

## ***The UK and the EU***

### ***A Business Manifesto***

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At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the UK faces an ever greater challenge to have its voice heard in a world increasingly defined by America and China. What the UK has to say, however, matters. The principles the UK stands for, of openness, competition and democracy are as important now as they ever have been.

The European Union has the capacity to speak as an equal to the USA and China, and the other great powers of the world, but what it wants to say is not always clear. We believe that the UK should use its position as one of the EU's largest member states to shape the European Union, and its voice.

#### ***This manifesto sets out what we believe the next government's European strategy should be:***

1. The next government should put the UK at the centre of the EU, and engage positively with other member states and the EU's institutions. We urge the next government to work within the framework created by the now-ratified **Lisbon** Treaty and to concentrate on the real issues facing the UK and Europe. A great deal of time and political capital has been spent on this necessary reform, and now that this new framework exists, it is right that Europe turns its full attention to issues of policy and substance. We commend the **Labour** and the **Liberal Democrat** parties' policies of moving beyond institutional reform to focus on concrete issues. We commend the **Conservative Party's** plan to have a minister of state spending a significant amount of time in Brussels and other EU member state capitals, building relationships and goodwill. We commend all parties' commitment to remain active and engaged members of the European Union.
2. We urge the next government to strive towards the completion of the **single market**, and support European Commission President Barroso's efforts to do so. We urge cross-party consensus in this area and commend the positions of the **Labour**, **Conservative** and **Liberal Democrat** Parties in this regard.
3. The **Doha** Development Agenda is currently suspended. Karel De Gucht, EU commissioner for Trade, has stated that he wishes to see the completion of the Doha round by 2011 at the latest, along with stronger bi-lateral trade deals. We urge the next

government to push the EU to make progress in this area. We commend the positions of the **Labour**, **Conservative** and **Liberal Democrat** Parties in this regard.

4. We urge the next government to work toward effective and proportionate financial services **regulation** at EU level where there is a real need for it. EU regulation should serve to add value, build market confidence and protect society without stifling the creation of wealth.
5. **Energy** security and diversity is essential to combating climate change and helping to build a positive and balanced relationship with our energy supplying partners. The next government should push the EU to adopt a unified policy towards its energy suppliers and to implement a truly liberalised energy market.
6. The next government should use the UK's leading position on **climate change** to push the EU to renew its efforts to achieve a binding global deal on reducing emissions. The UK government should push for the EU to unilaterally increase its target to reduce emissions by 2020 from 20% to 30%. The cross-party consensus in the UK does credit to our politics and we commend the positions of the three main parties in this regard.
7. As with climate change, the three main parties have made strong commitments to do everything possible to reduce **global poverty**. We strongly support the UN target of spending 0.7% of national income as aid by 2013. The government has a strong track record in this area and we support the **Conservative** and **Liberal Democrat** Parties' policies of giving this subject equal prominence in their agendas.
8. The next government should continue to support **enlargement** and to speak out in support of Turkey's eventual accession to the EU. All three main parties have voiced their strong support for this, and we strongly urge them to continue to make the case for enlargement.
9. The fight against **international crime and terrorism** is essential for our safety and our economic stability. The Lisbon Treaty introduces a new level of cooperation between the EU's member states in this area. The differences between our own legal system and that of our continental partners may limit our ability to align our approach in some areas but the UK's test should always be national security.
10. The next government should do everything it can to empower Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (**SMEs**), and in particular continue to implement the EU Small Business Act, including the reduction of the overall regulatory burden on business by 25%. Language skills and the support for female entrepreneurship are also essential to the competitiveness of SMEs and the wider European economy. All three parties have pushed this agenda and we strongly urge them to continue to do so at the European level.