

European Union Referendum Debate, Edinburgh 12 May 2016

13/05/2016 - The first of a series of major EU debates chaired by the CSPP was held in Edinburgh University last night, with a panel including former Liberal Democrat leader Lord Menzies Campbell and former Labour MP Tom Harris. Other panel members debating the UK's membership of the European Union ahead of the 23 June referendum were Hans-Hartwig Blomeier (Head of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Great Britain Office), Dr Arianna Andreangeli (Lecturer in Competition Law at the University of Edinburgh), and Anthony Salamone (editor of European Futures and PhD Candidate in Politics at the University of Edinburgh).

Listen to the report on last night's debate on [BBC Good Morning Scotland](#) 13 May from 36:30.

Following a welcome from the event chair, the CSPP's Professor Richard Kerley, the representatives from each side offered an opening statement. Lord Campbell, who is president of the European Movement in Scotland, stated that he had "emotional and pragmatic reasons" for wishing the UK to remain in the EU. The emotional reason was the peace that had reigned in Europe since WW2. Pragmatic reasons included the number of Scottish and UK jobs linked to EU trade, and the benefits of political union between EU countries for security, buttressing democracies across the continent in nations which had previously lived under fascist or Soviet systems.

Tom Harris, who is director of Scottish Vote Leave, then offered his opening thoughts. He lamented that leave campaigners had been cast by some as irrational, stating that there were reasons both to stay and to leave the EU. However, Mr Harris argued that greater democracy, sovereignty and the right to trade on the UK's own terms were all strong reasons for leaving. The former Labour MP also suggested that the Scottish parliament could enjoy greater powers if the UK voted to leave the EU.

The panel then answered questions submitted by audience members. These addressed:

- the future of freedom of movement if the UK left the EU;
- whether the prospective Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership with the US was a reason to leave the EU or not;
- what the prospects for UK university research funding and EU student fees would be if the UK left the EU;
- why Euroscepticism may be higher in the UK than in other EU countries;
- what the possibilities for further EU reform were if the UK voted to remain;
- the regional security implications of the UK leaving the EU;
- the role young people could play in the referendum campaign and outcome;
- and, whether sovereignty is still as important as in the past in a globalised world.

The wide ranging and considered debate concluded with panel members calling for all eligible voters with an opinion on the referendum to make their voice count on 23rd June, particularly younger people. Mr Harris stated that those who had an opinion should vote, or others would make the decision for them. Lord Campbell argued that young people had benefited from the EU through the opportunities it offers, and that older generations should consider this when voting.

The debate was organised by the European Movement in Scotland, with co-sponsors Edinburgh University European Union Society and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). It was the first in a series of similar events taking place around the country, with the CSPP set to chair two further debates, in Dundee (25 May) and Edinburgh (31 May). Please see the [CSPP events page](#) for further information.

Link to article on CSPP website:

http://www.cspp.org.uk/cspp_chairs_eu_debate_with_lord_menzies_campbell_former_mp_tom_harris