ANDREW DUFF'S SPEECH TO THE FEDERAL TRUST CONFERENCE, LONDON, 18 MAY 2016

This referendum campaign has not been an easy one for federalists to enter. The main argument between the two camps is about varying degrees of Euroscepticism – the narcissism of small differences. Ignorance and prejudice about Europe are in large supply.

One cannot vote in the referendum for stronger British engagement in the EU. Nor can one vote for the status quo. The only – and for federalists - unenviable choice is between the hard Brexit of 'Leave' and the soft Brexit of 'Remain'.

So the European Policy Centre should be congratulated for gathering together in this compendium of essays – *Britain and Europe: a new settlement?* - a number of eminent Britons who have had first-hand experience of the working of the EU institutions – those whom Chris Patten has described kindly as 'people who actually know what they are talking about'.

The authors are of different party backgrounds, and of none – as well as of different generations. We do not agree on everything. But we do all agree that on 23 June Britain should vote to remain in the EU. We also agree that, although the UK has not had as much influence on the direction of EU affairs as we would have liked, it has had much more influence than most people think.

Unfortunately, despite the work of many distinguished Britons who have worked in Brussels (Soames, Jenkins, Cockfield and Patten are mentioned), the refusal by successive British governments in London to engage more fully in all aspects of European integration has meant that the UK has never maximised its influence in the EU and that British citizens have been deprived of experiencing the full fruits of what the EU can offer. We all share a sense of unfulfilled potential, of a relationship not properly consummated.

It is certainly clear, however, that a more consistent approach in London to EU policy would have helped both the UK and its EU partners. Instead, we have blown hot and cold over the decades, making us look indecisive at best and perfidious at worst. Where we have engaged fully, the results have been impressive and beneficial: the creation of the single market, a more competitive economic policy, enlargement to the post-Soviet countries, an international trade policy. Where we have not engaged properly – fundamental rights, parliamentary democracy, justice and home affairs, foreign and security policy or defence – the presence of the British has been - and still is - a brake on progress.

Several of the authors have spoken of British potential in CFSP, whereas in reality UK engagement has been more about protecting its own prerogatives and in using protocols and procedures to restrain the development of genuine, substantive agreements between EU partners in international affairs. It was striking that when Mr Cameron set about his great 'reform' of the EU, he neglected entirely to include in his package-deal an effort to get the EU to collaborate more closely with NATO – a development which would have strengthened the security of all of us and discouraged the USA from retreating from European affairs. An opportunity missed. Nor did he pick up the case of CAP reform or advocate a base review of the EU budget – both long overdue.

The essays in this book contain several proposals of a practical and realisable nature to exploit a positive outcome of the referendum to reform British European policy for the better. Many of those ideas would fit into a distinctly British programme for the rotating presidency of the Council which the UK will take up for six months in July next year. They include more progress in single market matters, especially in services, including the digital agenda. An ambitious 'green new deal' would be

well driven by the UK. It would be useful, too, if the UK were to push for agreement on a common template for the use by all member states when they each come to conduct their next security and defence reviews.

So if we choose to remain, the next UK government and parliament will have much work to do to restore Britain's credibility and to re-build trust among our partners. None of this will be possible unless there is a British government with the wit and courage to tell the truth at home about the scale and scope of European integration and to dispel the fear and suspicion of the EU that is so widespread in British public opinion.

Whatever happens on 23 June, the pace of integration on the mainland will quicken thereafter. The EU is impelled by its two biggest challenges of the euro crisis and the refugees to make big changes. If the UK is still a player in the game next year it must stick to the word of the prime minister, in the making of the Decision of 19 February, that the UK will not impede the progress that our partners need to make not least in the way of deeper fiscal integration – with all the attendant moves to democratic federal government that that implies.

Is it too much to hope that the searing experience of the Brexit referendum will lead us never to repeat such a self-indulgent and dangerous exercise that toys with the national and the European interest? Could we possible hope that the UK, having learned some lessons, will stop from always being part of Europe's problems, and start – at last – to be a durable and trustworthy part of the solution to those problems?