

Erklärung der Hohen Vertreterin Federica Mogherini im Namen der Europäischen Union anlässlich des Welttags der Pressefreiheit am

Free press is vital for having a democracy that works. Today we celebrate the **World Press Freedom Day** in a difficult context for journalism. Freedom of expression and Freedom of the press are under increasing attacks around the world.

Free, diverse and independent media are indispensable to promoting and protecting democracy worldwide. A free press and freedom of expression are among the very same foundations of democracy, contribute to stable, inclusive, and resilient societies and can help defuse tensions and contain conflicts. The EU supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes ensuring universal access to information and protection of freedom of expression.

Supporting independent, quality and ethical journalism is essential. By facilitating the free flow of quality and well-researched information on matters of public interest, and by acting as the “public’s watchdog”, independent media are the basis of a participatory democracy and a tool to make governments accountable for their actions. The EU ensures that respect for freedom of expression is integrated in all EU policies and development programmes. The EU is notably funding specific projects in third countries enhancing quality of journalism, access to public information and freedom of expression. Since June 2015, the EU has supported at least 45 endangered Human Rights Defenders that promote the right of freedom of expression under its small grant scheme.

The EU condemns the increase of threats and violations against journalists and media professional offline and in cyberspace. All states are expected to fulfil their global obligations to protect freedom of expression and the safety of journalists by providing a supportive legal environment and prosecuting all attacks against journalists. The EU consistently opposes – in bilateral contacts with third countries as well as in multilateral and regional fora – any legislation, regulation or political pressure that limits freedom of expression and takes concrete steps to prevent and respond to attacks against journalists and bloggers.

The EU Guidelines on Freedom of expression online and offline, adopted in 2014, and their continued implementation, reaffirm the EU’s determination to promote freedom of opinion and of expression as rights to be exercised by everyone everywhere, based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination and universality, through any media and regardless of frontiers.

إع ن الممثلة العليا ل اتحاد ا وروبي فيدريكا موغريني باسم ا اتحاد ا وروبي بمناسبة اليوم العالمي 2 لحرية الصحافة في 3 أيار/مايو

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Declarația Înaltului Reprezentant, Federica Mogherini, în numele Uniunii Europene, cu ocazia Zilei Mondiale a Libertății Presei

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Brexit should be a democracy – Nick Clegg’s speech outlining our position on Britain and the EU

Nick began by setting out his key points...

My argument today is simple: our country cannot thrive without a strong economy.

And a strong economy is incompatible with a hard Brexit.

The pound has been falling since the prospect of the referendum was announced in mid-2015, and with average earnings growth set to stall later this year, consumers are inevitably going to feel the Brexit squeeze.

When prices go up and wages do not, millions of people are going to be poorer.

A lot poorer.

The average household is likely to be £500 worse off in 2017 compared to 2016 – and that’s before the Brexit negotiations have even started in earnest.

...and explaining the impact of Brexit on our public services...

Over a five-year period, Brexit will have dented the public finances by £59bn.

Money that could have been used to cut waiting times in A&E, keep beds open, and pay for vital medicines.

Money that could have been used to ease the intense pressure on local care services for our ageing population.

Money that could have been used to stop the shameful cuts to school budgets.

The government has effectively maxed out its credit card on Brexit.

Leaving you to pick up the cost.

Nick went on to describe how Brexit could affect our businesses...

The Brexit squeeze is already being felt in the world of business, through higher import prices, a shortage of EU workers, and reduced investment.

Some companies that rely on imported ingredients are already trying to disguise the impacts through creative repackaging, as we've seen with the reduced chocolate in Toblerone.

Others are struggling to find staff: the food and drink industry is more reliant on EU workers than any other sector in the UK. Around 29% of our food and drink manufacturing workforce are EU nationals.

The fall in the value of the pound is already causing some EU workers to consider leaving the UK, as their wages are now worth significantly less back home.

In some cases jobs have already been lost, including 300 in Newcastle and York, following Nestle's decision to move production to Poland.

So the immediate impacts of the referendum have been much worse than the Conservatives want you to think.

...then turned his attention to Brexit's long-term impacts...

Make no mistake: our economic future is hanging in the balance.

Theresa May could have chosen to remain in the Single Market, as have three other EU countries: Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

She could have chosen to be in the Customs Union. One non-EU country, Turkey, has done so.

She could have tried to persuade the EU to reform the free movement rules to re-focus them on work, instead of giving up without a fight.

Instead, she shunned all of these, elevating immigration over the long-term needs of millions of hard pressed families.

...and the Tories' specious justifications...

This can only be understood as a political decision based on the pressures from the Conservatives' right wing and the Brexit press.

But the Brexit squeeze won't be felt by the Prime Minister and her supporters in the right-wing media; it will be paid for by ordinary people out of their wages, by sick people needing treatment on the NHS, by elderly people needing care, and by children who won't receive the education they deserve.

At this election, the Liberal Democrats are the only major national party that is sounding the alarm against hard Brexit.

...Nick also outlined two Lib Dem manifesto commitments...

Labour's disastrous failure to do the most basic job of an opposition party:

holding the government to account, has given the Conservatives a clear run at their extreme version of Brexit.

We will do what Labour have failed to do, and hold the Conservatives' feet to the fire.

Today, we make a commitment to do two things:

First: to fight to secure terms which retain as many of the benefits of EU membership as possible.

Second, to secure a referendum on the final agreement, so that the people can decide the future for the country.

That referendum will offer two choices; accept the deal, or remain in the EU.

Liberal Democrats will campaign for a remain vote.

And reflected on the dishonesties of the Conservative Brexit campaign...

Hard Brexit is the latest in a series of con tricks.

The Conservatives were tricking you when they said there would be £350m a week for the NHS.

They're tricking you by pretending there's no Brexit squeeze.

And they're tricking you when they claim they can secure a deal with the exact same benefits as EU membership.

This trickery is the personal responsibility of Theresa May.

She deserves remorseless, unforgiving scrutiny for the decisions she is seeking to impose upon the country.

... Before launching into his closing statement...

By choosing to be careless with your future, the Conservatives have placed party before country, themselves before all else, politics before the nation.

Don't let the Conservatives get away with making this happen.

Don't let Labour get away with letting this happen.

Britain needs an effective opposition to hard Brexit.

That is why I urge you to vote for a real opposition – the Liberal Democrats.

Better facilities at Wokingham station?

I have received a follow up letter today from First Rail, who start the new South West train franchise in August. I held a meeting with them last month to discuss improvements for travellers using Wokingham Station.

They say they do wish to introduce a click and collect facility at the Station for people to pick up goods they have bought on line on their way home. This is subject to reaching commercial agreement on how to do it.

They also say they want to introduce automatic number plate recognition for car parking at the Station. This would enable travellers to register their Debit card for automatic payment. They will also allow on line purchasing of car park season tickets. The aim is to make it quicker and easier to park with these additional choices.