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## EU referendum petition

Posted by dws - 2007/10/18 18:08

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Fot those that are interested, this is the link to sign a petition at Downing Street re a referendum on the EU.

Link

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by TLJ - 2007/10/18 22:42

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dws wrote:

Fot those that are interested, this is the link to sign a petition at Downing Street re a referendum on the EU.

Link

Not one I'll be signing, dws ! There is so much crap said about the EU that I really don't think that the man in the street really has a clue about it and how it operates. To vote without knowledge is a dangerous thing....

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by dws - 2007/10/19 16:56

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TLJ wrote:

Not one I'll be signing, dws ! There is so much crap said about the EU that I really don't think that the man in the street really has a clue about it and how it operates. To vote without knowledge is a dangerous thing....

An interesting slant on democracy there, TLJ:blink:

I don't know about you but it sticks in my craw to be patronised - The "It's ok, you wouldn't really understand it...leave it to us approach" smacks of self interest and contempt.

On your other point, the man in the street hasn't actually been briefed very well...how the hell would he know what it's about if nobody's telling him?

I'm not entirely happy with our Gordy signing the country up to something off his own back with the conciliatory nod of "We've drawn red lines"

I'd rather the issue were discussed more and an informed opinion made, not this "slip it in while nobody's looking" attitude.

Or latterly, "Bugger you lot - I'm doing it anyway..."

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by TLJ - 2007/10/20 08:45

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dws wrote:

TLJ wrote:

Not one I'll be signing, dws ! There is so much crap said about the EU that I really don't think that the man in the street really has a clue about it and how it operates. To vote without knowledge is a dangerous thing....

An interesting slant on democracy there, TLJ:blink:

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It's actually the basis of our democracy. Our representatives in Westminster there to decide on our behalf.

dws wrote:

On your other point, the man in the street hasn't actually been briefed very well...how the hell would he know what it's about if nobody's telling him?

The man in the street is being briefed by the Sun.....

dws wrote:

I'm not entirely happy with our Gordy signing the country up to something off his own back with the conciliatory nod of "We've drawn red lines"

I'd rather the issue were discussed more and an informed opinion made, not this "slip it in while nobody's looking" attitude.

Or latterly, "Bugger you lot - I'm doing it anyway..."

Governments sign treaties and other binding legal agreements all the time without so much as a by-your-leave.

I'd agree that issues should be discussed in an informed way. However, for as long as we've got the tabloid press and a tabloid opposition, you'll find that the debate is based on jingoistic soundbites about presidents (but there's nothing new there as it already has a President who does not and will not fulfill the role of a state president), Foreign Ministers (it's an international organisation playing an ever more important role in the world as a whole, so why not have a spokesperson on foreign affairs ? The role is to be confined to issues where there is unanimity at Council), etc, etc, etc.

There's a Q&A on the Lisbon Treaty here

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by dws - 2007/10/21 19:06

TLJ wrote:

Governments sign treaties and other binding legal agreements all the time without so much as a by-your-leave.

That may be true, but not when part of the government's 2005 manifesto pledge was a referendum on the EU. And I don't care whether a law is now called a "directive", it's still legally binding, is it not?

This needs to be at least brought into the public domain by the government, or Gordon Brown can (rightly or wrongly) expect an even bigger kick in the Ed's than he's already going to get come election time.

By the way, why, when I hear the Tony Blair isn't in any way interested in the Presidency, do I believe he's next in line?

Maybe I'm getting cynical...:lol: ;)

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by dws - 2007/11/05 10:13

The Times October 22 2007

Yet these key transfers of sovereignty from Westminster to Brussels seem to include powers that have been devolved to Edinburgh. One example might prove to be the extension of qualified majority voting in the area of tourism. Will Scottish tourism become a European competence, or will it remain devolved to Scotland? Further examination of the reform treaty seems certain to discover that it would have a far reaching impact on Scottish self-rule. There is no red line to protect Scotland.

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The Scots had a referendum to approve devolution. Any substantial reduction in the scope of Scottish self-government would require a further referendum. Mr Brown is refusing a referendum to the UK. Can he also refuse one to Scotland, a nation with its own government and First Minister, Alex Salmond?

Can Mr Salmond and the SNP allow Scottish powers to be transferred to Europe without Scottish consent? If that consent were sought from the Edinburgh Parliament, would there be a majority to ratify the reform treaty, in respect of Scottish affairs, without a referendum? In the UK Mr Brown may have the power to refuse a referendum, but Mr Salmond may decide to call one in Scotland, as a powerful precedent for the referendum he is already seeking on Scottish independence. I do not see who could stop him – it would not be the Black Watch. Mr Brown does not have the capacity to coerce Scotland, even if his whips can still coerce the House of Commons.

An interesting thought. TLJ, do you still think Gordon Brown should be allowed to push this through " without so much as a by-your-leave"?

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by TLJ - 2007/11/05 18:37

dws wrote:

An interesting thought. TLJ, do you still think Gordon Brown should be allowed to push this through " without so much as a by-your-leave"?

It's an interesting take (although a not unsurprising one) by William Rees-Mogg. The European West Lothian Question !! Of course, the answer is for Scotland to be independent and to participate in the decision making institutions of the EU directly just as the solution to the original WLQ is for Scotland to be independent (or that England has her own Parliament).

The reality is the Westminster has retained powers for UK Foreign Relations and the UK is the Member State = and the issue is also no more than any devolved Parliament of Member State faces. The reality also is that Article III-281 provides that:

1. The Union shall complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector.

To that end, Union action shall be aimed at:

(a) encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector;

(b) promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice;

2. European laws or framework laws shall establish specific measures to complement actions within the Member States to achieve the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

...nothing of which I would disagree with, nothing of which should be seen as contrary to the benefit of Scotland - and nothing of which would cause me to call for a referendum.

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by Robin T Cox - 2007/11/05 21:28

I'm always puzzled by the fact that those who want a referendum about just about every decision taken by the EU, seem to be quite prepared to have the US take over control of our armed forces, and to station their forces and their weaponry on our soil, at the drop of a hat. If that isn't giving away your sovereignty to a foreign country, I don't know what is.

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## Re:EU referendum petition

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Posted by dws - 2007/11/06 12:12

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Robin T Cox wrote:

I'm always puzzled by the fact that those who want a referendum about just about every decision taken by the EU, seem to be quite prepared to have the US take over control of our armed forces, and to station their forces and their weaponry on our soil, at the drop of a hat. If that isn't giving away your sovereignty to a foreign country, I don't know what is.

To whom do you refer?

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by schawaldowris - 2007/11/07 16:12

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I would be more than happy to support a Scottish referendum on the European Union, although there is always the danger that the rest of Europe might not let England in!

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by agentmancuso - 2007/11/07 21:10

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dws wrote:

An interesting slant on democracy there, TLJ:blink:

Government by referendum has nothing to do with democracy; it's majoritarian despotism.

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by dws - 2007/11/07 21:35

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agentmancuso wrote:

dws wrote:

An interesting slant on democracy there, TLJ:blink:

Government by referendum has nothing to do with democracy; it's majoritarian despotism.

Democracy (literally "rule by the people", from the Greek demos, "people", and kratos, "rule") is a form of government. While the term democracy is typically used in the context of a political state, the principles are also applicable to other groups and organizations.

Literally "rule by the people" - not by some stookie who wasn't elected as Prime Minister and is reneging on an electoral promise on a referendum because he's afraid of the answer he might get from the people whom he is supposed to represent.

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by TLJ - 2007/11/07 22:32

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dws wrote:

Democracy (literally "rule by the people", from the Greek demos, "people", and kratos, "rule") is a form of government. While the term democracy is typically used in the context of a political state, the principles are also applicable to other groups and organizations.

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Literally "rule by the people" - not by some stookie who wasn't elected as Prime Minister and is reneging on an electoral promise on a referendum because he's afraid of the answer he might get from the people whom he is supposed to represent.

The UK is a representative democracy, ie the electorate select those persons into whose power they delegate decision making.

The democratic element is the election of our parliamentarians. The representation is through the delegation of power but it most certainly does not mean that our MPs must follow public opinion which (however patronising this sounds) is uninformed (you only need to reflect on threads here such as Who's paying their way ? and Scottish media bias to see that !!)

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by agentmancuso - 2007/11/08 19:22

dws wrote:

Democracy (literally "rule by the people", from the Greek demos, "people", and kratos, "rule") is a form of government. While the term democracy is typically used in the context of a political state, the principles are also applicable to other groups and organizations.

The principles, yes. The practice, no. It is all very well, when deciding which pub to go to next, to ask for a show of hands, and visit the most popular choice. It is not possible to govern a country (or anything else of any size) in such a way. Essential to the notion of democracy is the preservation of stable, neutral institutions of government. Parliamentary democracy, as TLJ has very sensibly said, entails electing officials to make decisions for us. It is in no way undemocratic for GB to go back on an electoral promise; it might be immoral, but it's not undemocratic.

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by dws - 2007/11/08 20:21

Well Gentlemen, you have me (almost) speechless.;

Agentmancuso asserts that in practice there is nothing undemocratic in a party being elected on a promise and then abandoning said promise - it may be morally wrong, but not undemocratic. While my friend Jambo states that The democratic element is the election of our parliamentarians

Agentmancuso, I'd go with morals any day if you are happy with democracy as you see it. A bit of a simplistic analogy to a pub crawl, but, point taken we can't run things by committee. TLJ, are you saying that we get our shot at democracy only at election time and then we leave our Honourable and Right Honourable friends to govern without accountability? Our only way to influence any direction is our vote for a manifesto on polling day (which agentmancuso says doesn't tie the incoming government to even look at it once they are safely ensconced on the green leather)?

Gentlemen, I am not advocating a referendum every week, but for goodness sake listen to yourselves! Those in Westminster are no better than you or I. They certainly do not have the monopoly on common sense, morals, selflessness or towering intellect. TLJ, they are not on average any brighter than the man on the street, and in some cases less informed and more detached from reality (some no doubt read the Sun!). One's position on the EU is besides the point here - if I didn't know better I'd think I'm speaking to two avid supporters of Brussels (for myself, I am undecided).

With the take that you two have on democracy, do you find it any wonder that the percentage of the public who vote is so low?

VOTE FOR WHO YOU WANT, BUT THEY ARE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO DO ANYTHING THEY SAY THEY WILL

Yep, that'll have 'em out in their droves, guys.

P.S. I take it from your positions that you are both against a referendum on independence?

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by agentmancuso - 2007/11/09 08:00

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dws wrote:

Agentmancuso, I'd go with morals any day if you are happy with democracy as you see it.

Happy with the present system? No, it could be improved, and made more democratic by for example, the introduction of a Single Transferable Vote for all elections. (not to mention fixed term parliaments, the transfer of substantial tax raising (and spending) powers to regional assemblies/ local authorities, reform of the upper chamber, abolition of the monarchy and disestablishment of the churches...)

But it cannot be made more democratic by the use of idiot-friendly methods like referendums.

A bit of a simplistic analogy to a pub crawl,

No more simplistic than the reduction of complex issues to a stunted Yes/No option.

are you saying that we get our shot at democracy only at election time and then we leave our Honourable and Right Honourable friends to govern without accountability?

No. We leave them to govern, precisely because they are accountable, and will be judged on their record next polling day. At which point their trustworthiness re their own previous electoral promises can be judged on its own merits.

Those in Westminster are no better than you or I. They certainly do not have the monopoly on common sense, morals, selflessness or towering intellect. TLJ, they are not on average any brighter than the man on the street, and in some cases less informed and more detached from reality (some no doubt read the Sun!).

That's evidently true, but I'm not sure why it's relevant.

One's position on the EU is besides the point here - if I didn't know better I'd think I'm speaking to two avid supporters of Brussels (for myself, I am undecided).

I'm certainly pro-European, in the broader sense, but the present structure is hideously bureaucratic and unwieldy.

VOTE FOR WHO YOU WANT, BUT THEY ARE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO DO ANYTHING THEY SAY THEY WILL

They are under a moral obligation, judgment on which will be visited upon them next polling day, but they are under no legal or democratic obligation.

I take it from your positions that you are against a referendum on independence?

Yes.

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## Re:EU referendum petition

Posted by dws - 2007/11/09 09:41

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agentmancuso wrote:-

Happy with the present system? No, it could be improved, and made more democratic

If I'm reading your definition of democracy correctly, no thank you.

But it cannot be made more democratic by the use of idiot-friendly methods like referendums.

That's a bit condescending, you could equally say "easily understandable". You may consider the electorate to have idiots amongst them, but you would be happy for said idiots to vote in an election and not a referendum. A bit of a paradox there.

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We leave them to govern, precisely because they are accountable, and will be judged on their record next polling day. At which point their trustworthiness re their own previous electoral promises can be judged on its own merits.

And how, precisely are they accountable if they have no need in your eyes to act the way they say they will? In an age where all parties seem to be converging on the middle ground and it's increasingly more difficult to tell them apart, you may as well abandon the concept of elections as well and just have "Buggin's turn".

Party "A" in government, and unpopular. "A" get voted out in favour of "B", who turn out to be as bad, if not worse than "A" (Oh, wait a minute - that's already happened) and we all happily shuffle along and vote accordingly for "A", because being the idiots we are we have the memory span of a gnat and don't remember how bad "A" were in the first place.

As to the independence issue, would you be content if the SNP attained a majority at Holyrood and then declared independence?

Your whole argument seems to suggest that people should be content for every decision, no matter how vital or irreversible, to be decided without the electorate expressing their opinion. Why are you so against the plebs having a say? They have to live with the decision, after all.

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