



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Response to Government leaflets on EU position

Thank you for contacting me about Government leaflets on the EU referendum.

The European Union Referendum Act obliges the Government to publish information for the public on the outcome of the renegotiation that the Government has conducted, on alternatives to membership and on the rights and obligations that arise from EU membership.

In addition, every household in the country has been sent a leaflet from the Government. The Government has stated that this leaflet sets out the facts, explains why it believes that the UK should remain in the European Union and shows some of the choices that the country would face if the British people were to vote to leave. The leaflet encourages the public to register to vote by 7 June and directs electors to where and how they should do that.

The public want an honest debate conducted by two competing sides. It is my belief that the distribution of these leaflets is not in the spirit of a fair campaign. The £9 million of taxpayers money spent on these leaflets is more than the designated campaigns are allowed to spend throughout the campaign period in total and would be better spent on our public services.

Government publications of this kind, and the distribution of a Government leaflet, are entirely lawful. The leaflet follows precedent from previous referendums, including the previous referendum on EU membership in 1975 and the Scottish referendum in 2014. It is absolutely right that the Government justifies its position on EU membership and communicates its reasoning to the British public.

Special rules limiting all Government publications and communications will apply in the last 28 days of the referendum campaign under the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

Whether the United Kingdom should remain in or leave the European Union is a huge decision for this country and I welcome that this decision is being made by the British people as a whole.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Edward Timpson MP

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