

Brexit: Will the UK vote to leave the EU?

In just a few weeks' time, the British people will vote in a referendum on whether to leave the European Union. Presently, surveys suggest that opinion is evenly divided between those who wish to leave, and those who wish to remain. The ruling Conservative party is itself divided on the issue, with five members of the British cabinet having announced their intention to campaign to leave, along with two fifths of the parliamentary party and a majority of party members.

Led by the Prime Minister David Cameron, the Remain Campaign argues that Britain would be less well off economically, and would have diminished influence in the world were it to leave; it also states that leaving would harm national security.

Spokesmen for the Leave campaign argue that the drive for ever closer union has eroded national sovereignty, and damaged democracy. As the fifth biggest economy, Britain would do at least as well economically outside EU. The fact that the Britain-EU trade balance greatly favours the latter means that Britain is well placed to negotiate a trade deal which would effectively ensure that it remains within the Single Market. It would also regain the right to control its own borders.

A vote to leave would clearly have profound implications for Britain's partners, not least because in the past it has sometimes been able to slow the drive to ever closer union even if it has been unable to prevent it, and because the UK is the second largest contributor to the EU budget.

What are the factors which have shaped Britain's attitudes towards the EU, and what will be the consequences of a vote to leave the EU under the terms of the Lisbon Treaty?

Robin Harris, historian, journalist and former speech writer to Margaret Thatcher, will seek to answer these and related questions in a lecture organized jointly by the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities and the Danube Institute, a think tank based in Budapest.

Mr Harris was Director of the British Conservative Research Department from 1985 to 1988, and a member of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit from 1989 to 1990. He helped draft the Conservative Party manifesto for the 1987 general election.

His publications include *Not for Turning: The Life of Margaret Thatcher*; *Talleyrand: Betrayal and Savior of France*; and *The Conservatives – A History*.

*After the lecture, Mr. Harris will answer questions.
The event will conclude with a reception.*

Date: 13⁰⁰, 20th April 2016.

Venue: University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities, room E/432