

The EU - far from perfect - but right now better than t...

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The EU is far from perfect.

It was built on a false premise, which was that freedom of movement for capital would deliver growth. As is very clear that's not true: it has delivered inequality within and between states.

And the EU has also never been able to shed some of the economic logic of the 1950s that is so deeply embedded in the Common Agricultural Policy, for example.

In addition, the EU has moved forward too quickly towards economic integration through the Euro when cultural and political integration has not been following in its wake.

The stresses of all these situations are now obvious. And the stress of trying to reconcile them is equally obvious. I do not underestimate that.

But the reality is that like it or not the EU is also a success story. It has kept the peace. It has allowed people to move in a way unimaginable before. It has aided trade, enormously, and that trade has overall been of considerable benefit. It has created dialogue and tolerance. The result is that if there was a referendum on Europe tomorrow I'd vote to stay in. Not unreservedly: decidedly reservedly, but unambiguously I'd vote yes.

Why? Because I want that trade. It would be much harder for the UK to secure it without EU membership.

Why else? Because being inside the tent is in the end of the day the only way to change things - and as Norway knows all too well, watching the EU from the sidelines means complying with all its demands and having no say upon them.

And because I'm a European and always have been. My name alone helps give that game away. I believe we're better off with open borders. I believe we're better off with fairly free trade. I believe we're better off on things like tax with the EU because it has

lead some of the most successful challenges on tax abuse internationally. And I believe that the EU can be improved.

Outside the EU I see isolation and inter-state competition prevailing. That leads to lost income, and worse, to a lack of understanding and intolerance that in turn leads to the threat of war.

I want none of those things. I'm not a fan of the EU. But we're much better off with it than without it.