



GRASSROOTS FOR EUROPE

Press Release – immediate availability

London, 24/11/2018 21:00

Grassroots groups urge EU to keep door open for “No Brexit”

Pro-EU groups from across the UK have made a direct appeal to the European Union to keep all options open on Brexit - including the possibility of Brexit being reversed.

More than a hundred grassroots campaigning groups have signed an open letter to the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, asking him not to do anything that would place obstacles in the way of a new referendum - and urging him to make provision for the possible revocation of Article 50.

The initiative has been coordinated by Grassroots for Europe, a network of local activists across the UK in what is fast becoming the EU’s largest mass movement.

Their letter is being hand delivered on Sunday to Mr Tusk’s office ahead of Sunday’s EU Summit, when ministers from the EU27 will consider the draft Withdrawal Agreement. It calls on him to recognise that the Prime Minister, who was in Brussels on Saturday, does not represent the majority view – and that more and more people are turning against Brexit as they’ve come to understand its implications.

More than 160 grassroots groups campaigning to stop Brexit have sprung up since the 2016 referendum in towns and cities across the UK. Its supporters took part in an unprecedented mass demonstration in London last month - when 700,000 people marched on Parliament to demand a People’s Vote on the Government’s Brexit deal, with an option to Remain. Since then publication of the UK/EU Withdrawal Agreement has sent shock-waves across the political landscape and the

possibility that Brexit might not happen at all has begun to become widely accepted. The Prime Minister herself has finally admitted this as a possibility – and last week Donald Tusk commented that a “no Brexit scenario” was still on the cards.

Grassroots for Europe co-organiser Richard Wilson, of Leeds for Europe, said: “Our campaigners know from talking every week to ordinary people on streets and doorsteps that public opinion is changing and people are realising the Brexit deal is nothing like what they were promised or what many of them were persuaded to vote for.

“We are making sure that our MPs know this, understand that the people's will has changed, and carry out the people's majority demand for the right to reject Brexit.

“With this letter we are taking the same message to the EU in Brussels, to ask, in the mutual interest of all EU citizens, for the time and cooperation to allow UK electors the chance of a democratic rethink.”

The letter cites recent opinion polls suggesting 54% of British people would now vote remain,¹ concluding: “As representatives of a substantial – quite possibly majority – view of ordinary British people, from all parts of our kingdom, we now ask you to please hear our voices and realise that the mood in the UK has moved against Brexit.

“In this context, we urge you to keep open the possibility of Article 50 being revoked and the UK remaining in the European Union.”

If the Withdrawal Agreement is off in Brussels and ratified, it is expected to be put before the UK Parliament in mid-December. However, it appears to have very little chance of being approved by MPs. If there is then a stalemate in Parliament, campaigners believe that a fresh People's Vote with an option to stay in the EU will emerge as the only viable solution.

Dr Mike Galsworthy, Programme Director, Scientists for EU, commented: “One of the remarkable features of British society since 2016 is the surge of grassroots pro-European groups springing up all over the UK. There is a cultural shift driven from the bottom up - one that talks to neighbours in the streets and organises mass marches. Nowhere in Europe is there a such a strong pro-European positive cultural force as the one currently tipping the balance for EU support across the UK. Now

¹ Survation/ Channel 4 Poll <https://www.channel4.com/press/news/c4-survey-uk-would-vote-remain-eu-majority-54-46>

would not be the right time to shut the door on the Brits after our public have battled through three years of debate and education on this. We want to stay in the EU and engage in building Europe.”

Notes for Editors

- 1. Grassroots for Europe** is a network of local pro-EU campaigning groups affiliated to the national People's Vote campaign and its component national organizations, which it supports and complements.
- 2. Grassroots for Europe** enables peer dialogue and collaboration across the nation between front-line campaigners, and provides a forum for consultation with national campaign leaders.
- 3.** The number of local groups campaigning to stop Brexit is steadily growing and is now over 160. Over 110 groups have so far signed **Grassroots for Europe's** letter to Donald Tusk.

Contacts for press enquiries:

Email: colinngordon@aol.com

Phone: [+44-] 7557 909811