

EU Referendum

Roundup, week 49

Friday 4 December 2015



Institute
and Faculty
of Actuaries

Assessment	Behind-the-scenes negotiations between the EU and the UK are ongoing. Paris attacks and terrorism threats elsewhere dominate the EU and European national political agendas. This may have impacts on Cameron's re-negotiation efforts. On the one hand, the UK re-negotiation has certainly moved down in priority. On the other hand, events may support certain re-negotiation topics, such as migration.
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Past week's events

Mon 23 Nov.	Behind-the-scenes negotiations between the EU and the UK are ongoing. A stumbling block for many EU member states may be that immigrants from EU states should wait four years before receiving in-work benefits such as tax credits and support for children living abroad. Officials and diplomats see that as discriminating between EU citizens on national grounds, which they say jars with basic EU treaty law.
	The Netherlands will assume the (6 months) Presidency of the EU Council as per 1 January 2016, and today it published its priorities. Regarding the EU referendum, the Dutch government states that "it is of strategic importance that the UK remains a member of the EU". During its Presidency, the Netherlands "will contribute to a constructive dialogue between the UK and the EU". It notes that the dialogue during its Presidency could influence the date of the EU referendum.
	Carolyn Fairbairn, the new head of the CBI, has backed Britain remaining in a reformed European Union and expressed confidence that Europe would not tear the employers' organisation apart.
Tue 24 Nov.	A poll by OBR international concludes a majority (52%) of UK wants to leave the EU. Split out by region, it confirms earlier polls that majorities in devolved would like to stay in. Also, there's a strong generational divide: 69% of the 18-24 want to stay in, contrast to 38% of the 65+.
Wed 25 Nov.	Jonathan Faull, the veteran senior EU official who is now the EU's chief negotiator for the negotiations with the UK , thinks it is not impossible to arrive at a deal at next month's EU summit – although it will be difficult.
Thu 26 Nov.	Louise Bours MEP, for EFD / UKIP political group, issued a brochure ("EUUseless: a view from the madhouse") that lists examples of irrelevant debates and misspending of budgets in the European Parliament. She specifically mentions immigration as an issue, and a 2011 Ipsos Mori poll which showed that most Europeans believe there are too many in their country. She concludes that many EP committees are not addressing these issues and are therefore not fit for purpose.
Fri 27 Nov.	Prof. Simon Hix, Political Science at LSE, in the Guardian reviews a Eurobarometer survey (conducted last May), which showed that UK citizens are among the least knowledgeable of the EU. He concludes however, that it is not clear whether providing more info about the EU will necessarily improve UK citizen's opinions of the EU.

Upcoming events

Tuesday 1 December, 1:30pm	Treasury Select Committee: Evidence session on the economic and financial costs and benefits of UK membership of the EU
17-18 Dec.	EU Summit, where Cameron will meet his counterparts, to negotiate
18-19 Feb 2016	EU Summit