s that some have today, we wouldn't have got as far as the Channel Islands, never mind America and India.

It is with great pride that I was elected chair of the European Movement and it is to you, the members, that we owe so much. Together we now have to raise our sights and once again motivate, mobilise and inspire the British people to support our membership of the EU. With that challenge in mind, these are educational times for the Movement and you will no doubt hear a lot more from us in the near future. I want to personally thank you for your voice and support over the years and look forward to working with you towards a more positive UK at the heart of a safer and more prosperous Europe.

**Laura Sandys
Chairman**

Below: The Annual General Meeting of the European Movement UK, with Richard Corbett MEP, Petros Fassoulas and Laura Sandys



The importance of idealism



We all know the original idealistic argument behind the creation of the European Union. Some 60 years ago, far-sighted statesman in post-war Europe shared an overwhelming desire to put generations of war behind them,

and create a better way to resolve differences among peaceful, democratic neighbours.

Europe has come a long way since the 1950s. Ideals are important, but our world has changed, and political reality has a habit of bringing them back down to earth with a bump.

Today, the EU has become in many ways a pragmatic organisation. It's a cooperative framework where interdependent countries can discuss mutual problems, agree where we need a shared approach, and then thrash out what that approach should be.

The beating heart of modern European pragmatism is the single market that we have jointly created. The majority of decisions we take at European level are about defining the rules for that market so that it works as efficiently and fairly as possible. To nurture and strengthen the continent-wide single market, whose foundations were laid by our predecessors, we need to develop and improve rules to protect workers, consumers and the environment, to ensure fair competition, and to eliminate red tape.

So the EU today might appear to be less about inspirational idealism, and more about nitty-gritty pragmatism. And pragmatism is important. But when we focus exclusively on self-interested arguments, we risk forgetting the underlying motivation for what we do - and this is dangerous for three reasons.

First, when we need to make the case for Europe to an increasingly sceptical public, facts, figures, rebuttals and rational explanations will only take us so far. We need to bind day-to-day realities together with the broader narrative of why we need the EU at all and why it outshines the alternatives.

Second, so many myths and misconceptions are already embedded in our national discourse about Europe that trying to squash every single one individually is a fool's errand. We must not get bogged down in an endless cycle of claim and counter-claim, myth and rebuttal. The best way to fight the negativity of narrow-minded nationalism is to present an alternative, positive story which shows the myths up for the nonsense they are.

Third — and most important — we are simply mistaken if we think the idealism of the past has no application for us today. As the Nobel Peace Prize committee recognised in 2012, the motivation for creating a European Union remains as important today as it ever was. If we take pan-continental peace, democracy and the rule of law for granted, we not only do a disservice to those who fought to achieve it, we also risk losing it. Witness the long queue of new countries seeking closer ties with the EU as a way of cementing their democratic and cultural independence. Witness the social and political unrest in countries whose journey towards stable democracy is not yet complete. And witness the resurgence of reactionary nationalism and the far-right in many European countries, not least the UK. We descend into narrow self-interest at our peril.

Day to day, the EU is a pragmatic, sometimes imperfect solution to a set of difficult problems. But it also represents a broader ideal, one we must never stop talking about.

Richard Corbett MEP
Senior Vice-Chairman

Membership update

The major recent development has been the decision to create a new 'supporter' status within the Movement which does not include a regular subscription.

Keith Tunstall and Christopher Denne in particular campaigned ably for this development. They argued that we need many more people to be involved than we can recruit into a traditional membership organisation. Although we have several thousand followers on Facebook and Twitter, we need to involve many more people in our work.

This proposal proved quite controversial, with many members feeling that the obstacle of subscription was not really critical, but a compromise was brokered and the Branches Forum on 22 November supported the decision. The Executive proposed that supporters be asked to agree that to the following formula:

I believe that the UK belongs at the heart of a peaceful, prosperous and fair European partnership. I support the European Movement UK's aim of advancing better understanding of the benefits of EU membership throughout the UK, and encouraging the UK to take an active part in the development of the EU.

On this basis, the National Council passed a resolution on 31 January:

that the European Movement UK admit a new class of supporters who state their adherence to our aims, wish to support our work but do not pay a subscription. Supporters must supply

a valid email address. Supporters may not attend General Meetings or stand for election as an officer of the Movement or membership of the National Council, nor shall they be entitled to stand for the offices of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer or EMMA user within any Branch. Otherwise each branch should have discretion to admit supporters to their General Meetings, to allow them to stand for election as members of branch committees apart from the offices listed above, and to allow them to vote in branch elections, or not as they decide, subject always to acting in accordance with their own constitutions.

So it is up to each branch how they involve supporters, provided they do not appoint non-members to any office which has national responsibilities or which would give them access to the personal details of members. We hope branches will be able to recruit many supporters, and in particular branches with local members can now persuade them to sign up as supporters. A new membership leaflet incorporating this status is being produced.

When the new website is up and running, it will provide a mechanism for supporters to register directly. In the meantime, please send details of any supporters who are recruited to Ms. Cherry Clarke on cherry.clarke@euromove.org.uk or to European Movement UK, Box P0032, 265-269 Kingston Road, London SW19 3FW.

Sarah Leigh
Membership Secretary



CONFERENCE REPORT

Building bridges for a successful campaign to stay in the EU

The conference on Friday 17 October 2014 at Europe House, London hosted by the European Commission Representation to the UK, attracted 115 participants including senior representatives from the three main political parties, European Movement activists from across the UK, unions, business, officials, diplomats, journalists, academics, and students. The conference focused on the current political debate on our EU membership, the different messages needed to appeal to different voter segments and the means of reaching them, and brainstorming about the shape of a possible cross-party, cross-institutional referendum campaign to stay in the EU.

The UK electorate is considerably more diverse compared to that in the 1975 referendum. For example, ethnic minorities now comprise 13%, and a rapidly growing segment, of the population. Different messages need to be designed to appeal to each group and different communication channels need to be used to reach each. For example, social media is widely used by youth whereas letters are a good way to reach older voters.

Towards a referendum in 2017?

In spite of the widespread belief that we are rapidly moving towards a referendum, a renegotiation of the UK's relationship with the EU and a subsequent referendum is not inevitable. Any renegotiation and referendum are dependent on the outcome of the 2015 General Election. The Labour Party, if successful, whether as a majority government or in coalition, has indicated it would not convene a referendum in the next Parliament unless there was a transfer of sovereignty. The case for staying in the EU nevertheless needs to be made and widespread support for our continued membership needs to be mobilised.

Some regard Labour's decision not to back a referendum as painting it into a corner, but others believe this allows Labour to argue that it is focusing on the issues that matter to most voters, notably the cost of living, National Health Service (NHS) and education and skills crises. It also allows Labour to argue that it is not jeopardising the economy, for example threatening flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the UK and a sterling crisis, which Conservative and UKIP commitments to a referendum could do. Others argue it is better

to have a referendum rather than let the EU membership debate drag on. They argue the UK hasn't had a referendum on the EU in forty years and we need to 'lance the boil'. However, any vote in 2017 to stay in is unlikely to silence eurosceptics.

Although 70% of UK voters say they want a referendum on the EU, polls show the public want a referendum on practically any issue. Therefore how an issue ranks in voter priorities is a more salient measure of whether or not the matter is of transcending national importance suitable for a referendum. As Europe regularly ranks anywhere between 9th and 15th in voter concerns, there appears to be a gulf between the importance which many Conservative and UKIP supporters, and voters at large, attach to the EU issue. Thus Labour is not promising a referendum on Europe, whilst UKIP seeks to link immigration with EU membership.

Voter segments

The typical United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) voter is not so much anti-Europe as anti everything. They are disgruntled, disappointed, distrustful, dissatisfied, and disbelieving. Most people do not have the faintest idea what the EU and its institutions do.

Many are therefore vulnerable to eurosceptic emotional misinformation.

The disaffected include many elderly and/or less skilled who inter alia have been adversely affected by the recent financial crisis; are more vulnerable to pressures on health, educational and transport infrastructure, and/or find change difficult (e.g. from the changing composition of their neighbourhoods, new legislation such as legalising gay marriage etc.).

There are arguments which don't work with the disaffected even if they are true:

- they are misinformed and do not have the facts (any suggestion that the disaffected may be less intelligent will be perceived as insulting)
- EU rules on free movement can't be changed (though the ability to study and work is attractive to many youth)
- immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits
- high EU immigrant flows is just scare-mongering (high levels of Bulgarian and Romanian immigration have not come to fruition)

There are however messages which might work such as we

can choose to stay/leave the EU (people like choice), and think of the future of your children and grandchildren. Pro-Europeans need to acknowledge and address the anxieties of the disaffected such as high youth unemployment, overcrowding, pressures on housing and social infrastructure and attempt to delink them from the EU membership debate. UK fishermen, for example who have traditionally been anti-EU, need to be reminded that many export material amounts of their catches to the rest of the EU, and that these markets would disappear if the UK left it.

Youth and ethnic minorities are in general likely strong sources of support for the UK's continued EU membership. Pro-Europeans have to make a particular effort to embrace and mobilise both groups, as eurosceptics are less likely to be able to do so successfully. Young people want opportunities. The ability to travel, study and work elsewhere in the EU is important for them – wars are just history. For university students and the more skilled, Europe is their oyster. Those who have experienced Europe, whether through travel, higher education and/or work, are more likely to be pro-European. Most youths are more used to diversity, and

are therefore generally likely to regard immigration as less of a threat.

However, 'youth' is not a homogeneous group. Those left behind, the less skilled (hairdressers, construction workers etc.) and unemployed, are more likely to ask 'what's in the EU for us?' These groups are unlikely to benefit from pan-European experiences such as the ERASMUS + higher education exchange programmes, but all the same they have to be appealed to. Messages such as leaving the EU will not improve their situation, and eurosceptics do not provide the answer for their future may help communicate the pro-EU case.

Although youth is more likely to favour continued EU membership, they are less likely to vote inter alia as they are more transient. A major challenge therefore is how to register them and to increase their turnout at elections. To do so, new means of communication, notably social media, are essential. Joint campaigns with those advocating online voting, voting at supermarkets and even mandatory attendance at elections can also help.

Support for the EU amongst ethnic minorities is under-researched, but similar messages

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such as equality and stronger employment rights can be made. If a EU referendum were presented as a referendum on the behaviour and views of UKIP politicians, it is believed most ethnic minorities might further be motivated to vote to stay in the EU.

Amongst other voting groups, many women tend to be instinctively more pro-EU than men. Men are more moved by emotional arguments and appeals to the UK's past glory. Pro-European arguments targeting women should point to tangible benefits such as stronger EU legislation on gender equality and employment rights; protecting women against violence; food, toy and transport safety, and the EU's leading global role in curbing climate change.

The terms of reference of a possible In-Out EU referendum and who is entitled to vote is not known. Although we are all EU citizens, there are gaps in eligibility to vote in national elections in many Member States. Many EU 27 nationals resident in the UK (other than those from Cyprus, Gibraltar, Ireland and Malta) currently would be unable to vote in a EU referendum. Only 15,864 of the estimated 2.2 million UK nationals living elsewhere in the

EU are registered to vote in UK national polls. The pro-EU side risks losing considerable sources of support if these four million people are not registered to vote, and are not mobilised.

Business and unions

The business community is not homogeneous, but its opinion on continued EU membership is overwhelmingly in one direction: TheCityUK found 82% of City firms wanted to stay in the EU as do 92% of motor manufacturers. 78% of Confederation of British Industry (CBI) members overall, including 77% of the CBI's smaller members, want the UK to stay in the EU. Most members of the Institute of Directors (IOD) think the UK should stay in the EU – only 6% advocate withdrawal under all circumstances.

Most businesses in London want to stay in. Those outside are more evenly split. A common perception amongst Small and Medium Enterprises is, that if they don't export, Brexit would not affect them and regulation would be less onerous. Although 95% of firms don't export, smaller firms would suffer indirectly from the loss of supply chains to larger exporting firms and a slowing, perhaps even shrinking, economy if the UK left the EU. A possible exchange

rate crisis, higher interest rates and higher inflation resulting from Brexit would benefit few businesses. Furthermore, EU policies such as competition policy help safeguard the interests of smaller firms.

Trade unions have been strong supporters of the EU for 25 years, but not previously. EU legislation often supports worker rights, such as the TUPE Directive and most recently paid holidays (the last time the UK Parliament was responsible for paid holidays, it prevented them). The Trades Union Congress is officially undecided on a referendum although the trade union movement rejected leaving the EU in 2012 and rejected a referendum call in 2013. Unions do not support David Cameron's position on repatriation of rights and a possible referendum. Four million jobs would be put at risk if the UK leaves the EU.

Campaign considerations and possible messages

The 115 participants concluded with suggestions and possible messages for a campaign:

- The messenger is all-important. Voters relate more to personal stories from real people like themselves (e.g. stories of those helped by EU employment and equal rights

legislation). 'Authenticity' and the experience of real people is above all what convinces voters.

- Pro-Europeans need to focus more on identifying particular voter groups with targeted messages and tailored means of communicating with each. No voter or stakeholder group is monolithic. Europe can mean different things to different people.
- Reference to the EU should be minimised — the debate is about Europe, not its institutions.
- People dislike being governed by others, especially 'foreigners' (a fear UKIP plays upon). Politicians from other EU countries should not play a leading role in any campaign. Nigel Farage says he is prepared for the UK to be a poorer country as the price to regain our sovereignty. Do UK voters want to become poorer so Westminster politicians have more formal powers which will result in less UK international influence?
- Pro-Europeans need to communicate why Europe is good for citizens as effectively as UKIP's populism argues it isn't. UKIP knows how to play on fear, local difficulties, and emotion. Pro-Europeans

should expose eurosceptics' failure to articulate a viable alternative vision for the UK outside the EU.

- Many messages do not provide magic silver bullets. The old narratives for the EU, notably war in Europe now being impossible, are often perceived as dated and are not resonating. Even current arguments, such as pointing to lower mobile phone roaming charges and cheaper air travel within the EU, may also have limited appeal (e.g. only to the more affluent).
- The Scottish referendum offers many lessons for a possible EU referendum. Inter alia people tend to vote for the status quo. This however is not an argument for complacency.
- Focusing solely on the negative economic costs of leaving is insufficient. Simple broad messages rather a barrage of statistics should be offered. Fear and hard facts will influence some but not all voters. We have to be in it to win it!
- The pro-European cause cannot win without a positive message. Pro-Europeans have had difficulty communicating a positive vision for staying in the EU. The pro-European case

has to be made to the heart as well as to the head.

- The EU has helped make our country what it is, and we should fear losing it. Some old arguments, notably the EU makes another war in Europe impossible, should not be jettisoned. Rather new arguments should complement them, many of which are now taken for granted. You don't know what you've got till it's gone!
- A campaign should focus on how the EU benefits what people care about, namely jobs etc. Instead of negative messages such as jobs are at risk, positive and emotive messages such as think about the future of your children and grandchildren can appeal to older voters.
- Being in the EU is the patriotic option. Eurosceptics say "we want our country back". Pro-Europeans should say "we want to take our country forward!"

This report reflects Nick Hopkinson's interpretation of the proceedings. The complete report is available from him on nickhopkinson151@aol.co.uk.

Nick Hopkinson
Member, National Executive
Chairman, London4Europe

Scottish Council report

Derek Hammersley, chairman of the Scottish Council, reports that its submission on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) has been submitted to the Scottish Parliament. The submission is available on the Parliament website, together with previous submissions on independence and the Smith Commission.

The Council sponsored the first round of the English-Speaking Union Schools MACE Junior Debating Competition in which 130 teams from 65 schools participated, on the motion 'This house believes that an ever-closer union offers the best future for the citizens of Europe'. The debates at Dundee High School were notable for

the absence of much serious euroscepticism. One team opposing the motion argued for the status quo and didn't see the need for any change.

In the debates at George Watson's College, only one team seriously tackled the thrust of the motion while others succumbed to the temptations of looking only at UK-related issues or regarded the motion as a question of 'in or out'.

The November AGM made constructive comments on how the Council might best proceed in 2015. It was felt we do too little to promote the positive changes that have taken place in Europe over the last 70 years and how the EU, along with NATO, has influenced that and

brought countries and people closer together enabling them to live in peace, mutual respect and understanding. The remarkable changes we've seen in Europe are now all too often taken for granted.

The AGM was followed by a very well-attended debate on the theme '100 years on, the EU has made a European war unthinkable'. Panellists included Peter Wilding, Director of British Influence; Iain Macwhirter, writer and broadcaster; Dr Daniel Kenealy, Deputy Director of the Academy of Government at Edinburgh University; and our own committee member and ex-MEP John Purvis.

What future for London in Europe?

At a time when Britain's EU membership is hotly debated and an in-out referendum may be on the cards, the European Movement's London section **London4Europe** will host a General Election Hustings on **Tuesday 21 April**, 18:00-19:30 at Europe House, Smith Square, London SW1.

- **Welcome:** Jacqui Minor, Head of European Commission Representation to the UK, and Laura Sandys, Chairman of European Movement UK
- **Chair:** Nick Hopkinson, Chairman of London4Europe
- **Panellists:** Mike Gapes (Labour), Anuja Prashar (Liberal Democrat), Hugh Small (Green), Conservative candidate (invited), UKIP candidate (invited)

The event will be followed by a networking reception at 19:30.

The event is free of charge, but pre-registration is essential by emailing nickhopkinson151@aol.co.uk

CONFERENCE REPORT

Extending LGBT rights in the EU

As suggested in the previous report, pro-Europeans should embrace and engage a wide range of voting segments to advance our shared cause. The European Movement UK in association with Pride in London, New Europeans, and the European Commission Representation to the UK, convened a seminar on 23 June to discuss the state of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights and equality in the EU, whether collective EU action is a solution, and what the UK's contribution might be.

The UK has admirably advanced LGBT rights and offered valuable support to activists in other countries. Although the UK is an exemplar, we should not be complacent. For example, Northern Ireland lags somewhat behind the rest of the UK. Individual countries should develop their own individual responses to human rights and LGBT oppression in ways that are most appropriate domestically.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights recently conducted the first ever survey of LGBT rights in the EU and found 47% of LGBT Europeans felt discriminated against. This figure rises to 57% in Poland, 60% in Hungary and 61% in Lithuania. However, labour mobility within the EU has helped to alter attitudes in some central and eastern European states radically in recent years. Poland was traditionally, for example, overwhelmingly

conservative culturally and politically. But recently it has become more liberal, partly thanks to many workers who came to the UK, engaged for the first time with LGBT people, and returned home with a different opinion.

Unfortunately, the situation is still dire in some eastern European states which are not part of the EU. In Russia, the situation has regressed since the 1990s. The authorities have tried unsuccessfully to ban some Pride events in Russia and other countries, with visibility attracting violence in some instances. Work is underway to help activists in Belarus who have been prevented from setting up solidarity groups.

The diversity of experience in Central and Eastern Europe demonstrates that EU membership, entailing the adoption of EU legislation and higher human rights standards, have had an important influence in enhancing LGBT and other rights.

Dr Alan Bullion
Member, National Council



For the first time ever, the rainbow Pride flag flew outside Europe House (below), headquarters of the European Parliament and European Commission UK offices.



CONFERENCE REPORT

European Movement International



The European Movement International Federal Assembly in Rome in late November demonstrated the vitality of our Movement, with ever more civil society organisations choosing to join the network.

EMI is a non-profit international association working to establish a united, federal Europe, founded on the principles of peace, democracy, liberty, solidarity and respect for human rights. It acts as a platform of associations and is currently one of the largest pro-European networks, with 39 National Councils, 33 International member associations and three supporting members.

The Federal Assembly opened with comments from Jo Leinen, President of EMI, who noted the progress made in 2014 with voters now having an input to the election of the new President of the Commission. He drew attention to the President Juncker's programme commitments including a new

investment plan for the EU, to tackle tax anomalies, and to boost the Union's economic performance and encourage growth. President Juncker has promised to reorganise the EU's energy policy with a commitment to an energy union, making the EU less dependent on energy from external sources, and stressing the need for a single EU digital market. Jo Leinen also touched on the dangers of Russia's involvement in Ukraine, and the rise of fundamentalism whether religious, political or anti-European. There was a vital need to re-establish the European idea to counteract these dangers.

Massimo D'Alema, former Prime Minister of Italy, noted public opinion is not with us. The EU needs the confidence to make bold decisions. He applauded President Juncker's investment programme, which was a first step towards the end of a long austerity tunnel. Member states should take the wider EU interest more seriously: for example, five countries receive some 70% of asylum seekers, and the burden is not spread throughout the EU.

The situation of national branches was discussed. Finland was pleased its citizens' organisations were having some influence. Ireland was positive about its growth in membership and campaign projects, but very

worried about the UK's possible exit from EU, given the profound impact this would have on the Irish economy. Denmark was glad its government was making another step towards full European integration, having won a referendum on patents and it was hoping to have a new one on Justice and Home Affairs to 'lose' its opt-out. Norway was continuing its work for a 'future' Europe although a recent poll found 80% of Norwegians would still vote 'no' to the EU. The Czech Republic was pleased they now have a very pro-EU government, which could result in significant change, possibly even considering entering the Euro. The Hungarian European Movement though is having to renew itself given the challenge of a Eurosceptic government. Turkey was developing a new pro-EU platform with civil society, students and research centres.

A roundtable debate with MEPs and civil society followed: 'How to bridge the democratic gap and build a Union of citizens'. Eva Paunova (European People's Party) noted that, even though citizens had been given a say on the Commission President, voter turnout had dropped to 42%. Of the 45 citizens' initiatives submitted, only 20 had been declared feasible. She noted progress towards a single political

market with agreement that freedom, respect for human rights, moral rights and peace and especially prosperity were vital ingredients for stability in the EU. Each politician should take responsibility for increasing trust.

Marju Lauristin (Socialists and Democrats) hopes the European Parliament will act more like national parliaments. Institutions need to connect with citizens consistently. Dialogues should not be conducted in such a way to promote exclusively member states' own national interests.

Pavel Telicka (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) noted Central European citizens now take for granted all the positive benefits of EU membership. Politics almost everywhere is in crisis. Too many national politicians blame European institutions for domestically-created problems.

The main points in the following discussion focused on aiming for more solidarity in Europe; more explanation, firmer action and greater honesty from politicians; and more civic education, the key to understanding amongst the young. All roads lead to Rome, but all discussions lead to education!

Veronica Stiastny
Member, National Council

Obituaries

In the past two weeks, we learned of the passing of two distinguished heavyweights in the European cause, Professors John Pinder and Roger Morgan. I feel sure that all of us, who, like them, have devoted so much of our lives to European unity, will feel genuine grief to lose two such distinguished colleagues in such a short span of time. Sadly, one sees on the horizon no replacement for the wisdom that these two champions have brought to our common cause. We can now only speculate on what they would have wanted to say about the current inadequacy of progress towards the aspiration that they cherished.

Roger Morgan was born the elder son of Esther and Donald Morgan, headmaster of Wolverton Grammar School, Buckinghamshire and the first headmaster of the Radcliffe School. He studied at Cambridge, Hamburg and Amsterdam before pursuing a career as an academic historian specialising in Europe and Germany. He wrote and edited numerous books on British, American and International affairs as well as making contributions to the BBC World Service, serving as Chairman of the International Association for the Study of German Politics (IASGP) in 1974-1975, and being long associated with the Franco-British Council. He went on to spend eight years at the European University Institute in Florence, before returning to the London School of Economics.

John Pinder was born in 1924 and read maths and economics at King's College, Cambridge. From 1950 to 1952 he worked for Federal Union before moving on to the Economist Intelligence Unit. He later became the Director the research institute that was then known as PEP (Political and Economic Planning). He was a great champion of a federal Europe, a cause that had apparently first inspired him when reading about it during a prolonged stay in a sanatorium in the 1940s. He went on to become Chairman of the Federal Trust and Federal Union, Deputy Chairman of the European Movement in the United Kingdom, Vice President of the International European Movement and President of the European Federalists.

Dr Derek Honeygold
Member of the National Council

BRANCH REPORTS

Ian Parsley, chairman in **Northern Ireland**, writes there were significant changes at the AGM as the Movement seeks to become a more prominent campaigning organisation. The organisation is now firmly branded as the 'European Movement in Northern Ireland', with separate financial and executive committees to ensure activity is funded and organised as efficiently as possible. Chief Executive of EM Ireland, Noelle McConnell, and Brendan Donnelly participated in a lively panel discussion with local pollster Bill White and Ulster Unionist Treasurer Mark Cosgrove. Having had a similar panel event sponsored by a Unionist MLA last year, the Movement continues to reach out to the traditionally more eurosceptic Unionist side in Northern Ireland to ensure as far as possible its ongoing support for Northern Ireland's place within the EU.

Kevin Hannon, chairman of the **Midlands** branch, reports that in spite of no income, the branch continues thanks to careful husbanding of funds and by finding free venues. The cheerful solidarity and optimism of our committee is at the core of our survival. The branch's website, trumpeter4europe.co.uk, is updated daily with news articles by Collis Gretton. Lawrence Brewer has participated in a dozen school debates with UKIP and won all of them. On Europe day at Worcester University, Lawrence debated against Professor Tim Congdon, the UKIP economics spokesman. The event was well attended and 75% of the audience voted in favour of staying in the EU. Lawrence has also had many pro-European letters published in *The Times*. A well attended European Parliamentary elections debate was organised by Haude Lannon in which prospective MEP candidates from most parties took part at the Aston University Centre for Europe. Haude is organising a seminar with Enterprise Europe Network for small businesses and young entrepreneurs at the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. Lawrence is convening a national best practice session for school speakers in Birmingham on 28 March.

Christopher Denne, outgoing chairman of the **Tamar** branch, notes the branch was quite busy in the run up to the European Parliament elections. The branch convened two workshops for sixth formers in Plymouth schools. In order to address the universal local ignorance about what the European Parliament does and why it matters, a simply worded leaflet was produced and distributed widely in Launceston, Tavistock and Plymouth. The branch stepped up its programme of letters to local papers. In Plymouth the branch organised a packed hustings meeting with all leading candidates, which was well reported in the local press. There was a film show in September to mark the European Day of Languages. Malcolm Bower edited a wise and witty quarterly newsletter. Otherwise the branch has had to rein in its activities. It is not taking a stall to agricultural shows and fairs as in previous years, given human and financial resource challenges. The branch needs new members and fresh faces on the committee.

John Studholme of Forward in Europe, in **Cumbria**, reports a busy programme of talks, school debates, and street questionnaires/surveys. Two town centre sessions were organised where people were asked what they knew about Europe with answers provided afterwards. A public hustings was convened in Kendal with speakers from Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrats and Green parties. UKIP withdrew at the last minute. Events were convened with Labour MEP Arlene McCarthy at a local school and Michael Hindley, a former MEP, spoke on European reforms. The drive to increase membership will continue.

Les Parkes, chairman of the Branches Forum and **Yorkshire & Humber** branch, reports that the branch concentrates on debates in schools where our five regular speakers are always successful. We are contacting schools throughout the region to increase the number of debates. At a meeting of 120 members of Harrogate U3A, only three voted to leave the EU at the end of the presentation. We produced a coloured leaflet with seven bullet points. The branch has been chosen to host a Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) meeting at the Leeds University Business School on 17 March.

John Cowan, chairman of the **Norfolk** branch, reports the branch is no longer in abeyance. New members are joining and a series of meetings is being planned. Several schools have requested speakers and so far the chairman has taken part in debates at Hellesdon 6th Form Centre and Norwich High School for Girls. Both debates resulted in a majority in favour of the UK staying in the EU. All Norfolk MPs and many parliamentary candidates have been emailed asking their views on UK membership of the EU.

Keith Tunstall, chairman of **Surrey**, reports committee members believe the only relevant thing for all pro-Europeans in the next few years is to build up support for the EU so we can win or avoid a referendum. This will require considerable organisation on the ground to combat well-organised Eurosceptics and UKIP. As in 1975, we need thousands of followers, flexibility and a minimum of bureaucracy within the Movement. If the constitution gets in the way of this task, it needs to be changed. With the new arrangements on membership, the branch has delivered 1000 leaflets. Senior members of the Liberal Democrats, Conservatives, Labour and Greens have been enrolled to bring in their supporters to the campaign as they agree the Movement could prove the right co-ordinating vehicle, and are keen to get going after the election. The branch organised a lunch in April, an AGM, and a garden party in August.

Kate Evans, chairman of the **Sussex** branch, reports a busy programme of activities. The possibility of an in/out referendum will colour the activities of the branch in the foreseeable future. The annual seminar held in April, on the theme of 'Reforming the EU', was very well attended, and the informal monthly meetings of the discussion group in Brighton continue at a new venue. Members staffing the information stand at the Jubilee Library in Brighton reported stimulating engagement with the general public. The branch's Twitter account, originally @VoteThisMay, is now @EUforEveryone and is attracting followers. The letter-writing group continues to promote pro EU information and refute misinformation. Nick Hopkinson undertook four successful school talks and debates in Sussex, Surrey and Berkshire, gave an address to the Surrey AGM and conducted a branch letter writing best practice session. The Treasurer actively updates the branch website. The annual François Duchêne travel bursaries set up in 2008 for doctoral research students at Sussex University came to an end in 2014. One of the two final year recipients gave a presentation at the branch AGM in December and the other will do so at this year's AGM. Plans for 2015 include a joint meeting with the Quaker Council for European Affairs British Committee on 28 March, and an autumn lunch with speaker.

Dr Razvan Constantinescu, **Bristol** chairman, reports a very active programme of talks, debates and stalls including at the Bath Royal Literary Institution; Bristol Labour party; Britain in Europe; the Schumacher Institute, New Europeans, and Sir Bernard Lovell College. The branch organised an EU flag-raising event on Europe Day. Stalls at the Hippodrome, Make Sunday Special, Bristol City Hall and Celebrating Age Festival were organised, and stalls for International Women's Day, Bristol Harbour Festival and EU Day at the Hippodrome are confirmed for 2015.

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continued

- John Studholme, **North West** representative, successfully relaunched the **Manchester** branch and convened a meeting at 18:00 on 26 February at Liverpool University, which it is hoped may lead to a relaunch of the **Merseyside** branch.
- Keith Tunstall, **South East** representative, has spent a considerable amount of time and travel resurrecting dormant branches in **East Kent** and **Hampshire** which are now up and running.
- Richard Wassell, **London** representative, reports the **London** section has been relaunched as London4Europe with Nick Hopkinson as chairman and vice chairs Jonathan Fryer, Peter Luff and Anthonie Smit. London4Europe will be convening a General Election hustings at Europe House at 1800 on 21 April.
- **Eastbourne** had an active programme of dinners with speakers in 2014 and a similar programme is envisaged for 2015.
- Karen Clements, **North East** representative, is working on establishing a branch and soon hopes to have working committee in place.
- Haude Lannon, **East Midlands** representative, is relaunching a branch but is finding it difficult to identify activists.
- A seminar on jobs, investment and trade was convened in **Cardiff** on Thursday 12 March.
- The **Oxford** branch has been very active, and finds the existence of a famous university on its patch to be an invaluable resource.



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