

Pro-Referendum must NOT mean anti-Brexit !

It's about fairness and good, more deliberative,  
democracy.

Opinion-Analysis from:  
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A general election definitely would NOT remove the vital need to hold a "brexit terms" referendum ballot of the whole electorate.

This referendum must be planned NOW and held regardless of which parties are in or have taken over government, independently of whatever proposals have been finalised by Parliament and government for leaving the EU.

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Web version <http://www.iniref.org/record35.html>

PDF version available on request

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**Two stage ballot procedure is a better form of democracy: We reject the "pig in a poke".**

For the Scottish independence referendum (2014) we recommended a two stage referendum procedure, (a) to mandate the government to negotiate terms for separation, with the UK, and (b) a second referendum to enable the electorate to decide if the negotiated terms are acceptable or not. If not, we would remain in the Union. For brexit we made a similar recommendation. The badly designed referendum of 2016 in effect mandated HM government to negotiate terms for withdrawal, with the European Union. Soon after this we re-stated our policy that another referendum should be held to decide finally (after recommendations had been made by parliament and Government) if the terms negotiated and agreed with the EU were acceptable to the UK electorate. We encouraged that respect should be shown towards our system of indirect, "representative" democracy. Only after the wheels of government had turned, interactions and consultations with Parliament completed, would a clear and final recommendation be put before the people in a referendum.

**Only the people should judge upon the terms for leaving EU**

We must recognise and implicitly accept the ultimate political sovereignty of the electorate. For vital decisions such as brexit which will affect all citizens and many generations to come, a single Parliament-Government duo must NOT act without the explicit and fully informed consent of the people (1).

**Democracy experts such as the Council of Europe recommend clear questions and realistic, well-explained, straightforward alternatives. Propositions on the ballot.**

The options on the ballot should be only two:

1. The government's agreement with the EU, OR, leaving the EU with no agreement if that be recommended by the Government or remains by default the only option.
2. Remain in the EU by revoking Article 50 Treaty on European Union.

What must be avoided is a multiple choice ballot-questionnaire, in which every faction of opinion about how we should leave the EU might be presented to the people. This could have been done as part of a consultation before the first brexit ballot. Now (early 2019) this would be an abdication of responsibility by Government and Parliament. They should be pressed to do their job and to come up with a clear proposal about how they say and have worked out that we should leave the EU.

**Need for preparation of referendum and run-up period applies to the electorate as well as electoral commission and government**

The democratic proposal, that the electorate should have the final, binding, say about how we leave the EU or whether we remain in it, was publicly proposed in 2016 and has received strong public support. The major parties failed utterly to respond to this reasonable demand, which required announcement well in advance of any deadline, effective public information, widespread debate, careful preparation e.g. about franchise and wording of ballot, many months of planning. Politicians have quite recently proposed

that ONLY IF the government's brexit proposal is defeated in Parliament then might the decision – in a time period expected to be of national chaos and hectic haste – be generously (helplessly?) chucked back to the people, leaving us to sort out the mess created by our politicians and "oligarchs", "representatives" of the people in our democracy. The campaign and preparation for a "final deal" referendum should have come many months ago, with much broader than seen, cross-party support by responsible, democratic politicians (2).

**A general election definitely would NOT remove the vital need to hold a "brexit terms" referendum ballot of the whole electorate.**

A general election is the holy grail of political parties in opposition but it must address all fields of politics. Compared with a referendum it cannot provide the same efficiency of representation nor does it allow adequate focus of citizens on a single (highly important) issue.

**This referendum must be planned NOW and held regardless of which parties are in or have taken over government, independently of whatever proposals have been finalised by Parliament and government for leaving the EU.**

Only the people should confirm or reject the final deal. The referendum should be legislated by Parliament in such a way that its result shall bind Government, Parliament and the UK state, alterable only by a subsequent statewide referendum.

#### **APPEAL**

**Take the people's decision about UK and EU, with a binding referendum-ballot, OUT of party politics!**

**Brexit is a matter for the whole country and generations to come.**

#### Notes

1. Theresa May's government attempts to evade and fight off a new "people's vote" about UK and EU. <http://www.iniref.org/record33.html>

2. In the "brexit" process the largest two UK political parties have emphatically NOT distinguished themselves in the practice of democracy. <http://www.iniref.org/record34.html>

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