

# This is what life after Brexit will look like: a Europe of democratic, free-trading states

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*Britons are proving immune to the pressure from doomsayers to vote Remain in the referendum, writes **Alan Sked**. A vote to Leave is highly possible – and with it, the restoration of self-government, the arrival of cheaper goods from the rest of the world and an end to uncontrolled immigration from the EU. It would also mean the end of German-imposed austerity in southern Europe.*



I am a historian and not a prophet. I cannot foretell the future, although as the sole **founder** in 1991 of a British political party specifically designed to convert the Conservative Party to withdrawal from the EU, I did lay the foundations of a strategy that may now be reaching fruition. Will Brexit be achieved on 23 June? I cannot say. However, it does seem likely that at least 45% of the British electorate will vote for it.



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The prospect of Brexit, of course, terrifies the EU's ruling class. And so it should. They should be more terrified, however, by the fact that, according to the latest data, 48% of Italians and 43% of the French want to leave the EU. The figure in Germany is 34%. A majority of French and Italians want their own referendum on the matter. The likelihood is, therefore, that any British exit would be immediately followed by demands in other EU countries to follow the British lead. Very soon, the EU could disappear.

This would be the EU's own fault. It deliberately refused to make any major concessions to David Cameron in his 'negotiations' before he presented his 'reform package' to Parliament and recommended a referendum on it. The concessions he did secure were rightfully rubbished in the British media and were of so little significance that in the present referendum debate they simply are not referred to. Instead, we have a prime minister who argues his case not with reference to a reformed EU – his original strategy – but with Project Fear. We are told that if Brexit happens, there will be world war, genocide, the collapse of the economy, terrorist infiltration and are only waiting to hear about plagues of locusts and the death of the firstborn. A couple of decades ago people shouting that the end of

the world was nigh were locked up in lunatic asylums. Today they are housed in 10 Downing St. They are backed by the serried ranks of mobilised heads of foreign governments, heads of multinational corporations, heads of international economic organisations and a variety of military and intelligence chiefs.

The British people, however, have proved pretty immune to all this pressure. They know that their defence and intelligence needs will continue to be served by NATO and the 'Five Eyes' agreement between the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They have little faith in economists who previously told them that entry into the ERM and the adoption of the euro was vital to their economic well-being and proved disastrously wrong. These were the same economists who notoriously failed to see the crash of 2008 coming. So Cameron's and Osborne's economic forecasts are treated as little better than horoscopes. Many are far more worried about uncontrolled immigration from the EU (including terrorists) especially if visa-free access is given to 129 million Turks, Kosovans, Georgians and Ukrainians. The pressure on British schools, the health service, social services and infrastructure is already too great. And they worry about EU plans – postponed till after the referendum—for a fiscal and banking union, a common defence policy and an increase in the EU budget. So Brexit is still highly possible.

What difference would it make to Britain? There would be celebrations in the streets. The pound might dip for a while but that would help our trade deficit. The most important thing would be the restoration of normal, democratic self-government, with a British government directly accountable to the British people through Parliament for the formulation and execution of all its policies, without the supervision of foreign bureaucrats or governments. European industrialists and international corporations would agree to free trade very quickly; they could not afford to lose the UK market, which, of course, would be opened up to cheaper food and goods from outside Europe. Very soon the whole, unpleasant experience of being part of the EU would be forgotten.

As for the EU, the sky would be black with chickens coming home to roost. Austerity in the Eurozone – with all that has meant for economies as diverse as Italy, Finland and Portugal – would have to be reassessed. Some solution would have to be found for the problem of Greece, whose democratically elected government was so humiliatingly crushed by German *Diktat*. Some solution would have to be found to the migration problem so casually exacerbated by the policies of the German Chancellor, including her deal with neo-fascist Turkey. The key priority, however, would be to hold the EU together as international financial speculators concentrated on the euro and member states began to manoeuvre for the exit. Brexit, therefore, would represent a new start for Britain but probably the end for the EU. Europe could become a community of free-trading, democratic nation states.

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