

# More on Brexit

I return quicker than expected to the subject of Brexit simply because everything is unfolding at high speed offering insights into what might or might not happen. Politics can sometimes be a waiting game and whilst emotions run high in a couple reflecting a deep sense of betrayal, time heals as they say and I still think this is the likely outcome here. But I am led to reflect further on what that outcome might be?

Today, UK is excluded from the council chamber leading to headlines of 28-1 or 27 leaders meeting in Brussels. Why? UK is still a full member of the EU and has not yet launched the famous article 50 to formally state an intention to withdraw. So why has UK been asked to not attend the meeting? (At least from what I can see the decision seems to be that of Council rather than UK saying it will not attend).

The referendum is purely an opinion and has no legal significance beyond that which the government of the day gives it. There still seems to be uncertainty as to whether the government or the parliament has the right to decide to notify the EU president of a formal application to leave (article 50) so surely it would be better to keep UK around the table; it may even be a legal obligation.

But feelings run high after a betrayal and that is the way that Brussels and the other capitals feel at the moment; so the UK is asked to stay away which is a decision probably welcomed by all ie a cooling off period. What next?

Like many, I am mostly concerned for the division in our society which has caused Brexit but which are now more firmly entrenched as a result and that a campaign based on pure hatred and lies can win over one based on facts. It is telling that whilst Remain tried to connect on social media with facts it was the emotional response of Leave which won over. If you want to listen to a good dissection of the campaign and consequences from a legal and constitutional perspective then the [talk by Professor Michael Dougan](#) is excellent.

I am troubled by the fact that whilst the 48% that voted to stay in are probably united in their view, the 52% which voted to leave did so for various reasons. For a large number it is about immigration, for others it is about sovereignty (not necessarily exclusive) and others it is simply a protest vote. So why should the 48% which hold one belief become subservient to the 52% who have many different beliefs? Even if we put all in one basket, it does not feel right that such an enormous change can be imposed by such a small majority. Of course this is democracy, but I start to wonder if there is not something much more profound happening and which the Brexit result is telling us?

We see that all countries are facing the same populist and nationalist pressures. There are those who embrace globalisation and the ability to work anywhere and those for whom this is a betrayal of national values. It is a new force growing out of individualism and rejecting the "establishment" even if everyone knows that a governing structure is necessary. How can UK, Europe and the world respond to such pressures? Are they so different to those represented by ISIS and others holding different social values based upon religious belief? Most importantly, how do we all and each navigate our way through the turbulent period which we enter?