

## **There is no doubt: ethnic minority Britons benefit from Britain's EU membership**

We are Labour activists and supporters of different ethnic backgrounds and generations. With roots that lie beyond Britain, we are all children of the Commonwealth too.

Being a member of the European Union helps us amplify the 'Great' in Great Britain because our country is stronger, safer and better off in the European Union, rather than isolated outside it.

Those who argue we should leave like to set the UK's membership of the EU against our membership of the Commonwealth, but this is a false choice. Our participation in both is important. Why else have Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth, from Canada's Justin Trudeau to New Zealand's John Key, argued Britain is stronger in the EU. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that for his country the UK is 'our entry point into the EU.'

Of course, Britain's ethnic minority communities are not some homogenous whole. We are richly diverse and together we make modern Britain the envy of the world. But, like so many, there is no doubt our communities benefit from Britain's EU membership.

At home it has led to ethnic minority Britons having a range of protections at work including against discrimination. We are able to travel freely to other EU countries without being subject to arduous passport checks and VISA requirements. And, our communities are nothing if not entrepreneurial – ethnic minority owned businesses appreciate the benefits of being able to do trade within Europe's Single Market.

Beyond the EU, where many of us have family, the EU already has deals easing restrictions on trade with the likes of Jamaica and Pakistan, and is negotiating more with countries from Japan to Malaysia. In terms of international aid, every £1 the UK spends through EU institutions is matched by £6 from other member states, not only delivering better lives for the world's poorest but tackling problems in areas where the UK has no large presence like in parts of Africa.

Leaving the EU would put all of this at risk and would be a leap into the dark, not least because the Leave campaigns cannot tell us what 'out' looks like. What we do know is that when the economy suffers a shock - as a wide range of experts predict if we leave - it will be the youth unemployment rate that rises the most and a disproportionate number of young ethnic minority Britons are already out of work.



Because they have failed to put a convincing economic case for our exit from the EU, the Leave campaigns now seek to anchor their arguments around immigration. This is not surprising – it is straight from the UKIP playbook. But our families, having been scapegoated in the past for society's problems, will have nothing to do with an approach that seeks to play on people's reasonable concerns about immigration by pretending there are easy answers if we leave the EU. Our communities reject attempts to blame all of the UK's problems on more recent immigrants.

Finally, when casting our votes on 23 June, we would rather be on the side of the those arguing for us to remain - from Alan Johnson to President Obama, and Unite, Unison, GMB and Usdaw and the millions of workers they represent - rather than a coalition of Brexiters - including Nigel Farage and Marine Le Penn. As Labour supporters, we know whose side we'd rather be on.

**Diane Abbott MP** Hackney North and Stoke Newington

**Rushanara Ali MP** Bethnal Green and Bow

**Dawn Butler MP** Brent Central

**Claude Moraes MEP** London

**Thangam Debbonaire MP** Bristol West

**Neena Gill MEP** West Midlands

**Rupa Huq MP** Ealing Central and Acton

**Afzal Khan MEP** North West

**David Lammy MP** Tottenham

**Baroness Oona King of Bow**

**Shabana Mahmood MP** Birmingham, Ladywood

**Seema Malhotra MP** Feltham and Heston

**Chi Onwurah MP** Newcastle upon Tyne Central

**Kate Osamor MP** Edmonton

**Yasmin Qureshi MP** Bolton South East

**Virendra Sharma MP** Ealing, Southall

**Tullip Siddiq MP** Hampstead and Kilburn

**Chuka Umunna MP** Streatham

**Keith Vaz MP** Leicester East

**Valerie Vaz MP** Walsall South