

Restoring the education and cultural ties that have been lost to Brexit

We have enjoyed fantastic links with our European neighbours for decades.

Our school children have benefitted from **easy language exchanges and visa-free school trips**. Young people have been able to live, study, and work **across 27 different countries**. Students have enhanced their education via the **Erasmus scheme**. Artists and musicians have been able to travel freely between us and the continent.

We cannot allow this government to deprive us of the unique educational, cultural and artistic opportunities that come with a close link to the EU. **These opportunities have all been harmed by Boris Johnson's botched Brexit deal.**

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As a replacement for the Erasmus funding scheme, the government has come up with the woefully inadequate "Turing Scheme".

This scheme is less well funded, doesn't provide our students with the same opportunities, and makes it harder to welcome EU students into our higher education institutions.

The pandemic has shown us the grave importance of international collaboration, especially when it comes to research. Yet this government freely puts barriers in place to prevent the vital exchange of knowledge and ideas.

We are delighted that our members recognise the enormous value of close ties with the EU.

Here is what we want to do:

- First and foremost, **improve the Turing Scheme**. This means having reciprocal partnerships between UK and EU institutions and ensuring the same level of funding is available under Erasmus.
- Aim to **rejoin the Erasmus Plus Scheme**.
- Negotiate passport and **visa-free school visits to EU member states**.
- **Encourage town twinning** for educational and cultural exchanges between the UK and EU.
- **Agree paperwork-free travel** for musicians, touring artists and their support staff.

[Read the motion in full](#)

Leaving the EU will worsen the opportunities available to society and especially our young people.

This government has shown it does not value arts or creativity despite being world leaders in these industries. Atrocious domestic policy has slashed funding for arts in the school curriculum and on university-based courses. Depriving us of access to Europe only worsens this.

So much has been lost by leaving the EU.

We owe it our students and young people to undo some of that damage.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Helping Build a Lasting Peace in Israel and Palestine](#)

During the awful violence in May, Britain was absent from the world stage – despite our historic responsibilities to the region.

That's why today we have set out a route map for the UK Government to follow in its engagement with the region. It is vital that long-term underlying tensions are to be addressed if we hope to achieve a **lasting peace rather than a short term truce**.

We have once again reiterated our call for **immediate recognition of the state of Palestine** – and called on the UK Government to go further.

Our members have voted for a motion that would see more trade with Israel and Palestine, further resources committed to peace, and international law upheld by proposing legislation to cease trade with the illegal Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory..

The Liberal Democrats have **become the first UK political party** to formally support the creation of a **peace fund** for the region, to build trust between Israeli and Palestinian communities, modelled on similar schemes previously used in Northern Ireland.

We are calling for **increased trade and cooperation** with Israel and Palestine – including in the fields of science, medicines and technology.

And we are also ensuring that as we increase our trading relationships, that **international law is upheld**, by proposing legislation to ensure that goods and services from illegal Israeli settlements in Palestinian do not enter the United Kingdom, unless and until a negotiated settlement is reached.

It's time for the UK to centre **human rights, trade, and international law** at the heart of its approach to this decades-long conflict.

You can read the further detail of our support for the peace process here: libdems.org.uk/f39-peace-israel-palestine

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[Responding to the Afghanistan Crisis](#)

As Liberal Democrats we are here holding the Government to account for its foreign policy failure over Afghanistan.

20 years on from the US-led invasion, the Taliban have swept into Kabul. They seized power illegitimately without the consent of the Afghan people.

The UK has a moral duty to the people of Afghanistan“

Life under the Taliban regime is one of terror. **Women and girls are excluded from education, work and government.** Human rights are utterly disregarded with medieval-style punishments used on those who do not conform to Taliban rule.

[Go to Source](#)

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[Jane Dodd's conference speech-highlights](#)

Leader of the Welsh Lib Dems Jane Dodds gave her speech at conference today! We've put together some highlights below or you can read the speech in full [here](#).

She started with a reminder of a longstanding

democratic tradition in Wales and the 1999 election to the Welsh Assembly

“Almost 600 years after the first Welsh Parliament was established in June 1404, the people of Wales once again had its own national democratic institution”

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Turning around our Trade Agreements

The Government has **only managed to negotiate one new trade deal** – with Australia – since leaving the EU. It has simply “rolled over” 23 existing trade agreements that we were already parts of. This simply isn’t good enough.

A thriving economy needs thriving international trade. **UK companies doing business in the EU need our help now.** We are also at risk of losing our long-established status as a finance hub. Put simply, the government must get its act together.

We owe our UK businesses the ability to trade seamlessly with our global neighbours.

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