

Some key points from the EM AGM in London 17th November 2018

James McCleary, EM Campaigns Director, made the following observations:

- In answer to the following question “is there more positivity about the EU or is the mood more about negativity towards Brexit?” James replied that his impression was more the latter and that as and when we win the right to a People’s Vote, campaigning must focus on the former.
- Further to this James also stated that in his opinion much of the noise level on the street was along the lines of “It’s a mess, let’s just stop this one way or the other, let’s get a better deal”.
- Campaigning must continue to be broad based, non-party aligned. The European Movement does not associate itself with any one political party.
- Further to a question/comment from Vincent Porter, James reaffirmed the value of using local radio to spread the word.

Veronica Stiasny, representing the European Movement International, made the following observations in her report:

- Brexit is not at the top of the agenda for other EM groups on the continent. They are more concerned about forthcoming elections to the European Parliament and debates about a one or two speed Europe.
- Do not engage with EU nationals in the 27 about free movement. This is not a concern for them. Their issue is about non-EU immigration, mainly from Africa.

Points arising from Stephen Dorrell’s address and the ensuing open discussion:

- The Prime Minister’s draft agreement with the EU gives the UK no say over the rules, says nothing about the removal of the Northern Ireland backstop and gives little or no say over the future deal-making process.
- While the nation celebrates the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World war, it must not be forgotten that June 2019 is the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, an example of a bad treaty which had dire consequences just twenty years later. In Stephen’s words, the proposed Brexit deal will build “national grievance into our national life”. The imposition of unacceptable rules on the UK will create a new breeding ground for national resentment against the 27.
- The EM and other campaigners must continue to make the case for the achievement of our post-war policy in terms of cooperation with Europe ... the longest period of sustained economic growth, the longest period of peace and that peace grows from economic success and social progress not from wars.
- The meeting was reminded that No Deal does not necessarily promise a simple transition to trading on WTO terms. President Trump’s antipathy towards the WTO might scupper this and secondly, Russia and several other countries have objected to the idea that the UK can simply slice off its share of quotas currently enjoyed by the whole of the EU. Those quotas are based on past trading patterns which will change once the UK leaves the EU. The UK will have to start over again negotiating new tariffs and quotas..
- The over-arching message? This very bad deal must be killed!

Pointing the way forward:

- We will not win broad based support for remaining in the EU if we just talk about the successes of the last decades and simply campaign for the status quo.

- The concerns of those who voted leave because they felt left behind or that the establishment or globalisation was not working for them must be addressed.
- The EU must recognise that these concerns also apply to many citizens in the other 27 countries even though at the moment there appears to be little appetite from any of them for leaving the union.
- The UK is better placed to address these concerns from within the EU than from outside.

David Rowen and Vincent Porter
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