

ALAN MAK MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

23rd February 2016

Dear Constituent,

Statement on EU Re-Negotiation & EU Referendum

The Prime Minister has announced the biggest national choice for a generation: an historic "in/out" referendum on our membership of the European Union (EU) on 23 June 2016. This is the first such referendum for 41 years, which I welcome, having campaigned for it.

The Prime Minister has also re-negotiated Britain's relationship with the EU, giving us a new, special status in the EU if we choose to Remain: *in* the parts of the EU that work for us, and *out* of the parts that don't.

Two promises made in the Party's 2015 general election manifesto have, therefore, been fulfilled, and now it is for the British people to make the final decision through the referendum. Every voter in Havant and across the UK will have the chance to decide whether the UK remains in a reformed EU, or leaves. The outcome will be decided by the British people at the ballot box, *not* by MPs like me in Westminster. My vote carries exactly the same weight as anybody else's, so I encourage every voter to consider the issues for themselves, reflect, and participate in the Referendum. There will be people and arguments I respect on both sides of the debate.

I thought it would be helpful if I gave an insight into my personal thinking on this issue.

I have been a Eurosceptic all my life, and given my family heritage, my outlook is global and not just Europe-focused. I was inspired to join the Conservative Party in 2000 to support William Hague's "Keep the Pound" campaign because I believed then, as I do now, that keeping control over our currency, interest rates and wider economic policies is a key element, if not *the* key element, of Britain's nationhood and economic sovereignty. I accept that for others reading this, welfare, migration and other issues may hold more weight in your minds when deciding which way to vote in the referendum.

After conducting a hard-headed analysis of the detail of the Prime Minister's re-negotiated settlement, reflected on the views expressed by constituents, and above all, thought about what is in Britain's long-term national interest, I've decided that on balance and with no affection for the EU whatsoever, I will support the Prime Minister and vote to Remain in a reformed EU.

Member of Parliament for Havant

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I have not reached this conclusion lightly. I have devoted considerable time to it, and it has been the hardest decision I've made in my short time as an MP. Factors that have influenced my thinking include:

- The deal secures a new, special status for Britain. The Pound is permanently protected (this is the issue that first brought me into politics); our opt-out from the Euro is made permanent; we retain control over our interest rates; and British taxpayers will never have to bail out Eurozone countries. We will be outside the "Schengen no borders area"; never be part of any European Army; and Britain is specifically excluded from the EU concept of "ever-closer union" and any future European superstate.

But we *will* retain full access to the free trade EU Single Market which businesses in Havant and across the UK rely on: a trading bloc of over 500m people, which is also the link to free trade agreements with large economies such as America, India and China. We've also secured a commitment that the EU will complete free trade agreements with more non-EU economies in the future.

- The Leave campaign have not spelt out what economic and trade arrangements we would have if we left the EU. Leaving without a specific alternative plan is a leap in the dark and too big a risk to take with British jobs, businesses and family finances.
- If we left the EU, but wanted access to the free trade Single Market, Britain would still have to either pay for access or have imposed on us some of the obligations associated with Single Market access such as the free movement of workers, but without any say over how the EU works because we would not be members of it. The EU would not give us the benefits of Single Market access without us also being forced to sign-up to the obligations.

Alternative arrangements to EU membership – a Swiss or Norwegian style relationship – don't work for Britain in practice when those arrangements are examined in detail. Switzerland and Norway still have to accept many of the rules of the EU, but don't get a say in what those rules are. Whatever we think of the EU, its existence is a geographical and commercial reality for Britain. By being in it – on our terms, and on new terms – we get a say in how it works and affects us.

- Long-standing Eurosceptics like the Business Secretary Sajid Javid, Home Secretary Theresa May and Defence Secretary Michael Fallon, whose views I respect, share my conclusion that this is not the right time to leave. The risks of doing so are too great, and would threaten our economic security and our national security. I respect the analysis and consideration that these senior, experienced Cabinet figures have given to this important issue.

Business Secretary Sajid Javid has said "storm clouds [are] gathering over the global economy" and "the fallout from a 'leave' vote this summer would only add to economic



turbulence that is, quite possibly, about to engulf the world". "A significant global downturn", driven by economic uncertainty across Europe and a slowdown in Asia, is forecasted. Coupled with the reality that the EU would be slow to conclude a free trade deal with the UK if we left means leaving is too much of a risk to Britain's economic security. It's taken seven years for the EU to make a trade deal with Canada, and it's still not completed. We can't make British businesses and families wait that long with all the uncertainty it would bring.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said the UK would be taking a "big gamble" with its security if we left the EU as we rely on it for defence, intelligence and security co-operation alongside NATO. Home Secretary Theresa May has said staying in the EU allows Britain to work with our European partners to fight cross-border crime and terrorism. *Links to their articles and comments, plus other useful resources, are set out below.*

I have always said I wouldn't be afraid of a future outside the EU. My family escaped Communism to build a new life here precisely because Britain is a strong and great nation, one of the world's major economies and a diplomatic power. The EU is far from perfect, and certainly not how we would design it if we were starting from scratch today. But that isn't the question we have to answer on 23rd June 2016.

The question is whether, on balance, it's in Britain's national interest to Remain rather than Leave. I have concluded that it would be, because the risks of leaving are too great. For now, Britain would be stronger, safer and better off inside a reformed EU.

Once the Referendum result is known, all sides must accept the result, and we must come together as a constituency and as a country, so we can continue building Britain's prosperous economy and opportunity society. That is my ultimate goal in public life as your MP.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Mak', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

ALAN MAK MP



Useful links and resources

Register to vote in the EU Referendum (for Havant constituency residents only)

<http://www.havant.gov.uk/council-and-government/elections-and-electoral-registration>

Prime Minister's remarks in Brussels summarising Britain's new "special status" deal on 19 February 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-statement-following-european-council-meeting-19-february-2016>

Prime Minister's remarks outside 10 Downing Street announcing the Referendum on 20 February 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-statement-following-cabinet-meeting-on-eu-settlement-20-february-2016>

Prime Minister's Statement to the House of Commons on 22 February 2016

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/todays-commons-debates/read/unknown/192/>

Business Secretary Sajid Javid's article explaining the risks of leaving the EU now

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3456567/It-s-failure-heavy-heart-believe-stay-Business-secretary-SAJID-JAVID-says-leaving-EU-come-high-cost.html>

Home Secretary Theresa May's remarks on security co-operation with other EU members

<http://www.itv.com/news/update/2016-02-20/theresa-may-to-campaign-for-britain-to-remain-in-eu/>

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon's remarks on defence co-operation with other EU members

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35628051>