

43 years, 43 broken promises



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An analysis by Vote Leave  
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'When it becomes serious, you have to lie'.

- Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission

Ever since Britain joined the then European Economic Community (EEC) 43 years ago, successive British Governments of all political colours have transferred more and more powers from the British Parliament to the EU's courts and institutions, despite promises to the contrary. To make the public more receptive to this transfer of control, Governments have made numerous promises about the EU that have proven to be wholly inaccurate, misleading the public about the direction of travel in the EU.

British politicians have followed a pattern of failure when it comes to the EU: first they say that ideas coming out of Brussels are 'not really on the agenda'. When they are being implemented, the same people then say 'the EU is coming our way so we have to go along to have influence, if we oppose them we'll have no influence'. After we have failed to influence them, the same people then say 'this change is inevitable and only extremists oppose it'. Here are 43 broken promises made by politicians:

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### 1. 'Our sole commitment is to negotiate; no more, no less.'

**Politician's promise:** The Conservative Manifesto of 1970 started the trend of misleading the British public about the Government's intentions when it said that '**our sole commitment is to negotiate; no more, no less**' (Conservative Manifesto 1970, [link](#)). This was a clear commitment by the then Conservative Leader, Edward Heath, simply to negotiate and look at the possibility of entry in the future, rather than necessarily to join the EEC.

**Broken promise:** Two weeks after Heath was appointed Prime Minister, British officials were in Brussels, pushing for entry as soon as possible. In the words of the lead negotiator at the time, Con O'Neill, the approach of the British Government was to '**swallow the lot, and swallow it now**'. This was a clear breach of the manifesto pledge. On 1 January 1973, Britain officially became a member of the EEC, without the sanction of the British public.

### 2. 'There is no question of any erosion of essential national sovereignty'.

**Politician's promise:** Paragraph 29 of the 1971 White Paper that was presented to Parliament during the debate on whether Britain should join the EEC stated that '**there is no question of any erosion of essential national sovereignty**' (HM Government, July 1971, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** The next year, the European Communities Act 1972 was passed, which established EU law as supreme over UK law. Even after the European Communities Act 1972 had been passed, Edward Heath maintained the façade that there would be no impact on national

sovereignty. In a television interview in 1973, the Prime Minister said **‘there are some in this country who fear that in going into Europe we shall in some way sacrifice independence and sovereignty. These fears, I need hardly say, are completely unjustified.’** Shortly after this interview, the EEC announced that it was considering the formation of a monetary union.

### 3. **‘These better terms can give Britain a New Deal in Europe.’**

**Politician’s promise:** During the first European referendum campaign in 1975, the Wilson Government sent a leaflet to every home, claiming that the Government had renegotiated the UK’s terms of EEC membership, securing a ‘new deal’. It argued that people should vote to remain in for this ‘new deal’: **‘We confidently believe that these better terms can give Britain a New Deal in Europe. A deal that will help us, help the Commonwealth and help our partners in Europe’** (HM Government leaflet, 1975, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** This was a gross exaggeration of the Government’s ‘renegotiation package’ - there were no new ‘better terms’ as there was no Treaty change. The only substantial policy change agreed was new terms of access for New Zealand butter. Wilson’s adviser, Sir Michael Butler, admitted **‘the renegotiation was billed as being a lot more than it was and the results, though satisfactory, were not very important’** (Historians for Britain, 2014, [link](#)).

### 4. **‘Britain will not have to put VAT on necessities like food.’**

**Politician’s promise:** The claim that **‘Britain will not have to put VAT on necessities like food’** was another spurious assertion that was made in the leaflet that went to every household in 1975. It gave a misleading view of the impact of VAT on food (HM Government, 1975, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Today, VAT applies to numerous food items, including alcoholic drinks, confectionery, crisps, savoury snacks, hot food, sports drinks, hot takeaways, ice cream, soft drinks and mineral water. VAT is also charged on other necessities, including contraception and sanitary products.

### 5. **‘Decisions can be taken only if all the members of the Council agree’.**

**Politician’s promise:** Another assertion in the leaflet was that the UK’s sovereignty would not be compromised because **‘it is the Council of Ministers, and not the market’s officials, who take the important decisions. These decisions can be taken only if all the members of the Council agree’** (HM Government, 1975, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** This quickly proved to be a misleading statement, as the veto power would be given away over the coming years in successive Treaties.

## 6. No threat of Economic and Monetary Union in Europe.

**Politician's promise:** The final egregious claim in the 1975 leaflet was the assertion that there was no risk of European countries being forced to join an Economic and Monetary Union (EMU): **'There was a threat to employment in Britain from the movement in the Common Market towards an Economic & Monetary Union. This could have forced us to accept fixed exchange rates for the pound, restricting rates for the pound, restricting individual growth and putting jobs at risk. This threat has been removed'** (HM Government, 1975, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** This, again, was a falsehood – as the establishment of the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) in the 1980s and the subsequent introduction of the euro prove. More importantly, the authors of the leaflet in 1975 also knew that the claim was false. There had already been discussion in the European Council of EMU and the communiqué that was released at the end of a summit in Paris 1974 had actually said: 'the heads of Government having noted that... progress on the road to EMU affirm that in this field their will has not weakened.' Edward Heath would later admit that economic and monetary union 'was what it was all about'.

## 7. There is no plan for a European Union or a Federal Union.

**Politician's promise:** During the 1980s, under the leadership of the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, the EEC started to move away from being an economic community towards a political union. The then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, however, constantly denied that this was happening. After signing the Stuttgart Declaration of European Union in 1983, which constituted a 'solemn declaration of European Union', Thatcher defended her decision by saying **'I must make it quite clear that I don't in any way believe in a federated Europe. Nor does that document'** (HC Deb 23 June 1983, [link](#)). In a House of Commons debate in 1985, the Prime Minister claimed that there were no plans for a move towards a European Union, or a European federation. In the debate she claimed, **'I have often spoken about European union... I wish that people would not use [the phrase]. In this country it raises fear of a federation. It is not used in that way in Europe'** (HC Deb 6 June 1985, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** These claims proved to be completely inaccurate. The Maastricht Treaty in 1992 provided for the creation of a political union, with EU officials pushing for the union to be described as 'federal'. Unlike other British politicians, Thatcher admitted that she had got it wrong. Just five years later, she warned the House of Commons that 'what is being proposed now... is the back door to a federal Europe' (HC Deb, 30 October 1990, [link](#)). Even after Mrs Thatcher realised that there was a federal agenda in the late 1980s, politicians continued to claim that there was no plan for greater integration or federalism. In 2001, the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, claimed **'We have a vision for Europe - as a union of nations working more closely together, not a federal super state submerging national identity'** (*The Guardian*, 23 November

2001, [link](#)). Three years later the Constitutional Treaty was introduced. The Lisbon Treaty entailed a substantial increase in the EU's competence. In 2012, the then President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, called for the EU to turn into 'a federation of nation states' (European Commission, September 2012, [link](#)).

#### 8. Britain would retain the 'Luxembourg Compromise'.

**Politician's promise:** Mrs Thatcher told the House of Commons on 5 December 1985, that the Single European Act (SEA) would not affect the UK's veto - also known as the Luxembourg Compromise - stating '**the Luxembourg compromise, whereby a member state can invoke a very important national interest to prevent a decision being taken, is unaffected**' (HC Deb 5 December 1985, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** This proved to be wrong as the SEA introduced Qualified Majority Voting, taking away the UK's right of veto in many key areas. The Luxembourg compromise ceased to be an effective tool after this.

#### 9. '[The British Government has] contain[ed] the powers of the Commission'.

**Politician's promise:** After signing the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the then Prime Minister, John Major, made a number of inaccurate comments about what the Treaty would and would not do. He asserted in 1991 that the Maastricht Treaty '**safeguards and advances our national interests. It advances the interests of Europe as a whole. It opens up new ways of co-operating in Europe. It clarifies and contains the powers of the Commission**' (HC Deb 11 December 1991, [link](#))

**Broken promise:** In fact, the Commission's powers were not restrained by the Treaty. Today, it retains the right of legislative initiative. Since the Treaty came into force, executive power in the EU has actually moved from the Council to the Commission. It has now become so powerful that the leader of the European Liberal Party in the European Parliament has said that the Commission should be renamed the 'European Government', saying that the current name is 'ridiculous'.

#### 10. There would be no 'co-decision'.

**Politician's promise:** John Major also asserted that he had stopped co-decision being introduced - which would involve the European Parliament being given equal rights to the Council of Ministers (and would represent a dramatic decline in the power of the nation states): '**we did not accept the proposal made by other member states for a power of co-decision between the Parliament and the Council. As I told the House on 20 November, the Council of Ministers must be the body that ultimately determines the Community's laws and policies**' (HC Deb 11 December 1991, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** This was inaccurate. The co-decision procedure was actually introduced by the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (1992), and extended and made more effective by the

Amsterdam Treaty (1999). With the Lisbon Treaty that took effect on 1 December 2009, the renamed ordinary legislative procedure became the main legislative procedure of the EU's decision-making system.

### 11. The UK would 'not accept' the Social Chapter.

**Politician's promise:** Major also claimed that he had kept Britain out of the social chapter of the Maastricht Treaty: **'What we have agreed not to accept are the sort of damaging laws that nearly brought this country to its knees when we last had a Labour Government. That is what we are not prepared to accept'** (HC Deb 11 December 1991, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** While it is true that Major secured an opt-out from the Social Chapter, it was not permanent. When Tony Blair became Prime Minister in 1997, he committed to taking Britain into the Social Chapter. There is now no possibility for the UK to opt back out of social and employment laws and David Cameron has had to abandon his efforts to take back the power to make such laws.

### 12. '[The British Government] introduced procedures to reverse the trend towards [EU] centralism'.

**Politician's promise:** Perhaps the most inaccurate claim was that **'The Maastricht treaty provided mechanisms for more broadly based development of the Community, and introduced procedures to reverse the trend towards centralism.'** Major further claimed that **'the very centralising tendency that many are so worried about was addressed and corrected at Maastricht'** (HC Deb 11 December 1991, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** These claims have proven to be false. Since the Maastricht Treaty was ratified, there have been three other major Treaty changes – all of which passed significant power to the EU institutions. Centralisation was in no way arrested by the Maastricht Treaty but accelerated.

### 13. 'The union has no financial resources of its own.'

**Politician's promise:** In December 1992, the Foreign Office Minister, Tristan Garel-Jones, said **'The union has no financial resources of its own'** (HC Deb 2 December 1992, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Under Council Decision 2014/335/EU on **'the system of the own resources of the European Union'**, the EU's own resources derive from tariff revenues, a share of VAT revenues, and a budgetary contribution from member states linked to their gross national income.

### 14. Subsidiarity to be 'a substantial and legally binding' principle.

**Politician's promise:** In March 1993, the Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, stated that **'the principle of subsidiarity is now for the first time enshrined in the treaty as a substantial and legally-binding**

**decision**’ and that **‘the court is there and it will be the legal underpinning for subsidiarity’** (HC Deb 11 March 1993, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** The European Court of Justice has never struck down an EU law for breach of the principle of subsidiarity and it is unlikely that it will ever to do so. In December 2015, Advocate General Juliane Kokott said that EU legislation could comply with the principle of subsidiarity even if it merely recited an **‘empty formula’** to the effect that the matter was better dealt with at EU-level (*R (Philip Morris Brands) v Secretary of State for Health*, Case C-547/14, para [292], [link](#)).

### **15. Justice and home affairs ‘will not fall under the jurisdiction of the European Court.’**

**Politician’s promise:** On 20 May 1993, the Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd said **‘law and order will be managed between national Governments accountable to national Parliaments. The Commission will not enjoy a monopoly of initiative and the processes will not fall under the jurisdiction of the European Court’** (HC Deb 20 May 1993, [link](#)). Tony Blair also claimed in 1997 that **‘In the justice and home affairs area, we have agreed better arrangements for co-operation on police matters, crime and drugs. I attach great importance to more effective international action in those areas of direct concern to people. However, such co-operation will remain intergovernmental and subject to unanimity. Thanks to amendments that we also secured, the European Court will have no authority to decide cases brought in United Kingdom courts on those issues’** (HC Deb 18 June 1997, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** As part of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Commission and ECJ acquired enforcement powers in the field of justice and home affairs from December 2014. The UK Government decided to opt into several measures, including the European Arrest Warrant, meaning the ECJ now has jurisdiction over justice and home affairs.

### **16. ‘Union citizenship does not override national citizenship’.**

**Politician’s promise:** In June 1993, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, said **‘Union citizenship does not override national citizenship... The concept of Union citizenship is benign’** (HC Deb 8 June 1993, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** In September 2001, the European Court of Justice declared that **‘Union citizenship is destined to be the fundamental status of nationals of the Member States’** (*Grzelczyk v Centre public d’aide sociale d’Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve* [2001] ECR I-6193, para [31], [link](#)).

### **17. Free movement to apply ‘only’ to EU citizens.**

**Politician’s promise:** In July 1993, Earl Ferrers, a Government Minister, said **‘The free movement provisions of the Treaty of Rome apply, in our view, only to European Community nationals’** (HL Deb 12 July 1993, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Directive 2004/38/EC provides that free movement applies to the family member members of EU citizens, regardless of whether or not they are EU citizens themselves.

#### 18. '[T]here can be no question of lifting our border controls.'

**Politician's promise:** In 1995, the Prime Minister, John Major told the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool that **'there can be no question of lifting our border controls. We are an island and we need them. Those controls are vital. They are not negotiable. And they are staying'** (Conservative Party, 13 October 1995, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** In December 2014, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Luxembourg decided that the UK could not require third country nationals who are married to EU citizens to obtain a permit from UK authorities to be able to enter the UK (*R (McCarthy) v Secretary of State for the Home Department*, Case C-202/13, [link](#)). The British Government is now instead obliged in principle to accept as valid permits issued by other EU countries. This is despite the fact that a High Court Judge had found that forgery of such permits was 'systemic'.

#### 19. 'We shall retain our veto on immigration issues.'

**Politician's promise:** While in opposition, in 1995, Tony Blair asserted that 'We have made it clear that **we shall retain our veto on immigration issues. We have always said that**' (HC Deb 15 November 1995, [link](#)). In 1997, after signing the Amsterdam Treaty, Tony Blair claimed that migration remained a national competence: **'we have obtained legal security for our frontier controls, through a legally binding protocol to the treaty. That is an achievement of lasting value, attained for the first time. The key point in the protocol says: "The United Kingdom shall be entitled...to exercise at its frontiers with other member states such controls on persons seeking to enter the United Kingdom as it may consider necessary for the purpose."** I know that that will be welcomed by the whole House. We have ensured that we, and only we, decide border policy, and that policies on immigration, asylum and visas are made in Britain, not in Brussels' (HC Deb 18 June 1997, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Despite these pledges, the Blair Government handed over significant control over the UK's asylum system by opting into several EU Directives and Regulations following the Tampere European Council in 1999.

#### 20. No enhanced cooperation.

**Politician's promise:** After he signed the Amsterdam Treaty, Tony Blair asserted that he had blocked the introduction of 'enhanced cooperation', where other EU member states can group together and introduce further integrating measures, without being held back by other states: **'We**

secured a veto over flexibility arrangements which could otherwise have allowed the development of a hard core, excluding us against our will' (HC Deb 18 June 1997, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** In fact, enhanced cooperation was introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam for judicial cooperation and criminal matters. The Treaty of Nice forbade opposition to the creation of enhanced cooperation and introduced cooperation for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Treaty of Lisbon extended enhanced cooperation to include defence.

Today, enhanced cooperation creates substantial problems for the UK: other EU member states are using the procedure to force the introduction of a financial transaction tax, something that the British Government has said will harm the UK.

### **21. No legal personality for the EU.**

**Politician's promise:** The Blair Government claimed that it would make sure that the EU would not gain a full legal personality, saying: '**Others wanted to give the European Union explicit legal personality across all the pillars of the treaty. At our insistence, that was removed**' (HC Deb 18 June 1997, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Today, the EU Treaties explicitly state that '**The Union shall have legal personality**', making it an independent entity in its own right (TEU, art. 47, [link](#)). The Lisbon Treaty established legal personality for the whole Union - despite Tony Blair's assurances ten years earlier.

### **22. No expansion of QMV in social security matters.**

**Politician's promise:** Tony Blair claimed that he had stopped the expansion of QMV in 1997 when he signed the Treaty of Amsterdam: '**We have prevented the extension of qualified majority voting in areas where it might cause damage. Others wanted to extend QMV in the social chapter, which would have affected our companies even if we had not been party to the chapter. Because we were in it, we were able to stop that**' (HC Deb 18 June 1997, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** The Treaty of Lisbon expanded QMV to social security issues (TFEU, art. 48, [link](#)).

### **23. No European Constitution.**

**Politician's promise:** During the early Blair years, successive Government ministers asserted that '**we are not proposing a constitution of Europe**' (HC Deb 25 May 1999, [link](#)). Even in 2000, Keith Vaz told the House '**We are not going to have such a constitution, so I am happy to deny categorically his statement**' (HC Deb 22 November 2000, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe was drawn up by an intergovernmental conference (IGC) and signed by Tony Blair in Rome in October 2004. When this

Treaty was rejected by French and Dutch voters in 2005, it was later resurrected as the Lisbon Treaty, which Tony Blair and then Gordon Brown signed Britain up to.

#### 24. Social security to remain the 'province of national governments and national parliaments'.

**Politician's promise:** In the early years of the Blair Government, the Prime Minister said that he did not want to see the EU have power over social security systems: **'We have set out very clearly where there are particular positions, for example in relation to...the social security system, where we think this is the province of national governments and national parliaments...we have got absolute red lines we have laid down'** (*BBC News*, 9 December 2000, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Today, it is clear that the EU exercises considerable influence over social security policy, especially under Regulation 2004/883/EC on the **coordination of social security systems**. The Prime Minister, David Cameron, was recently warned by the Cabinet Secretary, Jeremy Heywood, **'that banning EU migrants from claiming tax credits for four years, a key demand in their EU renegotiations, could be found to be illegal'** (*BBC News*, 4 November 2015, [link](#)).

#### 25. An opt out from the Charter for Fundamental Rights.

**Politician's promise:** One of the more egregious claims that was made during the Blair years is that the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights would have no legal weight: in the words of Keith Vaz: **'This is not a litigators' charter. Nobody can sue on it. Nobody will be able to litigate on it. People will be able to bring it up in the European Court as if it was the Beano or The Sun'** (*Daily Telegraph*, 14 October 2000, [link](#)). Vaz also told the House of Commons that **'it will not be legally enforceable'** (HC Deb 22 November 2000, [link](#)). He was not the only one who made this claim - Tony Blair told the House of Commons in 2000 that **'our case is that it should not have legal status and we do not intend it to'** (HC Deb, 11 December 2000, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** These claims have since been proven to be false. The European Court of Justice has ruled that the protocol negotiated by Blair **'does not intend to exempt the ... the United Kingdom from the obligation to comply with the provisions of the Charter or to prevent a [UK] court ... from ensuring compliance with those provisions'** (*R (NS) v Secretary of State for the Home Department*, Case C-411/10, [link](#)). In 2012, the UK Supreme Court said that **'the Charter thus has direct effect in national law'** (*Rugby Football Union v Consolidated Information Services Limited* [2012] UKSC 55, [link](#)).

#### 26. No EU diplomatic service.

**Politician's promise:** During the Blair Government, various ministers asserted that there would be no EU diplomatic service. For example, Denis MacShane claimed: **'We believe that it remains for EU Member States to organise their respective bilateral diplomatic services at the national level'**

(HC Deb 21 January 2003, [link](#)). In 2003 Peter Hain claimed: **‘Already, there is a sensible co-operation amongst European Member States: we represent some Member States in African countries, for example, and they do the same for us in areas where they have a traditional, historical relationship, and we do not have the resources to put in a proper mission. So I think that kind of co-operation will go. But [will we see the] arrival of a diplomatic service? No’** (HC Deb 16 July 2004, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** The Lisbon Treaty introduced the European External Action Service.

### **27. No European public prosecutor.**

**Politician’s promise:** The Blair Government also asserted that there would be no chance of an EU public prosecutor being introduced. In 2003, the then Solicitor General, Harriet Harman, claimed: **‘The draft proposals recommend the creation of a European Public prosecutor. The UK opposes this. Prosecution should remain the responsibility of the Member State. The UK will not sign up to anything which is not in its interest’** (HC Deb 3 June 2003, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** The Lisbon Treaty made provision for a European Public Prosecutor. The Commission has since proposed the creation of such an office and the European Parliament has voted in favour. The position is set to be introduced in the near future.

### **28. ‘The UK has made clear that it cannot accept a provision importing a mutual defence commitment’.**

During the Constitutional Treaty debate the Blair Government made clear that it did not support proposals for a mutual defence agreement: **‘The UK has made clear that it cannot accept a provision importing a mutual defence commitment in the European Union. We support what the European Council at Nice stated: “NATO remains the basis for the collective defence of its members.” Therefore the EU, most of whose members are NATO allies, cannot duplicate this role, either as a whole or through reinforced cooperation’** (European Convention, 2003, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** The mutual defence clause was, in any event, introduced by the Lisbon Treaty (TEU, art. 42(7), [link](#)). This clause provides that if an EU country is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other EU countries have an obligation to aid and assist it by all the means in their power. This has, as warned, created serious questions about the future of NATO.

### **29. To return powers ‘back towards member states’.**

**Politician’s promise:** One of the more egregious claims that was made during the Constitution debate was that the Treaty would actually return powers back to the member states, with Jack Straw claiming that: **‘What [the Constitution] won’t do is shift the balance of power between**

**member states and the union, except to a degree, back towards member states'** (Jack Straw, *BBC Today Programme*, 9 September 2003).

**Broken promise:** This was nothing but spin. Instead of ending the drift of powers to the centre in Brussels, the Constitution would have actually set up new mechanisms accelerating the transfer of powers to the EU via 'ratchet clauses', which would abolish national vetoes without the need to consult the people in a referendum. These were introduced via the Lisbon Treaty.

### **30. No new European Treaty.**

**Politician's promise:** Tony Blair promised that, if the Constitutional Treaty was rejected, that would be it: **'What you cannot do is have a situation where you get a rejection of the treaty and bring it back with a few amendments and say, "Have another go". You cannot do that'** (*Guardian*, 23 April 2004, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Despite this promise, after the Constitution was rejected by the French and Dutch electorate in 2005, the Treaty was resurrected as the Lisbon Treaty - which Tony Blair and then Gordon Brown signed Britain up to two years later.

### **31. A referendum on the Constitution.**

**Politician's promise:** The 2005 Labour Party Manifesto promised a referendum on the Constitution (Labour Manifesto 2005, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Instead, the British Government signed the Lisbon Treaty (which was, to all intents and purposes, the same document - in the words of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, **'The Treaty of Lisbon is the same as the rejected constitution. Only the format has been changed to avoid referendums'**) and then refused to give the people a vote on the Treaty. The then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, claimed in 2010 that there **'was no major constitutional change'** in the Lisbon Treaty (*Daily Mail*, 15 April 2010, [link](#)).

### **32. 'The UK rebate will remain and we will not negotiate it away. Period.'**

**Politician's promise:** In 2005 Tony Blair claimed that: **'the UK rebate will remain and we will not negotiate it away. Period'** (HC Deb 19 December 2005, [link](#))

**Broken promise:** In December of that year, the Government agreed to give up a large part of the rebate during negotiations on a new EU budget deal. This has cost the UK, to date, £10.4 billion.

### 33. A referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

**Politician's promise:** In 2007 David Cameron gave a 'cast iron guarantee' that a future Conservative Government would give the British people a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

**Broken promise:** On 4 November 2009, David Cameron announced that he would no longer be pursuing a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, claiming he could 'no more hold a referendum on the treaty than ... a referendum on the sun rising in the morning' (*Guardian*, 4 November 2009, [link](#)).

### 34. No European Army.

**Politician's promise:** One of the most frequent claims by British politicians is that, in the words of Tony Blair, '[There is] no such concept called a European army' (*The Times*, 13 October 2003, [link](#)). This is a falsehood. Over the last decade, EU politicians have made no secret of their desire to create a European army: 'The EU should have its own army from countries which accept a common defence' (Romano Prodi, Speech, 9 May 1999).

**Broken promise:** The Treaty of Lisbon envisages the creation of a European Army. Article 42(2) of the Treaty on European Union provides that 'the common security and defence policy shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides.' On 8 March 2015, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker told the German newspaper *Welt am Sonntag* that he would like to see the introduction of an EU army (*Welt am Sonntag*, 8 March 2015, [link](#)). He argued that it was needed to combat growing Russian aggression, claiming 'a common army among the Europeans would convey to Russia that we are serious about defending the values of the European Union.' He argued that 'such an army would help us design a common foreign and security policy.' In 2014, Tony Blair himself called for steps to be taken toward a common European Defence Policy (*Telegraph*, 21 July 2014, [link](#)).

### 35. An end to debates about the EU institutions and power grabs.

**Politician's promise:** Tony Blair claimed in 1997 that 'the successful conclusion of the intergovernmental conference enables Europe to put institutional wrangles behind it and to move on to the issues that affect people's daily lives' (HC Deb 18 June 1997, [link](#)). The EU spent the next ten year discussing further changes to the institutions. In 2007, the Brown Government claimed that the Lisbon Treaty would mark the end of the EU's obsession with institutions and power grabs, claiming 'this amending Treaty will allow the EU to move on from debates about institutions' (HM Government, July 2007, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** In fact, there was no such shift. Following the Lisbon Treaty there have been calls for a new Treaty from the European Commission, which recently produced the ‘Five Presidents’ Report’ setting out its agenda for taking even more powers from the member states and for bolstering the role of the EU’s institutions - or, in the words of the report, ‘**Institutional Strengthening**’ (European Commission, 22 June 2015, [link](#)).

### **36. ‘We should not have any liability for bailing out the eurozone.’**

**Politician’s promise:** In 2011, the Cameron Government claimed that it had taken Britain out of the Eurozone bailout mechanism. David Cameron said ‘**we should not have any liability for bailing out the Eurozone.**’ This was even promised by the EU in 2011, and the Conservative manifesto of 2015 boasted that the party had taken the UK out of eurozone bailouts (*Official Journal*, 25 March 2011, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Yet in July 2015, the EU broke its promise and used funds from member states to bail out Greece. Even the Chancellor, George Osborne, admitted that this was ‘**in flagrant breach of the agreement**’ (HM Government, 3 November 2015, [link](#)).

### **37. Reforming the working time directive to protect the NHS.**

**Politician’s promise:** In January 2012, the Prime Minister, David Cameron claimed his Government was ‘**committed to revising the [working time] directive at EU level to give the NHS the flexibility it needs to deliver the best and safest service to patients. We will work urgently to bring that about**’ (HC Deb 18 January 2012, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** No amendments to the Working Time Directive to protect the NHS have been made in the period since. In December 2015, the ECJ ruled that Greece had broken EU law by suspending the application of the Directive to its National Health Service (*Commission v Greece* Case-180/14, [link](#)).

### **38. Cutting the EU budget.**

**Politician’s promise:** In February 2013, David Cameron claimed that he had cut the EU’s budget: ‘**This meeting has been about setting the overall limit on EU spending over the next seven years. Now I have been determined to cut the spending limits, and so to cut the amount that Brussels can spend and, working with like-minded allies, I have achieved that today. Every previous time these multi-year deals have been agreed, spending has gone up. Not this time**’ (HM Government, 8 February 2013, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** According to the PM, ‘**Under the last seven-year framework, which runs out this year, the credit card limit was €943 billion... what we’ve achieved is an agreement that it must be cut to €908 billion.**’

It is important to stress this is not a cut in cash terms, and that Vote Leave research has shown that, in cash terms, the budget will actually increase, from €925bn to €1,1024bn (Vote Leave, December 2015, [link](#)).

### 39. Obtaining Treaty change before the EU referendum.

**Politician's promise:** In January 2014, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, spoke of the '**treaty change that I'll be putting in place before the referendum**' (*Telegraph*, 5 January 2014, [link](#)).

However, in November 2015, the Europe Minister, David Lidington said '**our timetable for referendum by the end of 2017 means that you just cannot [have] treaty negotiation and 28 national ratifications within that timeframe**' (*Herald Scotland*, 16 November 2015, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** In December 2015, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, said '**it's impossible to change the [EU] treaty before the referendum**' (*Guardian*, 2 December 2015, [link](#)).

### 40. 'I'm not paying that bill on 1 December'.

**Politician's promise:** On 17 October 2014, the European Commission informed HM Treasury that the UK would have to make an additional contribution to the EU Budget of approximately €2.1bn (£1.7bn). This 'surcharge' aroused considerable anger within the UK. Prime Minister David Cameron described his 'downright anger about... the completely unjustified and sudden production of the bill', and told a press conference: '**I'm not paying that bill on 1 December, if people think I'm going to they've got another thing coming**' (HM Government, 24 October 2014, [link](#)). The UK did, however, end up paying.

**Broken promise:** The Chancellor claimed to have halved the 'surcharge' by negotiating for the rebate to be applied to it. This was wrong. The House of Commons Treasury Committee stated that '**it should have been unambiguously clear to the Treasury, well in advance of ECOFIN on 7 November 2014 that the UK was entitled to a rebate on any additional budget contributions that could arise from the GNI revisions**' (HC Deb 27 February 2015, [link](#)).

Despite George Osborne's claim that '**we've also changed permanently the rules of the European Union so this never happens again**', the EU legislation that was used to justify this 'surcharge' still provides that member states' GNI-based contributions from previous years can be changed retrospectively (*Telegraph*, 7 November 2014, [link](#)). The Government was only able to secure an amendment that any further large 'surcharges' could be paid over a longer period. Unless this mechanism is revised, there is a risk of more 'surcharges' in the future.

### 41. EU migrants to 'have a job offer' before coming to the UK.

**Politician's promise:** In November 2014, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, said '**we want EU jobseekers to have a job offer before they come here**' (*BBC News*, 28 November 2014, [link](#)). In

1991, the ECJ held that the Treaties contain **'the right for nationals of Member States to move freely within the territory of the other Member States and to stay there for the purposes of seeking employment'** (*R v Immigration Appeal Tribunal, Ex parte Antonissen* [1991] ECR I-745, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** In November 2015, the Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond confirmed this pledge had been dropped, telling the European Scrutiny Committee that **'if you are self-supporting, under the principle of freedom of movement you can come to the UK'** (HC Deb 17 November 2015, [link](#)). This was not changed in the renegotiation.

#### **42. 'If an EU jobseeker has not found work within six months, they will be required to leave'.**

**Politician's promise:** In November 2014, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, promised that **'if an EU jobseeker has not found work within six months, they will be required to leave'** (*BBC News*, 28 November 2014, [link](#)). It is illegal under EU law to remove jobseekers who can show that they are genuinely seeking work and have a genuine chance of finding it, regardless of how long they spend in the UK.

**Broken promise:** The Government has since admitted that some EU migrants can **'keep the status of jobseeker for longer than six months'** (House of Commons, 2 December 2015, [link](#)). This was not changed in the renegotiation.

#### **43. 'Finally addressing the concerns that the British people have over our membership'.**

**Politician's promise:** In his 2013 Bloomberg Speech, David Cameron promised to renegotiate Britain's terms of EU membership. For two years his actual negotiation aims were kept secret. He later promised that **'we will succeed in fundamentally changing the UK's relationship with the EU, finally addressing the concerns that the British people have over our membership'** (*HC Deb*, 5 January 2016, [link](#)).

In 2015 he produced a letter, stating what his renegotiation goals were. This revealed that the renegotiation has already fallen short of the many promises that were made by David Cameron in his Bloomberg Speech and in other promises he has made. He has dropped 9 out of ten of his promises to change the EU, including his 2009 promise of a 'complete opt out from the Charter of Fundamental Rights' (Vote Leave, 11 October 2015, [link](#)).

**Broken promise:** Now that the renegotiation has been completed, supporters of the EU have made clear that they want to present the renegotiation as a 'new deal' securing the UK a 'special status', even though it will not be backed by any sort of Treaty change and is not legally binding (*BBC News*, February 2016, [link](#)). Government sources have already floated the idea of the deal being placed in the UN - even though this will do nothing to bolster its legal effect.

Prominent supporters of EU membership have made clear that they want to present the renegotiation as being a lot more than what it really is, and want to create a fake row. Former Health Secretary, Lord Lansley, a close ally of the Prime Minister has already revealed that the Government hopes to stage a fake row with other European Governments in order to create the impression that it has got a good deal (*Daily Mail*, 17 August 2015, [link](#)).