

The Institute for Economic Affairs

Published: January 13, 2026, 5:09 am

The Institute for Economic Affairs is supposedly a charity. I have long wondered how. With little regard for democracy; much for tax havens and an irrational attachment to supposed 'free markets' as the answer to all questions that might ever be posed, its objectivity has always been open to question.

The fact that I have met, and crossed verbal swords with its director, Mark Littlewood, on many occasions has never changed my opinion of the organisation and its lack of balance. Never once have I heard him give the sort of answer that I often do that markets play an immensely valuable role when the right conditions are met, as does the state when other conditions prevail and that the matter to be decided upon is when each is appropriate. There has only ever been one solution in his mind: the market is the only thing he promotes. That is not what might be expected of a charity.

In that case the [enquiries now being raised](#) into its activities are especially welcome. And as one of the organisations that has undoubtedly promoted Brexit, as opposed to comment upon it, this is an organisation whose activities need as much attention focussed on them as do those of others undertaking such activity, such as the ERG.

I absolutely defend the right of the IEA to hold its opinions. But I question their modus operandi. At the very least, a lot more transparency is required of it. And maybe rather more, but that is for others to determine.