
THE

STRONG

VOICE

IN

EUROPE



The Conservative Manifesto
for the European Elections

14 JUNE 1984

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FOREWORD

BY THE PRIME MINISTER

THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, FRS, MP.

Britain joined the European Community with a vision.

We saw opportunities for trade and greater prosperity. But we also saw in the Community the promise of peace and security, an alliance in which endeavour, enterprise and invention could flourish.

For the first time in history, the very idea of an armed conflict between the countries of Western Europe has become unthinkable. As we celebrate the anniversary of D-Day, we shall also be celebrating almost 40 years of peace among the nations of Europe.

Membership of the Community has had its problems. But we have tackled them with courage and vigour.

When the European Parliament was directly elected five years ago, we Conservatives promised that our Government would defend Britain's vital national interests. We have kept our promise. Today, Britain's voice in Europe is strong and clear, and its message is respected by our partners.

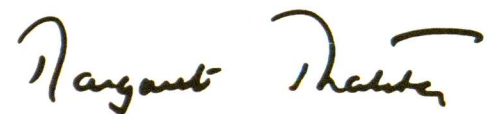
We have been right to fight for improvements to the Common Agricultural Policy and for a fairer system of finance.

We want these things so that we can put behind us the endless haggling over money and begin to develop the full potential of the Community.

These coming European elections are part of our commitment to peace with freedom and justice.

It is vital that Britain's voice remains strong in Europe. We do not want to see our accomplishments and our future damaged by those who seek only to destroy what has already been achieved.

That is why I ask for your support on June 14th.



1. THE CONSERVATIVE COMMITMENT

These elections are about who can best represent your interests in the European Community. This Manifesto explains why the policies of the Conservative Government, together with a strong Conservative team in the European Parliament, are the best guarantee of British interests in Europe and the best means of securing a prosperous and successful European Community. We are in the Community to stay because that is in Britain's interest and in Europe's. We intend to see that it succeeds.

Conservatives share the ideals which underpin the Community — safeguarding peace, stability and democracy in Europe, recognising our common destiny, and making the best use of our resources so as to secure the prosperity of our citizens. We want to see it playing an important role in strengthening democracy across the world. We have made, and will continue to make, a positive and constructive contribution to turn those ideals into reality. This requires practical proposals and a resolute approach to negotiations rather than empty rhetoric.

Five years ago, therefore, we called for an end to the confused and half-hearted approach to the Community which was all that a deeply-divided Labour Party could offer.

In both the general election and the European elections of 1979, the Conservatives won a clear victory.

Since then we have shown that it is possible to be true to Britain *and* true to Europe. We have set to work to win agreement on essential reforms; to assert the major role which Britain should play in the Community; to establish a more effective Community voice in the world; and to secure, in co-operation with our partners, an economic recovery which will provide jobs for our people on a lasting basis.

After five years we have a record of solid achievement in Europe.

- Our firm economic policies at home are restoring the economic health of Britain, giving us the fastest growth rate of the Ten, and we are helping to lead the Community out of recession.
- We have won agreement that there must be a fairer Community budget system. Pending its achievement, we have negotiated budget refunds of £2,500m for the last four years.
- We have won Community agreement that there must be effective and guaranteed control of spending, including agriculture.
- For the first time in the history of the Common Agricultural Policy, support prices have been reduced and open-ended guarantees removed for products in surplus. While bringing about these reforms, we have fought for a fair deal for British farmers, who now produce more of our food than ever before.
- We have secured a Common Fisheries Policy which provides a good deal for British fishermen and long-term security.
- We have helped consumers by keeping the rise in food prices below the rate of inflation.
- We have secured reforms in the European Social Fund so that it provides more help to Britain's unemployed, particularly young people training for new jobs.
- We have secured important new measures under the Regional Fund to help create new industrial opportunities in the steel, shipbuilding and textile areas of the UK.
- We have won agreement on measures to make the Common Market more effective, to move towards freer trade in insurance and transport services, and to give greater priority to scientific and technical co-operation.

Our record is in sharp contrast to that of the Labour Party. We have had to make good its failure to secure any reforms when it was in office, or to develop Community activities in ways of benefit to this country. The warring

factions within the Labour Party have made it incapable of achieving anything for Britain in Europe. Its irresponsible threat to withdraw from the Community has damaged the reputation of Britain and made our negotiations more difficult.

Nor do the Liberal and SDP parties offer an alternative. Their policies are vague, they are inexperienced, and they are united only in their unwillingness to defend British interests.

In the European elections on June 14th we are seeking fresh endorsement of Conservative policies designed to promote British interests in the Community, and the election of a strong Conservative team in the European Parliament. Over the next weeks and months the work of these last five years of tough and persistent negotiations will come to fruition. We look to the electors to support us, to vote Conservative — for Britain and for a better Community.

2. A COMMUNITY WITH A WORLD ROLE

Conservatives believe that Community membership increases the influence of the United Kingdom and strengthens our ability to direct our own destiny in the world. The Ten working together can have more influence on matters of foreign policy, economic policy and trade than they can have separately.

Improving co-operation on foreign policy

Conservatives want to see the Community taking the initiative on world problems, not just reacting to them. We want to create a more hopeful relationship between East and West. That is why we have taken the lead in improving co-operation among the Ten on foreign policy. We will continue to strengthen the arrangements for working together, though we will insist that the procedures remain flexible and unbureaucratic.

We recognise the importance of preserving and strengthening our friendship with our great ally, the United States, which since World War II has done so much to secure liberty and prosperity in Europe. We share the objectives of maintaining peace and protecting our freedoms. We believe that a stronger and more united Europe is in the interests of the Western Alliance as a whole.

NATO is the right forum for co-ordination of Western defence. Closer European co-operation on the purchase and production of defence equipment is in Britain's interest and in Europe's, and can help to promote European industrial development and innovation. We would also like to see even greater co-operation on defence and security among members of the Community. We welcome recent moves towards more discussion among the Ten of the political and economic aspects of security.

Enlargement

Enlargement of the Community to include Spain and Portugal will strengthen democracy and security in Western Europe. We wish to see these negotiations brought to a conclusion as soon as possible, so that the wish of both countries to join on January 1st 1986 can be met.

A trading community

The trading strength of the Ten combined is unrivalled; their share of world trade is half as large again as that of the United States. The Community has numerous trading agreements with developed and developing countries. Its potential influence is therefore very great.

Free trade is essential for world prosperity. The Community should use its strength to increase freedom of trade. It must not try to solve its internal problems by adopting protectionist measures. The protectionist policies of the Labour Party are bad for consumers, bad for industry, and bad for Britain.

Conservatives will work for:

- freer trade in services, a field in which Britain leads the world;
- a Community policy to roll back protectionism, in agricultural as well as industrial products;
- action to ensure that Japan opens her markets more rapidly to imports and investment;
- the opening up of markets in newly industrialised countries;
- measures to deal effectively with unfair practices by other countries and to provide breathing space for Community industries in difficulties. Conservatives in the European Parliament have taken a leading role in making Community action against unfairly subsidised imports more effective;
- action to solve our trading differences with the United States in a way which defends our legitimate interests, notably in agriculture, company law and taxation;
- action to promote economic co-ordination and greater exchange rate stability.

Helping the Third World to help itself

The less developed countries take 40 per cent of the Community's exports. In turn they supply us with many of our raw materials. The Community's trade and aid policies towards these countries should reflect this degree of interdependence and be designed to meet humanitarian needs, to encourage self-sufficiency and to further our trading and political interests.

The European Community and its member states provide more than a third of all the aid given to the developing world. The Lomé Convention, now being renegotiated, provides 63 African, Caribbean and Pacific States (34 of them Commonwealth members) with the most comprehensive trade and aid arrangements between the developed and developing worlds. In addition, the Community programme of aid to other countries in the Third World, including India, has been growing steadily.

Resources are limited, but we will work to maintain an open trading environment, to avoid waste in aid programmes, and to promote investment in developing countries.

We want British industry and commerce to be able to make more of the opportunities offered by the Community's aid programme. We will continue to make the quality of Community aid more effective, particularly so that it contributes to self-reliance in food production. Food aid plays an important part in fighting famine in the Third World, but it should not be used merely as an outlet for Community surpluses.

3. RECOVERY IN EUROPE: POLICIES FOR JOBS

Conservatives recognise that the member states of the European Community are today more dependent upon one another than they have ever been. So we each have a vital interest in our collective success. That is why relaunching and reviving the Community is of major importance to this country. Our policies in Britain have cut inflation and restored business confidence. Our partners in Europe, regardless of party or ideology, are now following similar policies with positive results.

These policies provide the essential foundation for sustained European recovery with improving job opportunities. The more Community member states work together to promote them, and the more we exploit the potential of a common market of 270 million consumers, the greater will be the benefits. We look at Community policies on their merits. When it is clear that Community action is more effective than national action alone, we wholeheartedly support it.

At Community level, just as in Britain, practical Conservative policies to control expenditure, eliminate waste and set industry free, provide the best prospect of creating new jobs which will last. That is why Conservatives believe that the greatest single contribution from the Community need cost no money at all – it is to make a reality of the common market.

Removing obstacles to trade within the Community and opening up a genuine common market in goods and services will boost industrial competitiveness, reduce costs, extend consumer choice, and improve prospects for employment. But if we are to exploit fully the opportunities this provides, we also need to ensure fair competition and make our economies more flexible and responsive to change.

Fair Community competition rules must be enforced, small businesses encouraged, new technologies developed, and older industries made more competitive. Community funds and financial instruments should be used to help achieve these ends. These policies will

strengthen Europe's future as the centre of invention and creative endeavour which it should be.

Already over two million British jobs depend on our trade with the rest of the Community, which provides by far our largest market. Furthermore, much investment from other countries such as the United States and Japan comes to Britain, bringing new jobs in advanced industries, because we are guaranteed tariff-free access to this vast common market.

Opening up the market

Although customs tariffs and quotas have gone, too many barriers to trade remain. The French lorry drivers' protest vividly illustrated the problems. We must make faster progress towards a Community-wide market where those with goods and services to sell can go about their business with a minimum of restrictions and burdens. In particular, we shall strive to:

- eliminate costly delays and bureaucracy at frontiers within the Community;
- make public purchasing more open and competitive;
- create a common market for financial and other services, which is particularly important to Britain as the financial centre of Europe;
- promote faster progress towards mutual recognition of proper professional qualifications;
- agree a definite and detailed timetable for the removal of non-tariff barriers to trade.

These changes will help businesses. But they will also help the individual as consumer, as traveller, as student, as earner, or as job seeker.

Trade within the Community is too often obstructed by a jungle of conflicting national laws. We shall work for simpler laws and common trading standards across Europe. But we shall resist harmonisation for its own sake.

Small businesses

Experience shows that small businesses can generate many of the new job opportunities. Our policies for

simplifying trade, reducing frontier formalities and easing bureaucratic burdens will help small firms grow and create more jobs. We shall continue to champion their interests.

Developing Europe's technological and industrial potential

This is a key to the future prosperity of the Community. **We will:**

- promote common efforts on research and innovation such as the ESPRIT programme on information technology, and the new programmes on telecommunications and bio-technology: the costs of such work are often too great for individual countries or companies;
- encourage training programmes for the new technology industries;
- seek to remove obstacles to joint European ventures and investment, and encourage industrial co-operation;
- continue to support Europe's aerospace industry through collaborative efforts such as Airbus Industries' A320 and the EH 101 helicopter, which the Conservative Government helped to launch;
- support Community efforts to rationalise traditional industries such as steel and shipbuilding on a fair basis.

Community funds

We recognise that Community funds can play a useful role in supporting these policies. The UK benefits from these funds, and from the activities of the European Investment Bank. **We will:**

- continue to insist on an increase in the share of non-agricultural spending in the Community Budget, including the Regional and Social Funds;
- ensure that resources are used where they are most needed;

- work to ensure that enlargement does not lead to our own problem areas being deprived of a fair share of Community support;
- ensure that lending by the European Investment Bank particularly benefits small businesses.

Conditions of employment

We have strongly supported the Community's efforts to promote high common standards of health and safety at work. But the Community should not impose detailed and binding rules without regard to differing national practices. Such rules are more likely to destroy jobs than create them.

Good employers need no urging to consult their employees and inform them properly. We want the practices of the best firms to become the norm. But the emphasis must be on voluntary arrangements. We shall therefore resist attempts to impose excessively rigid systems of legislative compulsion in matters which are better agreed between employers and employees.

Monetary co-operation

Uncertainty about interest rates and exchange rates is bad for trade. We support the objectives of more stable exchange rates and financial conditions, which require above all a common commitment to policies which will master inflation. The question of sterling participation in the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System remains under regular review. We should only take that step when the conditions are right, both for us and for our partners. We support the increasing commercial use of the ECU in Community trade and finance. We have already removed all serious obstacles to its use in this country, and will urge our partners to do the same.

Transport

We attach a high priority to increasing freedom of competition in transport. **We are pressing for:**

- easing of the unduly restrictive quota of Community road haulage permits, and their eventual abolition, to enable free movement of goods across the EEC;

- Community agreement to counteract protectionism in world shipping and to act against unfair and disruptive action from Eastern bloc countries;
- more competition in air passenger transport to provide a greater variety of service and encourage lower fares.

Energy policy

We will work to:

- encourage energy conservation and development of our own energy resources;
- continue moves to realistic and fair energy pricing throughout the Community;
- ensure contingency arrangements in case of future oil crises;
- promote a healthy and competitive coal industry.

Environment and conservation

The UK has long been a pioneer in fighting pollution. Much pollution crosses frontiers, in water or in the air. So policies for the environment are a proper concern for the Community if they are to be effective, and if there is to be fair competition within European industry. Measures must strike a fair balance between the protection of the environment and the need to contain industrial costs.

Within the Community we will work for:

- the elimination of lead in petrol for new vehicles by 1990;
- Community action to control cross-frontier movements of hazardous wastes;
- more research to find practical answers to the problem of acid rain;
- proper assessment of the environmental effects of major industrial development projects before approval;
- Community assistance in cleaning up polluted rivers such as the Mersey.

We have taken the lead in promoting Community action for a ban on the import of whale products, and secured measures for the protection of seals and wild birds.

Consumers

A concern for consumer interests runs right through our policies on the Community. Our commitment to a realistic agricultural pricing policy, and to creating greater Community-wide competition and choice, will benefit the consumer. The consumer interest is not best protected by excessive intervention in the market-place in the name of consumer protection. But Community consumer measures are justified when barriers to trade are caused by different national approaches to consumer protection; and when safety is involved.

4. SECURING REFORMS

In Europe as in Britain we are the radical party leading the way to necessary change. Since 1979 we have worked to persuade our partners that the Community must set its own house in order if it is to tackle the major external challenges. We have argued that a budgetary system which imposes unfair burdens on Britain or any other country and which provides no firm control of spending, is damaging to the unity and effectiveness of the Community. Prolonged annual haggles are not a sensible way of dealing with the problem. We are seeking a solution which takes this item off the agenda, so that we can all devote our energies to making the Community more of a force to be reckoned with in the world.

We have put forward this case with determination and persistence — and with increasing success. While continuing to press for long-term reforms, we have secured interim arrangements for British refunds of £2,500m, two-thirds of what our budget contribution would otherwise have been. In contrast, the Labour Government presided over a rapid increase in Britain's budget burden, approaching £1 billion in their last year of office. Its formal 'renegotiation' used up much goodwill towards Britain, yet it failed to secure any relief whatsoever.

At the Stuttgart Summit last June, the Prime Minister secured the agreement of our partners to launch a major negotiation to establish a fairer distribution of burdens; to curb the growth of expenditure, particularly on the CAP; to develop new policies; and to examine the Community's revenue needs. And in the European Parliament, our MEPs won agreement that long-term budgetary arrangements were necessary if the Community was to make progress.

Since then we have been involved in long and tough negotiations to complete this agenda. Once again, it is the Conservatives who, by their commitment to the Community, their consistent approach, and their resolute defence of British interests, are securing real progress and real reform.

The Budget: discipline and fairness

Conservative policies of financial prudence must apply in the Community as well as in Britain. More has to be done, in addition to the work of the Court of Auditors and the budgetary control activities of the European Parliament, to bring Community spending under control.

We have now secured the agreement of our partners to a system of budgetary discipline. A maximum level of overall expenditure will be fixed each year, and the rate of growth of agricultural expenditure (which accounts for two-thirds of the total budget) will be held below the rate of growth of Community revenue. We shall ensure that budgetary discipline becomes a full part of the Community's procedures.

Strict budgetary discipline will not in itself guarantee a fairer distribution of budget burdens. This is why we have persuaded our partners to accept a new system which will ensure that in future no member state will bear a budget burden disproportionate to its relative prosperity within the Community.

Agriculture

In the last two decades we have seen major improvements in efficiency and productivity in farming throughout the Community. Meanwhile the Common Agricultural Policy has given farmers guarantees of good prices for what they produced, whether or not there was a market for it. As a result, the Community is faced with surplus production on a scale which has been getting out of control. Demand is stagnant and attempts to dispose of surpluses on world markets threaten to bring us into conflict with our trading partners outside the Community. The rapid rise in agricultural spending has brought the Community up against the limit of its financial resources.

Conservatives recognise the benefit of secure food supplies and more stable prices brought about by the CAP, and the part the policy has played in easing difficult social changes in the countryside. But the CAP has become the victim of its own success. We must tackle the problems of costs and surpluses now so that it can be

placed on a basis which will safeguard the future of a healthy agricultural industry, and preserve the quality of our rural heritage.

Our new system of budgetary discipline, combined with the package of measures agreed by Agriculture Ministers in March this year, marks a significant reform of the operation of the CAP and a first major step towards control of agricultural spending.

British agriculture. Under the Conservatives, British agriculture has prospered while the price of food in the shops has risen less quickly than other prices. This is a record of real achievement. Conservatives, as the national party, have to strike a balance between farmers, consumers and taxpayers. We wholly oppose the anti-farmer attitudes of the Labour Party. Its policies for the CAP, and for the rerating of agricultural land and nationalisation of tenanted land, would drastically cut British agricultural production and drive tens of thousands of farmers and agricultural workers off the land. Labour talk of cutting agricultural costs, while advocating a policy which could cost the British taxpayer £2.25 billion per year.

Controlling surpluses. The removal of open-ended guarantees for products in surplus, or likely to be in surplus, has now been agreed by Ministers. The Plumb Report, drafted by the leader of Conservative MEPs, and adopted by the European Parliament, was the first Community document to recognise the need for this.

A rigorous price policy is essential in order to help reduce surplus production and the costs of disposal and to make the agricultural industry more responsive to market conditions. We have agreed this year, for the first time in the history of the CAP, price reductions or a price freeze on nearly all major products.

Problem sectors. Because of the huge cost of surpluses in the *milk* sector, a special supplementary levy has been introduced for milk production for five years. All dairy farmers face a difficult period, but we believe that this system is the fairest and most effective that could be secured. It is also important that the real price of

cereals should be reduced in order to restore the balance between the livestock sector and the major arable crops. The agreement to reduce the price of most cereals this year is a step in the right direction.

Agricultural trade. Conservatives insist that the Community must not try to solve the problems of the CAP at the expense of our trading partners elsewhere. As the European Parliament stated, in adopting the Resolution on Sir Fred Catherwood's Report on this subject, Europe must guard against exporting heavily subsidised agricultural surpluses at the expense of important industrial products. In line with this approach we have successfully opposed an oils and fats tax. We will also work to ensure that the Community stands by its obligations, for example to the ACP countries and, above all, to New Zealand.

Community revenues

In accordance with the agreement at the Stuttgart Summit last year, we have been prepared as part of the overall negotiations to consider an increase in the Community's revenue. But we have made it quite clear that we cannot recommend any such increase to the British Parliament unless there is a final and satisfactory agreement on the new arrangements for effective control of agricultural and other expenditure, and for a fair sharing of the budgetary burden.

Fisheries

The Conservative Government has succeeded in negotiating a Common Fisheries Policy providing British fishermen with secure advantages in our own waters. This policy provides the stability the industry needs for long-term investment and, with effective conservation measures, should secure expanding stocks of fish.

Our achievements contrast with the abject failure of the last Labour Government to make any progress in defending the interests of British fishermen or in negotiating a satisfactory policy. The lost opportunities under Labour made our negotiations longer and more difficult than they need otherwise have been.

We shall continue to ensure that our fishermen get a fair share of the resources available to the Community, and that the policy is enforced even-handedly and managed efficiently. We shall continue to help our industry adapt to the new circumstances that face it with the loss of deep-water fishing opportunities.

5. THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

Since 1979, the directly-elected European Parliament has established for itself a position of real influence at the centre of the Community's decision-making. Its role is to scrutinise and, where necessary, to amend or check proposals for new legislation from the Commission; to control spending; to curb bureaucracy; and to act as the forum where the problems facing the Community can be debated and solutions proposed.

Conservatives have used the Parliament not only to criticise Commission action and bring it into line with Conservative thinking, but also to draw attention to the major reforms the Community needs if it is to survive. They have pressed for the economic and social policies essential to longer-term prosperity.

In their constituencies, the Conservative Members are a vital link between the Community and the voters of this country. They have helped to safeguard the rights of individuals and businesses threatened by bureaucracy or administrative action, and they have fought to ensure that firms and projects in their constituencies receive a fair share of Community resources.

All this has been done by making more effective use of the Parliament's existing powers. Over the next five years the Parliament must consolidate its influence. This can best be done if a direct link is maintained between the Members and their constituents, which is why in the discussions on a uniform electoral procedure Conservatives will continue to attach great importance to the retention of such a link in Britain.

The newly-elected Parliament must give high priority to developing a more consistent and responsible stance on the central issues, notably those relating to the Community Budget. Over the years, the Parliament's say

in how Community funds are spent has increased, but it has little direct responsibility for how the money is raised. It has shown itself unwilling to make cuts in some areas of Community expenditure so that within the limits of available resources other areas might benefit. Conservatives will work to ensure that the Parliament shows itself capable of making political choices of this kind.

On a growing range of issues, the Parliament is regarded as 'the voice of Europe'. It has an important part to play on human rights questions, for example. Conservative MEPs will help to ensure that the European Parliament makes a responsible contribution to the maintenance and expression of the democratic ideals upon which the Community is founded.

These three criteria – effectiveness, consistency and responsibility – allied to a concern to keep the Parliament closely in touch with the electorate, are fundamental to the Conservative approach. This approach has helped us to work very closely on key issues with members from many other like-minded parties across the Community. With these parties the Conservatives have held the initiative on all important issues since 1979, from the Falklands crisis and cruise missiles to policies for economic recovery.

Conservatives have insisted that member states should retain the right to protect their vital national interests in the Council of Ministers by being able to invoke, where necessary, the principle of unanimity. However, we recognise that if the Council is to be an effective decision-making body, a member state's right to block a decision should be used only as a last resort. It is not in our interest that other member states should, without proper justification, veto agreement on measures which would benefit the United Kingdom.

We welcome practical reforms in the workings of the Community institutions. But we do not support attempts to force the pace of institutional reform, especially in ways which might jeopardise the defence of genuinely vital national interests or which would not command the necessary degree of common agreement and public support.

6. A STRONG COMMUNITY

The Community is founded on a great deal more than the pursuit of ten differing national interests. Compromises have to be reached and differing aspirations reconciled. The Community may, on occasion, be troubled by short-term conflicts. But these should not obscure the immense progress made in building a new Europe over the past few years. With the right leadership the Community is an association of immense potential, whose achievements in the future should dwarf what has been achieved to date. If the leadership of the Community were to fall into the wrong hands, the price of stagnation will be high in the short term but far greater for future generations.

In Europe, as in Britain, we are in the vanguard of those seeking modernisation and change. Our policies in Britain and our policies in the European Community stand together. Strict control of finance and elimination of waste; economic growth and employment created through enterprise and initiative; a commitment to the Western Alliance and to working with our friends abroad to safeguard our common interests.

The implementation of Labour Party policies would destroy jobs and prosperity across Europe just as they would in Britain. A protectionist Europe is no more likely to secure our interests than a protectionist Britain. A non-aligned Europe is no more likely to safeguard our liberties than unilateral disarmament in Britain. Withdrawal from the Community, whether plainly advocated or disguised in Labour's call for a new Messina Conference to tear up our treaties, would do serious damage to British interests in Europe.

It would be equally wrong to plunge into a federal Europe, as the Liberals propose, and thus lose our capacity to protect British interests.

A STRONG COMMUNITY

A resolute, strong Conservative team in Government and in the European Parliament is the best protection for British interests and for the future of the whole Community.

We do not change our policies every time there is an election. That is why people trust us. And that is why we seek your support on June 14th for the strong Conservative voice in Europe.

