BRITAIN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION
Views of members of the TEPSA network

This report summarises the ideas and opinions contributed by members of the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) to a survey on questions relating to Britain's membership of the European Union. It contains the following sections:

The survey was conducted between 13 December 2012 and 7 February 2013.

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INTRODUCTION

Successive British governments have declined to take part in important aspects of European policy (the eurozone, the Schengen area, etc.); the present government has created a 'referendum lock' on British participation in future integration; and Prime Minister David Cameron has recently declared that if his party forms a government after the election due in May 2015, it will negotiate a 'new settlement' with Britain's partners and hold a referendum by the end of 2017 on Britain's EU membership.

The question of Britain's relations with the EU has been discussed within TEPSA on a number of occasions, and some of its members have published material on the subject; a list of relevant publications by TEPSA member institutes is given in Annex I.

There is now a possibility that Britain may leave the European Union. At a time when the EU faces major political and economic challenges, this situation is a source of uncertainty both for Britain's European partners and for those British citizens who wish their country to play a constructive role in European affairs. In this debate the points of view of Britain's partners need to be heard. In official forums such as the EU institutions, where government representatives are bound by the conventions of diplomacy, it is difficult to discuss the matter frankly; but in the TEPSA network ideas and opinions can be exchanged more freely.

Members of the network were therefore invited to respond to a series of questions concerning:
- their perception of Britain's role in the EU
- the consequences of Britain's possible departure from the EU
- their advice to the British people concerning relations with the EU

The questions posed are shown in Annex II.

This report summarises the replies received from members of the TEPSA network in 13 countries: Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Greece, Finland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Cyprus, Austria, Lithuania and Croatia.

Since Ireland would be most affected by Britain's departure from the EU, the report includes a special contribution from TEPSA's member institute in Dublin; and concludes with a contribution from TEPSA's member institute in London.

This document does not pretend to be a collective view of TEPSA, and it does not engage the responsibility of member institutes of TEPSA: it is a synthesis of opinions expressed in a number of countries by individuals, by politicians, by political parties and by commentators in the press.

VIEWS FROM THIRTEEN EU MEMBER STATES

1. Perceptions of Britain's role in the EU

The responses showed a wide range of perceptions of Britain's role in the EU. Concerning the positive aspects, the following remarks were made:

'*The general perception is positive. UK membership helped to stabilize the idea of an integrated common European market, and the idea of an attractive EU for those states who had doubts about membership. The UK has helped to strengthen the transatlantic agenda and security links, and to avoid the "continental" temptation to develop an autonomous European defence policy against the USA. It has given a strong impulse to improve the common market and to the enlargement process in Central and Eastern Europe*' (Portugal)

'*'The UK was viewed very positively when Hungary wanted to join the EU; we were thankful for Britain's support and encouragement to enlargement, even if it was understood that it promoted enlargement mainly with the aim of slowing down further deepening. Another important point for citizens from Central and Eastern Europe was that the UK was one of the first EU countries to open its job market for new member states; this generous arrangement benefited many citizens from the region. Similarly, British support for a more liberal Services Directive was also seen with sympathy in the then new member states*' (Hungary)

'*The UK is generally seen as an important and positive force within the EU. A large number of commentators, including ministers, mention its devotion to free trade, better functioning inner market, enlargement and globalization*' (Sweden)

'*The general perception of the role Britain has played in the EU is a positive one. Although the public view the UK as a "semi-detached" country which is sometimes rather difficult in the EU, they warmly embrace the British membership*' (Finland)

'*The UK constitutes a crucial pillar of the European financial centre and investment markets. British traditions, language and cultural variety are a plus for Europe's diversity*' (Luxembourg).

'*We want to see an active Britain in the EU, but we are worried that the current British EU policy will lead to the opposite development. We value Britain's global outlook, pragmatic approach and sound analysis on many global and European developments*' (Finland)

'*The UK played a relevant role in the completion of the internal EU market and to re-launch the topic of a European hard defence. It also allowed other member states to move ahead on the track towards the euro*' (Italy)

Europe for Citizens

'The perception of the UK and its role in the EU is rather positive. It is appreciated that Britain has encouraged the adoption of the single market program, and has often played a role of constructive opposition to various draft EU norms, due to the use of its good system of Regulatory Impact Assessment in assessing them' (Lithuania)

'One can say to the credit of the British that, at least until now, they allow other member states to go ahead with the implementation of new treaty objectives' (Netherlands)

'Through its permanent membership of the UN Security Council, G8 and other multilateral fora, the UK has contributed to upgrading the EU's political influence; it has strengthened the transatlantic partnership due to its special relationship with the USA; and it has boosted the EU's trade agreements with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, and others. Britain's EU membership has contributed to the creation of the Single Market. Although the UK is not member of the eurozone, London's financial sector has global relevance, and has a potential role in the future banking union. Britain has upgraded the EU's cultural impact worldwide, and has contributed by means of its excellence in research and higher education to promoting the EU's economic growth and competitiveness' (Croatia)

'Britain has been an important partner in trying to forge an alliance of countries which support further extension of the principles of the common market, especially in the field of services, and structural reforms and sound public finances. As a NATO partner it is an important contributor to European security' (Lithuania)

'One has to admit that Britain offers pragmatic solutions. In some political domains the British government has shown more commitment than others, particularly in European external relations, development aid and defence' (Luxembourg)

'Britain has a record of timely and dedicated implementation of policies and EU law. Its representatives and functionaries at various levels in the EU institutions and decision-making process tend to be highly reliable and professional in their approach, with an attitude of wanting to get things done' (Malta)

Concerning the negative perceptions of Britain's of EU membership, the following remarks were made:

'The UK's general attitude has been to slow down the process of European integration by remaining always a strong supporter of the intergovernmental method, starting with the budgetary rebate which is based on the principle of cost/benefit analysis, and continuing with the European foreign and security policy which it wants to keep under strict national control Britain is a real brake towards any new project of political union' (Italy)

'We are not fond of the way in which the UK cooperates in the process of developing and deepening the integration process. It seems as if each time a new policy domain is discussed in Brussels, the UK asks for derogation' (Netherlands)

'Editorialists denounce the British policy of "cherry-picking" and the everlasting British quest for opt-outs' (Luxembourg)

'British national strategy sees the European Union as a menu à la carte, with some policies fitting UK's national interest and others not. That creates a sense of mistrust among member states, perhaps natural due to European history' (Portugal)

'There is a sense of disappointment about the attitude of the UK. Our country was a strong supporter of Britain's entry into the Community. Some considered its participation as a counterbalance to the overwhelming role of Germany and France. This proved to be wrong: the UK simply took care of its own national interest' (Italy)

'The British vehemently defend their own interests within the EU, but its functioning is based on the willingness to cooperate and the need to make compromises' (Luxembourg)

'We have negative perceptions of the UK's opt-outs and membership fee. The same rules should apply to all member states. Britain's "hang-ups" in terms of European integration are not always fully understood' (Finland)

'Britain has a Eurosceptic attitude towards deeper EU integration. With its approach to the eurozone, to justice and home affairs policy, to social policy and to financial integration as part of nascent EU economic governance, it has constantly opposed the EU's efforts to federalise' (Croatia)

'Britain is known for its euroscepticism and opt-outs. It is also seen as the country which must be reimbursed by other, even poorer, member states under the rebate system in the framework of the EU's budget. This regime is seen as unfair that should be abolished' (Hungary)

'The general perception of Britain's role in the EU is rather cynical: although the Cypriots love and respect British culture, education and civilization (a majority of them study in Britain for their degrees), Britain's stance on the Cyprus problem has led them to see Britain as a Trojan horse for the USA in the EU' (Cyprus)

'The only major UK initiative has been its unfailing support for enlargement' (Malta)

'During our EU accession process the UK was a tough negotiator concerning the fulfilment of the principles of conditionality. Some media commented that strong EU members such

as the UK are allowed opt-outs from EU policies that conflict with their national interests while candidate countries have to adopt the acquis completely' (Croatia)

'*Flexibility sounds fine, but if you open up to a 28-speed Europe, at the end of the day there is no Europe at all, just a mess. If all countries have individual negotiations followed by referenda, we would have chaos*' (Sweden)

'*The British position is schizophrenic: other member states don't see the EU as a self-service restaurant where you go with your tray, choose what you want, and consume it in your corner*' (Greece)

'*It is not serious to stay within the Union and have the power of common decision-making without accepting the constraints of full EU membership*' (Luxembourg)

Many commentators reported mixed perceptions, underlining the complexity or ambivalence of Britain's role in the EU:

'*The UK is seen as one of the three big, singular and "complicated" members*' (Austria)

'*The general perception concerning Britain's role within the European Union is one of a complicated partner. It is perceived as being mainly interested in a market-oriented union and less inclined to contribute to the development and deepening of a political union*' (Luxembourg)

'*The UK is seen as a slightly eccentric and also quite demanding member (opt-outs, budget exceptions etc.) trying continuously to counterbalance or block a federalist approach and transfers of competences to the EU*' (Luxembourg)

'*It is salutary for the EU to have an internal critical voice, a touch of agnosticism that allows it to look differently at what it is doing, to ensure that all alternative courses of action have been tested, and to put existing policies under scrutiny. But when a member state provides an overdose of this critical spirit, it tends to lose credibility. The UK never really achieved a healthy balance between criticising the EU and maintaining itself as a strong, committed and credible European state at the heart of Europe, perhaps because it never really joined the EU*' (Malta)

'*The UK has a large economic impact and plays an important role internationally, and this contributes to the EU's strength. But it is often perceived as an obstacle to the process of European integration. Its economic concept of the EU stands in contrast to the views of other countries which see it as a political union that works closely together in a large range of areas*' (Luxembourg)

'*Britain's EU membership is seen to be based on three strategic considerations: 1) to maintain a balance of power within Europe, so that no country can achieve hegemony 2) to prevent further integration of the EU, so that it remains primarily commercial and economic in character 3) to perpetuate the EU's reliance on NATO and the USA*' (Cyprus)

'*Critics of the EU view the British position as a counter-balancing power towards German pre-eminence, restraining excessive fiscal/economic integration reflexes that appear to impose "one-size-fits-all" policies. Those who have pro-European views are critical of the ambivalent British position over the evolution of the EU towards a "closer Union", considering Britain as a drag if not an outright threat to Europe's future*' (Greece).

'*The UK is perceived as a member that wants to lead (especially in foreign policy and security affairs, and in economic competition) but which does not want to take responsibility and show solidarity. Together with Germany and France it is seen as belonging to the unofficial "directorate". It has an ambivalent relation to "the continent", is a hindrance to integration and coherence, and insists on its own advantages without a sense for the others*' (Austria)

'*The role of UK is generally seen through the lens of British exceptionalism (opt-outs from Schengen & EMU). It is perceived as always opting for privileged status and a kind of isolationism within the EU*' (Croatia)

Comments on Britain's domestic situation included:

'*Sections of the most influential parts of the British press and media have for years been openly hostile and biased against the EU. It is hard to say whether their objective is to inform and criticise or to crusade against the EU*' (Malta)

'*In Britain there is a populist political behaviour which constantly blames Europe in order to pursue electoral profit*' (Portugal)

'*The UK is not seen any more as an "Empire", but with a heavy load of self-made structural problems in its economy as well as in its social fabric*' (Austria)

Some commentators also mentioned the question of Scotland, which is due to hold a referendum on independence in 2014:

'*If Britain departs from the EU, there is the issue of the terms under which it would leave - or part of it, for will Scotland leave?*' (Malta)

'*If Britain decides to leave the EU, what will be the position of Scotland? What will happen to the Conservative Party?*' (Austria)

2. Consequences of Britain's possible departure from the EU

Most commentators considered that a British departure from the EU would be more negative for the UK than for the EU:

'*If the UK turns its back on Europe it would weaken both Europe and Britain. In the first place the effects would be felt by the UK, but it could also result in a more introvert and less open EU*' (Sweden)

'*We judge the possibility of a British departure from the EU as a negative political fact, but more for the UK itself than for the future of the EU. The main features of the EU are already largely without UK participation: a multi-level Europe is already in place*' (Italy)

'*If the UK would prefer to withdraw from the EU, it would be to the disadvantage not only of the EU (particularly for the credibility of its common foreign and security policy) but also of the UK. That being said, the main consequences of a British withdrawal will be for the account and responsibility of the UK itself*' (Netherlands)

'*If the majority in Britain wants to leave the EU, then that choice must be respected. One of the positive outcomes of this would be that the process of EU integration would encounter less internal difficulties. However, the internal political balance in the EU would be changed*' (Malta)

'*The general perception is that British withdrawal would be terrible for both European and British interests. On one hand, it would undermine the positive goals achieved. On the other one, it would weaken the UK's position in the international arena, jeopardize its economic ties with member states, and diminish its influence in European politics*' (Portugal)

'*The UK's departure would weaken the political, economic and military weight of both the EU and the United Kingdom, and this at a time when the EU's weight in relation to other regions of the world is already dwindling. It could also damage the relationship with the US government since the UK forms an overseas-bridge for the EU to the US and vice versa*' (Luxembourg)

Other commentators emphasized the consequences of a British departure for the EU or their own country.

'*Without Britain, the EU would probably be seen as a far weaker actor on the international level; in the logic of a geographically all-inclusive political project, an EU without the UK is difficult to imagine... but not impossible*' (Luxembourg)

Europe for Citizens

'The UK's departure from the EU would represent a serious blow to the EU's credibility and integrity. It could put into question some of the EU's historical achievements, and (in a pessimistic scenario) have a domino effect which would endanger the existence of the EU and its foundations' (Croatia)

'Britain's exit would be against our economic interests, since we have both highlighted the need for structural reform and further liberalization in the EU' (Finland)

'Britain's departure from the EU would be bad for our country and for the EU as a whole' (Lithuania)

'With the departure of Britain, the EU might be "relieved" at losing one of its toughest critics and opponents, but on the other hand, it would lose one of its key actors in terms of economy and foreign policy. Seen from the outside world, it would signal a weaker EU, characterised by internal discord, which would be highly detrimental to the image of the Union' (Hungary)

'Our country has invested an immense amount of political, financial and human capital in the EU accession process; if the Union that we were so eager to join now faces the risk of disintegration, it creates an unwelcome environment' (Croatia)

Some respondents commented on the political dilemma faced by Britain:

'On the one hand, the measures necessary to keep the euro afloat (the development of an ever-closer union of members of the eurozone) are not an option which the UK seems able to accept, but on the other hand this ever-closer-core without the UK sitting at the table is disturbing for a British Government. Staying inside the EU, but outside the core, would slowly but surely weaken the UK's ability to influence the part in which it is really interested (the single market) as well as its international prestige' (Luxembourg)

'Britain will try to push the EU to become more flexible and to move towards a kind of Europe à la carte. It cannot succeed in this, as it would weaken the Union, slow down the integration process and lead to fragmentation. But if Britain does not succeed, its politicians and citizens will feel frustrated and the wish to leave the EU will be stronger' (Hungary)

'It is understood here that British political elites are playing domestic politics, trying to manoeuvre between an increasingly eurosceptic public at home and the EU partners, but it is hoped that this process will not lead to the exit of the UK. The optimistic scenario is that the review of EU membership undertaken by the British government may lead to a debate inside the EU on the need to review regulatory norms which impede the flexibility of the labour market and the competitiveness of the EU economy' (Lithuania)

'The British government and political parties are in a really difficult strategic situation, since neither way (in or out) can be completely satisfactory. But then, isn't it like that for every member state?' (Luxembourg)

Some respondents expressed doubt that the UK will leave the EU:

'The main idea is that the UK will not depart from EU and that Mr. Cameron is trying to balance the goal to stay in the EU with the internal refusal of a deeper European integration' (Portugal)

3. Advice to the British people concerning relations with the EU

'Do not withdraw. The balance between advantages and disadvantages of withdrawal would clearly be a negative one for the UK, for its business and for its citizens' (Netherlands)

'Vote 'no' to leaving the EU if there is a referendum. An exit would be a disadvantage both for the EU and (more so) for the UK. It's better in times of global crises to stay integrated than to stay outside' (Austria)

'British people should carefully consider the advantages that the UK might lose if it leaves the EU. It could lead to a weakening of its financial role as one of the main world markets, and to a greater subordination to US global policies. The UK would turn into less than a medium power'. (Italy)

'Out of the EU, the UK's influence in world affairs is likely to diminish. The way world politics are evolving, it is difficult for any European state to compete on its own against China, the USA, Russia, the EU, India and Brazil. An EEA type of agreement may be possible for the UK, but it would also have to contribute to the EU budget. Since most of its trade is with the EU it would still have to comply with salient parts of EU legislation' (Malta)

'The best advice we can give is to reflect on five questions: Would departure from the EU improve the British economy? Would it give Britain the role that it has been looking for since the end of the British Empire? Would it create a firewall towards problems of the eurozone? Would it strengthen the Anglo-American relationship? Would it generate more cohesion and prosperity in Britain's neighbourhood, the European continent? The answer to these questions is surely no' (Portugal)

'Britain should continue to play a role of constructive opposition, and make use of existing opt-outs, if this reflects the position of a majority of British citizens rather than leaving the EU' (Lithuania)

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'It is important for British citizens to have a transparent and objective insight into the EU's functioning, without the rhetoric of populist politicians. You should take a long-term perspective when considering leaving the EU, and not decide only on the basis of difficulties experienced in a period of crisis. By leaving the EU, the UK would lose a significant part of its political power and would be less influential. As part of the EU it exercises power and augments its influence worldwide. The EU is an answer to the challenges and risks of globalization, and you would hardly be better off standing outside. Your stake in EU decision-making is absolutely crucial: the UK needs to be at the table when decisions are being made for most of the European continent' (Croatia)

'The British government should show to its fellow countrymen the importance of the European construction for the EU in general and for the UK in particular' (Luxembourg)

'It is not the amount of money that a member state pays or gets that should be the decisive factor, but rather the success of the project of peace and freedom for the benefit of all European citizens, including British citizens' (Luxembourg)

'The cost-benefit analysis of British EU membership should be conceived in the widest sense, namely in terms of high politics (influence on international affairs as a member of the EU), economy and trade, the EU budget, participation in EU policies, influence in EU decisions and legislation, etc. During the public debate it should be made clear what Britain (with all its rights, opportunities and obligations as a member state) would gain and what it would lose on leaving. By the time of a referendum, this would help citizens to make a decision based on facts rather than on stereotypes and generalisations.' (Hungary)

'If one wishes to change the EU regulation of the Single Market, one should work within the system rather than outside it' (Finland)

'The EU is needed as a peace project, for spreading democracy and creating wealth. The challenges are vast, but the worst option is to give up and leave' (Sweden)

'We would advise the British people to become better team-players and more Europe-minded, so as to help the EU increase its benign power and ethical influence in the world' (Cyprus)

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A VIEW FROM DUBLIN

Dáithí O'Ceallaigh, Director General of the Institute of International and European Affairs, Dublin

Neighbourly concern

The UK and Ireland joined the European Economic Community at the same time in 1973. Now, on the fortieth anniversary of their membership, the possibility that the relationship between the UK and the EU may change fundamentally is a matter of serious concern in Ireland.

Relations between the UK and Ireland have never been better. In March 2012, the Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Prime Minister David Cameron signed an ambitious Joint Statement of Cooperation, which set out a programme of work to further strengthen the British-Irish relationship over the next ten years. The wide range of shared interests and opportunities for bilateral cooperation between the two countries was acknowledged in the statement: business and trade relations, education, research and development, the creative sectors, energy and the agri-food sector.

The Joint Statement also highlighted the areas of common interest between the UK and Ireland in Europe. The two states share similar economic views, including on the single market, financial services, free trade and corporate taxation, as well as a commitment to the enlargement of the EU. For this reason, Britain's involvement in the EU has been perceived positively in Ireland. However, Britain and Ireland have always approached the EU differently. While the UK views the EU primarily as an opportunity to pursue its economic interests, Ireland has been a more dedicated participant in the wider political aspects of EU membership because membership gives it the opportunity to exercise influence over the decisions that affect its own interests.

Britain's disengagement from the EU could pose a serious challenge to Ireland's positive engagement with the EU and its commitment to remain a member of "core Europe". If the UK were to succeed in excepting itself from other areas of EU policy, while retaining access to the single market, this would open the prospect of a rule-constrained Ireland being out-competed by a newly aggressive neighbour, which is already Ireland's closest competitor in many areas, including in the attraction of inward investment.

If David Cameron's strategy of renegotiation/repatriation were to be unsuccessful and the UK were to withdraw from the EU, it could disrupt the free movement of goods and people between Ireland and the UK (Ireland's largest trading partner), as well as undermine bilateral cooperation in important policy areas. Given the considerable influence of British media in Ireland, a UK exit could also affect popular support in Ireland for European integration. Within the EU, Ireland would lose a key ally on many economic issues.

An important factor that seems to be neglected in the UK's debate on Europe is the possible effect of changes in the UK-EU relationship on the still fragile political and social situation in Northern Ireland. The disengagement of the UK from the EU could upset the delicate compromise in Northern Ireland, which requires constant oversight by the governments in London and Dublin. The UK's possible opt-out from pre-Lisbon police and justice measures in 2014 could impact on the effectiveness of valuable police cooperation and risks undermining the fight against cross-border terrorism. Efforts to develop an all-island approach in certain policy areas, such as energy, environmental and health policy, could also be undermined if an external border of the EU ran through the island of Ireland. In a worst-case scenario, barriers to trade and the free movement of people could see customs and border controls being re-introduced on the Irish border.

Should the UK withdraw altogether from the EU, Ireland would need special arrangements in order to maintain its close bilateral relations with the UK while remaining a member of "core Europe". For now, it is to be hoped that this will not be necessary. As a close partner of the UK with an understanding of Britain and its debate on Europe, Ireland should argue for continued British membership of the EU, emphasising the high costs of disengaging from Europe, particularly for Northern Ireland. In the EU, Ireland may be able to assist the case for a fair debate on David Cameron's proposed reforms and to explain British concerns to EU members that are less familiar than Ireland with the UK's internal debate on Europe.

A VIEW FROM LONDON
Brendan Donnelly, Director of the Federal Trust, London

Politics and reality

Prime Minister Cameron's speech about Europe on 22nd January can best be understood as an exercise in the management of his fractious Conservative Party. Although he is no enthusiast for the European Union, it is not so high in his list of priorities as it is for others in his party, both in Parliament and in the constituencies. There are however many Conservatives for whom the United Kingdom's exit from the EU, or at least the radical redefinition of its position within the EU, is a major political priority.

Mr. Cameron's hold on the leadership of the Conservative Party these days is not robust. Many of his colleagues blame him for not winning an absolute majority for the Party in the General Election of 2010. Britain's economic performance under his premiership has been disappointing. A large number of Conservatives see Mr. Cameron and his advisers as favouring a socially liberal brand of Conservatism which they find unattractive. So he does not wish to add Europe to the list of topics on which he is thought to stand outside the mainstream of his party.

Mr. Cameron knew before his speech of 22nd January that the promise of a European referendum was the minimum necessary to stabilize his leadership of the party. It was also important for his management of the party that he should not give an unqualified commitment to campaign in a future referendum on the pro-European side. Renegotiation of Britain's terms of EU membership, after the General Election of 2015, followed by a referendum, was Mr. Cameron's response to the internal political pressure in his party. Despite the party's generally positive response to his new ideas about Britain's position in Europe, there are aspects of his strategy to which opponents in the party will draw increasingly critical attention.

It is not sure that the Conservative Party will be in government after 2015 to carry out his European policy. In any case, it is unlikely that a significant renegotiation of the terms of British membership will be possible. This was well illustrated by a devastating article from the German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle in "The Times" of London on 30th January, which made clear just how far from political reality is Mr. Cameron's aspiration of a substantial renegotiation. Mr Westerwelle wrote: 'There are no rights without duties. There can be no cherry-picking. Saying "You either do what I want or I'll leave!" is not an attitude that works, either in personal relationships or in a community of nations. One thing is not negotiable from Germany's point of view. For us the EU

is far more than just a single market; it is a community united for peace and the shaping of our common destiny.'

If Mr. Cameron is Prime Minister after 2015, and holds a referendum in 2016 or 2017, he will have to make a choice between recommending "yes" on the basis of a renegotiation that will be at best cosmetic, or "no" on the basis that his renegotiation has failed. Whichever choice he makes will bring nearer the prospect of an irreparable split of the Conservative Party. Whichever choice he makes, the outcome of a referendum is very difficult to predict.

Moreover, Mr. Cameron's speech in January has probably not succeeded in calming the European question until the next General Election It should not be assumed that the Conservative Party is any sense equally divided between forces favourable to and forces hostile to the European Union. There is a tiny and now predominantly elderly pro-EU fringe within the Party, but the rest of the Party is divided between those who favour "nearly out" and those who favour '"really out." Mr. Cameron is at the moment in the first camp, but there is no guarantee that he or any possible successor will remain there.

The major new component of policy offered to his party by the Prime Minister - renegotiation - has already shown itself to be a delusion, and the party may not be capable of restraining for another two years its resentment at what it sees as its leader's European apathy, waiting for an election which many of them expect him to lose, and which if he won would (in their view) make no significant difference to Britain's situation within the EU. Mr. Cameron has attempted to pre-empt such criticism by stressing his participation in the coalition of EU member states which was successful in obtaining a Medium Term Financial Perspective smaller than that which preceded it. He will however find it difficult to present this tactical success as a strategic model for the more ambitious and controversial enterprise of restructuring the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union.

It cannot easily be predicted how in the long term the other main British political parties will react to Mr Cameron's plans for a European referendum. The Liberal Democrats, who are in the present coalition government with the Conservatives, have traditionally been favourable to referendums. For the Labour Party, its leader Ed Miliband was firm in his first response in rejecting a move by his party in favour of a European referendum. Whether this firmness will endure is another matter. If, as seems likely, the United Kingdom Independence Party does well in the European Elections of 2014, Mr. Cameron himself is likely to come under renewed pressure from within his own party to reinforce his own commitment to a European referendum and perhaps even to bring forward the date on which it may be held.

ANNEX I: RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS BY TEPSA MEMBER INSTITUTES

United Kingdom: The Federal Trust, London

There may be trouble ahead: the Coalition & the European Union
A Federal Trust Report, May 2012
http://www.fedtrust.co.uk/filepool/Theremaybetroubleahead%20WEB.pdf

What would happen if the EU broke up?
John Bruton, November 2012
http://www.fedtrust.co.uk/filepool/Policy_Brief_John_Bruton.pdf

Ireland: The Institute of International and European Affairs, Dublin

Towards an Irish Foreign Policy for Britain
Dáithí O'Ceallaigh & James Kilcourse, August 2012
http://www.iiea.com/publications/towards-an-irish-foreign-policy-for-britain

Beyond the British Veto
Tony Brown, October 2012
http://www.iiea.com/publications/beyond-the-british-veto

Portugal: Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI-UNL), Lisbon

A potência do meio
Carlos Gaspar, Público, 31 January 2013
http://www.publico.pt/jornal

Finland: Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA), Helsinki

British European policy: Will increasing Euroscepticism restore British authority/influence?
Juha Jokela, FIIA Briefing Paper
to be published: http://www.fiia.fi/en/publications/3/

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ANNEX II: SURVEY QUESTIONS

List of questions concerning Britain and the European Union

1. The United Kingdom has been a member of the EU for 40 years. What is the general perception in your country of the role that Britain has played? What are seen as the positive aspects of Britain's membership? What are seen as the negative aspects?

2. In Britain the idea of a referendum on EU membership is now widely discussed. Is Britain's possible exit from the Union a subject of discussion and analysis in your country? What would be the consequences for the EU of Britain's departure?

3. In your view, what advice could people in your country give to the British people concerning their future relations with the EU?

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