



Facts and Mythbusters about the EU

If we don't leave now, we are locked in for ever...

Not at all. Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, known as the Lisbon Treaty, introduced for the first time a mechanism for the withdrawal of a country from the European Union. Prior to this no EU treaty had given member states the right to withdraw from the union or set out a means of doing so.

Article 50 states that 'any member state may decide to withdraw from the union' and then proceeds to set out the process of withdrawal from the EU. The only condition set out for leaving is that the decision must be made in accordance with the member states' constitutional requirements.

"Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements."

If a member state decides to leave it must inform the European Council. The EU will then negotiate an agreement with the exiting state, setting out the arrangements for withdrawal and taking into account the future relationship between the EU and the exiting state. The European law will no longer apply to the exiting member state on the date the withdrawal agreement comes into force. Agreement must be made with a qualified majority in the European Council and with the consent of the European Parliament. If agreement is not reached then EU law will no longer apply to the exiting member state two years after its decision to leave. The two year period can be extended if there is a unanimous support from the member state and the Council to continue negotiating. The article also says that a member state that leaves may ask to rejoin the EU via the normal accession procedure.

Turkey are about to join!

To join the union, candidate countries must satisfy the Commission that they have adopted European policies in 35 "chapters". Since applying for full membership to the then European Economic Community in 1987, Turkey has managed to close only one chapter – science and research. Talks haven't even opened on 20 chapters.

Before Turkey can close the chapters it has to solve many of the issues raised in UKIP's video. The Commission recognised this in a 2015 [report](#), highlighting concerns on "discrimination against women and gender-based violence", and "backsliding" on freedom of expression, media and the internet.

Even if Turkey opens and closes all 35 chapters – which is far from certain – all existing EU members would have to approve their entry. Both the UK government and the Houses of Parliament would have a veto – meaning UKIP's contention that Turkey could join without the British people having a say is disingenuous. In sum, it will be a long time if ever before Turkey belongs to the bloc.

The EU cost of our membership is £350m/week

Actually, in 2015 it's around £160m/week after our rebates, or £8.5bn. This will rise to £11.2bn in 2016 but then drops again to around £9bn.

UK contributions to, and receipts from, the EU budget, £ billion, 2009 - 2020

	Gross Contribution	Rebate	Total contribution (after rebate)	Public sector receipts	Net contribution
2009 (outurn)	14.1	-5.4	8.7	-4.4	4.3
2010 (outurn)	15.2	-3.0	12.2	-4.8	7.4
2011 (outurn)	15.4	-3.1	12.2	-4.1	8.1
2012 (outurn)	15.7	-3.1	12.6	-4.2	8.5
2013 (outurn)	18.1	-3.7	14.5	-4.0	10.5
2014 (outurn)	18.8	-4.4	14.4	-4.6	9.8
2015 (estimated)	17.8	-4.9	12.9	-4.4	8.5
2016 (forecast)	20.5	-4.8	15.7	-4.5	11.2
2017 (forecast)	18.0	-6.1	11.9	-4.6	7.3
2018 (forecast)	18.6	-4.4	14.1	-4.8	9.4
2019 (forecast)	19.8	-4.7	15.0	-5.2	9.8
2020 (forecast)	20.3	-5.1	15.2	-5.4	9.8

Sources:

HM Treasury, European Union Finances, latest edition published December 2015, Cm 9167
 OBR, Economic and Fiscal Outlook - March 2016, Supplementary Fiscal Tables, Table 2.26
 OBR, Economic and Fiscal Outlook - March 2016, Supplementary Economy Tables, Table 1.9

The EU can tell us whether convicts can vote

The European Court of Human Rights (which is not part of the EU) has said that Britain's current blanket ban on prisoners voting in general elections is contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights. But this is a separate institution irrelevant to the referendum.

The European Court of Justice (which is part of the EU) held that the ability to vote in European Parliament elections was a matter of EU law, but upheld the French legislation that precluded a prisoner from doing so. It made no claim to have jurisdiction over rights to vote in national elections, which are clearly outside the scope of EU law.

The European Court will decide whether we can deport potentially dangerous individuals, such as Abu Hamza's daughter-in-law

There is as yet no judgment in this case, but the Advocate General's opinion considers that there are [public security grounds for deporting this person](#) and suggests that it is up to the UK court to determine the issue.

60% of our laws are now made in Brussels

It's probably more like 15%. According to the House of Commons library, a respected independent resource of information:

In the UK data suggest that from 1997 to 2009 6.8% of primary legislation (Statutes) and 14.1% of secondary legislation (Statutory Instruments) had a role in implementing EU obligations, although the degree of involvement varied from passing reference to explicit implementation.

<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/RP10-62#fullreport>

If you think about it, these figures do make sense. Most of the laws that affect our daily lives; crime, education, health, pensions, transport, energy, welfare, taxes etc. are almost exclusively decided on in Westminster.

The EU accounts haven't been signed off for the last 20 years

Not true. The European Court of Auditors (ECA), an EU body set up to examine the accounts of the Union, [signed off](#) on the 2014 accounts as reliable—something it's done for every set of figures since 2007. But it did find that around 4% of payments made were materially affected by error.

EU accounts present a true and fair view

The EU accounts for 2014 were correctly prepared in accordance with international public sector accounting standards, and present a true and fair view of the EU's financial results for the year and its assets and liabilities at the end of the year. We were therefore able to give a clean opinion on the reliability of the accounts ('signed off'), as we have done since 2007.

Estimated level of error remains persistently above the materiality threshold of 2 %

A key element of our audit work is **the testing of samples** of transactions from across the EU budget to provide unbiased and rigorous estimates of the extent to which revenue and the different spending areas are affected by error.

Diagram 2 summarises the results for 2014. For more information on our audit approach and the estimated level of error see pages 45 and 46.

Diagram 2 2014 results of transaction testing for EU budget as a whole

