

Statement of Principles

The Democracy Movement was formed in 1998 as a non-party campaign to unite those in all parties and none to campaign together for a 'no' vote in the referendum Tony Blair promised to hold on Britain's membership of the EU single currency – the euro.

Since then, the DM has successfully fought campaigns to keep the pound, to highlight the EU's growing threat to human rights & civil liberties, to force the government to promise a referendum on the proposed EU Constitution and to maintain strong public opposition to that plan to ensure a 'no' vote would have been achieved in the referendum.

Today, with the failure of the EU Constitution, the huge cost and waste of the Common Agricultural Policy, beset by incidents of fraud, divided over its budget and with member countries openly discussing leaving the euro, the EU is in crisis about its purpose and future in the 21st century world.

The DM does not intend to rest on these achievements. Ultimately, we want to see a more dynamic, flexible form of co-operation replace today's out-dated EU that instead respects democracy and Europe's diversity.

Today, the DM campaigns for a constructive, modern alternative to the European Union – the *Europe of Democracies*.

DEMOCRACY
MOVEMENT

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The Democracy Movement is a non-party campaign to defend liberal democracy in Britain and across Europe.

We believe that this is fundamentally undermined by the single currency, the proposed EU Constitution and the drive to create a Brussels-based system of government, which will result in all major decisions being taken at the European Union centre by undemocratic institutions.

Our vision instead is that of a *Europe of Democracies* whereby elected governments can co-operate together on issues transcending national boundaries where there is *voluntary*, common agreement. Removing the EU's legal superiority over its member countries and making Europe's elected national parliaments legally supreme once again is a necessary first, if not sufficient, step towards a democratic re-Enlightenment in our continent.

The Democracy Movement works with those who share our beliefs, of all political parties and none, without endorsing parties or individuals at elections, and alongside groups in other European countries that share our aims.

We are pro-European: because of our commitment to diversity, democracy, and decentralisation in our continent, we consider ourselves to be the *real* pro-Europeans in this debate. We believe that those who are trying to construct a pan-European government are working against the interests of all ordinary European people. The more decision-making is centralised in Brussels, the less voting power ordinary European citizens possess. The key contradiction of the EU project is that it seeks to concentrate ever more decision-making power in Brussels when single policies simply cannot suit the different, local needs and aspirations of Europe's diverse countries and people.

Europe has never naturally been a single political entity and the various attempts to impose an artificial unity upon it have ended in disaster: the empires of Charlemagne, Napoleon and Hitler being examples. Europe's great cultural and economic advances – the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution – took place when and because our continent was a collection of diverse, competing entities free from the suffocation of a single dominant ideology and corrupt centre of power.

We are internationalist: we also envisage the peoples of Britain and Europe having an outward-looking attitude to those countries and...

...continents that lie beyond the boundaries of the EU. We are internationalists and reject emphatically not only the 'little Englander' but also the 'little European' mindset that currently predominates in Brussels. In the age of e-commerce and ever faster and cheaper transport it seems bizarre that there is an obsessive, out-of-date push to create a pan-European state with its own currency and constitution.

Our long-term vision: is of a *Europe of Democracies* that trade together, enjoy cultural exchange with each other, and co-operate voluntarily where it makes sense to do so. This is what the British people were told they were signing up to by the government when they voted to stay in the European *Economic* Community in 1975. This objective will obviously entail radical changes either to the current structure of the EU or, failing that, to the relationship between Britain – perhaps together with other member states – and Brussels.

Our view is that the current EU structure is a product of out-dated, top-down, technocratic thinking from the first half of the 20th Century. The need now is for a lighter, more flexible structure that combines the roles of the (non-EU) Council of Europe and the European Free Trade Area. In the quickly-changing era of globalisation, the emphasis must be on the ability of countries to adapt with speed to changing circumstances, not creating enormous, slow-moving political structures.

What we do: the Democracy Movement is a large network of registered supporters and volunteer-run local branches, with a small full-time staff at its Campaign Centre in London. As a non-party pressure group, our primary activity is at the grass-roots, working to change opinion from the bottom up and direct pressure for change on political decision-makers. Across the country, branches arrange activities such as organised leafleting, street info stalls, public meetings & debates, lobbying, local media work as well as social and fundraising events. The DM is funded solely by the voluntary donations of supporters.

We are part of a broader coalition: the DM works alongside groups similarly committed to challenging the current structure of the EU. In the eventuality of there being a referendum on the EU Constitution or the euro, the DM will give its support to the official umbrella campaign that will be appointed by the Electoral Commission. A broad popular alliance including democrats from the left, centre and centre-right will be needed to safeguard liberal democracy and prevent the creation of an authoritarian Brussels-based government. We will also continue to work with our allies in other European countries fighting similar battles.