

REBUILDING EUROPE'S FUTURE

U K I N O R O U T ?

Peace Beyond Borders

*How the EU brought peace to Europe and how exporting
it would end conflicts around the world*

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*Hilton London Euston
17-18 Upper Woburn Place
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Introduction

On 23 June 2016, Britain will have voted on whether to stay in or leave the European Union. The UK's referendum campaign is unpredictable because of the ongoing financial economic crises in Eurozone, migrant or refugee crises, EU-NATO and Russia's ongoing tensions in Eastern Europe, or EU's greatest problem : crises of identity and confidence causing the rise of anti-EU populist movements in several EU states. There is a risk that Europe's great peace-promoting project will start to unravel.

Historically, Europe has been the planet's most violent continent: Today, this truth is almost forgotten, a testament to the remarkable change in Europe's internal relations after 1945. Until that point, war was a perpetual fact of European life. What changed?

Put simply, European countries systematically cancelled their own motives for war. I would like to dispense with alternative explanations for peace, such as culture change, the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) or the security "guarantee" provided by the United States and NATO. Instead, it was Europe's institutional alignment and economic integration in European Coal and Steel Community, than European Economic Community and finally European Union. In my book, "**Peace Beyond Borders: How the EU brought peace to Europe and how exporting it would end conflicts around the world**" I have identified 10 institutional peace promoting mechanisms that dispelled the mutual belligerence in Europe, creating permanent peace.

10 Peace Factors Made War Unthinkable in Europe

The 10 peace promoting factors are: 1. Enshrined Democracy and Rule of Law 2. Economic Truce 3. Open Borders and Human Ties 4. Soft Power and Shared Values 5. Permanent Discussion, Dialogue and Diplomacy 6. Financial Incentives and Support 7. Veto and Consensus Building 8. Resistance to External Interference 9. Rules, Human Rights and Multiculturalism 10. Mutual Trust and Peaceful Coexistence

These 10 factors prevented inter-state conflict during the latter half of the 20th Century by defusing specific flashpoints in Western Europe. These included the territorial dispute between Spain and the UK over Gibraltar; the dispute between the UK and Ireland over the six counties of Ulster; and secessionist movements in Spain, Belgium and in Scotland.

The framework that delivered these 10 mechanisms is today the European Union. The EU grew out of smaller and less ambitious regional bodies such as the European Coal and Steel Community and then the European Economic Community. The 10 principles for peaceful co-existence swiftly accreted around these structures. They provided a template for other continents to follow.

The success of the European Union has been in establishing a 'positive peace'. This kind of peace is established when different nations, groups of people or organisations become so vested in the interests of one another, and dependent on mutual cooperation, that the prospect of conflict becomes remote to the point of impossibility. In a remarkably short length of time – Europe has peace and cooperation where before there was conflict and cynicism. It is also worth emphasising that Britain has played a key role in all of it.

Europe is peaceful and we need to remember how novel that is, why it is an achievement and, most importantly, what led to it being so normal that we don't even question it any more. Namely, the structures, organisations and processes of the European Union and Britain's role in all of those.

Challenges and Urgent Reforms of EU

As with all big organisations, like the UN, World Bank, IMF etc., EU has to address new challenges which were not anticipated at its inception. EU recognises that it now faces its greatest ever crisis: the ongoing financial and economic crisis in the Eurozone, giving rise to inequality, the refugee and migrant crisis, civil war in Eastern Europe, and the crisis of confidence in the EU causing the rise of anti-EU populist movements in several EU states. Furthermore, urgent EU reforms should include, its pro-NATO alignment, democratic deficit, its neo-liberal economic agenda and addressing the recent refugee crisis.

EU's arms export are counterproductive to European security which is evident from the situation developing in Eastern Europe with the West including NATO and Russia starting a dangerous new cold war with military exercises in front of each other's borders. It benefits elites on both sides of the divide. In the West the tension with Russia has given NATO a new lease of life and made it easier Western arms manufacturers to sell their goods. Every NATO member is being urged to commit 2% of GDP to defence spending. It has also benefited Russian arms companies as Russia has been increasing its military spending particularly on high tech weapons.

Over the period of 2010-2014, EU Member States were responsible for 25.4% of the deliveries of major conventional weapons, which made EU the third largest arms supplier in the world, after the US and Russia. Much of those arms were exported to non-democratic countries that regularly violate human rights and encourage military action as is the case in Middle East and North Africa. Various studies have found that higher military spending have increased civil wars around the world. Ukraine is an example of that as Russia and NATO countries are increasing their military arsenal in Europe. We need to challenge War Profiteers (weapon manufacturers) – the industries that both profit and support ongoing cycles of war and violence.

One need to remember that it only takes a few hundred actors who decide to go to war. It is in the interest of the EU to disentangle itself from US strategic plans and from NATO's relentless efforts to outmatch Russia militarily. Isolating Russia cannot bring peace in Europe. EU's alignment with NATO is damaging its credibility and soft power appeal increasing hostilities with Russia. There is a need of EU responding to Russia in a friendly way including perhaps the possibility of it to be a part of the European Union provided it met the block's democratic standards. This will ensure lasting peace in Europe and pave the way for stability in the rest of the world.

EU should abandon its free market and austerity agenda, leading to a rise in inequality and need to put pro people policies, revive participatory democracy and economy, which can help to bring levels of equality. The policies of the European Union should reflect the 500 million Europeans living in the continent not just elites and corporations. EU need to cater the requirements of its citizens, be accountable to them and work for them in a transparent and decentralised way.

As per the refugee crisis, the West has to claim its responsibility and acknowledge the fact that US and NATO countries by continuously bombing Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan and destroying their economy and infrastructure are collectively guilty of creating the refugee crisis. These wars have displaced 60 million people. The West is capable of helping the refugees without straining the resources and furthermore have a legal obligation for their protection under UN convention relating to the status of refugees. EU should also work against exclusion, racism, xenophobia, discrimination and promote the positive aspects of diversity and multiculturalism in Europe and beyond.

EU is a work in progress. We live in an increasingly interconnected world. Britain should be leading inside Europe and not watching from out where it will have no say

in the decisions that affect jobs, growth, investment and our security without having a voice at the table.

We together IN/OUT campaigns need to work on the essential and urgent EU reforms needed to keep the European Union project relevant to all European citizens, and the UK to take the lead, to put the common European interests ahead of narrow national interests, in short reaffirming foundation *raison d'etre* of EU. UK as part of a team of 28 countries can not only preserve peace in Europe but also build a community spirit which can bind all Europe economically, culturally, socially, and politically.

More importantly the UfP “Europe for Peace” campaign will aim to create a dialogue between the yes and no campaigns, to work together to create a common vision in which Europe can help humanity survive the current multiple global crisis and build a future, towards liberty, fraternity, equality, a shared European house that is kept in order.

Better Together

Nation states unipolarity is in decline and multipolarity and regional organisations like African Union, UNASUR, ASEAN and Pacific Islands Forum have been formed based on the EU model the most successful peace experiment in international co-operation in the world. Countries in other parts of the world are building institutions on the model of EU to pre-empt conflicts before they erupt to guarantee peace, freedom and security.

Let me conclude with a endorsement of the EU against its critics, focusing particularly on Great Britain. Whatever the troubles of the Eurozone, peace is a necessary foundation for prosperity and that economic arguments against the EU will always fall at this hurdle. Acknowledging the union’s difficulties, I suggest new ways in which Europe can overcome its growing pains by adopting a new, demilitarised strategic approach to expansion, internal migration and refugee crisis. Global challenges call for a global, common effort: they will be tackled multilaterally or they will not be tackled at all.

UK has a clear choice – Better Together, and not isolate itself from the rest of the world. We cannot go back to the 90’s when Euro and economy of Europe was growing every year. We cannot go back to the 1940’s when Europeans were killing each other. At this moment 40 active conflicts including 11 civil wars are raging in the world including one in Eastern European soil. Let us move away from racial,

religious, social and political, sectarianism and hatred which are the causes of these active conflicts and build a peaceful world together by staying in EU. In an interconnected and complex world, alliances are needed more than ever among continents and civilisations to end conflicts and build partnerships.

We live in an increasingly interdependent and globalised world. No nation can afford to be isolated. What unites the people of Europe is greater than what divides them. Despite some shortcomings, the European Projects had been a triumph and all the member states should strive to strengthen rather than to weaken.

Brexit is as much Europe's problem as ours, and Europe is our problem as much theirs. Geographically, culturally and economically Britain and Europe are bound together. What's good for them is good for us and vice versa. By leaving, a weakening Europe will not make the UK any stronger.

Robert Schuman – one of the founding father of our European Union – said that "world peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it." Collectively, we must be more creative than ever to fulfil the ambition that the founding fathers of the European Union visualised seventy years ago.

Let us vote to continue the peace project that has transformed Europe for the better over the course of post war era making war unthinkable on the continent. A new Europe is emerging, let us build a vibrant Europe on European values, capable of contributing to the establishment of international relations based on peace, mutual respect, economic and social justice. Prosperity is important, but one cannot have prosperity without peace.

All of us, especially young people have a central vested interest in how society is run and that should be central to its decision making. So we need to vote to remain in EU on June the 23rd.

Notes:

Excerpts for this speech are taken from the book "Peace Beyond Borders" by Vijay Mehta, published in June 2016 in print and ebook (both £9.99) by New Internationalist with a foreword by Jose Ramos Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate

Proposed European Union Goals

The origins of the European Union lie in the ambition to guarantee peace in Europe. The fact that war between the nations of Europe is no longer conceivable is evidence of its success. However, in the 21st century, Europeans face new challenges and opportunities. Uniting for Peace and European Union proposed Mission Statement outlines where action at European level is needed.

- 🇪🇺 To guarantee peace, freedom and security in and around Europe.
- 🇪🇺 To promote and protect democracy and universal rights in Europe and around the world.
- 🇪🇺 To strengthen Europe's economy and to promote solidarity around Europe by working in partnership with national, regional and local government.
- 🇪🇺 To make it easy for Europe's citizens to live and work throughout the Union.
- 🇪🇺 To promote equality and tolerance of diversity in Europe.
- 🇪🇺 To promote and facilitate cooperation between Europeans, at individual, local, regional and national level, and in both the public and private sectors.
- 🇪🇺 To protect Europe's environment and combat climate change.
- 🇪🇺 To ensure that Europe's voice is heard in the world.
- 🇪🇺 To listen to its citizens, be accountable to them and work for them in a transparent and decentralised way.
- 🇪🇺 To undertake development aid programmes for poor countries to help them achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)
- 🇪🇺 To assist to replicate EU-like structures being created in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australasia, and the Middle East for peace and prosperity

Bio – **Vijay Mehta** is a distinguished author and leading peace activist and a champion for Development and Human Rights. He is the chair of Uniting for Peace (www.unitingforpeace.org) and Founding Trustee of Fortune Forum Charity (www.fortuneforum.org). He is a Director of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)

Working since 1979, Uniting for Peace is a non-profit organisation devoted to creating and promoting a global culture of peace, nonviolence and poverty reduction. The flagship campaign of Uniting for Peace is called 4D for World Peace. It is a campaign to create global frameworks for taking actions on interconnecting global issues of disarming and demilitarising the world and the savings thus achieved to be deployed for development and democracy. In 2016, Uniting for Peace have initiated a new campaign “Europe for Peace – Count Me In” (www.europeforpeace.org.uk) – It is an educational campaign aims to contribute positively to the upcoming UK referendum on EU’s membership highlighting the EU’s peace endeavours.

The charity Fortune Forum whose founder is Renu Mehta, daughter of Vijay Mehta, held summits (2005 and 2006) where Former US President Clinton, Former US Vice President Al Gore and Actor Michael Douglas were keynote speakers. The summits raised over a million pounds for charity and attracted a worldwide audience of 1.3 billion people (one fifth of humanity) including print and media coverage.

Vijay Mehta’s books include The Economics of Killing (2012), The Fortune Forum Code: For a Sustainable Future (2006), Arms No More (2005) and The United Nations and its Future in the 21st Century (2005).

Vijay Mehta's new book **Peace Beyond Borders: How the EU brought peace to Europe and how exporting it would end conflicts around the world** is now published in print and ebook by New Internationalist. The book contributes positively to the upcoming UK referendum on EU membership by highlighting the EU's peace endeavours, with a foreword written by Jose Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate and former president of Timor-Leste.

In 2014, Vijay Mehta's bio, "The Audacity of Dreams" appeared in the book Karma Kurry, published by Jaico Publishing House (India). It included 25 other inspiring change-makers' biographies. Nelson Mandela who wrote the foreword to the book, had this to say, "Ordinary people do extra ordinary things. These stories have that power to inspire people to rise and act, to make a difference." To read Vijay Mehta's full bio, please follow this link: <http://goo.gl/JcUGwr>

He has appeared in various TV programmes including BBC World, Press TV, Ajtak-24 hour Indian news channel, and Think Peace documentary, Canada, among others. The Sunday Times, Independent, Observer and Guardian newspapers, among other journals have written about him. His life is devoted to the service of peace, humanity and our planet.

Vijay Mehta is the recipient of the Global Indian Karmaveer (Action hero) Puraskaar (Award) by iCONGO (International Confederation of NGO's). He is now a noble-laureate 2012 – 2013 of the iCONGO team of advisors and mentors (www.icongo.in). It is an award for outstanding luminaries working for peace and social justice. He has been awarded as Global Peace Ambassador by Global Diversity Peace Centre London in 2015

"Vijay...a long standing activist for peace, development, human rights and environment"
The Sunday Times Magazine, London 1st February, 2009

"Vijay Mehta lends intellectual credibility to the project and wrote 'The Fortune Forum Code for a Sustainable Future', a sort of manifesto that will underpin the group's future activities."
The Independent, London 26 September 2006

"Thank you for all you do Vijay - both the Organisation and yourself are inspiration and give us all hope that both yourself and Uniting for Peace can bring a world without war. Indeed it is possible, even in our own time."
Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate (1976)

Vijay Mehta is among the 1,300 Notable Peacemakers Throughout History
http://peace.maripo.com/p_peacemakers.htm

He is among the 98 Peace Philanthropists around the world.
http://peace.maripo.com/p_philanthropy_bios.htm