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The Big Picture

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Introduction

This paper contains several important contributions from leading Eurosceptic thinkers, political leaders, and campaigners for democracy and good government from across Europe.

The writers hail from Denmark, Ireland, Estonia, Iceland, Slovenia and Norway.

It is very easy for commentators in the United Kingdom to reflect on Brexit in a silo fashion, focusing just on narrow technical trade issues of considerable complexity. It would be a mistake, however, to neglect the extraordinary geo-strategic context into which these changes fall.

Brexit generates tremendous opportunities to break the monopoly of vision that the European Commission currently holds on how this continent will develop in the future. We lose sight of this at our peril.

What follows, then, are individual perspectives, that may help inform and ground our own.



It is Best for Denmark to Leave the EU Together with the UK



Lave K. Broch, master of political science and substitute member of the EU parliament for the People's Movement against the EU in Denmark (social liberal).

Denmark joined the EEC together with the UK the 1st of January 1973. One of the main arguments before the Danish referendum was that the UK would join and therefore Denmark had to join. In the last TV debate before the Danish EEC referendum in 1972 our prime minister - Jens Otto Krag - was asked what Denmark should do if England later would leave the EEC (they used the term England but probably meant the UK). Prime Minister Krag promised that in such a situation Denmark should leave together with England. That promise still has relevance. It is part of the preconditions for the Danish EU membership that the UK is part of the EU and it is only fair if there will come a Danish referendum now when the UK is leaving the EU. There are many political arguments for such a referendum and for Denmark to leave the EU.

There is a big risk that after Brexit Denmark will end up having a very difficult position inside the EU. Denmark is after the UK probably the most reluctant member state of the target of an "ever closer union". We are actually a very odd EU member state.

Denmark has both a geographically and politically a semi EU membership. Two parts of the Danish kingdom are not parts of the EU. The Faroe Islands never joined the EU, and Greenland – the biggest part of the Danish kingdom – chose to leave the EEC in 1985 after a referendum in 1982.

Politically Denmark has also a special relationship to the EU. A majority of the Danes voted No the Maastricht treaty in 1992 and after negotiations Denmark got several opt outs and a new referendum.

Denmark is, due to that, the only EU member state besides the UK that has the right to keep its national currency, and the EU Commission has after the Brexit referendum made it very clear that all other member states have to abandon their national currencies.

Denmark has also rejected the EU defence policy and is due to that not part of the EU battle groups, the EU Defence Agency, the increased military cooperation (PESCO), none of the articles about defence in the Lisbon Treaty is valid for Denmark. Danish soldiers do not have EU flags on their uniforms and cannot participate in EU military operations. Our tax money does not go to the militarization of the EU.

Denmark has also an opt out that makes it clear that Denmark does not participate in the EU's supranational justice and police cooperation. Due to that opt out we had a Danish exit from the EU police agency – Europol – the 1st of May 2017 when the agency became supranational. Denmark is the only EU member state with such an opt out. We are basically a non-EU member state when it comes to justice and police matters. We are also the only EU member state that is not a member of the supranational EU police agency Europol. Instead Denmark has an agreement about cooperation with Europol.

Denmark is part of the Schengen agreement but as an independent state, and we have not accepted its supranational powers.

When the UK leaves there is a big risk that there will be put pressure on Denmark to adjust and to give up sovereignty on areas as which are essential for every independent state. We can already see how the French and German governments have boosted the centralization process inside the EU. This is in no way in the interest of the Danes.

Danes and Britons have that in common that we want a practical cooperation in Europe. Many of us support that it is possible to trade, travel, study, live and work across borders but we do not support the idea of an EU super state – the United States of Europe. But nevertheless it is in that direction the EU is moving.

The biggest problem with the EU is the lack of democracy. However the EU is also a threat to the welfare, our environment and our possibilities to be global oriented nation.

It would be much better for Denmark to leave the EU together with the UK. We would benefit from a Danish exit of the EU in many areas. Most importantly on the democratic area.

According to a survey from the Danish parliament in 2015, 90 % of the EU law proposals never pass before the Danish Parliament before they become law and Danish influence in the EU is very little. No elected representative of the Danes can make law proposals inside the EU. We have a tradition of a strong democracy but that is surely undermined by the EU. Outside the EU we can make laws that are better than the EU. We can go further than the EU with laws that are good for the health, environment and animal welfare. We are a nation that is good at exporting high quality products and we can make our own trade deals with countries all over the world or we can together with the EFTA countries (Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Lichtenstein) negotiate for trade deals with other nations.

The world will also benefit from Denmark having its own international voice again. We and the other Nordic countries used to be countries that facilitated peace negotiations and were strong supporters of the UN and international law. Norway is still doing a lot for peace in the world but if Denmark could stand shoulder to shoulder with Norway we could do more for a better world. And if the UK would walk the same path we could make a huge difference.

My goal is that Denmark will leave the EU together with the UK. I hope that our two states could rejoin EFTA. Being a member of EFTA will give us a good platform for cooperation with remaining EU states. Denmark should also increase the Nordic cooperation and we can have a close cooperation with the UK. The UK, Denmark and the EFTA states can show the EU that there is a more democratic way to cooperate.

Brexit gives hope for a better Europe.

Yes to democracy and cooperation – No to the EU state!



An Irish View of a Meaningful Brexit

By Anthony Coughlan

Associate Professor Emeritus in Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin

The Irish Government is currently doing its utmost to subvert a meaningful Brexit by playing up the North-South Irish Border as a “problem”, in close cooperation with M.Barnier and his EU Commission negotiating team - and behind the scenes with “Remainer” elements in the UK.

The best solution to this particular problem is that the UK should replace the relevant parts of its domestic legislation implementing the EU Single Market laws with new domestic

legislation prohibiting carriage across the land border in Ireland of any goods which the EU would regard as illicit. Such a new UK law should be rigorously enforced by UK customs officers operating in Northern Ireland, in continuing co-operation with Irish customs officers as may be required.

The UK Parliament has already passed a new Act controlling the issue of haulage permits, and that or similar legislation could be used as part of the enforcement process to protect the EU Single Market from unwanted imports across any open land border in Ireland.

If the UK implements the meaningful Brexit envisaged in Mrs May's Lancaster House speech of last year it is quite on the cards that public opinion in the Republic of Ireland will swing also towards leaving the EU over the next few years. Fear of that happening undoubtedly influences EU Commission attitudes in the current negotiations.

A change of Irish attitudes to the EU is inevitable if a real Brexit happens because EU membership would no longer be of significant benefit to the Irish State without the UK beside it as a fellow EU member.

For one thing if Brexit were to be followed by an "Irexit" the Irish land border would no longer be an EU one too. Anglo-Irish relations would again be a matter exclusively for the British and Irish Governments, as was the case from 1923 until both States joined the EC/EU. The Irish Border would no longer be a cause of problems with the EU, either economically or politically.

Secondly, leaving the EU following the UK's departure would save the Republic money as it has become a net contributor to the EU Budget since 2014. This is a big change from the previous forty years when Ireland was a major net recipient of EU funds, mainly through the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. If the Republic stays in the EU its contributions will moreover have to increase significantly to help compensate for the loss of the UK's EU contributions following Brexit. This removes what hitherto has been the principal basis of Irish europhilia, official and unofficial - namely cash.

The Republic would get back control of its sea-fisheries if it followed the UK out of the EU. The value of foreign fish-catches in Irish waters is a several-times multiple of whatever moneys the Republic has received from the EU over the years. That also would benefit Ireland significantly.

As regards foreign trade and investment, the Republic sends 61% by value of its goods exports and 66% of its services exports to countries that are outside the continental EU 26, mostly English-speaking. It gets two-thirds of its imports from outside the EU26. The UK is the most important single-country market for its indigenous firms and the USA for its foreign-owned ones. Free trade between the UK, Ireland, the continental EU and the rest of the world therefore makes every sense, with both the UK and Ireland being freed of the burden of unsuitable EU regulations.

Dublin is closer economically and culturally to Boston than Berlin. Ireland, North and South, is naturally part of the English-speaking world. A Britain that is half-in and half-out of the EU would not be Ireland's interests. If the UK takes back control of its law-making and public policies, it would make every sense for the Republic to do the same.

The security implications of the Republic of Ireland staying in the EU when the UK leaves have not been publicly discussed in either country. Brussels has signalled that a security and military union is a preferred next stage of EU integration. If the Republic remains in the EU when the UK leaves it means that it will become part of an EU military bloc effectively dominated by Germany. If Ireland should be reunited at some future date under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement it would mean the whole island of Ireland on Britain's Western approaches would come effectively under German hegemony, with France hanging on to Germany's coat-tails. That can hardly be in the security interests of Britain.

Britain leaving the EU to take back control of its laws and policies and resume its global vocation as a maritime country makes sense only if Brexit is a real and not a simulated departure. A UK that had really left the EU, including its single market, customs union and the jurisdiction of its EU Court of Justice, would undoubtedly become a pole of attraction for the Republic of Ireland. That is why a real Brexit would be in Ireland's interest as well as Britain's.



Brexit as the 2nd Dissolution of the USSR

Professor Igor Gräzin, Member of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1989-1991); MP Estonia (1995-1999; 2005-2018), MEP (2018, current)

Disclaimer: as a citizen of Estonia and a Member of the European Parliament I do not have any either moral or political right to have a say in issues of UK policies and readily accept a reply to mind my own business. But as a devoted friend of this country I am honored to respond to the request to write this brief essay.

The fundamental analogies between the EU and USSR are not metaphoric and figurative speech, but similarities between essential features of two phenomena. The phrase "the EU is another USSR" has to be taken without panic and other emotions, but as a tool of political analysis of the current state of British-European affairs.

What makes the EU (model 2018) and the USSR (model 1988) similar? We take it as a given that we put aside the fact of secondary importance that the USSR had been much poorer than the West (this is the case with modern Russia as well). Let us look at the essentials;

1. Both the USSR and the EU had been aimed at the formation of some type of a supra-national political entity – the meta-ethical positions of the "new Soviet man" and of

“European values” are epistemologically equivalent, keeping in mind that the EU has abandoned the principal idea of its founder – Robert Schuman – to create post-secular and non-materialistic unity based upon Christian values.

2. Any reference to the interests of natural human communities and nation states had been and has been regarded as something hostile. Labels like “nationalism”, “racism”, “fascism”, and “separatism” were first employed by Stalin in the mid-1930s and continue to perform the same semiotic connotations and functions in the modern EU. The idea that supra-national political unity has the right to override national interests results in the modern practices of political blockade against Austria (in 1999; the EU did not like the outcome of the Austrian people’s vote) and the intended one against Poland (2018). The tragic irony is that the modern anti-Austrian and anti-Polish arguments reverberate the ones used against these countries in 1938-1939.
3. The creation of a supranational political structure that neglects economic basics. (By the way, it did not happen overnight either in the USSR nor the EU.) Rather than set out dozens of examples and even the economic aspect of massive imposed immigration, I shall refer just to the biggest one – the creation of the Eurozone that ignores the law of the optimum currency area. The Greek fiscal anomaly is not the Greek Government’s fault – it is the result of being ignorant of economic basics, and in turn it means it does not have any visible solution within the current structure of the Eurozone. And the anti-Greek sentiments harbored by Eurozone-related political and bank leaders are immoral and unfounded.
4. The politically-inevitable filling of the vacuum left by excluding economic mechanisms by propagandistic, populist instruments - including propaganda and censorship, and by the employment of ad hoc political solutions. Nord Stream did not make any economic sense but served specific goals of supra-East European cooperation.
5. And, we might make the following frivolous observation: both political phenomena – the USSR and the EU – liked to play with criminal analogies and practices, starting with the questionable behaviour of Gerhard Schröder in a joint venture with a certain former KGB operative, and ending with the lexicology: the word “family” taken from the Mafia world has been in use in both cases – “European family” and the “family of Soviet nationalities” come semantically from the same root as expressed by Don Corleone in Puzo’s celebrated novel.

Turning these similarities upside down, we discover that both systems presupposed as their precondition (if we take as granted the materialistic view on the economy by Marx, that is dominant in the macro-economic thinking of politically-correct European academia) some economic system that is somehow coordinated, and co-subordinated to meta-economic or para-economic reality. In brief: the planned economy.

Really, if the market economy with its millions of agents (entrepreneurs, owners, employees, customers, clients, scientists, inventors, artists) produces a multiplicity of goals and behavioural motives, then ruling those phenomena along the narrow pathway of European Union policies requires not only ideological control over the European free mind but over its

economic performance. (The political economy is the metaphysics of socialism, noted Marx in his philosophical works over and over again. He was actually perfectly right in that.)

In normal life we do not ask a plumber why and how he performs his business, because his answer is evident: “I know the job, I like it, people need it and they pay for it. I do it for living.” We will get a similar answer from a taxi-driver, rocket-scientist, cleaning lady and a prime minister. The problem for the so called European unity is that individual differences between a baker, a teacher and a mechanic do not fit into each other given that their relation is not based upon the principles of the market. Thus there has to be some sort of regulation – some way to rule within the natural variety of free market economy, and it can’t be of a purely economic nature although it has to have economic consequences.

An independently-operating free market makes the EU macro-economically obsolete. Trump has proved it by moving out from trans-Atlantic trade agreements.

Here comes something macro-economically new (or very old) into the economic behaviour of the EU: the introduction of different “policies” (10 of them explicitly stated in chapter III only; others implicit; some of them making sense like the Internal Market) that do not result from free economic development, but are the preconditions of further economic activity itself. This extends to all kinds of legalistic regulations of quality, of the ways to operate machinery, the admissibility of certain agricultural methods.

And in the very end it leads to the fundamental statement by the EU itself – it is not you (the entrepreneurs) who decide what to produce, but it is us (the EU Commission plus all its dependents) who decide what to produce and how to perform. The third party – the clients and consumers – have to be taken out from this equation.

It is worth noticing though that “consumer protection” is the most often exploited misleading term in the EU’s economic policy. The consumer is an ever-present pretext and indulgence for the EU’s distortive intervention.

The current example – the EU Copyright Directive (still a draft) – is rhetorically aimed at protecting copyright holders (who are the consumers of Internet platforms) but in reality is aimed at introducing censorship over hundreds of millions of Internet end-users.

It is that mysterious “consumer protection” that takes away from us normal light bulbs, high quality TV (replaced by digital, i.e. the one with still pictures) and normal food (street pizzas, maddeningly well-smelling sausages) and the like.

So, so far we have stated two things:

1. Macro-economically the USSR and the EU were similar.
2. Economic activity in the case of non-free-market economy has to be run by extra-economic factors or economic factors that are abnormal.

Normalities, as the phenomena of the Heavenly Providence of laws of nature (if I may so put it to cover all bases for atheist readers), fall into place – naturally, by themselves. Certain economic factors exist in constant and stable balance no matter what – if we look at a bigger Picture. The aggregate demand of the whole population on Earth is exactly equal to the aggregate supply by the planet Earth. Each and every budget is always in perfect balance in the end – we can spend only what we really have – in cash, reserves, aggregates, bonds, possessions, credits, gentlemanly promises etc.

But abnormalities – and steering an economy not in the direction where it would naturally go – needs non-economic, i.e. political control.

And secondly it puts actors on the economic field into a position of artificial interdependence. It turns out that a certain buyer is tied by the rope to a certain supplier due to some European regulations. It turns out that we do economically stupid things (building high-ways that lead nowhere, or developing wind energy that nobody needs) because they are managerially sound as they follow European rules.

Most nastily this economic argument is thrown at the face of New Europe – countries of the former Soviet bloc, who due to the Western policies of 50 years have been impoverished indeed. The argument goes: “You, beggars (Poles, Hungarians, Czechs...), live by our hand-outs, so do not dare to issue any criticism against us.”

It is exactly what Gorbachev et al. told us (the People’s Deputies of the USSR from the Baltic States) in 1989: if you secede you are going to collapse economically, because your economy is based upon the strength of centralized Soviet economy.

Our situation was then worse than that of the UK vs EU today – the Estonian economy in 1988 was directly orientated to Moscow to the extent of 70+%. Through Moscow we got all the machinery (industrial, agricultural and communal), most of the fuel (oil and gas), all the money (republics did not have their own monetary instruments). But as that economic structure was unnatural in essence, it was academically clear that we in the Baltic States would play it out successfully after taking two steps:

1. Break away from the USSR.
2. Introduce (actually – restore) the free market economy in Adam Smith’s sense (a truly “invisible” hand).

This is just what happened. Secession from the USSR was milder and quicker than we had expected. By 1994-1995, Estonia had become a normal country with a GDP growth-rate that went sometimes into double digits and never went below 6%. (The setback started with the crisis launched by the failure of Lehman Brothers, i.e. for purely capitalistic reasons that hit everybody as within as outside of EU). Now after the crisis Estonia is among the best performing economies in EU.

Here is my personal impression as a conclusion:

1. Brexit does not have reasonable alternatives.
2. Brexit will not bring significant and long-term negative consequences; the gains will outplay them.
3. No-deal Brexit is definitely preferable to half-way options and so-called compromises. In the case of secession and aiming at economic freedom, any compromise is a side-step away from economic normality, people's prosperity, and restored faith in the principal human right – the pursuit of happiness.



We Can Do Better than the EEA

Hjörtur J. Guðmundsson

MA International Relations, Icelandic journalist and former member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Conservative Independence Party (Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn)

From the point of view of Iceland, Britain's departure from the European Union offers an opportunity to further increase the levels of cooperation between the two countries. While Iceland and Britain have had their quarrels in the past as so many other countries, for example over things like fish and banking, they also have a long history of mutually beneficial cooperation. Especially regarding trade.

During the 15th and 16th century, when Iceland was part of the Kingdom of Denmark, English traders were in fact responsible for bringing the benefits of free trade to Icelanders with higher prices until the Danish authorities finally managed to put an end to that through force after many previous attempts. Henceforth Icelanders were only allowed to trade with those with a special permit from the Danish king.

Trade remains the most important sector regarding cooperation between Iceland and Britain; and while Brexit is considered a challenge when it comes to maintaining close cooperation between the two countries, the Icelandic government also sees Britain leaving the EU as a great opportunity to take the cooperation further than has been possible while Britain has been bound by EU rules and customs.

Following the 2016 EU referendum Iceland was the first country to formally offer Britain a trade agreement. A few hours after the final results were declared the Icelandic government announced it would explore every possibility to maintain strong economic and trade

relations with Britain after the country left the EU.¹ Since, countries all over the world have queued up for a trade deal with Britain.

Foreign Minister Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson has on many occasions, since first taking office in January 2017, spoken of Brexit as an opportunity for Iceland and Britain to take the cooperation between the two countries further than has been possible under the current agreements negotiated with Iceland by Brussels with freer trade and less barriers. Mutually more favourable deals were now a possibility.

The departure of Britain from the EU has been a priority task in Iceland's Foreign Ministry ever since the 2016 EU referendum. Britain is Iceland's single most important foreign market and trade between the countries is currently governed by the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement. When Britain leaves the EU the country will also cease to be part of the EEA according to the agreement.²

The Foreign Ministry produced a report on Brexit and Iceland in November last year³ underlining what has been mentioned earlier. The report is in general terms very positive towards Brexit and puts more emphasis on viewing it as an opportunity than in a negative light. When it comes to the future trading relationship between Iceland and Britain after Brexit the report presented three possible scenarios.

The first scenario suggests a deep and comprehensive Iceland-UK free trade agreement, the second scenario a free trade deal between EFTA (which Iceland belongs to along with Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein) and Britain, and the third scenario considers the option where a possible Brexit agreement negotiated between Britain and the EU takes the EEA Agreement into account.

What Foreign Minister Þórðarson has also put emphasis on is the (formerly?) stated aim of the British Government that Britain should take on a leading role after Brexit when it comes to free trade. Especially today when protectionism seems to be gaining ground in the world and the future of free trade is becoming more uncertain. Those circumstances indeed certainly need a global free trade leader.

Þórðarson has on several occasions urged the British government to consider rejoining the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which consists of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland and was founded at Britain's initiative in 1960 as a free trade alternative to

¹ "Reactions to UK's decision to leave the EU", Government.is 24 June 2016.

<https://www.government.is/news/article/2016/06/24/Reactions-to-UKs-decision-to-leave-the-EU/>

² Guðmundsson, Hjörtur J., "The EEA is not the way", Theredcell.co.uk December 2017.

http://www.theredcell.co.uk/uploads/9/6/4/0/96409902/the_eea_is_not_the_way.pdf

³ "Ísland og Brexit. Greining hagsmuna vegna útgöngu Bretlands úr EES". Stjornarradid.is November 2017.

<https://www.stjornarradid.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?itemid=5e03958e-d1c9-11e7-941f-005056bc4d74>

the EU, but without mentioning the European Economic Area (EEA) in that context, the so-called Norway option.^{4 5}

The Icelandic top diplomat has also put great emphasis on explaining the difference between EFTA and the EEA. While EFTA is about maintaining a free trade area between its members and striking free trade agreements with third countries, the EEA is an agreement between three of the four EFTA members, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein, and the EU about participation in the bloc's inner market.

This means that the three EFTA/EEA countries are required to unilaterally adopt EU Single Market rules, are in fact subjects to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and must allow free movement of people from the bloc.⁶ As the 2016 referendum was mainly about taking back control the EEA and similar arrangements, including Chequers, would obviously not deliver what was voted for.

While the EEA Agreement doesn't prevent the EFTA/EEA countries from negotiating free trade deals with other countries, as they are not part of the EU's customs union, such negotiations are nevertheless marked by the requirement to adopt EU rules which for obvious reasons does significantly limit their scope for dialogue. Therefore EFTA membership minus the EEA may not either suit Britain's interests.

What Brussels wants of course, as is evident from the Brexit negotiations, is for Britain to remain under its control as much as possible. But to honour the results of the 2016 referendum and to be able to strike free trade agreements with countries all over the world without being dictated by EU rules, Britain evidently must not be a subject to authority from Brussels in any way after leaving the bloc.

What Brussels obviously fears most about Brexit, apart from more countries leaving the EU after witnessing the success which can be achieved by throwing off its shackles, is that Brexit will indeed be successful and that Britain will furthermore become the much needed leader of global free trade, independent of authority from Brussels, that the Icelandic government and so many others hope it will.

⁴ "Iceland opens door for UK to join EFTA", *Daily Telegraph*, 15 July 2017.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/07/15/iceland-opens-door-uk-join-efta/>

⁵ "Everyone wants to trade with Britain, says Iceland's foreign minister", *Daily Telegraph*, 5 September 2017.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/05/everyone-wants-trade-britain-says-icelands-foreign-minister/>

⁶ Guðmundsson, Hjörtur J., "The EEA is not the way", *Theredcell.co.uk* December 2017.

http://www.theredcell.co.uk/uploads/9/6/4/0/96409902/the_eea_is_not_the_way.pdf



Slovenian Travails

Blaž Babič is a former Secretary General of Nova Stranka (the New Party) and Secretary General of TEAM (The European Alliance of EU-critical Movements)

Our Eurosceptic friends in the UK will, I hope, excuse us here if we have had little time recently to think about what getting a good Brexit means for Slovenia. Our fight against the EU machine is just part of our wider struggle for democracy and self government.

As the communist Yugoslavia drifted apart in the '80's, it became more and more obvious that the proclaimed solidarity had faded with Tito. The apparatus was fully aware that national forces would become a decisive factor, and the national stage would become the tool to attempt their survival through the cross-dressing period.

In Romania, the Securitate helped remove Ceausescu (Christmas, 1989) and the army "switched sides" - it was done in a way no other communist leader wanted to see repeated. What was the System left to do? That is why the elites jumped the national bandwagons so the people would forget the retribution side of the purification process. It was the famous KOS (counter-intelligence service of the army) that prepared everything for a smooth change. Well, for the communist elites at least. The people suffered through local Yugoslav wars long enough to just want peace at the end, at any price – even the price of the "old boys" controlling everything once again; this time through natural generational replacements, but indeed with "their people".

And now in 2018, after full 14 years of EU (and NATO), in a time when the "sociable, friendly and brotherly EU" is drifting apart, when someone asks me of my thoughts on this I really cannot lift a finger for the EU (or NATO membership for that matter).

I've been more than actively following the degrading of Slovenian democracy, and the decline has not slowed since 2004 – au contraire.

The referendum (direct democracy in action) has been kaputt since 2013, via the destruction of Article 90 of the Constitution. No referendums are allowed any more on international contracts, or on budgetary and taxation issues.⁷ The Opposition (the role constantly reserved for Janša's SDS) in the Assembly and the National Council can no longer call for a referendum – only if 40,000 voters' signatures can be collected in 200 hours under completely unconstitutional circumstances. Even the Croats look as if they are heading towards calling a referendum, in their case over the Istanbul Convention, while we step away from that mechanism.

⁷ <http://www.us-rs.si/media/constitution.pdf>

One of the last complaints at the ECHR I personally filed – backed up by a firm position of at least one of the Constitutional Judges (Marko Šorli) – has been dismissed. As always this has been thanks to the deep state.⁸

And what did the EU do? Zilch. I'm even wondering if the OSCE observers (I was interviewed by an Italian) skipped the facts presented to them about the Slovenian media landscape. POP TV and Kanal A, two TV channels, are now under Wall Street-Serbian capital (the KKR fund, don't get me arguing over who funded the "October Revolution") with a pinch of control from Milan Kučan, the last communist official hanging around. With that amount of influence you have the potential to do whatever you want, without any legal barriers.

The only obligations they face when elections or referendums come is to:

1. Write their own rules of covering the process
2. Publish those rules in their "regular" way.

I hear the British Establishment tried that on with Brexit.

With no provisions to prevent discrimination, it's completely free space – and the result now is our new PM candidate, Mr. Marjan Šarec, is appropriately enough an actual comedian, and one who is quoted as having "admired such personalities as Roosevelt, Churchill, Tito and Stalin" in his youth. What more do we know? If we are to believe the reports, he flunked his six exams at the high school for woodwork. And he shouted "Death to fascism!" (the crowd replying with: "Freedom to the nation!") in front of Milan Kučan.⁹ Hence we are led to the natural suspicion he belongs to that more and more fascist and non-democratic looking clique of post-communist, unpurged, non-democratic, yugo-nostalgic, Soros-adoring, mass migrant-welcoming spirits.

So this is our context as you grapple with your own attempts to restore democracy. Here, the average person therefore gives less and less attention to the EU. Meanwhile, brainwashing continues with more intensity. Since Germany is the main economic occupier of Slovenia, most business tends to ignore any "democratic issues" but rather tag along with the anti-Trump and anti-Brexit sentiments.

Did I mention I have a case at the Constitutional Court now, which revolves around the "2nd Tier" - a humungously over-scaled railroad project between Kozina and Port Koper (which could cost approximately €600 million, but could rise up to €1,6 billion)? Actually I have had it before already – the reason was the unconstitutional referendum procedure – since September 2017, but they dismissed my case on 19th June 2018 due to the fact that "the Law was not implemented" even after the 2nd referendum vote (yes!)

Well, the law (ZIUGD) got in the Official Gazette on 20th of July 2018 and became valid on the

⁸ <http://www.publishwall.si/blaz.babic/post/404917/the-role-of-echr-staff-in-blocking-applications>

⁹ <https://nova24tv.si/slovenija/politika/video-skandal-poglejte-kako-marjan-sarec-vzklika-smrt-fasizmu-in-s-tem-ugaja-svojemu-stricu-iz-ozadja-milanu-kucanu/>

very next day, a Saturday. Therefore on Monday, 23rd of July, I filed another (rather copied) constitutional complaint against that same law.

Up to today, not one media outlet in Slovenia has mentioned that this case had been registered at the Constitutional Court. That's despite it also raising key democratic and taxpayer questions about whether a municipality can take part in a referendum campaign, and whether state companies (with over 25% state-owned capital) can too.

In these last hot days of Summer, the Slovenian media has been preoccupied by who-did-what in the Second World War. Yes, we still have not processed the events from 1945 and on (British guilt included).

And you expect people to be able to register Brexit? It will be like Trump. For most people he must be presented as a nuisance and Melania as a Slovenian should be mentioned as few times as possible.

So what exit you say? We have more "urgent" things to attend to!



Norway is closer to London than Brussels

We knew leaving the EU would be a mess, but a clean Brexit should strengthen future relations between Britain and Norway.

By Kathrine Kleveland, Leader of Nei til EU (No to EU in Norway)

The process of Britain leaving The European Union is being watched with great interest in Norway. Norwegians have been debating EU for decades, and the situation in Britain could inspire a different relation to the EU than the current association through the controversial EEA agreement. We think a good Brexit is a clean Brexit, with Britain leaving the single market including the customs union with the EU.

Norwegians have rejected joining the EU in the 1972 and 1994 referendums. Eurosceptic sentiment has soared in recent years, so much so that in the past decade every single opinion poll has found a majority opposed to joining. The most recent polling found close to 70 per cent of Norwegians opposed joining the EU.

Despite our Prime Minister Erna Solberg and her party still dreaming of Norway joining, Norwegians are happier outside the EU. The mood is such that even a majority of our Prime Minister's own voters disagree with her position on Brussels.

Happier outside the EU

One important argument for Norwegians is that it would be messy to leave the EU if we actually joined and then later realised we wanted to get out. The turbulence surrounding

Brexit was to be expected, but I must say I am surprised to what extent the EU seems willing to inflict self-harm on European interests. Chief negotiator Michel Barnier has time and again put the prestige of the EU above politically sound solutions and economic arrangements that would benefit all parties.

There have been countless warnings from Brussels cheerleaders that global investment will dry up and your country will be far less competitive. This too was one of the main arguments promoted by the pro EU camp in the Norwegian referendums. Reality is very different with foreign investment in Norway increasing several hundred per cent since 1994. Also, unemployment decreased in Norway following the referendum and has remained consistently lower than in EU member states.

The truth is, Norway is not alone or isolated, rather we have thrived as an independent nation. The Norwegian economy has enjoyed many years of higher growth than the economies of EU Member States and our international rankings are far higher on a wide range of issues including gender equality, social welfare, even on happiness.

Close relations

As the results of the British referendum became clear on the historic morning of June 24th 2016, we at Nei til EU immediately released a statement saluting Brexit as “a victory for democracy.” It continued: “The British people have delivered a clear rejection of the ambition to create a United States of Europe, which is undermining democracy in Europe. This is the first time a country has disaffiliated from the EU. After having been granted increased autonomy, Greenland chose to leave the EU in 1985, but Denmark is still a member. Nei til EU expects that the British Leave vote will inspire a fundamental debate about the EU in member states. Europe and democracy deserve it.”

We are still following the progress towards Brexit with great interest and anticipation. Norway and Britain have, of course, close historical ties. While not in strict geographical terms, Norway is closer to London than Brussels talking culture, economics and politics. Britain is the single largest market for exports of Norwegian goods, about a quarter of our exports to the European Union finding their way to Britain.

Innovation Norway, an official body run by the government, concludes: “Britain is an international crossroad of business, and is one of Norway’s most important markets for industry and tourism.” Around 320 Norwegian businesses are established on British soil. You’ll find Norwegian enterprises in most sectors and parts of the country. Equinor has for instance many activities in production and sales of energy in Britain and is a major supplier of gas to the British market, mainly imported from Norway.

Also, Norway and Britain share vast marine resources in the North Sea. We have mutual interests in protecting the environment at sea and a sustainable management of the fisheries. Leaving the EU, Britain should again take control of fisheries policy. The EU Common Fisheries Policy is a story of much despair and few successes. Outside the EU,

Britain and Norway can work together finding solutions that will be both environmentally sound and strengthen local fishing communities.

Bilateral agreements

Brexit is a game changer in European politics, offering new opportunities on how to handle trade and international co-operation. For Norway this is the time to reconsider our relations with the EU, as well as developing future bilateral trade relations with Britain.

In Norway there is a growing national concern about our subordinate relationship with the EU. When Norway entered the EEA agreement in 1994, we were told it would not affect workers' rights, regional policy, equal opportunities, ownership restrictions in the financial sector, or a host of other issues. Nevertheless, it did. The EEA agreement is not as cosy as the Single Market. In fact, it has turned out to be a lesson in the implementation of the four 'freedoms' – capital, services, labour, goods – and beyond.

The EEA is controversial because of the never-ending tide of new EU legal acts. Some 12,000 EU directives and regulations have been implemented through the EEA agreement. The cost of the EEA for Norway has increased ten-fold. Norway now pays around £650 million (gross) each year to the EU and EU states.

Nei til EU wants to replace the EEA agreement with a bilateral trade agreement, and we are demanding a referendum on leaving the EEA. We are certain it would better to trade on even terms with the EU than being integrated into the Single Market.

Before the disaster that is the Chequers Agreement, Theresa May said that “we will pursue a bold and ambitious free trade agreement with the European Union”. In my view, this is the preferred way forward for future EU relations, a bilateral agreement where both sides have an equal say.

I would love for Norway to follow Britain and get a trade agreement with the EU instead of being tied by the EEA agreement. But even a “no deal” solution, trading on WTO rules, is way better than any kind of EEA arrangement.

We are watching Brexit closely. I want as much as you do, to live in a truly independent and democratic country.

