

## Introductory speech for talk by Professor Michael Dougan

### Johnson's Great Brexit Deal: How far have we got?

North East Surrey for Europe - 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020

Welcome to another of NE Surrey for Europe's monthly Thursday talks. We have explored the **political** side of Brexit with Denis MacShane, the **economic** aspects with Vicky Pryce (and you can see their bullet points on our website [nes4eu.co.uk](http://nes4eu.co.uk) / Resources), and today we will learn about the **legal** challenges from Professor Michael Dougan.

One day I hope we can meet in person and we can hear of **your** experiences, challenges and triumphs in the effort to spread the pro-Europe message. I know we are all confined to quarters, but at least we can still benefit from interesting Zoom get-togethers like this and exchange ideas.

Here's just a bit of background to put us in context.

In the next 8 minutes I will tell you about:

- The European Movement International
- The European Movement in the UK
- MoVEM in Mole Valley
- N E Surrey for Europe in 4 Surrey constituencies
- then give a round-up of the various organisations who have warned about Brexit and
- include some quotes from Stephen Dorrell and A C Grayling - and listen out for the one from Delia Smith!

The European Movement International is the largest pan-European network of pro-European organisations. It is present in 34 countries and encompasses 38 International Associations, bringing together European civil society, business, trade unions, NGOs, political parties, local authorities and academia.

It was founded in 1949, and continuously advocates in favour of European

- co-operation and
- integration, based on the principles of
- peace,
- democracy,
- liberty,
- solidarity,
- equality,
- justice,
- respect for human rights and
- the rule of law.

In 2016 the European Movement in the UK had 15 branches, now in 2020 we are part of 123 local groups and still growing. There are 8,000 paid up members and 150,000 supporters who receive the emails.

Our mission is to fight for our close relationship with Europe and **together** to ensure that European values, standards, and rights are upheld in the UK.

In a post-Brexit world, our values are at risk, from the undermining of human rights to compromising environmental standards. We are campaigning to **maintain European values in the U.K.**

To achieve this mission we are working with our tens of thousands of activists, our membership community, and our partners in Europe through the European Movement International network.

We are acting now to ensure that **the future we have been fighting for over the past 70 years** is upheld.

Do take a look at the website. To support the work and keep in touch, membership costs just £36:

[www.europeanmovement.co.uk](http://www.europeanmovement.co.uk)

We felt inspired to do **something** by speakers like Hugo Dixon, Will Hutton, Gina Miller and Dominic Grieve.

MoVEM - Mole Valley European Movement was founded in Leatherhead in October 2017 and consists of a small group of us who meet weekly, now via Zoom, to put the Brexit situation into perspective.

We have been on all the pro-Europe marches, held numerous street stalls, working with Guildford and Woking in Europe, South West Surrey European Movement and Epsom and Ewell Lib Dems, though we are cross-party. We write to our MP, and get letters published in the national press. Look out for David Woodhead. Ian writes on the Times website and several members use Twitter.

NE Surrey for Europe was spawned from MoVEM a couple of years later in July 2019, but covers the 4 constituencies of Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate and East Surrey. If you come from those areas, please email us as we would like to connect with you. Ray runs the website [www.nes4eu.co.uk](http://www.nes4eu.co.uk) as well as the Facebook page with over 3,500 followers.

Public opinion shows a clear majority who agree that Brexit is a mistake.

In YouGov polls held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November - 56% thought the government was handling Brexit badly and on a different question - 51% thought Britain was wrong to leave the EU, 38% said it was right and the rest did not know..  
(Sample Size: 1,632)

These 8 quotes sum up the situation:

Cicero said -

“When you have no basis for an argument, abuse the plaintiff.”

Aristotle said -

"At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; - separated from law and justice, he is the worst."

A C Grayling said - Brexit is a failure of insight.

John Major said - Brexit is an historic mistake.

Will Hutton said - Brexit is an act of economic lunacy. The EU is a force for global good.

Michael Heseltine said - Brexit is the biggest act of economic self-harm ever undertaken by a democratic government.

Delia Smith said (in December 2018)

"Why does our country want all this chaos, when what we already have is so much better? You have to see the bigger picture.

If we are going to live in peace, countries have to learn to cooperate."

and 120 Veterans of D-Day said:

"When you trade, you do not fight.

Peace in Europe is not something that should be taken for granted."

(120 **Veterans** of D-Day 1944, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019, Letter to the Independent)

**All** of these 15 different organisations -

the OECD, OBR, NAO, IFS, IMF, Bank of England, Institute for Government, UK in a Changing Europe, LSE, CBI, BMA, RPS (Pharmacists), IBA (Barristers), and NFU (Farmers Union) and Road Haulage Association among many others, as well as almost all recent Prime Ministers of all parties -

**all** agree that Brexit is seriously damaging this country in the long term and that we need to mitigate its harm as far as possible -

(never mind about the incoming President Elect of the United States - leader of the most powerful country in the world).

There is a list of 80+ privileges of being part of the world's most successful trading block (on our doorstep) and post-war peace project - on our website:

<https://nes4eu.co.uk/resources> "Benefits of the EU"

What has the law got to do with this?

The Conservative government attempted an illegal Prorogation of Parliament. We have seen again the extent of their disregard for legal constraint with the Internal Market Bill - twice in 12 months the government chose to resort to illegal activity in order to achieve its objectives.

The majority of people in this country do not want to leave the EU, yet it has happened - due to the distorting effect of our electoral system.

It is **\*unconscionable\*** that the last government was elected by 29% of the total electorate but got 56% of the seats with an 80 seat majority. This distorts democracy and there is **no** scrutiny.

Britain is a European country, it is not moving away, we share economic, social and political interests.

What happens in Europe affects us whether we are part of Europe or not. The only choice is whether we are part of the decision-making process. We have voluntarily taken ourselves out of the decisions which affects our lives.

It is not that we doubt the result of the Referendum, but it is absolutely fundamental to democratise the debate that you have the right and duty to argue your case and resist the arguments of those you disagree with.

We can argue the case for -  
European interests and values and the UK's role in the mainstream of Europe.

We can argue the case -  
to be part of that international network of alliances.

Europe properly constituted is a key advocate and champion of those values in a dangerous world. The challenge is the **most important single set of political issues** in a generation.

It will take us some years to get back in - but we will.

The people are waking up to the folly of Brexit and if we fight we can get back into the EU sooner rather than later.

Thank you for listening.