



Den Haag, 28 januari 2013

Voortouwcommissie: **vaste commissie voor Europese Zaken**
Volgcommissie(s): vaste commissie voor Buitenlandse Zaken
contactgroep Verenigd Koninkrijk

Activiteit: **Gesprek**
Datum: dinsdag 5 februari 2013
Tijd: 12.15 - 13.15 uur
Openbaar/besloten: besloten

Onderwerp: Lunchgesprek met de minister voor Europese Zaken van het Verenigd Koninkrijk, de heer David Lidington

Minister Lidington bezoekt op 5 februari a.s. Den Haag voor consultaties met zijn counterpart minister Timmermans.

De minister heeft aangegeven ook graag een gesprek te voeren met de commissie voor Europese Zaken. Van de zijde van de minister wordt een informele gedachtewisseling zonder formele agendapunten voorzien; uiteraard zal ook de speech van MP Cameron van 23 januari jl. ter sprake komen.

Locatie: volgt
Voertaal: Engels

Een C.V. van minister Lidington is bijgevoegd bij deze convocatie. Ook de tekst van de speech van MP Cameron is bijgevoegd.

Aanmeldingen voor deze activiteit s.v.p. via Parlis met de knop "Inschrijving" op het tabblad "Deelnemers" van deze Parlisactiviteit. I.v.m. de korte termijn voor het organiseren van het gesprek wordt u verzocht te **reageren uiterlijk woensdag 30 januari 16:00 uur**.

Griffier: M. van Keulen

Activiteitsnummer: 2013A00314

David Lidington MP was appointed Minister of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office on 14 May 2010.

David Lidington was elected to Parliament in 1992 and is the Member of Parliament for Aylesbury.

He worked for BP and RTZ before spending three years as Special Advisor to Douglas Hurd in the Home Office and Foreign Office.

His proudest political achievement was successfully promoting a Private Members Bill which became the Chiropractors Act in 1994. He believes that this piece of legislation has made a real difference to many people's lives.

He has a long standing passion for history, and has twice captained a champion team on University Challenge, first in 1979 and then in 2002 when the Sidney Sussex team became "champion of champions" in University Challenge Reunited.

He is married to Helen Lidington and has four sons.

Positions held:

Member of Parliament for Aylesbury, 1992 - present

Parliamentary Private Secretary to the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Michael Howard QC MP, 1994 to 1997

Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition, Rt Hon William Hague MP, June 1997

Shadow Opposition Spokesman at the Home Office, June 1999

Shadow Financial Secretary to the Treasury, September 2001

Shadow Minister for Agriculture, May 2002

Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, November 2003

Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, July 2007 – May 2010

Minister of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, May 2010 - present

Responsibilities:

European Union

Europe, including Balkans, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova

Russia, South Caucasus, Central Asia

NATO and European Security

OSCE and Council of Europe

FCO relations with Parliament

This morning I want to talk about the future of Europe. But first, let us remember the past. Seventy years ago, Europe was being torn apart by its second catastrophic conflict in a generation. A war which saw the streets of European cities strewn with rubble. The skies of London lit by flames night after night. And millions dead across the world in the battle for peace and liberty.

As we remember their sacrifice, so we should also remember how the shift in Europe from war to sustained peace came about. It did not happen like a change in the weather. It happened because of determined work over generations. A commitment to friendship and a resolve never to re-visit that dark past - a commitment epitomised by the Elysee Treaty signed 50 years ago this week.

After the Berlin Wall came down I visited that city and I will never forget it.

The abandoned checkpoints. The sense of excitement about the future. The knowledge that a great continent was coming together. Healing those wounds of our history is the central story of the European Union.

What Churchill described as the twin marauders of war and tyranny have been almost entirely banished from our continent. Today, hundreds of millions dwell in freedom, from the Baltic to the Adriatic, from the Western Approaches to the Aegean. And while we must never take this for granted, the first purpose of the European Union - to secure peace - has been achieved and we should pay tribute to all those in the EU, alongside NATO, who made that happen. But today the main, over-riding purpose of the European Union is different: not to win peace, but to secure prosperity. The challenges come not from within this continent but outside it. From the surging economies in the East and South. Of course a growing world economy benefits us all, but we should be in no doubt that a new global race of nations is underway today. A race for the wealth and jobs of the future. The map of global influence is changing before our eyes. And these changes are already being felt by the entrepreneur in the Netherlands, the worker in Germany, the family in Britain. So I want to speak to you today with urgency and frankness about the European Union and how it must change - both to deliver prosperity and to retain the support of its peoples. But first, I want to set out the spirit in which I approach these issues. I know that the United Kingdom is sometimes seen as an argumentative and rather strong-minded member of the family of European nations.

And it is true that our geography has shaped our psychology. We have the character of an island nation - independent, forthright, passionate in defence of our sovereignty. We can no more change this British sensibility than we can drain the English Channel. And because of this sensibility, we come to the European Union with a frame of mind that is more practical than emotional. For us, the European Union is a means to an end - prosperity, stability, the anchor of freedom and democracy both within Europe and beyond her shores - not an end in itself. We insistently ask: How? Why? To what end? But all this doesn't make us somehow un-European. The fact is that ours is not just an island story - it is also a continental story. For all our connections to the rest of the world - of which we are rightly proud - we have always been a European power - and we always will be. From Caesar's legions to the Napoleonic Wars. From the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution to the defeat of Nazism. We have helped to write European history, and Europe has helped write ours. Over the years, Britain has made her own, unique contribution to Europe. We have provided a haven to those fleeing tyranny and persecution. And in Europe's darkest hour, we helped keep the flame of liberty alight. Across the continent, in silent cemeteries, lie the hundreds of thousands of British servicemen who gave their lives for Europe's freedom. In more recent decades, we have played our part in tearing down the Iron Curtain and championing the entry into the EU of those countries that lost so many years to Communism. And contained in this history is the crucial point about Britain, our national character, our attitude to Europe. Britain is characterised not just by its independence but, above all, by its openness. We have always

been a country that reaches out. That turns its face to the world... That leads the charge in the fight for global trade and against protectionism. This is Britain today, as it's always been: Independent, yes –but open, too. I never want us to pull up the drawbridge and retreat from the world. I am not a British isolationist. I don't just want a better deal for Britain. I want a better deal for Europe too.

So I speak as British Prime Minister with a positive vision for the future of the European Union. A future in which Britain wants, and should want, to play a committed and active part. Some might then ask: why raise fundamental questions about the future of Europe when Europe is already in the midst of a deep crisis? Why raise questions about Britain's role when support in Britain is already so thin.

There are always voices saying “don't ask the difficult questions.” But it's essential for Europe –and for Britain - that we do because there are three major challenges confronting us today. First, the problems in the Eurozone are driving fundamental change in Europe. Second, there is a crisis of European competitiveness, as other nations across the world soar ahead. And third, there is a gap between the EU and its citizens which has grown dramatically in recent years. And which represents a lack of democratic accountability and consent that is – yes –felt particularly acutely in Britain. If we don't address these challenges, the danger is that Europe will fail and the British people will drift towards the exit. I do not want that to happen. I want the European Union to be a success. And I want a relationship between Britain and the EU that keeps us in it. That is why I am here today: To acknowledge the nature of the challenges we face. To set out how I believe the European Union should respond to them. And to explain what I want to achieve for Britain and its place within the European Union. Let me start with the nature of the challenges we face. First, the Eurozone. The future shape of Europe is being forged.

There are some serious questions that will define the future of the European Union –and the future of every country within it. The Union is changing to help fix the currency –and that has profound implications for all of us, whether we are in the single currency or not. Britain is not in the single currency, and we're not going to be. But we all need the Eurozone to have the right governance and structures to secure a successful currency for the long term. And those of us outside the Eurozone also need certain safeguards to ensure, for example, that our access to the Single Market is not in any way compromised. And it's right we begin to address these issues now.

Second, while there are some countries within the EU which are doing pretty well. Taken as a whole, Europe's share of world output is projected to fall by almost a third in the next two decades. This is the competitiveness challenge –and much of our weakness in meeting it is self-inflicted. Complex rules restricting our labour markets are not some naturally occurring phenomenon. Just as excessive regulation is not some external plague that's been visited on our businesses. These problems have been around too long. And the progress in dealing with them, far too slow. As Chancellor Merkel has said - if Europe today accounts for just over 7 per cent of the world's population, produces around 25 per cent of global GDP and has to finance 50 per cent of global social spending, then it's obvious that it will have to work very hard to maintain its prosperity and way of life. Third, there is a growing frustration that the EU is seen as something that is done to people rather than acting on their behalf. And this is being intensified by the very solutions required to resolve the economic problems.

People are increasingly frustrated that decisions taken further and further away from them mean their living standards are slashed through enforced austerity or their taxes are used to bail out governments on the other side of the continent. We are starting to see this in the demonstrations on the streets of Athens, Madrid and Rome. We are seeing it in the parliaments of Berlin, Helsinki and the Hague. And yes, of course, we are seeing this frustration with the EU very dramatically in Britain. Europe's leaders have a duty to hear these concerns. Indeed, we have a duty to act on them. And not just to fix the problems in the Eurozone. For just as in any emergency you should plan for the aftermath as well as dealing with the present crisis so

too in the midst of the present challenges we should plan for the future, and what the world will look like when the difficulties in the Eurozone have been overcome. The biggest danger to the European Union comes not from those who advocate change, but from those who denounce new thinking as heresy. In its long history Europe has experience of heretics who turned out to have a point. And my point is this. More of the same will not secure a long-term future for the Eurozone. More of the same will not see the European Union keeping pace with the new powerhouse economies. More of the same will not bring the European Union any closer to its citizens. More of the same will just produce more of the same – less competitiveness, less growth, fewer jobs. And that will make our countries weaker not stronger.

That is why we need fundamental, far-reaching change. So let me set out my vision for a new European Union, fit for the 21st Century. It is built on five principles. The first: competitiveness. At the core of the European Union must be, as it is now, the single market. Britain is at the heart of that Single Market, and must remain so. But when the Single Market remains incomplete in services, energy and digital – the very sectors that are the engines of a modern economy – it is only half the success it could be. It is nonsense that people shopping online in some parts of Europe are unable to access the best deals because of where they live. I want completing the single market to be our driving mission. I want us to be at the forefront of transformative trade deals with the US, Japan and India as part of the drive towards global free trade. And I want us to be pushing to exempt Europe's smallest entrepreneurial companies from more EU Directives. These should be the tasks that get European officials up in the morning – and keep them working late into the night. And so we urgently need to address the sclerotic, ineffective decision making that is holding us back. That means creating a leaner, less bureaucratic Union, relentlessly focused on helping its member countries to compete. In a global race, can we really justify the huge number of expensive peripheral European institutions? Can we justify a Commission that gets ever larger? Can we carry on with an organisation that has a multi-billion pound budget but not enough focus on controlling spending and shutting down programmes that haven't worked? And I would ask: when the competitiveness of the Single Market is so important, why is there an environment council, a transport council, an education council but not a single market council? The second principle should be flexibility. We need a structure that can accommodate the diversity of its members – North, South, East, West, large, small, old and new. Some of whom are contemplating much closer economic and political integration. And many others, including Britain, who would never embrace that goal.

I accept, of course, that for the single market to function we need a common set of rules and a way of enforcing them. But we also need to be able to respond quickly to the latest developments and trends. Competitiveness demands flexibility, choice and openness – or Europe will fetch up in a no-man's land between the rising economies of Asia and market-driven North America. The EU must be able to act with the speed and flexibility of a network, not the cumbersome rigidity of a bloc. We must not be weighed down by an insistence on a one size fits all approach which implies that all countries want the same level of integration. The fact is that they don't and we shouldn't assert that they do. Some will claim that this offends a central tenet of the EU's founding philosophy. I say it merely reflects the reality of the European Union today. 17 members are part of the Eurozone. 10 are not. 26 European countries are members of Schengen – including four outside the European Union – Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland. 2 EU countries – Britain and Ireland – have retained their border controls.

Some members, like Britain and France, are ready, willing and able to take action in Libya or Mali. Others are uncomfortable with the use of military force. Let's welcome that diversity, instead of trying to snuff it out. Let's stop all this talk of two-speed Europe, of fast lanes and slow lanes, of countries missing trains and buses, and consign the whole weary caravan of metaphors to a permanent siding. Instead, let's start from this proposition: we are a family of democratic nations, all members of one European Union, whose essential foundation is the

single market rather than the single currency. Those of us outside the euro recognise that those initiatives are likely to need to make some big institutional changes. By the same token, the members of the Eurozone should accept that we, and indeed all Member States, will have changes that we need to safeguard our interests and strengthen democratic legitimacy. And we should be able to make these changes too. Some say this will unravel the principle of the EU – and that you can't pick and choose on the basis of what your nation needs. But far from unravelling the EU, this will in fact bind its Members more closely because such flexible, willing cooperation is a much stronger glue than compulsion from the centre.

Let me make a further heretical proposition. The European Treaty commits the Member States to “lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe”. This has been consistently interpreted as applying not to the peoples but rather to the states and institutions compounded by a European Court of Justice that has consistently supported greater centralisation. We understand and respect the right of others to maintain their commitment to this goal. But for Britain – and perhaps for others – it is not the objective. And we would be much more comfortable if the Treaty specifically said so freeing those who want to go further, faster, to do so, without being held back by the others. So to those who say we have no vision for Europe. I say we have. We believe in a flexible union of free member states who share treaties and institutions and pursue together the ideal of co-operation. To represent and promote the values of European civilisation in the world. To advance our shared interests by using our collective power to open markets. And to build a strong economic base across the whole of Europe. And we believe in our nations working together to protect the security and diversity of our energy supplies. To tackle climate change and global poverty. To work together against terrorism and organised crime. And to continue to welcome new countries into the EU. This vision of flexibility and co-operation is not the same as those who want to build an ever closer political union – but it is just as valid. My third principle is that power must be able to flow back to Member States, not just away from them. This was promised by European Leaders at Laeken a decade ago. It was put in the Treaty. But the promise has never really been fulfilled. We need to implement this principle properly. So let us use this moment, as the Dutch Prime Minister has recently suggested, to examine thoroughly what the EU as a whole should do and should stop doing. In Britain we have already launched our balance of competences review – to give us an informed and objective analysis of where the EU helps and where it hampers. Let us not be misled by the fallacy that a deep and workable single market requires everything to be harmonised, to hanker after some unattainable and infinitely level playing field. Countries are different. They make different choices. We cannot harmonise everything. For example, it is neither right nor necessary to claim that the integrity of the single market, or full membership of the European Union requires the working hours of British hospital doctors to be set in Brussels irrespective of the views of British parliamentarians and practitioners. In the same way we need to examine whether the balance is right in so many areas where the European Union has legislated including on the environment, social affairs and crime. Nothing should be off the table. My fourth principle is democratic accountability: we need to have a bigger and more significant role for national parliaments.

There is not, in my view, a single European demos. It is national parliaments, which are, and will remain, the true source of real democratic legitimacy and accountability in the EU. It is to the Bundestag that Angela Merkel has to answer. It is through the Greek Parliament that Antonis Samaras has to pass his Government's austerity measures. It is to the British Parliament that I must account on the EU budget negotiations, or on the safeguarding of our place in the single market. Those are the Parliaments which instil proper respect – even fear – into national leaders. We need to recognise that in the way the EU does business. My fifth principle is fairness: whatever new arrangements are enacted for the Eurozone, they must work fairly for those inside it and out. That will be of particular importance to Britain. As I have said, we will not join the single currency. But there is no overwhelming economic reason why the single currency and the single market should share the same boundary, any more than the single market and Schengen. Our participation in the single market, and our ability to help

set its rules is the principal reason for our membership of the EU. So it is a vital interest for us to protect the integrity and fairness of the single market for all its members. And that is why Britain has been so concerned to promote and defend the single market as the Eurozone crisis rewrites the rules on fiscal coordination and banking union.