



Geoffrey Van Orden's

eDispatch

From Brussels and Strasbourg

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"I didn't become an MEP in order to promote the EU - I want us to govern our own country. I go to Brussels to speak up for British interests and for the people of the East of England. My priorities are the prosperity and security of the United Kingdom." **Geoffrey Van Orden MEP**

ONLY CONSERVATIVES CAN DELIVER REAL CHANGE IN EUROPE AND CONTROL IMMIGRATION

Our Conservative Election campaign in the East of England will be launched on St George's Day, Wednesday 23 April, by Secretary of State Eric Pickles MP and our 7 Conservative candidates for the 7 East of England seats. The European Elections will take place on 22 May. They are of major importance to the future of our country.

Please be clear that there is much about the EU that we as Conservatives do not like. The question is, how do we change it? There are real hazards if we just pull out. The EU would still be there, but we'd have no way of stopping them taking actions that would damage our vital interests. And I would be concerned that foreign firms would be less willing to invest in Britain if they were unsure of unfettered access to the single market of 500 million people.

That is why the responsible position is to negotiate a fresh relationship with the EU. Then let's see to what extent we have got what we want. Then you will get the chance to vote on whether we stay or go. **Only the Conservatives are offering you this in-out referendum on Europe.**

If you are cross about some Government policies – please think of the bigger picture and bear in mind that we are in coalition with the most euro-federalist party. It is a miracle that we have been able to achieve as much as we have – on the economy, on benefits, on controlling immigration, and in putting the pieces in place to change our relationship with the EU. And think about the alternative! That alternative is not UKIP. It is Labour.

IF YOU VOTE UKIP, YOU GET LABOUR

If you vote UKIP, you get Labour – we have already seen the reality of this in Norfolk at the last County Council elections. If the UKIP bandwagon gets on a roll at the European elections the effects will be felt in May 2015. UKIP might then win one seat but that will be it. But they could stop the Conservatives winning 40 or 50 seats. **Vote UKIP get Labour. Then you would get all the things you detest, in spades – a broken economy, uncontrolled immigration, and a headlong rush into a federal Europe. So the hot air needs to be taken out of the UKIP balloon now, before it floats off with our country's future.**

What UKIP does not tell you is that, **if we left the EU tomorrow we would still have a massive immigration problem -** quite simply because most migrants don't come from Europe. During the Labour years of deliberate uncontrolled immigration there were some 3 million net migrants. Over 2 million of these came from outside Europe. It's entirely in the hands of British Government, not Brussels to control these numbers. The present Government has already taken successful action and there is much more to come.

And UKIP doesn't tell you that, **if we left the EU, we would still have a 'human rights' issue** because we are signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This was established in 1951 as a consequence of the horrors of Nazi Germany and emanates from the Council of Europe and not from the EU. Therefore, we would still be bound by the ECHR even if we were outside the EU. However, a Conservative government will seek changes to the ECHR.

CAMPAIGN LAUNCH!

The Conservative East of England European Election Campaign Launch will be held on:

St George's Day, Wednesday 23rd April 2014 at 12:00pm

St John's Innovation Centre
Sanger Suite
Cowley Road
Cambridge CB4 0WS

And we will be joined by
The Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles MP

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

It is your Conservative MEPs that have led the campaign for EU reform and worked hard for British interests in Brussels. **You need a Conservative government backed by a hard-working team of Conservative MEPs to deliver the radical changes you want.**

Please do not be misled by UKIP snake-oil salesmen. What they say may be appealing but the contents of the bottle are bogus. Please **stay loyal and support the Conservatives on 22 May** – and please do share this message with your friends and family.

THE UKRAINE CRISIS

The Ukraine crisis continues to give great concern. President Putin is trying to reassert control over his near-abroad – those countries previously under Soviet control that have not yet been fully embraced by the West. He has already annexed the Crimea. He is only too aware that there is no political or public appetite for armed conflict by the Western democracies which, in any case, are only just emerging from deep recession and therefore anxious to avoid further shocks to the system. He is willing to take calculated risks, understanding that our options are limited and that China represents an alternative market for Russian gas. He has been emboldened and armed with crucial information from the American traitor, Edward Snowden. Year on year over the past 6 years Putin has increased defence spending which is now approaching 4% of GDP. At home, his popularity has soared. With Russian provocateurs at work inside Eastern Ukraine and over 40,000 combat-ready Russian troops just over the border it can be expected that tension will continue to rise in the lead up to the Ukrainian Presidential elections on 25 May.

You will recall that the West did not intervene in Budapest in 1956, in Prague in 1968, or in Georgia in 2008. The tipping point was, and remains, the guarantee of the territorial integrity of NATO member states. The Ukraine, of course, is not a NATO member state – but the Baltic states are. They also have ethnic Russian minorities. Not surprisingly, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have become nervous in recent days, as has Poland.

The relevance and credibility of NATO needs to be underlined. NATO has therefore announced a series of immediate steps to bolster its forces in Eastern Europe. NATO fighter aircraft will fly more sorties over the Baltic region; Allied ships will deploy to the Baltic Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere; and Allied military staff will be dispatched to improve NATO's preparedness, training and exercises. We will see deployments at sea, in the air and on land, beginning in the coming days.

At a meeting of EU Foreign Ministers this week, EU sanctions currently in place to blacklist key Russian and Ukrainian figures were strengthened to include 51 individuals. Foreign ministers are also preparing a "third tier" of "more far-reaching" economic sanctions against Russia, to be applied if the situation escalates. These will include stronger financial restraints and possibly even trade measures. Foreign Ministers also agreed on short-term support for the Ukrainian economy, by lifting customs duties on the vast majority of imports from Ukraine. There is also an OSCE military monitoring mission in Ukraine, being led by the Netherlands, with participation from Sweden, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The purpose of the mission is to "visit South Eastern regions and record facts of possible unusual military activities and provocations aimed at destabilizing the situation in Ukraine."

In my view, there are two bright spots in the cloudy eastern skies. Firstly, fresh attention will be given to revitalising NATO and to our own defence preparedness. Secondly, the need to reduce dependence on dubious sources of energy supply has been starkly brought to our attention. We need reliable, sustainable, and cheaper energy and that means investment in a variety of new energy sources, including nuclear and shale gas.

Fanny joins me, along with Caroline, Jenny and James in Brussels, to wish you all a very Happy Easter!

HOW TO VOTE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS ON 22 MAY

1. Register to vote

You've probably done this already. If not then register online before 6 May by [clicking here](#).

2. Voting options Exactly as for national and local elections:

Either:

Go to your local polling station (open 07:00-22:00 on 22 May)

*OR

Register for a postal vote

You can register online before 7 May for a form to be sent by [clicking here](#)

*OR

Vote by proxy

You can register someone you trust to vote for you if you cannot vote yourself by [clicking here](#).

3. YOUR VOTE

It's simple. **You vote for the Party of your choice (e.g. The Conservative Party)** not for an individual.

(Each Party puts up a list of 7 candidates. The more votes a Party receives, the more seats they will be allocated on a proportional basis. We don't like the system any more than you, but Mr Blair imposed it on us)

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