

The EU – Paper Votes to Remain

The results of a survey of its Members by the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) indicate very strong support for the UK to remain within the EU: 60% were in favour of staying, 34% felt unable to express a view and 6% were in favour of leaving.

The industry is largely foreign owned and controlled from head offices located outside of the UK. Paper is internationally traded, as are products derived from the material and even its waste. The industry believes that it is essential that a tariff-free market operates across Europe where common standards prevail.

Paper is a capital intensive sector and there is already evidence that projects are not being given the go ahead unless the pay back periods are very short term. Indeed, a vote to leave the EU is likely to result in a very lengthy period of uncertainty which will only increase the likelihood of future investment being deferred or even cancelled.

In common with all of the UK's Energy Intensive Industries, Paper is already struggling to remain competitive as a result of high energy and climate change costs – a situation that has largely arisen because of UK government policy rather than that of the EU.

The industry accepts that the EU itself does need radical reform and it was Europe's Paper Industry which launched a very hard hitting campaign, titled "Basta" (a Spanish word meaning "enough is enough"), at the time of the last EU parliamentary elections. Previous Commissions have over legislated, imposing costs on European industries which mean we struggle to remain competitive. The UK needs to be at the forefront of this reform agenda, something that cannot happen if we are no longer members of the club.

CPI Director General, David Workman, commented: "The views of our Members on this important issue should be taken seriously. The UK's Paper-based industries are an important element of this country's manufacturing base and we are inextricably tied to our neighbours within the EU. To break this tie and enter a lengthy period of uncertainty about our future trading relationship with it could prove to be very damaging indeed to our industry's future prospects."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) is the leading trade association representing the UK's Paper-based Industries, comprising recovered paper merchants, paper and board manufacturers and converters, corrugated packaging producers, and makers of soft tissue papers.
- CPI represents an industry with an aggregate annual turnover of £6.5 billion, 25,000 direct and more than 100,000 indirect employees.
- For facts on the UK's Paper-based Industries please visit: www.paper.org.uk.



CPI Director General, David Workman