



# Conservative Group for Europe

## Factsheet 7: The European Union and the Challenge of Migration

- The EU Single Market is based on four freedoms - for labour, capital, goods and services. Well over a million Britons take advantage of the opportunity to live, study or work elsewhere in the EU.
- We retain control of our borders. We are not part of the Schengen border-free travel zone. This means that we continue to check the passports of everyone entering Britain, including EU nationals. We have the best of both worlds - inside the EU but outside Schengen.
- Through his renegotiation, the Prime Minister won important changes to guard against abuse of our benefits system by EU migrants and to broaden the grounds on which any EU nationals who constitute a security or serious crime risk can be denied entry.
- A study by University College London (UCL) in 2014 found that between 2001 and 2011 EU migrants contributed £20 billion more to UK public finances than they received in benefits.
- Arrivals from the EU make up less than half of net UK migration. This debunks the idea that it is EU freedom of movement that stops the Government from delivering on its immigration targets. For non-EU nationals a points-based system operates but it hasn't reduced migrant numbers significantly since 2013.
- The Leave campaign have adopted a UKIP-type approach to immigration. They deny the special nature of our relationship with our European neighbours and Britons' would lose the freedom to move around Europe to work and study. In pursuit of their ideological obsession with shutting out European migrants they are willing to wreck the economy by sacrificing access to the Single Market. This would have grave consequences for inward investment, our manufacturing and service industries and jobs.

### Facts, Figures and Myths

The major elements in the migration statistics are: EU migrants (net 184,000 in 2015); and non-EU migrants (net 188,000 in 2015). Within these figures long-term immigration for study accounted for 167,000 people and refugees/asylum seekers 41,563 (up 30% to end Q1 2016). EU citizens make-up less than half of net migration.

Many Britons live and work in other EU countries. According to the House of Commons Library, 1.22 million Britons live in other EU countries compared with 2.88 million of their citizens who live here. Research by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) in 2010 suggests that the former figure is an under-estimate. They calculated that 2.2 million Britons could be living elsewhere in the EU; if those who live abroad for only part of the year are excluded the number falls to 1.8 million.

#### Preventing abuse of Britain's benefits system

In his renegotiation, the Prime Minister acted to prevent the UK's in-work benefits from being a magnet for EU migrants. Henceforth, people coming from other EU countries will have to wait for four years before they enjoy full access to our benefits. EU migrants will no longer be able to claim Universal Credit whilst looking for work and those who fail to find work within six months can be required to leave. Child benefit will no longer be sent to children living abroad at UK rates but will be adjusted to reflect the cost of living of the country where they live.

#### Controlling our borders

The arrangement whereby our border controls operate at Calais rather than Dover was created through a bilateral agreement with France but in the context of Britain and France being partners in the European Union. It is of great benefit to Britain since it enables us to deny entry away from UK territory rather than having, for example, to process ill-founded asylum claims in Dover. The arrangement is controversial in France and a Leave vote would put it in jeopardy as Emmanuel Macron, French Economy Minister has made clear (*'the day this relationship unravels, migrants will no longer be in Calais'*). It seems likely that were Britain to leave the EU, the Calais migrant camp would be recreated in Dover.

### EU migrants make a valuable contribution to Britain

A 2014 study by University College London (UCL) found that in 2001-11, EU migrants paid £20 billion more in taxes than they received in benefits. HMRC data shows that in 2013-14 recently arrived migrants paid £2.5 billion more in taxes than they received in tax credits and benefits. Migrants from EU countries are, on average, more likely to be in work than their British peers and are relatively well educated. According to the UCL study, of all the EU countries, Britain attracts the most highly skilled migrants; 60% of those coming from West/Southern Europe and 25% of those from Central/Eastern Europe are graduates. 130,000 EU nationals work as doctors, nurses and care workers in the NHS and in care homes. 9% of NHS doctors come from other EU countries.

### What the Quitters Say

#### EU membership prevents us from reducing net migration to Britain to 'tens of thousands'

This is not true. There are complex migratory pressures throughout the world. Amongst the factors at work in Britain is our inability to control asylum applications (up 30% in 2015); and the fact that through attracting foreign students, British universities have become a major export earner. We retain policy control over non-EU migrants (using a points-based system) but this group still makes up more than half of net migration.

Finally, if we want to retain access to the Single Market, we would have to accept freedom of movement. Switzerland and Norway are not EU members but accept free movement in return for access to the Single Market.

#### The migrants who came to Europe in 2015 will use freedom of movement rules to enter Britain

Many people were concerned by the seemingly uncontrolled influx of migrants to continental Europe in 2015. These consisted of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan mixed with economic migrants. Britain did not accept any of this influx and chose instead to receive 20,000 refugees directly from the region. Nor is it a valid fear that having made their way to Germany the migrants will quickly acquire citizenship and come to Britain. Foreign residents normally have to live in Germany for 8 years before they apply for citizenship. Britain has no obligation to admit third country nationals just because they have a right of residence in another EU member state.

#### 'Turkey (population 76 million) is joining the EU'

The Leave campaign have made a cynical and disreputable claim that Turkey will soon join the EU and that we will then face a flood of migrants. Negotiations on Turkish accession to the EU started in 1987. Since then, only one out of 35 subjects for negotiation has been resolved. No one expects Turkish accession for decades - if ever. Article 49 of the EU Treaty states that all member states must agree to the admission of a new country; so Britain has a veto.

#### The official immigration statistics understate EU migrant numbers

Leave campaigners suggest, by comparing National Insurance numbers issued with migration statistics, that the true level of EU migration in 2011-2015 was 1.5 million higher. In fact, the discrepancy arose because some EU citizens came to Britain to work for less than a year (the standard definition of who is a 'migrant') and then left.

#### EU migrants take jobs from British workers

Britain attracts migrants because our labour market is operating at close to full employment. The employment rate amongst UK nationals is at an all-time high - 1.5 million more jobs have been created for UK citizens since 2010.

#### UK Immigration should be controlled by an Australian-style points system

Migration Watch, which campaigns against mass migration, says the Australian system is a 'thoroughly unsuitable' model for the UK. In 2014 Australia had three times more immigrants per capita than Britain. Since 2008 Britain has had such a system for non-EU migration. It is slow, unpopular with businesses and has failed significantly to bring down migrant numbers to the 'tens of thousands'. The Australian system favours graduates but the UK needs extra lower skilled workers too, especially in agriculture.

### Conclusions

As the Prime Minister has said, we want to reduce net migration but not at the expense of 'wrecking' our economy through leaving the EU and losing access to the Single Market. Two other issues should be considered:

- **Visas:** Pro-Brexit Justice Minister, Dominic Raab, has said that post Brexit, Britain might introduce visas for EU citizens. If reciprocal, such a move would have serious implications for British exporters and tourism.
- **Ireland:** The Leave campaign has not explained how post Brexit border arrangements would operate in the island of Ireland? Is it intended that a tightly controlled border would be introduced? What would the consequences be for the Good Friday Agreement and for peace of such a divisive approach?



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