



Brexit Referendum – Ray Caitlin

Jeff: Hello, I'm here with Ray Catlin.

Ray: Hello Jeff.

Jeff: Firstly I'd like you to describe for us the differences you see between the French and the UK views..

Ray: I think the British and the French do look at life rather differently. The French have quite a principled and strategic view in the way they look at life whereas the British tend to be far more pragmatic and, er, take things more at a step at a time. Now a good case in point to illustrate the difference between the French and the British approach is if we go back to the 1990's and we look at the debate that occurred over the Euro project at that time, there were two different views. There was the view taken by – certainly by the French and others- was that all the national currencies should be replaced overnight and we should have one single currency. As we all know that is the view that prevailed and we now have the Euro. The British view at the time was 'No. Let's keep our national currencies and have alongside a common currency called the Euro.' So both national and the International European currency would circulate together. Now, that demonstrates the two views. One is the radical 'Everything must be done now. Complete changeover to a new situation'. The other says 'Well, hang on, let, let the two things evolve.'

Jeff: And would you say that that relates solely to the French or to the... or to other nations in the European Union?

Ray: The difference is perspective. I think the French view is probably more widespread on the Continent.

Jeff: Getting onto the predisposition of arguments.

Ray: Yes. I think it's important for people to be aware, to understand and we can all see that there are people set in their views on both sides of this debate. There are those who are going to be, um, for the European Union come what may and are not prepared to hear any other arguments and equally there are those who are going to say 'We're getting out. We're not

interested in the European Union. We have our own way and we want to go our own way. But it is worth pointing out there is a third group and they are the ones who say 'well, yep, the European project is in need of great reform. The way to get that is if we vote to go out, we're then in a much stronger position to say 'well, things need to change. We'll come back in if we get better changes.' That's another group and I think that may come to the fore more if there is a Brexit vote. So I think those are the dispositions and I think it's important to try and step back from that and try and take a more objective view if we can.

Jeff: Could you just describe the way things have worked up to now?

Ray: I think its important to understand that the European Project which is now called the EU - the European Union - is a project that has been ongoing since its inception in 1956-57. it was clearly the intention of the original six founding nations that the ultimate objective would be not just a Common Market but would be a political union and the idea of ever increasing economic and political union, that notion, those words may have come later but the germ of the idea was certainly there. And of course it was founded upon the idea that if we have economic integration, if we have political integration between the nations of Europe we can avoid ever again going through the two cataclysmic events of the two World Wars. After, um, the vote on June 23rd this year I think there will be moves towards greater integration if Britain remains- whether it remains or not – there will be further moves towards integration- but I could see that if Britain leaves it could well cause a whole rethink amongst the Members of the EU as to which direction the European Union is going.

Jeff: What would be likely to happen if the vote went to leave the European Union? What would be likely to happen to Britons abroad?

Ray: I don't think the sorts of fear that I've seen; the concerns and the worries are justified. I say that for two very good reasons. Number one's the political factor. The political realities of life - if we just take France and Britain as two EU Members out of which nations we are primarily concerned with there are twice as many French people living and working in the UK now as there are British people living in France. That is a fact of life. It's not in the interests of either nation to see mass movements of their populations one to the other country. I don't see it in the mind-set of either the French Government or the British Government to want to go down the road of making it difficult for each other's migrant community. That's politically, and I mean obviously economically, there's an economic affect because many of the British living in France are retired and they're bringing income. They buy a property and do it up - there are all sorts of factors there that impact on the

French economy and of course many of the French - probably the majority of the French I would guess in the UK are working and contributing in the UK economy. So I don't see politically any justification or any, indeed any desire on the part of either Government to create problems there. That's on the political side.

Just as importantly if not more importantly is the legal aspect. Both countries, in fact all the countries in the EU subscribe to the notion of, and practice the notion of the Rule of Law. Now, neither Government is going to overnight abandon the Rule of Law. And under International Law it simply is not possible for either Government to start expelling citizens of other countries. There is something called the 1969 Vienna Convention on International Treaties. Under that International Law is viewed according to that Convention. Now, the legality of it is that the Peoples now resident, we British now resident in France, those French now resident in Britain, cannot be removed. They have Rights of residence by virtue of the fact they are resident, by virtue of the fact that they came legally, under the Law, under the current framework within the European Union. And along with that Right of residency of course will go all the arrangements to do with Social Security, health cover, all that will need to be seen in view in.... within this perspective of the current arrangements. So governments aren't going to be allowed to just tear up the existing arrangements. They can, of course, make new arrangements thereafter. And incidentally, it's not just the International Law: the House of Commons Library has given an opinion on this and it says exactly that, that the Rights of people under the current arrangements of the EU cannot be changed after. But of course those who wish to move abroad between the nations after the leaving of the EU, then obviously they will be subject to whatever new arrangements are bilaterally agreed between any two national Governments.

Jeff: Ray, thank you very much for your words of wisdom and for that very encouraging final section. Thank you very much indeed for giving me your time.

Ray: Well thank you Jeff.

