

PRESS RELEASE BY THE RT HON LORD OWEN, 22 MARCH 2016 SPEAKING  
AT THE LAUNCH OF DAVID MARSH'S BOOK, 'EUROPE'S DEADLOCK',  
REFORM CLUB, LONDON

Ed Miliband refused a referendum in the last election and it cost him many votes and a crucial number of seats [see Annex A]. He is a sincere and very committed European but it is important to recall that since 1962, under Hugh Gaitskell, the Labour Party has been every bit as strong an anti-federalist political party as the Conservative Party. The Labour Cabinet in July 1977 under James Callaghan actually defined the UK position as 'Yes' to Britain's continued and constructive membership, but specifically 'No' to the integrationist wish eventually for a single state a United States of Europe.

The only truly federalist Prime Ministers that we have had were Edward Heath and Tony Blair but even they both denied it publicly. Everything changed in the Common Market/European Community when the euro started to be created in 1990. That is the pre-eminent federalist policy. Inevitably it will create a federal union. It may take a decade or more but it will happen. It was no accident that as part of the Maastricht negotiations at a meeting of foreign ministers in Luxembourg, in June 1991, a Dutch presidency paper was presented in which, for the first time in the history of the European Community, an explicit reference was to be made in a treaty to the 'federal goal' of European union. It was thankfully rejected but it has not disappeared and will never disappear. That is the destination of the European Union and that is what this referendum is about.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leave in an orderly way through a transition period under a government which has four years to run before the next election. They will do all the negotiating. If we take this opportunity we will never become part of a United States of Europe. The 'remain' campaign wants everyone to ignore the Five Presidents Report, wants people to forget that their next demand is a Europe-wide election for President of the Commission. Inexorably all history points to the inevitable nature of a federal union to support a single currency. Alternatively the euro collapses with devastating effects. Our opportunity is to get out before it collapses.

# Appendix

General Election 7 May 2015

## Labour stance on a referendum

Q. If the Labour Party had promised to hold a referendum on the UK's EU membership, would you have been more or less likely to vote for Labour or would it have made no difference?

	All	Con voters	Lib Dem voters	UKIP voters
More likely	19%	13%	16%	30%
Less likely	8%	6%	15%	4%
No difference	73%	81%	69%	66%

A fifth of the general public (19%) say that they would have been more likely to vote Labour if Mr Miliband's party had promised a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU.

This figure is particularly high among those who voted for UKIP (30%).

## Attitudes towards an EU referendum

A strong majority (71%) of people think that it is either fairly or very important for the UK to hold a referendum on whether to stay in or leave the EU.

Source: ComRes