

## **Wise Men or Stooges?**

Johnson, Trump and Farage have something in common; The Three Wise Men or The Three Stooges? Well actually a combination of both. All three are larger-than-life characters who occupy the Bully Pulpit, and know that 'If you say anything with sufficient authority, anyone will believe you'; and they don't even have to believe what they are saying. But then as the old Chinese proverb says, 'People who talk, don't know. People who know, don't talk.' A reminder of Disraeli's reputed remark, 'There are lies, damned lies and statistics' - actually it wasn't him, it was Mark Twain. But how true, as they massage the facts, tell lies, and throw out financial bribes. Me, a cynic? you bet!

Yet faith in human sensibility remains, as the destructive and divisive Brexit debate continues. The 2016 Referendum on our continued membership of the EU, was premised on lies about NHS funding and Immigration, but was actually more about national dissatisfaction with the whole political scene, and the Right's obsession with the EU's unelected status. Well the EU gives 500 million people across 28 countries freedom to live, work, study and freely trade in the world's biggest single market. The Death Penalty has been abolished, and standards set and agreed on environmental issues including beach safety and cleanliness.

But it is not just about trade, although within the last three years, whilst the UK has continued to tear itself apart, the EU has signed trade deals with Japan and Canada, and is negotiating with Australia and New Zealand. Why would we throw that away and start all over again on our own? It has been awarded the Nobel Peace prize. Workers from EU countries now have the same pay and conditions as local workers. Digital reforms have been agreed, including the scrapping of Roaming Charges, and the unblocking on sales of digital subscriptions and content. The EU is standing up to unfair Chinese competition and Trump's trade war on steel imports. It has brought in new rules to tackle tax avoidance and illegal competition. There are new EU-wide crackdowns on criminals and their activities. There are new safety rules on passenger aircraft and ferries, and chemical levels in children's toys. Named foodstuffs are now protected from foreign copying. New caps on greenhouse gases, and increased levels of recycling have been introduced... the list goes on.

There is much to celebrate as a continued member of the EU, particularly at a time when new MEPs have been elected and new Presidents will soon take up their posts. Despite what we are daily led to believe, this is not all about trade, but about peace, friendship, cooperation... Every 'sane' person must see, that in our uncertain world, which is being made daily less secure by the destabilising antics of The Three, it is sheer lunacy to throw away decades of negotiated settlements, of which we were, and are a part; and if we don't like it, we should stay in and fight for change, don't let's fret and walk away.

So, as there is no way out of the corner into which our politicians have backed us, and if we really are a democratic country, then today's people should be given a vote on the facts, not on the lies of 2016.

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