

Liberal Democrats



STOP
BREXIT

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Stop Brexit

The Liberal Democrat Vision
for Britain in Europe



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Introduction

Every vote for the Liberal Democrats is a vote to stop Brexit and stay in the European Union. We passionately believe that Britain is stronger as part of the European Union and we have led the fight to give the people the final say on the Brexit deal.

The Liberal Democrats' vision for Britain is a country that has remained at the heart of a dynamic European Union. A country where everyone can afford somewhere to live, in a safe, clean and friendly neighbourhood. A country where high-quality health and social care, good-quality childcare, lifelong education, reliable transport and clean air are all part of a contract between government and citizens. A country with a new politics – taking on entrenched power and privilege and delivering a fair deal for everyone.

The importance of the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union has never been clearer. The national humiliation of Theresa May's Brexit puts so much at risk – the NHS, our public services, jobs across the country, peace in Northern Ireland, the unity of the UK and our global reputation as a country that is confident and outward-facing.

Theresa May doesn't care about Remainers – and doesn't care about those who voted leave either. For almost three years she has been obsessed with trying to buy off the right wing of the Conservative party.

The deal she has put on the table shows just how damaging and costly Brexit will be, in contrast to the lies peddled by the Leave campaign. It is also clear that many of the reasons driving people to vote leave – worries about funding of the health service, anger at rising inequalities across the country, the feeling of being left behind – will not be solved by Brexit; indeed, they will all be worsened.

The Conservatives have spent half a decade trying to please UKIP and Nigel Farage. Jeremy Corbyn has his own Brexit vision: instead of opposing it, he wants to deliver it. The fact is that whether Labour Red or Tory Blue, Brexit is bad for the UK.

Why should Britain be poorer? Why should our NHS struggle to get the medicines we need? Why should we sacrifice the opportunities of our children and

grandchildren to live, work and love where they please in Europe? Why should we undermine the fight to stop climate change? Why should we risk slashing our food standards to suit American exporters? Why should we turn our backs on our nearest neighbours? Why should we risk the hard-won peace in Northern Ireland? Why should we risk the rise of nationalistic and divisive politics?

Enough is enough. Liberal Democrats demand better than Brexit.

It doesn't have to be this way. We can stop Brexit through a People's Vote. We can stay as a leading force in the European Union, shaping its future with our MEPs sitting at the decision table.

We can focus on building a country where everyone has the opportunity to get on in life. **Instead of letting Brexit consume the next decade, let's focus on tackling climate change, building the best health and education systems in the world and tackling the inequalities that limit life chances for so many people.**

The way things are now is not the way they have to be. By working together, it is possible to build a brighter future for everyone and create a fair, free and open society: a united country in a united Europe. The Liberal Democrats demand better than Brexit could ever begin to offer.

European values are Liberal Democrat values

In May 2019, when voting for Britain's representatives in the European Parliament, we all have a fundamental choice to make. What kind of Britain and what kind of Europe do we want to live in? Do we work within the European Union to promote freedom, prosperity and stability, or do we stay stuck in the times of nationalism and growing authoritarianism?

The Liberal Democrat vision is one built around a free, democratic, entrepreneurial, prosperous, sustainable and united Europe open to the world. A Europe anchored in the four freedoms of movement of people, goods, services and capital. A Europe where human rights, the rule of law and democracy apply equally to all. As Liberal Democrats, we believe in you, the individual. We trust in your own talents, potential and sense of responsibility, and your right to make your own choices in life.



We are more than 500 million citizens in the European Union. For centuries, even as European civilisation flourished, it was often interrupted by wars, division and repression. In the 20th century, Europe was a continent still divided by walls and trenches, but in recent decades, we have been breaking down the barriers that divided us.

We have learned to cooperate, to make decisions together, and to shape our own future. As Europeans, we have built common understanding and institutions for democracy and justice, and now we have the responsibility to safeguard them.

Working together, we have achieved peace and prosperity on our continent. That is a tremendous achievement; it should not be taken for granted. The European Union is a positive ideal for many others in the world; an example to follow.

History has taught us that dignity and freedom for every individual are the building blocks of peace, prosperity and progress. Through strong liberal institutions, the rule of law and an independent judiciary, Liberal Democrats are committed to protecting and promoting human and civil rights. In the face of the abuse of political or economic power, as liberals we defend the inalienable right to a life of self-determination, regardless of birth or belief, gender or sexual orientation. We want a Europe that is proud of its diversity and works for the benefit of all. We believe that our diversity is our strength.

Reasonable debate, responsible conduct, respect for evidence and tolerance of diverse opinions all strengthen society immeasurably. We want equal and fair opportunities for everyone. We want to leave a healthy planet to future generations. We seek to empower everyone through education. Every person should be able to live the kind of life that they choose.

As Liberal Democrats, we are the keepers of these core European values.

In this election, vote for Liberal Democrat MEPs who will champion these values. Our MEPs will join a powerful group of like-minded liberals, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. With 68 MEPs in the current Parliament, the ALDE Group already exerts decisive influence and is set to grow further. The more Liberal Democrats we elect, the more we will be able to pursue these liberal values.



These are the only elections where Liberal Democrat representatives can be elected for Gibraltar – as part of the South West region. The people of Gibraltar voted overwhelmingly for the Liberal Democrats in the 2014 European elections (67%) and we pledge to continue to support their rights in Europe and to self-determination.

Confronting populism and authoritarianism

Britain and the entire European Union are being threatened at every turn by rising anti-liberal forces and political paralysis. Authoritarian, nationalist and populist movements within the UK and the EU are seeking to undermine the openness, pluralism and tolerance that Britain has historically championed and that are shared at the heart of the European Union. These anti-liberal forces are fomenting cultural conflict. They wish to turn our liberal values inside out. They claim to protect our freedoms, but in fact they limit them. They claim to defend security, but instead they make us unsafe. They claim to speak for the people, yet they vilify and attack anyone who is different.

Today we face profound challenges: Brexit; cross-border crimes such as terrorism and human trafficking; youth underemployment; potential trade wars and protectionism; the revolutionary impact of technology, especially artificial intelligence; unfair trading practices and the challenges brought by competition from other rising economies like China; climate change; Donald Trump's antagonism towards NATO and disregard for Europe; Putin's Russia undermining European security and launching chemical weapons attacks on UK soil.

As the world changes, the European Union needs to lead. Liberal Democrats want Europe to be strong, to be willing and able to act, and to be at the forefront of world progress.

This European election in 2019 is about the soul of Europe and our promise to the next generation of Europeans. Liberal Democrats and our liberal allies in the European Parliament have always been progressive reformers. We want to lead the European Union forward and adapt it to the changing realities of the 21st century.

By working together with our European neighbours, we can harness globalisation and other global trends to generate growth and jobs in the UK. By retraining workers and tapping into new economic opportunities, we can overcome the





challenges and ensure that everyone reaps the benefits. **The EU can clamp down on abuses by global corporations in a way that Britain cannot do on its own, for example in tackling tax avoidance and misuse of personal data.**

Protectionism, an inevitable result of Brexit, threatens what Liberal Democrats stand for. It distorts economic activity, impoverishes nations and locks the poorest nations out of the richest markets. It is our duty as liberals to defend the benefits of free and fair trade. The UK's position in the EU gives us greater negotiating power to secure better trade deals than we ever could on our own, with higher standards for employees, animal welfare, food quality, environmental protection and anti-corruption.

We want to boost infrastructure, invest in education and establish the legal framework for a digital Europe that ultimately makes life better for everyone in the EU. We want to simplify bureaucracy and renew the social contract so that everyone in Europe can participate in strong, thriving and innovative economies.

Freedom of movement

One of the reasons that Liberal Democrats are fighting to keep the UK in the EU is that we cherish freedom of movement. It gives British people the opportunity to be free to work, be together with their loved ones, study and retire anywhere in the EU. Our current deal as members of the EU allows the UK control of our borders and the ability to refuse entry to criminals and other dangerous individuals.

Freedom of movement has brought the UK tremendous social, economic and cultural benefits. We are lucky to live in an open Europe, where people, goods, services and capital can flow freely. We believe that our shared European identity enriches our British, national and regional identities.

EU citizens make a huge contribution to the UK. 63,000 EU nationals work in the National Health Service in England and 104,000 work in the adult social care sector. Overall, ten per cent of the NHS's doctors and seven per cent of its nurses are EU nationals, and seven per cent of social care workers are from the EU. A third of EU doctors working in Scotland are considering leaving, compounding the existing NHS recruitment crisis. Around 13,000 schoolteachers in the UK are EU citizens. Without EU nationals these services would be even more stretched than they already are.

Freedom of movement has also given British creative, sports and tech industries access to the best and brightest talent from the EU, giving those businesses opportunities to grow and contribute to life and prosperity in the UK.

EU citizens are valued members of our communities and we believe that they should be afforded the right to full participation in civic life, including the ability to stand for office and vote in UK referendums, local elections and general elections. We would extend these rights to all EU citizens who have lived in the UK for five years or longer and would encourage other EU member states to similarly extend the franchise for their elections.

Education, health and opportunities for all

The UK's place in the EU has made Britain one of the best places in the world for students to study and gain the skills that they need to give them the best possible start in their working lives. Before the referendum, the UK's universities received around £730 million a year from the EU to spend on research. Membership of the EU means that academics of international calibre can easily come to teach in our universities and pass their expertise on to British students.

Being in the EU also enables British students to participate in the Erasmus scheme. More than 40,000 people from the UK went abroad on the Erasmus+ scheme during 2015–16: the scheme has allowed students like these to live and study anywhere in the EU and in turn other EU students have come to the UK, enabling an exchange of cultures, broadening of horizons and the building of new relationships. By staying in the EU, Liberal Democrats will ensure that British students can continue to study wherever in the EU they choose to.

The EU also makes it easier for people such as doctors, nurses, vets and architects to work abroad by ensuring that their qualifications are recognised across Europe. Liberal Democrats will continue to work to ensure that more qualifications gained in one member state are fully recognised in others, including by supporting joint degree initiatives.

The European Social Fund actively supports young people through improving access and integration into employment, self-employment, social inclusion, education and training, traineeships and apprenticeships, jobs and training mobility, among others. The Fund is implemented by each member state and Liberal



Democrats will fight to ensure that the UK Government spends this money where it matters most, reaching those who need it most.

EU membership also benefits the health and well-being of UK citizens. **The EU funds research into new treatments for diseases** and gives the UK access to cutting-edge treatments at the earliest opportunity. The EU provides important coordination on the management of pandemics, which must be a cross-border endeavour. And the European Health Insurance Card means that UK citizens can easily receive medical treatment when they are visiting other countries in the EU.

The UK imports a great number of medical goods from the EU that are essential for treating disease. We rely on our membership of Euratom to get access to the radioactive isotopes that are used for cancer diagnosis and treatment, we rely on imports of blood plasma – which cannot be replaced from within the UK due to the risk of variant CJD – from the EU, and the UK is also dependent on the EU for insulin. Being part of the EU also means we get ground-breaking new medicines before other countries outside the bloc.

Working together to tackle the climate emergency

Cooperation with the UK's European partners is nowhere more crucial than in tackling the climate emergency. Working through the EU both greatly amplifies the UK's voice in international negotiations and enables us to jointly set high environmental standards – which in turn can be used to hold the government to account at home, for example over its failure to tackle toxic air pollution and poor water quality.

The EU led the world in agreeing the ambitious global climate targets embedded in the Paris Agreement, and as part of the EU we must continue to work to achieve them, including accelerating the deployment of low-emission technologies, infrastructure, vehicles and products and building on Liberal MEPs' work to ensure that climate objectives are built in to all relevant EU strategies, funds and agencies.

Liberal Democrats were the first major political party to call for a zero-carbon Britain; we believe this target must be met by 2045, contributing to a zero-carbon EU by 2050. British strengths in offshore wind, low-emissions vehicles and green finance mean the UK is well placed to foster jobs, growth, and competitiveness at the same time as protecting the environment.





The EU-wide Energy Union helps to make energy more secure, affordable and sustainable. We want to develop it further to encourage more trade in green energy between European countries and greater investment in electricity interconnectors to guarantee energy security. The EU Emissions Trading System, the first of its kind in the world, has cut emissions across the EU, and we will strengthen it, including by extending it to aviation. We would also promote higher EU standards of and greater investment in energy efficiency. We would campaign for an EU-wide ban on fracking because of its negative impacts on climate change, the energy mix and the local environment.

Work by Liberal MEPs has ensured that EU-wide requirements for fuel efficiency have helped make vehicles greener, saving motorists money while also tackling pollution; these should be further strengthened. We support using EU funding to drive innovation in zero-emission and autonomous vehicles and infrastructure such as charging points. We support the development of carbon capture and storage for industrial processes, 'negative emissions' technologies and strategies, including 'natural climate solutions' such as forestry, and greater resilience for infrastructure and housing against the impacts of climate change such as flooding.

The EU is a global leader in promoting resource efficiency and the protection of oceans and nature. Liberal Democrats will build on this record by reducing the use of plastics, including through a new binding international treaty, and through more ambitious targets for reducing waste and increasing the reuse and recycling of natural resources. We will introduce a general duty of care for the environment and human rights for companies and public sector agencies.

We will establish an ambitious EU-wide action plan on deforestation, including reducing the consumption of commodities associated with the destruction of global forests such as palm oil or soya. We will support greater efforts by the EU to tackle illegal and unsustainable trade in timber, wildlife, ivory, and fish, lead negotiations on a Paris-style agreement to save global biodiversity for future generations and ensure better protection for wildlife, habitats and the countryside.

Innovation that benefits and unites us

In our digital age, access to the internet is crucial for equal opportunities. In our liberal Europe, there will be no virtual borders. **Through the EU we have abolished mobile phone roaming charges** and restricted 'geo-blocking', so that British shoppers can buy goods and services from websites across the EU. We will continue to strengthen cross-border protections for consumers.

The EU has already made great steps towards building a Digital Single Market. We want to continue working within the EU to complete this, harnessing the full potential of innovative technologies and ensuring that people can enjoy the same digital benefits wherever they are in the EU. Liberal Democrats will encourage competition among companies in the digital space, and we will support the decisive use of European and UK competition powers to prevent the tech giants from exploiting consumers and to ensure innovation through competition.

We believe that the EU should be the first to create a solid legal framework for new technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and others to be used in the economy and in public life. Legislation should, however, be focused on applications that use these new technologies and not on the underlying technologies themselves, since this would otherwise limit innovation and the creation of new applications. We aim to make digital the default for all public service delivery, to increase efficiency and make services more accessible.

Addressing the issues of cyber security, data protection and privacy is a top priority. There can be no digital society without these basic requirements being met.

Innovation is often driven by small and medium-sized enterprises that are the backbone of prosperity in Europe. We will continue to facilitate the creation of more jobs through easier access to finance, simpler rules for investment funds to support new, innovative businesses across Europe, encouraging knowledge and technology transfer from universities and research institutes, and greater opportunities for young entrepreneurs.



Equal treatment for all in Europe

While progress has been made towards equality for women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and LGBT+ people, there are many challenges still to overcome. There is increasing hostility towards women and minority groups – especially online – and reports of hate crimes are on the rise, including a big spike in the number of hate crimes following the 2016 Brexit vote. **We are committed to combatting this type of discrimination, promoting equality and tackling hate crime.**

The EU sets a minimum standard for protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender, gender identity, race, disability and sexuality. States that violate these protections must face sanctions.

Liberal Democrats will keep campaigning against prejudice and discrimination against LGBT+ people throughout Europe and the world. We will continue to urge all European Union countries to offer asylum to those fleeing persecution because of their sexuality or gender identity. We are committed to championing the cause of equal marriage and ensuring that same-sex marriages are recognised across the EU. We would mirror other EU states by introducing an “X” gender option on passports.

Gender-based violence and sexual harassment remains a huge problem in contemporary society and we are committed to tackling it. Combatting violence against women and girls is a priority for us and **we call for all EU member states, including the UK, to ratify and bring into law the Istanbul Convention.** Women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights, and all women should have access to affordable, good-quality sexual and reproductive health care and services.

We are committed to promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, and to working for the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, regardless of gender.

All countries across the EU, including the UK, need to do more to promote better participation of women, disabled people and ethnic minority people in the labour market in order to benefit from their full economic potential. To make further progress, a continued assessment of the effectiveness of existing public policies and

workplace practices is needed. Only with resolve and a continued focus can European countries ensure that the whole population enjoys equal treatment.

We strongly oppose all forms of racism, division of societies and hatred against human beings. Any form of violence against people on these grounds must be stopped. We want to work with European partners to strengthen the EU asylum system to protect those who are fleeing the horrors of war and persecution.

UK leading through the EU

Britain's voice in foreign affairs is greatly amplified by membership of the EU. It allows us to shape the EU's approach to the rest of the world on security, the environment, trade and human rights. **Britain is far better able to exercise global influence by working together with its EU partners than it can alone.**

We wish to see the European Union, acting collectively, continue as a strong actor on the international stage. In a rapidly changing geopolitical environment, the EU should play an important global role, further developing the EU's immense economic and rule-setting power and growing collective diplomatic capabilities.

In an era of strained defence budgets and costly capability, with Trump's US less willing to take the lead in Western defence, deeper cooperation is vital if European powers are to retain significant military capabilities to guard against the uncertainties of the future. This requires more strategic thinking and coordination from European NATO and EU member states but with national parliaments continuing to decide on national military deployments and the use of force.

We believe the EU must continue to play its leading role in development cooperation to ensure sustainable development and promote democracy, human rights, peace and security round the world. **Liberal Democrats have shown leadership on development by securing the UK's legal commitment to devote 0.7 per cent of national income to development aid.** To use EU member states' resources in the best possible way, we will strive for a greater focus on the quality of development projects and programmes, and better coordination within the EU. In this way we can promote both Europe's security interests and our humanitarian values.



We condemn the continued annexation and occupation of Crimea and aggression in East Ukraine by Putin's Russia, in violation of international law. We call for greater EU support to the democratically elected administration of Ukraine and for the EU to continue its economic sanctions on Russia.

Fighting crime and upholding liberties across borders

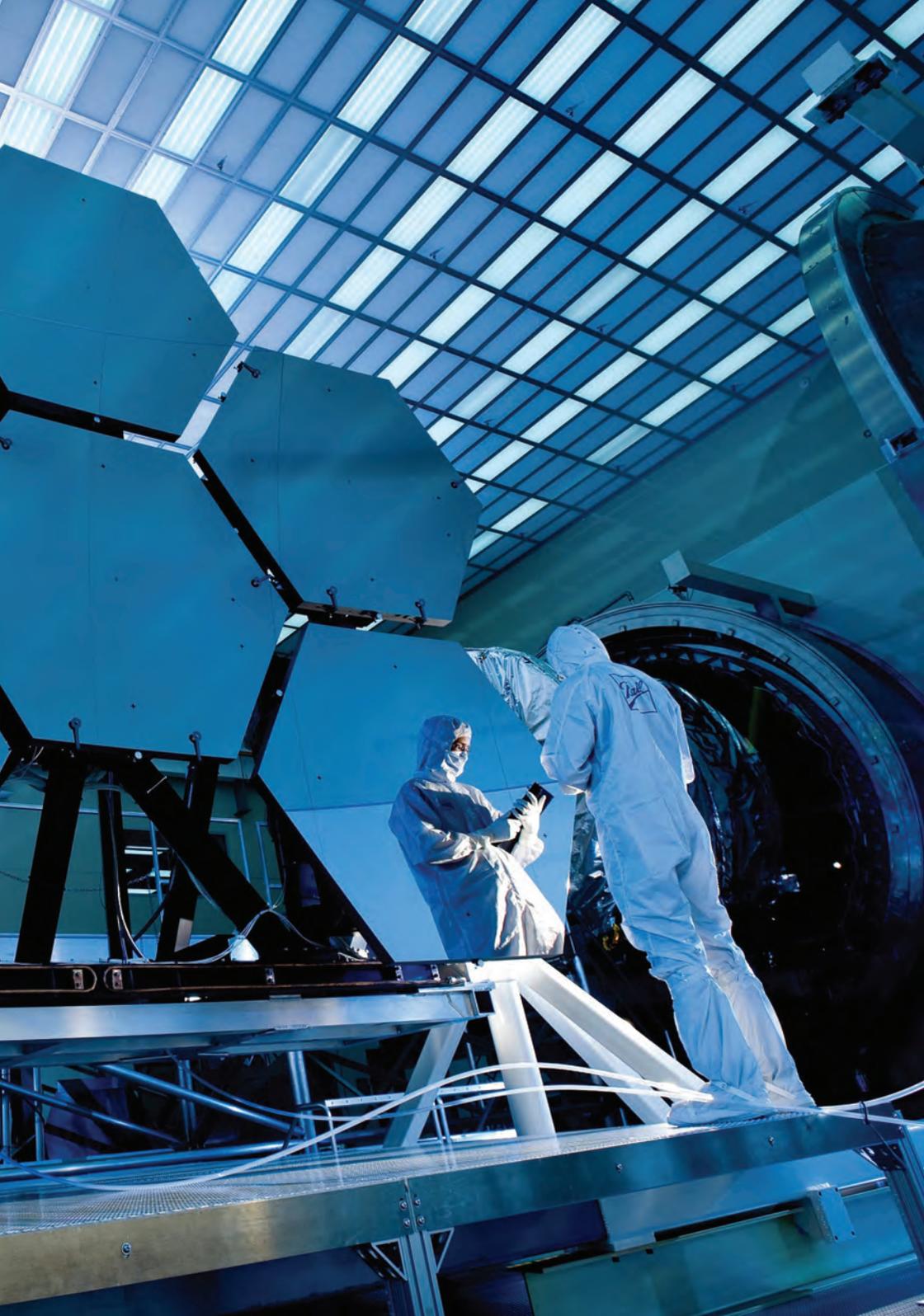
Membership of the EU means the UK's police are better able to keep us safe. Outside the EU British police would not have access to the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) – a tool that enabled the UK, for example, to bring Osman Hussain, who had attempted to bomb a London Underground station, back to the country to face justice. Before the EAW the UK extradited fewer than 60 people per year to the EU and in one extreme case took ten years to extradite a terrorism suspect to France; since its introduction the EAW has enabled the UK to extradite well over 12,000 suspects to the EU. **British leadership in Europol has brought down criminal gangs engaged in modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and cybercrime.**

Ensuring the safety of British citizens is the first duty of the UK Government. We will continue to work closely with our European partners to prevent terrorism, including through Europol and other intelligence-sharing arrangements. Only through the EU can we successfully defend our economies and societies against threats such as cyber-attacks, money-laundering, tax scams and disinformation campaigns – including those aimed at undermining our democracies and our elections.

The EU guarantees the presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial, individuals' control over their own personal data, and protection against discrimination. Sanctions must be enforced wherever these rights are not upheld, and EU funding must be conditional on the rule of law.

Investing for the future: innovation, agriculture and regional development

In the EU, as in the UK, Liberal Democrats are committed to spending taxpayers' money as efficiently as possible. It is important to manage all European funds in a more effective manner to ensure the EU budget delivers on the issues that matter





to citizens and that provides added value. Before posing the question of “how much?”, Liberal Democrats first want to answer the questions of “what for?” and “how?”.

Liberal Democrat MEPs would also seek to improve the democracy and efficiency of EU institutions. **We believe the European Parliament should only have one seat – Brussels.** We want to see a greater degree of transparency of negotiations and voting within the European Council, and the Council of the EU. We also want to ensure that British Members of Parliament hold UK Government ministers better to account for the decisions they take on our behalf in Brussels. The Prime Minister and other ministers should make a statement to the House of Commons setting out the objectives of the government before each Council meeting, as well as a statement afterwards, and Parliamentary select committees should lead the scrutiny of European legislation in their specialist areas.

The EU is vital in funding research and facilitating research collaboration across Europe. The EU has given €75 bn between 2014 and 2020 to support Horizon 2020. It has enabled UK scientists to work with partners throughout Europe to improve people’s lives across the EU: tackling climate change, protecting food supplies and improving health and wellbeing. The European Commission wants the funding for Horizon Europe, which runs from 2021 to 2027, to rise to €100 bn. As a member of the EU, the UK would benefit enormously from this extra funding. Outside of it, the UK will have to ‘pay as you go’ to participate in Horizon Europe projects. Liberal Democrats know that we are better off inside the EU where the UK plays a leading role in research and innovation.

We support investments in innovation and research, technological change, security, fighting climate change and protecting the environment and tackling youth unemployment as key priorities for the EU budget. We would like the EU to make greater use of loans or guarantees to mobilise private capital and incentivise innovation.

The EU has played a vital role in supporting UK farmers and protecting the countryside. Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), UK farmers receive much-needed income support; EU funding also supports rural development and environmental improvement schemes. As well as this, the ease of trade with the EU provides a critical export market for British farmers.

We believe that the way in which EU agricultural subsidies are distributed to farmers should be further improved to help meet sustainability goals and maintain income support for farmers who need it. We would substantially reform and rethink agricultural subsidies to ensure the CAP rewards farmers for reducing greenhouse gas emissions towards net zero levels and farming sustainably. We want a streamlined and modern agricultural policy that incentivises innovation, entrepreneurship, generational renewal and sustainability in farming, phasing payments progressively to protect small farms. Support should also be targeted to combat challenges such as antimicrobial resistance, food security, and animal welfare standards, and promote alternative and environmentally friendly agricultural methods. Reforms within the UK should be agreed between the four administrations, by including the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive in decisions.

Liberal Democrats would defend and maintain Britain's fishing industry by not allowing fishing rights to be traded away against other policy areas, and work with the industry and other stakeholders to develop a national plan for sustainable fisheries. We will work to improve the Common Fisheries Policy to ensure that it delivers the necessary economic and environmental objectives.

Membership of the EU has been a vital source of support for rural and coastal areas of the UK. EU structural funds have especially benefited Cornwall and Wales where the spend over 2014–2020 has been around £900 and £700 per person respectively. The EU is also one of the largest funders of work to conserve natural habitats and historical sites, which are the backbone of the tourist industry in rural and coastal areas. Staying in the EU would ensure that the UK's nations and regions continue to benefit from these funds.

The Conservatives have failed to deliver on the promise of the 'Northern Powerhouse' and dropped major projects elsewhere. We will continue to champion the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine and invest significant capital resources in infrastructure projects across the North of England and the Midlands.

Even if Brexit is stopped, enormous damage is already being caused by Brexit uncertainty. Liberal Democrats would create an emergency Brexit Support Fund of at least £7.5 billion to support those affected by this uncertainty. This would mitigate job losses, supporting UK workers made



redundant as a result of businesses leaving the UK, closing down or downsizing as a result of the impact of Brexit, and offering workers the chance to receive advice or re-training to help them secure employment or start a new business.

The UK as part of a more liberal Europe

We believe that the UK is stronger as part of the EU. We want to stop Brexit and instead focus on building a country where everyone has the opportunity to get on in life.

Working with our neighbours across the EU, Liberal Democrats want the EU to continue to lead in tackling global threats like climate change, terrorism, cyber-conflict and organised crime. We celebrate diversity and stand up for the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens across the continent of Europe. We must protect freedom of movement and the single market, so that our NHS can attract the doctors, nurses and medicines that we all need, and citizens can benefit from the opportunities to work and live across the whole continent. The EU can ever more strongly embrace the potential of innovation and the technological and digital revolution. Acting together, we can use the EU's combined strength to clamp down on abuses of power by global corporations such as corporate tax avoidance, and secure trade deals that promote high standards of environmental protection, working conditions, animal welfare and food safety.

We want a Europe where you can succeed. A liberal Europe.



Applicability: This manifesto contains Federal Liberal Democrat policy. On issues where power is devolved in Scotland and Wales, the policy of the Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats applies.

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