European and External Relations Committee

The EU referendum and its implications for Scotland

Written submission from Robert Durward, Cloburn Quarry Co. Ltd

This consultation is problematical as it is designed to highlight problems rather than potential solutions. If the Scottish Government wishes to avoid or mitigate collateral damage from Brexit then it should first of all be asking the business sector what it finds most troublesome about the EU. As you will be aware, many Scottish business people voted for Brexit and the reasons for this can and should be identified as soon as possible. No-one yet knows what the full implications of Brexit might be, assuming it ever takes place, but most of us already know what it is about the EU that we dislike.

Once it identifies the most serious objections to the EU, the SG should then meet with other EU members, who will almost certainly have similar problems; to discuss what steps can be taken to address these concerns in order that meaningful reforms can be proposed.

Not all Scottish businesses sell to the EU yet all are caught up in its damaging red tape. A flood of EU Directives has damaged our civil engineering, construction, transport, house building and healthcare sectors but they have also adversely affected practically every frontline goods and service provider. The only real beneficiary – apart from farmers – has been the multitude of non-productive enterprises that have sprung up to exploit the gravy train created by this complex and often counter-productive legislation – practically all of which have added significantly to Scotland’s growing £15bn deficit.

This consultation looks very much like an exercise to ingather information that our Nationalist government can use to attack Westminster. The Scottish business sector now needs solutions to long-standing problems rather than continual separatist politicking.

Most Scottish business people, myself included, would prefer to remain in a reformed EU, with open access to the single market. Many of us voted for Brexit to get the process of reform underway not for our vote to be used as a further lever for Scottish independence.

It is also extremely disappointing that the consultation questionnaire fails to ask what advantages Brexit might deliver for Scottish businesses. Many of us are keen to sell our goods or services farther afield than the EU as well as cutting in the volume of red tape we have to contend with.