

The Rejoin EU Party Manifesto

The Party

The **Rejoin EU Party** believes Britain's future lies in Europe as a full and committed member of the European Union. By creating unfettered access to our largest market and by sharing in the strength of its trade deals, membership will give us back 'control' and provide a brighter economic future. By providing unrestricted freedom to live, work and travel throughout the EU, membership will considerably enhance our lives. And through closer engagement with our immediate neighbours at a time of great international turmoil, our security will be strengthened.

Rejoin EU therefore considers Brexit a serious and grievous mistake achieved through misleading claims and falsehoods that exploited the fear of foreigners and betrayed millions of settled Europeans who had greatly contributed to our society. Brexit destroyed Britain's reputation for inclusivity and is causing considerable economic hardship, social division and political damage to our nation.

Our party serves to represent those who would see it reversed.

Composed of highly motivated citizens drawn from across the political spectrum, the party is dedicated to promoting and achieving a future for Britain inside the EU with full restoration of the rights, freedoms, and prosperity that would result from that. This can be achieved either through a staged process of single market/Customs Union membership or a direct application for renewed membership under Article 49 of the EU Treaty. **Rejoin EU** will also address the causes of Brexit to guard against such mismanagement again and will work towards rectifying the damage caused by it.

Our diversity of membership not only enables people from all political persuasions to demand the reversal of Brexit, but it also allows their voice in each constituency to be heard on other issues. **Rejoin EU** candidates are committed to represent their constituents and, as local issues will often vary, they may emphasise different proposals. Beyond the common bond to reverse Brexit and stand against all forms of discrimination, we are not a party of dogma. **Rejoin EU** listens to the communities we serve. And all the polls indicate that a clear majority now seek a restoration of Britain's vital participation in the EU.

Our role and objectives

Given Britain's disproportional 'first-past-the-post' electoral system, **Rejoin EU** recognises the same difficulties faced by all smaller parties to form a government in 2024 or even provide proportionate parliamentary representation for the millions of British citizens who support our cause. However, every vote for the party will be crucial in enabling us to apply pressure on the larger parties in Parliament to address our collective voice and implement the following objectives:

- 1) Immediate dialogue with the European Commission on the conditions and timing of renewed full EU membership;
- 2) The swift restoration of free movement as part of interim membership of the European single market;
- 3) The suspension of any further divergence from EU regulations;
- 4) The restoration of EU Customs Union membership;
- 5) The development of closer political and economic ties with Brussels such as membership of Erasmus+, the Pan-European-Mediterranean cross-border trade agreement and various other European initiatives.

These priorities should provide a path towards re-joining the EU, but not be a substitute for it.

Rejoin EU will also demand the new government addresses the various constitutional, economic and domestic consequences of Brexit that have caused so much damage to our nation. We must not only restore our platform for prosperity, but also deal with the effects of losing it.

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Rejoin EU therefore proposes measures and positions outlined below in the following policy areas:

Constitutional reform

Brexit exposed the fundamental weakness and outdated structure of British democracy. Major constitutional change was enforced after a controversial referendum supported by only 37% of the electorate with a majority of less than 4%. Under heavy parliamentary pressure in both chambers for greater democratic involvement, the government illegally prorogued it and deceived the Queen to do so. This cannot be allowed to happen in healthy democracies and **Rejoin EU would ensure it can never happen in Britain again.**

This is how we propose to do that:

- 1) To prevent any government with minority electoral support from dictating policy over the majority again, **Rejoin EU** would replace the current 'first-past-the-post' system with a more balanced and inclusive model involving greater proportional representation;
- 2) The party would reform the House of Lords through either or all of; (a) the introduction of some directly elected members (b) the creation of an independent body to appoint citizens of outstanding achievement outside the political sphere and (c) the limitation of politically appointed members;
- 3) In keeping with our times, the party advocates the abolition of life peerages and the introduction of fixed terms for elected or appointed members;
- 4) The party respects and supports the right of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to democratically decide upon levels of self-determination and to conduct properly

monitored independence referendums, should a parliamentary majority in each nation demand such;

- 5) **Rejoin EU** believes the political stalemate caused by Brexit in Northern Ireland and the consequent risks to the Good Friday Agreement should be democratically settled without delay. The party does not oppose Irish re-unification, should a majority in both Ulster and the Republic of Ireland vote for such a course of action;
- 6) The party would criminalise deliberate deception by parliamentarians, whether in Parliament, to the Head of State, to the media or to the electorate. Abuse and misconduct amongst members has reached such proportions that mere suspension or dismissal, often into lucrative employment, is no longer sufficient to warrant their continued immunity;
- 7) The party would ensure that the outside employment of elected politicians is subject to specific scrutiny and does not impede the representation of their constituents for which they were elected;
- 8) **Rejoin EU** supports the strengthening of recall powers by constituents where representatives have substantially lost their confidence;
- 9) The party proposes the establishment of a written constitution that would enshrine such measures and limit the powers of government to act without either referendum or parliamentary support from both chambers.

Trade and Economy

The party considers the majority of current economic problems in Britain stem from Brexit and that re-joining the EU would restore healthy economic growth and greatly lessen our decline relative to other advanced economies. This would eliminate the massive rise in red tape, costs, delays and supply-chain problems that currently strangle many businesses and impede ordinary citizens when buying products and services from the EU.

Rejoin EU thereby supports the following measures:

- 1) In view of the continuing pressure on sterling under the post-Brexit volatility that has led leading investment banks to describe it as an 'emerging-market currency', the party favours a constructive approach towards joining the euro as a measure to stabilise the currency and harmonise economic interaction with our biggest trading partners;
- 2) **Rejoin EU** would also press for swift relief to those worse affected by Brexit, in particular those small businesses who experience adverse trading conditions in Europe, increased bureaucracy and the loss of seasonal workers in the agricultural and leisure industries. Consideration would be given to corporation tax reform through the introduction of progressive bands so that small businesses, their workers, high streets and all who use them may survive more easily;

- 3) Participation in the EU's customs union is considered essential for the benefit of British businesses, their workers and customers. The inflationary effect of increased duties and bureaucracy when trading with our closest neighbours has been understated. Moreover, the increased carbon footprint of distant foreign imports is incompatible with the global objective of Net Zero. EU membership would rejuvenate our European commerce whilst the minimal post-Brexit trade agreements so far concluded outside Europe could be extended to include our European partners.

Foreign Policy

Far from extending sovereignty, by lessening our role in Europe, Brexit has increased our political and economic dependence on America and thereby actually reduced the scope of British foreign policy. We seek to reverse that trend.

- 1) **Rejoin EU** seeks to restore Britain's pivotal role amongst our closest neighbours. Participation in EU foreign-policy negotiations with various foreign powers increases British influence abroad whilst our reputable military capabilities, when considered in European defence co-ordination, strengthen our voice in European diplomacy;
- 2) At a time when international co-operation and European unity are vital for global stability, such enhancement of community spirit embodies the path for other peoples and greatly increases the chances of meeting the crucial targets to combat climate change;
- 3) A policy of international co-operation and compromise where necessary enhances cultural exchange and the reduction of xenophobia. At a time when the whole developed world faces increased immigration pressures through war, climate change and political instability, the need for social cohesion in a multi-cultural society and co-ordination with our neighbours is paramount. Restored EU membership will allow Britain to participate in measures to better address the causes of migration and managing it.

Migration

Rejoin EU rejects immigration as a means of securing cheap labour and supports a return to the policy of labour mobility within Europe offered by EU freedom of movement.

- 1) The resumption of EU freedom of movement would swiftly alleviate the serious shortage of essential and able workers in some sectors of the labour market which Britain, despite record non-EU immigration levels, has experienced since Brexit. As our hospitals, schools, farms, hotels and restaurants have directly suffered severe decline as a result, the party considers this a significant reason to re-join;
- 2) Rather than an immigration policy that leads to permanent settlement, freedom of movement is a mobility-of-labour measure which also facilitates reciprocal rights to UK citizens to work across the EU. Moreover, as EU workers stay an average of five years, they don't structurally increase the UK population which otherwise would cancel their benefit to per capita GDP. This vital measure of labour productivity and economic health, essential for capital investment, has stagnated since Brexit. It is therefore vital that we re-join the EU to restore its growth;

- 3) **Rejoin EU** considers the training and earnings of EU workers also benefits the economic bloc of which Britain would be part. Their assimilation thereby enhances our common strength and welfare;
- 4) The party supports the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, fleeing the effects of war, persecution and climate change, to safe, lawful and humanitarian routes for them to apply;
- 5) Since Brexit, Britain has absorbed a significantly higher proportion per capita of migrants overall than the EU. Re-joining the EU would make it easier for the UK to collaborate with its partners in facing the challenges and difficulties of both assisting refugees and managing migration generally within Europe.

Education/health

Rejoin EU strongly supports the NHS and advocates greater entitlement to efficient treatment and the priority funding and legislation needed to provide this. Both the NHS and the education sector have faced considerable disruption and decline through Brexit and the economic damage it has caused. Besides increased financial constraints, the loss of thousands of trained European workers across many public sectors has caused serious staffing problems. And the increased risk of another pandemic through climate change and mass international travel creates another need for urgent action. Re-joining the EU would greatly assist this.

- 1) By restoring free trade with the EU, increased revenues will boost economic growth and support greater funding;
- 2) By restoring free movement within the EU, the pool of trained and willing workers will be substantially increased;
- 3) Free movement also facilitates educational opportunities abroad and the party advocates swift uptake of the Erasmus+ student-exchange scheme;
- 4) Renewed EU membership would restore our participation in the EHIC reciprocal healthcare scheme benefiting all those who travel, work and live abroad. And it would benefit development, innovation and industry through re-entry into EU scientific research programmes such as Horizon.

Defence and security

Brexit directly served to separate the British and French nuclear deterrents which later emboldened the Russian attack on Ukraine. This defence and security failure

de-stabilised the world and caused immeasurable costs to British, American and European citizens. Besides the growing military strength of China and its allies, the fragility of American politics and its commitments elsewhere requires Europe to enhance its independent defence capability. This could entail a fully developed European pillar to NATO similar to that of the US with its nuclear capability properly integrated at European level.

- 1) **Rejoin EU** would therefore propose enhancing the 2010 Anglo-French Defence Treaty into a more comprehensive European military capability as a matter of urgency. EU membership would shield against any consequent increases in defence expenditure through the shared responsibility of the entire bloc. Moreover British focus on European defence, rather than the Brexit fantasy of a global naval capability in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, will not only increase our standing and co-operation in Europe, but also direct our funding where it is most needed;
- 2) The Ukraine war has revealed the increasing decline of traditional armoured formations and manned combat aircraft whilst signalling the enormous significance of drones and missiles besides cyber and other non-conventional combat strategies. Therefore the party will advocate a fundamental reform of our military procurement policies and the re-configuration of our defence industries to accommodate this;
- 3) The party believes re-joining the EU would also restore access to EU security intelligence and police databases and the European Arrest Warrant, thereby instantly improving our ability to reduce crime and improve protection against terrorism and overseas security threats. It would also restore our membership of the Dublin convention and the EU border agency Frontex, allowing us to better guard against terrorism and illegal migration;
- 4) We believe the logic of European integration will be the eventual creation of a common European Defence Force. Accepting and working towards that goal alongside our neighbours, given Britain's much respected military and naval strength, will play a major part in securing for us the best possible overall terms for re-joining the EU.

Environment

Rejoin EU is committed to protecting the environment and fulfilling Britain's obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But no nation can work alone to reduce climate change. Renewed EU membership is a vital element of the international co-ordination required to achieve this.

- 1) Re-joining the EU would end the regulatory "race to the bottom" which has led Britain, in an effort to use its 'Brexit benefits', to such measures as relaxing pollution restrictions on housing developers and water companies;
- 2) Moreover Brexit enabled Britain to leave the EU Emission Trading System, which gradually reduces the Greenhouse Emissions needed to reach Net Zero by 2050, and created instead its own national carbon market (UK ETS);

This allowed Britain greater freedom to shape its own carbon-emission market and ideally set a more ambitious carbon scheme than the EU. However the competitive global market has also tempted the UK government to use lax carbon pricing to attract carbon intense industries. Hence carbon prices per tonne have increased by almost 65% in Europe but fallen by 14.7% in the UK since 2021. This trend greatly reduces Britain's chances of meeting crucial emission targets;

- 3) Furthermore, such non-alignment between Britain and the EU is likely to create future barriers for UK exports into its biggest trading partner when the EU introduces penalties against imports from countries with lower carbon costs, such as the UK, with its planned Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

Our vision for Europe

Rejoin EU is not a backward-looking party and we don't seek mere restoration of Britain's earlier relationship with the EU, but rather a more positive European future which addresses the concerns that many voters held in 2016. The most pressing global problems; climate change, mass migration, international security and growing inequality, require a more integrated and more democratic EU.

This demands the cultivation of a deeper sense of European citizenship within the European public sphere. This would enable wider participation with all those political institutions and civic organisations across the EU through which citizens debate political matters and make political decisions. Such is currently very weakly developed. Media systems are almost exclusively national in focus whilst European Parliament elections are effectively 27 nation-focused ballots where genuine European-wide issues are given insufficient attention.

With that aim, **Rejoin EU** would pursue the following reforms:

- 1) Greater European democratisation to include the creation of transnational constituencies for European Parliament (EP) elections, strengthening the *Spitzenkandidaten* system and giving the EP the power of legislative initiative so that voting in EP elections has a direct impact on policy-making thereafter. Citizens should thereby see clearly how and why their votes matter;
- 2) Tying the appointment of the EU Commission President more firmly to the outcome of elections and enabling EP majorities to pro-actively pursue a policy agenda rather than merely react to proposals initiated by the Commission. This empowers the citizens and makes their participation in EP elections more meaningful;
- 3) Encouraging European political parties to become transnational organisations allowing membership for all European citizens. The current federations of national parties have no cross border membership or any real authority amongst them. Transnational parties and the presentation at EP elections of transnational party lists will help ensure EP

elections become genuinely European campaigns at which the pressing problems are more effectively debated.

Rejoin EU will work with other organisations to bring about such reform.

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The world undoubtedly faces serious economic, social and international problems over the coming decades. Besides the catastrophic results from ineffective measures to combat climate change and environmental destruction, widespread war and political volatility add to an evolving crisis. Rather than independent initiatives taken under fluctuating sovereign will, **Rejoin EU strongly believes in essential protection against these threats through greater international co-ordination and integrated collective action. Britain's membership of the EU would significantly enhance this and help engender the spirit needed if the world is to limit climate change and meet the serious challenges ahead.**

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