

March for Europe,  
Edinburgh  
Saturday 25 March 2017

Thank you to Young Europeans for organising this march and for inviting me to speak.

So good to see so many of us standing up for Europe, proud to say “We are European.”

I’m Vanessa Glynn. English by birth, Irish by ancestry, Scottish by choice and European through and through.

I chair the European Movement in Scotland. We campaign for a European future for Scotland and we will never give up on that.

Today we celebrate the 60th birthday of the EU. We in Edinburgh join our European friends and neighbours in Rome, Berlin, Dublin, Bucharest, London and across the EU to say we want a Europe without barriers, where we co-operate and solve our problems together.

Let’s give a special thought to London in the wake of the senseless atrocity there. Let’s send greetings to all who are marching with us for Europe and values of peace, tolerance and equality, wherever they are marching today.

Let's nail the lie that Europe is done for. Quite the opposite - the Eurozone is outperforming the US economy, troubled economies like Ireland and Spain are growing again, rationality beat hatred in the Netherlands, fascism will be beaten in France and Germany because it has no real solutions to our problems.

The European Union has brought peace, prosperity and democracy to our continent, and to each of us, for 60 years.

That is worth celebrating and it is as relevant today as it was in the 1950s.

Article 50 will be triggered next week and the destination is a hard and damaging Brexit. 62% of voters in Scotland said no to that sad path.

I do not know if there will be another independence referendum. The European Movement takes no view on how people should vote on that question. We leave it to the judgement of individuals to decide for themselves how best to secure a European future for Scotland.

But I do say, that the fundamental question facing Scotland is what kind of society do we want here. And that the answer, in the modern world, is inextricably bound up with being European.

The Brexit that is being unleashed by the hard right now in charge is not going to improve the lives of the many. It is ideologically-driven by fanatics who see the world as Trump does. Brexit is designed to enrich the already powerful through a deregulated economy that competes at the expense of protections to you and me as citizens, consumers and workers. A dog-eat-dog economic model that degrades our environment and reduces the security and freedom of all of us to live, work, study and love across our own continent.

Scotland, is that what we want for our future? If not, let's say so. Let's hear it - No to Brexit. We do not want to live in a Trumpian dystopia. We are European.

And let's keep saying it to our MPs, to our MSPs, to our friends and colleagues.

A Scotland out of the EU Single Market is a Scotland that faces costly and bureaucratic barriers to trade in the products and services that we are so good at - food and

drink, chemicals, textiles, electronics, financial and professional services.

This is not about a few tariffs - the simplistic free trade that Jacob Rees-Mogg and his ilk of neo-Victorian popinjay dream of to bring the British Empire back.

Brexit is about being wrenched out of the world's wealthiest integrated market - the barriers in modern global trade are about intellectual property, regulation and standards, tax and state aid regimes. That's why trade deals are complex and take a long time.

To chase trade deals with whoever will offer a desperate UK a quickie on whatever terms we can get, means lowering our standards and protections to suit their exports. Chlorinated chicken anyone? Dodgy safety standards for kids' toys? Soon we find we no longer align with the requirements of the biggest available market - the EU and the 50 plus countries with whom it has trade deals already, and more - such as Canada, and Japan - coming soon.

That divergence from the biggest available market hampers our trade, will make us all poorer and means fewer jobs. For what - we already trade perfectly well with

China, Africa, Australia - there is no pot of gold over the Brexit rainbow.

A Scotland out of the Single Market is a Scotland without EU workers able to move here freely to grow our population, build our economy and pay our taxes - taxes that now are the responsibility of Scotland to raise. We have been given a tax power and at the same time our capacity to make a success of it is being snatched away.

A Scotland out of the EU Single Market is a Scotland without billions of euros of EU investment in our renewables industry, without funding for training our young people, for developing the Highlands or financing research in our universities.

This is not scaremongering, nor is it just a possibility in the distant future; Brexit is happening to us now. Prices in the shops are up, young Europeans are not coming here to study, to work in our health service or to start new businesses. They are going elsewhere - we can't!

So, we can whimper or shrug about what is being imposed on Scotland, on the United Kingdom, by the will of the Daily Mail and the politicians that they control, or we can fight for the future that we want. We cannot

tackle global challenges - like climate disruption, inequality and the changing nature of work, like terrorism and demographic imbalances - on our own. Let's help build a strong European future with countries with whom we share values so that together we can influence the wider world for the better. I fear the alternative leads to resource and economic conflict. We thought we were done with that.

People ask me how do we fight for a European future. "What can we do. We have tried logic, we have tried persuasion. It's too frustrating. We have no power."

Well, we fight by being many. By being vocal and visible in our thousands and our millions about what we want. And we do like Leith - we persevere. Keep telling those in power what we want. Come out on the streets. Send emails to politicians. Write to a newspaper. Put a flyer in your window. Attend a meeting or rally. Vote, always vote. Work, and be seen to work, for the European future for Scotland that the majority of us have said that we want.

Let's not give in to Brexit.

Like Winston Churchill, who founded the European Movement, let's fight and never give up.

We are European.

Join us if you are too.