



According to Barrell... Good environmental policies don't mitigate harm done by other EU policies

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For anyone confused about trusting politicians, the 2009 MP expenses scandal provided some useful insights. If that wasn't convincing enough, then the wild extremes of political speculation emerging from the EU referendum debate should be enough to remove any doubt.

The increasingly absurd and desperate assertions from each side verge on comical, but for their sinister assumption that the electorate are stupid enough to believe the political propaganda.

In the face of such polarised extremes, how do ordinary people decide? I recall the last British referendum in 1975, when 66 per cent voted to join the European Economic Community. It was a bold experiment with exciting prospects, but 41 years of being in Europe exposed some uncomfortable truths.

For example, the Common Fisheries Policy is plundering our maritime prosperity and the Common Agricultural Policy is destroying the ecological vibrancy of our countryside. Of course, the European protected species legislation is a major positive, but that does not mitigate the harm done by policies that do not suit us and would never have been in place from our own choice.

Stepping back from the rhetoric, it is hardly surprising that the EU is not working for Britain. With 28 countries all fighting for their own agendas, the best outcome can only ever be a fudge — compromises not suiting our national best interest and no real prospect of changing a system that was always teetering towards failure.

In the absence of an obvious correct answer, all that's left is intuition. Impulsively, 40 years seem long enough to decide — Britain in Europe is a failed experiment and it is time to move on.

I am aligned to Europe but I am not European. I am British, and with that comes our proven resilience to succeed without being shackled by the failed aspirations of continental countries that are fundamentally different from us.

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