

Inquiry into EU reform and the EU referendum: implications for Scotland

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At the moment I am very torn on Europe - I believe passionately in the ideals of closer cultural ties, free movement of people and of people recognising the commonalities between the countries, and of never again having a war within Europe. I lived in Germany for many years, studied French, German and Spanish, am half Spanish and my husband is German. We live in Scotland. So from that perspective I am truly European.

On the other hand, I am very worried by the direction of travel. The driving forces now are very neoliberal and corporatist, with the TTIP agenda as a prime example of how the power of the EU is being used against the citizens in the interests of big business. The EU institutions are too big, too impenetrable and not democratic in any meaningful sense. The way Greece has been blackmailed into utter devastation of its citizens is truly sickening. For me Europe should be about solidarity with our neighbouring countries. The UK's refusal to take its share of the immigrants from the recent crisis is a particularly brazen example of this country NOT following that ideal.

I think Scotland should actually take a stand and offer to take our equivalent share of refugees - and make sure the media report on it. Behaving as though we were already an autonomous part of the European Union can only stand us in good stead for the future.

I would like to see Scotland standing in Solidarity with countries fighting against the current right wing agenda. If the interests of the EU are in conflict with what is best for people living there, then the EU is no longer doing what it set out to do. The irony is that Germany is the biggest proponent of Europe because of the scars of Nazism and the 2 World Wars, and has paid a heavy monetary price to keep things together - but its actions now are causing such strong negative reactions especially in Greece, that this actually makes a future conflict more likely.

I am also very torn on the referendum - on the one hand, the thought of the UK lifting its skirts and marching away from Europe fills me with horror. The prospect of Scotland voting for and England voting against is likely, and could perhaps trigger another referendum, which would perhaps work out well for us. On the other hand, I would vote yes with very strong reservations - I too would like to see a renegotiated settlement, but in a completely different direction from the concessions that David Cameron is trying and failing to achieve!

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