

NEC STATEMENT – EUROPE

The NEC believes that joining the single currency offers the British economy many advantages for reasons of trade, inward investment, employment, as well as greater protection against speculation in foreign exchange markets.

The NEC notes that our trade links with our European partners are stronger now than they have ever been. In 1973, the year we joined the EU, only 35% of goods exported went to the EU countries. Now, nearly 60% of UK foreign trade is with the EU. Up to 3.5 million British jobs depend on exports to the European Union and nearly 2 million of these jobs depend on manufacturing.

The NEC believes that the debate on the single currency cannot be divorced from the debate around the European social agenda, that employment protection and economic reform are essential parts of the European project.

The NEC also recognises that it is essential for the public of Great Britain to enjoy a proper, meaningful debate based on facts around the Chancellor's five tests. Such a debate is crucial if we are to attract majority voter support in a future referendum. Amicus will continue to campaign for a referendum on the single currency once these tests are met.

The NEC believes that the Government must give a firm commitment that its public spending plans will not be compromised when the UK joins the euro if we are to allay fears that public services and the euro are incompatible and to campaign for reform of the growth and stability pact.

We also recognise that the European Economic Institutions, in particular the European Central Bank are widely regarded as too remote and not sufficiently accountable or transparent in their present form and welcomes the Government's commitment to constitutional and institutional reform.

The NEC notes the UK Government policy to hold a referendum on the draft EU constitution and further notes that the UK Government sought guarantees that the charter of fundamental rights would have only limited application in the UK.

The NEC notes the speech given by the Foreign Secretary to the CBI in which he said that the interests of business were at the heart of the Government's negotiating position and hence it would ensure that the Charter created no new rights under national law.

The NEC resolves that until the UK Government reaffirms its commitment to the European Social agenda, and ensures that all rights under the charter of fundamental rights are enshrined in UK legislation, Amicus should refrain from active support for the EU constitution.