

Hello everyone

My name is Liz, I am a member of North London Friends, and I am voting to leave the EU.

First of all, I'd like to say thank you to the organisers for setting this event up. I'm delighted to see so many people here tonight. It shows that people are genuinely interested in our country and its future.

So why am I voting to leave the EU?

Well, I'm not anti Europe, how could I be? I was European before the EU came along and will be whether we are in or out of the EU.

So why am I against the EU? Well I think we need to take back control of our country; we need to take back the ability to plan for ourselves **and** for the generations to come.

I want to talk first of all about immigration controls. Some people are nervous about talking about immigration controls in case they are accused of having a racist agenda.

But whilst some with a racist agenda may use immigration to fuel their position, it is not racist to talk about immigration controls.

Immigration controls are about being able to make decisions; and about being able to plan.

I imagine that everyone in this room is a planner of some sort. Whether as part of your job; running a household; or organising a busy social life. Most people would agree that when running a country of 65 million people, we need to be able to plan effectively. We need to be able to plan for jobs, for housing, for school places, transport, welfare, social care and our health service.

But we can't plan effectively, where a key factor – the size of the population - is unknown and subject to massive hikes that we cannot control - or predict.

I'm not going to quote many stats, but I will use some to put some things in perspective.

In 2015, the number of people entering the country from Romania and Bulgaria was 45,000.

In the same year, we had 40,000. black people in this country under the age of 24, - who had been unemployed for more than a year.

Now some people might say that those unemployed young black people don't have the right skills, therefore we need to bring people in, who do have the skills – but I say, if our young people don't have the skills we need, maybe we should be doing something about that.

So for instance, why do we make it so difficult for our young people to train as health professionals? Each year 100,000 people based in Britain compete for just 20,000 student nursing places. Meanwhile, health trusts actively go overseas to recruit nurses.

Taking control of immigration is not about kicking people out of this country. The British population includes people from all over the world who have established themselves here - not just from the EU.

However, we need to face some facts. We are the fourth most densely populated country in Europe. Last year, immigration into the country reached 323 thousand. Changes to Turkey's relationship with the EU, means that figure will rise. But we won't know by how much, until it happens.

I think we need the ability to draw a line in the sand. The ability to take stock. We should be able to freely determine our own destiny; and that includes determining our own levels of immigration. A level which works for us – not the EU.

Looking at the EU itself. Its a mess. It is a political and legal union that is failing. And it will get worse.

There are 22 million people unemployed across the EU. The EU has created mass unemployment amongst young people: 40 % in Italy; and a whopping 50% in Spain and Greece.

Last week, the EU announced it is considering sanctions against Spain and Portugal as the EU doesn't believe those countries are doing enough to cut their deficit.

So what is the EU all about? The European Commission wants complete Economic Union, complete Financial Union, complete Fiscal Union, complete Political Union and complete Monetary Union. So if people do vote to stay in, its unlikely we will have the pound for much longer.

The EU is not a force for social justice – its sole reason for existing is to make massive profit for transnational corporations – at our expense.

I don't accept that wanting to leave the EU makes me inward looking or a little Englander. I want us to trade with as many countries as we can. In fact, I think the EU is anti internationalist. At heart it's a protection racket for wealthy elites and transnational corporations. We don't need the EU to be able to cooperate with other countries.

Often the EU dresses up its activity in countries as aid or "development" but as MEP Ska Keller, says: *"developing countries have a gun pointed at their chest – either they sign a deal with the EU or their access to the EU is restricted,"*

So so much for the EU being internationalist – I'd say its more an international bully.

Finally I want to address those people here tonight, who say that we should stay in the EU to reform it, to make the EU better, to make it nicer.

I believe this is totally misguided. The EU is not a cuddly beast that can be reformed.

We cannot influence the EU from the inside – British governments have tried and failed. Before we even joined the EEC, Harold Macmillan talked of reforming it. Thirty years ago, Neil Kinnock talked of reforming it. David Cameron has done a lot of talking but has failed to get any changes actually agreed. We have some watered down pledges, with vague ifs and buts, with the devil being in the detail.

As EU President Juncker has said, *“When things get serious, you have to lie”*

The EU will not reform. Again a quote from Mr Juncker , *“There can be no democratic choice against the European treaties.”*

The EU is not going to change for us. However this referendum is not a vote for the status quo.

If we vote to stay, it gives the green light to the EU to do what it wants.

If we are in the EU, we are run by the EU warts and all. The only way not to be run by the EU is to leave.

We are the 5th biggest economy in the world. We should have the self confidence to move forward on our own terms. We can succeed out of the EU.

So in summary i'd say

Leave to create a better country;

Leave to create a better future for us and for the generations ahead.

Vote leave

Thank you