

U.K. Independence Party

MANIFESTO

What Is the UK Independence Party?

The UK Independence Party was founded in 1993 to seek Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. We have attracted membership from Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democratic backgrounds - principled men and women who want their country back. UKIP has grown steadily as more people see through the European 'project'. We are now the fourth political party - in 1999, we won three seats in the European Parliament, a platform we use to reveal the truth about the EU.

UKIP is a non-racist, non-sectarian party. It includes British people of all ethnic backgrounds who value individual freedom, tolerance and our right to govern ourselves - the most basic human right. UKIP really believes in Britain and Britain's future as an independent nation competing in the world. We are not 'anti-European', but we oppose British membership of an EU that stifles our initiative and threatens our freedom. We do not seek to abolish the EU, for we believe that each nation in Europe should decide its own future. Britain has no more right to control them than they have to impose their will on us.

UKIP is the only political party contesting the General Election that will never abolish the pound for the euro and will never abandon British common law, the right to trial by jury or the presumption of innocence. Indeed we are the only party left that genuinely believes in freedom - freedom for the individual, freedom for businesses and local communities, freedom from patronising 'political correctness' and from intolerance or injustice. We seek an independent, outward-looking Britain, not the offshore province of a centralised 'Europe', whose people are told what to do and what to think.

In 1975, the British people voted for the 'Common Market' in good faith. They were told it was going to be a genuine common market - an association of independent, freely trading nation states. Instead, we have the European Union: centralised, bureaucratic, unaccountable and corrupt, eroding our independence and imposing by diktat policies that we would never vote for in an election.

Not only is our currency under threat, but our entire legal system, our British nationality, our pounds and ounces, our right to free speech and freedom of association, our police, our Armed Forces, our own agricultural policy, our right to trade freely and the Parliamentary system that underpins British liberty.

The EU has shown itself to be one of the largest confidence tricks in human history. It claims to 'give us rights' while removing basic freedoms. It 'gives us money' while costing us billions of pounds per year. EU subsidies are like crumbs from the cake we have made. UKIP rejects the absurd Alice-in-Euroland logic of rule from Brussels.

The other parties are not telling us the truth about the EU. Labour are increasingly divided, but want a 'Europe' run by politically correct courts. The Liberals claim to

believe in individual freedom but would reduce us to powerlessness within the EU. The Greens claim to believe in 'acting locally' but want us to be ruled by the Strasbourg Parliament. **The Tories pretend that we can be 'in Europe but not run by Europe'. We say that 'in the EU means ruined by the EU'.**

The European Commission in Brussels intend there to be an EU 'government', an EU 'Army' and an EU 'constitution'. This proves to us that it is time to withdraw, rather than go on pretending that we can compromise.

UKIP will repeal the European Communities Act (1972) and renegotiate trade agreements with our former 'partners'. Whatever their claims, the Tory, Labour and Liberal parties are all led by Euro-extremists. These professionals don't want us to run our own country or control our own lives. UKIP, by contrast, is a moderate, mainstream party which believes in the British people and can offer them a life outside the Euro-state.

Free Trade and Globalisation

The UK Independence Party supports genuine free trade. This means leaving the European Union, which prevents us from trading freely and fairly on the world stage. It means freedom for British businesses from unreasonable bureaucratic control - whether from Brussels or Whitehall.

Britain is the world's fourth largest economy, the second largest global investor (after the United States) and head of the largest international club except for the UN itself - the Commonwealth. This international grouping includes a quarter of the world's population. It is a free association of independent, culturally diverse nations which respect each other's integrity. This is a far better model for international relations than the centralised, increasingly tyrannical EU.

Through the Commonwealth, Britain has links with some of the world's fastest growing economies, such as those of the Indian subcontinent. Our relationship with the United States remains unique. These connections equip us to take advantage of global opportunities. EU membership, by contrast, holds us back in the world. It locks us into an over-regulated system based on the old-fashioned principle of 'state knows best'.

UKIP believes that as a free nation we have the right to govern ourselves and decide our own trade policies. We believe in setting businesses free, too. This is because we value our business people, who are the key to our success in the global market. They are creative, innovative, responsible and successful. Over-regulated, they are more likely to fail. This means fewer jobs for workers and less choice for consumers. Regulation should therefore be minimal, easy to understand and applied with flexibility, good sense and a light touch.

Many people believe that bureaucratic regulation is needed to curb 'greedy multinationals'. In reality, it is small and medium-sized companies that suffer most. They have the least time for paperwork and cannot afford expensive legal advice. Draconian employment directives, mostly from Brussels, deter them from hiring staff.

According to the Federation of Small Businesses, small business people are now

spending thirty-one hours per month on paperwork - time better spent on running their firms and serving their customers¹. Red tape discriminates - in favour of big corporations, against family firms, the self-employed, co-operatives and ethnic minority businesses. It militates against job creation, especially part-time jobs which often give opportunities to women, under-25s and older workers. UKIP will fight for our business people and the communities they serve.

Many multi-nationals support the euro and want an EU superstate. It suits their lobbying interests to divide the world into regional power blocs. National governments and different legal systems are an inconvenience they could do without. Labour, the Tories and the Liberal Democrats agree with them. In contrast, we believe in keeping the pound and retaining our own laws. That ensures fairness to all business people - on whose enterprise our whole economy depends.

UKIP is not 'against' multi-nationals. On the contrary, we welcome their contribution to the economy. But we seek a trading environment in which small and medium sized businesses are allowed to compete fairly. We are for independence, diversity and choice, not regulation, bureaucracy and conformity.

Since our entry to the "Community" in 1973, the UK, a global economy, has been unable to negotiate any trade deals with the rest of the world. Freedom from the EU means that Britain can act as a force for good in the world. As a powerful and independent economy, we would be entitled to our seat at the World Trade Organisation table and can, therefore, help shape the policies of the WTO so that there is more genuine free trade, less protectionism on behalf of big companies or rich countries.

Outside the EU, we can build strong trading relationships with the rest of the world, including Commonwealth countries and the North American Free Trade Area. It is ironic that the European Commission could negotiate with - or even join - NAFTA. Britain cannot make such decisions because Tory and Labour governments have signed our sovereignty away.

UKIP is the only party to support free and fair trade for a free country.

Trade and Industry, Taxation and Employment

Britain retains unique opportunities because of its history, language, ethnic diversity and entrepreneurial spirit. Our connections with the rest of the world are not 'the past' as Europhiles claim. They are our future in the global economy.

EU regulations stifle businesses and discourage employment. There is no point in pretending that we can pick and choose between EU regulations, or than we can 'negotiate' and 'opt out'. Even where we have successfully resisted EU laws, the EU Commission bring them back in another form.

¹ Federation of Small Businesses, in association with NatWest Small Business Research Trust Quarterly Survey, Vol. 15, No.3, September 1999. The survey showed that directors of companies with 10-14 workers spent thirty-one hours per month exclusively on complying with government and EU regulations, including (ironically) the Working Time Directive from Brussels.

Whatever anyone says, being in the EU *means* being run by the EU. When we withdraw, not only shall we be able to free our businesses, but also we shall be able to regulate justly, impartially and in accordance with our legal traditions.

Withdrawal from the EU would allow us to make a 'bonfire' of inappropriate regulations. Crippling bureaucracy is not limited to Brussels - it can exist at all levels of government. We recognise that small and medium-sized businesses create most of our wealth, but that too often a wealth-devouring bureaucracy obstructs them. UKIP would exempt small businesses employing fewer than 20 people from many regulations.

Also, withdrawal from the EU will mean an end to compulsory metrication. We shall rescind the Weights and Measures (Unit of Measurement) Regulation, introduced by the Conservatives in 1994, which has led to the prosecution of shopkeepers and stallholders. Compulsory metrication is a financial imposition on small businesses, especially, and limits people's freedom of choice. The idea that a shopkeeper can be fined or jailed for refusing to use metric measurements is alien to our traditions of freedom and tolerance. UKIP is not 'anti-metric'. We see this issue as one of freedom and diversity. Brussels, by contrast, seeks to impose a Napoleonic absolutism and uniformity.

UKIP recognises the need for regulation - to balance the rights (and responsibilities) of workers and employers, small and large enterprises, environment and economic growth. For example, UKIP opposes all types of unfair discrimination.

The regulatory structure of employment must be intelligible and justly applied. Much of the present system, by contrast, deters enterprise and employment. Worse still, it deters honesty and encourages rule breaking - such as the 'black economy', whereby workers are hired illegally and have no rights. When rules are 'made to be broken', corruption thrives. That is the main lesson of EU membership.

The Tax System

There will be two immediate benefits of independence. First, we shall have the right to decide our economic future. Secondly, we shall save billions of pounds a year. Some of this 'independence dividend' will be directed to tax reform. UKIP believes that all of us pay too much tax - especially the less well off. We would therefore use part of the cash dividend arising out of independence from the EU to raise substantially the tax threshold. This would remove at least a million lower paid from the tax system.

Excessive taxation - of individuals, families and businesses - is bad for Britain. It stifles initiative, discourages employment and punishes people for behaving responsibly. It makes Britain less competitive in the global marketplace. Just as over-rigid employment law encourages illegal employment, high taxes increase tax avoidance. In every area of our lives, excessive regulation makes us a less law-abiding society.

The UK tax system has spun out of democratic control and shows little consideration for the taxpayer. UKIP will work with the Accountancy and Taxation Institutes, together with business groups, to simplify tax law so that it is:

- * Simple, concise, with clear objectives;
- * Easy to calculate and collect, without resort to the Courts;
- * Fair and reasonable.

Tax policy should be framed to encourage investment, enhance our global competitiveness and create, rather than remove, incentives to work and save.

Three areas of tax law requiring urgent attention are Capital Gains Tax (CGT) and Inheritance Tax (IHT) and the self-assessment system. These are too complex, as well as punitive to middle-income families. We will remove main residence from IHT. We favour a more streamlined taxation system, with higher thresholds. We wish to encourage wealth creation, and release millions of people from hardship.

Value Added Tax (VAT) is imposed by our membership of the EU. It can only be reformed by an independent Britain. The administrative and regulatory burden of VAT, and the punitive regime of enforcement, is in desperate need of reform.

Above all, freedom from the EU would forever remove the threat of 'tax harmonisation'. Harmonisation would reduce our competitiveness and drag us downwards. Brussels knows this, as do our EU competitors. Harmonisation will also mean VAT on books, children's clothing, transport and funerals.

Only UKIP can promise that there will never be tax harmonisation. UKIP is the only true party of tax reform.

Health, Social Security and Pensions

Health

Britain, which has the world's fourth largest economy, deserves a first class National Health Service. Doctors, nurses and other health professionals work immensely hard to provide this. Flaws in the system are caused by bureaucratic waste and centralisation. Management methods and structures are unwieldy and cumbersome.

UKIP sees the NHS as the mainstay of health care provision in this country. It provides Britain with health care at a remarkably low cost compared to our competitors. But the system is failing and requires additional - but properly managed - financial support. An ageing population will add to demands on the NHS - which should be met with imaginative and flexible approaches.

Nursing must be seen as a rewarding career with good pay and prospects. Salaries must be increased to attract high calibre candidates into nursing - and, crucially, to retain them in the Health Service, in particular by extending salary scales to reward proficiency and experience. Although additional funding should be made available for recruitment and training, we believe that the pursuit of increasingly academic qualifications should be reconsidered, and more emphasis placed on practical competence.

Furthermore, we believe that hospitals should reintroduce proven, traditional management structures, characterised by the "matron" system where a single manager

is responsible for all "hotel services" and "caring" functions.

Additionally, we believe that significant measures must be taken to deal with the increasing burden of hospital infection and clinical malpractice, including the setting of legally enforceable standards and the provision of an independent inspectorate.

Freedom from the EU will give us greater freedom to recruit high calibre applicants from Commonwealth countries, adding to the pool of talent. The Health Service should be a centre of excellence, where merit is rewarded irrespective of background because professionalism and skill are valued. UKIP promotes the ethos of public service - and deplores its erosion by Labour and Tory governments.

Links between NHS Trusts and their local communities are crucial to first class health care. Governing bodies should be more accountable to the communities they serve. Effective reform depends on peeling away the layers of self-perpetuating bureaucracy that dog the NHS and impede the delivery of patient care. UKIP has no ideological bias against the private sector, which we regard as an essential part of the nation's health provision. We believe that money should be spent on treating patients, not on management consultants, politically correct excesses and 'preparation' for the euro. Patients should be treated as individuals, not mere statistics, and should be given as much consideration and choice as possible. Complementary or 'alternative' medicine should fall within the NHS remit, as a supplement to conventional treatment.

In other words, UKIP supports a return to the original principles of the NHS: a health care system serving local communities and responsive to people's needs, not a bureaucratic monolith.

We share the widespread public alarm about the impersonal and bureaucratic nature of social service provision in many areas. This can lead to a patronising, dictatorial approach to disadvantaged communities, and at worst to acts of tragic incompetence and injustice. Britain has many first-class social workers, but the system they work in disempowers local communities and takes little account of individual needs. UKIP is determined to review social service provision so that it is far more accountable and far less doctrinaire. Training and working practices for social workers will be reviewed so that there is less emphasis on 'political correctness', more emphasis on solving practical problems for individuals and communities.

UKIP believes in the welfare state as originally conceived - serving and responding to public need, empowering people to control their own lives.

Social Security

UKIP aims to free as many as possible from benefit culture. We shall remove artificial obstacles to employment - by cutting red tape and reforming employment law to make it responsive to local conditions. We shall review and streamline the benefit system, removing barriers and disincentives to seeking work, whilst maximising delivery to those in need. The present benefit system provides incentive for fraud. It creates what is best described as 'institutionalised dishonesty'. Long-term job seekers are transferred to sickness benefit, often on spurious grounds, to massage the figures and save administrative effort.

The benefit system acts increasingly as a trap. Through a network of complicated but pointless rules, it discourages part-time employment and penalises voluntary work. It should be streamlined and simplified. In 'post-industrial' areas, where skilled mature workers cannot find work, a basic income would be preferable to benefits. It would free up these workers to engage in community projects and creatively pursue their interests. Basic income is easy to administer, cuts red tape and eliminates the problem of benefit fraud.

We therefore examine the possibility of introducing **a new concept**:

* Basic income for unemployed workers with more than twenty years' work experience, and single mothers with school age children: this should not rule out part-time employment.

More training, re-skilling and lifelong learning programmes: these increase our competitiveness, creating a flexible, well-trained workforce. Benefits and training locally administered and tailored to local needs.

UKIP believes in a practical, carefully targeted benefit system, which encourages paid employment where it is possible, and constructive alternatives where it is not. Training and re-skilling will be our first priorities.

Pensions and the Elderly

Our population is ageing and so the pensions bill is bound to increase. Indeed it is tipped to rise dramatically after 2010. Unlike other parties, UKIP is prepared to face the idea that the current pay as you go (PAYG) system is unsustainable in the medium and long term.

An EU-wide pensions time bomb is ticking away and Brussels cannot be trusted to defuse it. This is another argument for withdrawal from the EU and keeping the pound forever. Only an independent Britain can adequately provide for British pensioners - without picking up the bill for the rest of 'Europe'.

UKIP proposes a system of individual personal provision with assets accumulated being the private property of investors. This will increase the savings rate, liberate funds for investment and accordingly lower long-term interest rates and inflation. Personal pension investments, under any measure, have been shown to outperform pension provision operated by governments. We will additionally restore tax repayments to pension funds.

The proceeds derived from the sale of airwave licenses are an ideal national windfall to kick-start the new system. There will be a full safety net out of general taxation to those not in work and the existing elderly.

UKIP's policy of withdrawal from the EU also enables an independent Britain to remove taxes which hit the poor and elderly hardest, notably VAT on fuel. **From the "independence dividend" UKIP will therefore fund a minimum increase in pensions of £5.00 per week per person.**

The right to govern ourselves means the right to decide our economic and fiscal future

once again. This can only increase prosperity and employment - and enable us to provide appropriately for the needy.

One key provision, which this Party supports, is the provision of free residential care for the elderly, provided by the private and voluntary sectors, supervised by local authorities. We cannot accept the situation where local authority social services allocate spaces, provide services and also monitor and enforce standards.

Education

Schools

An independent Britain requires a qualified, well-trained population with the skills and knowledge needed to compete in the world. But education has wider purposes, too: the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, the transmission of cultural values, the creation of good citizens with the inquiring minds required for a free society. The UK Independence Party seeks to remove obstacles to learning, give real opportunities to every student and promote excellence rather than mediocrity. That means striking a balance between fair regulation and the freedom which teachers and academics need.

UKIP will reform the system of teacher recruitment to entice into the profession individuals with a wider range of experience. There are many people from industry, the Armed Forces and the professions with knowledge, skill and insight, who could make valuable contributions as full or part-time teachers. Their pay will match their experience. UKIP believes that teachers should be given the rewards and respect that their profession deserves. However we believe that teacher training methods are seriously flawed. They will be restructured, so that they place less emphasis on sociological theory, more on practical understanding.

UKIP seeks to shift the balance of power from educational bureaucrats towards parents, teachers themselves and students. We shall therefore promote as much educational choice as possible. This means that state schools will once again be allowed to select for academic ability or potential, as long as they take into account social needs and give opportunities to children from less advantaged backgrounds. UKIP believes in top quality education for all, regardless of background, race or income. UKIP is therefore committed to reducing class sizes, especially at junior level, where the foundations of learning should be laid. Our target is less than twenty-five pupils per class.

UKIP aims for an education policy that reflects the concerns of parents, many teachers and children themselves, not self-proclaimed 'experts'. We shall therefore address such problems as boys' under-achievement (and the social problems this causes), the shortage of male teachers to act as role models, lax discipline and the continuing under-achievement of many ethnic minority children. We note that some black parents send their children to the Caribbean to receive a traditional 'British' education. This is a terrible indictment of our system. All British children should have the opportunity to pursue excellence. UKIP will ensure that the days of levelling-down are over.

Excellence in education requires freedom of choice. We envisage more specialist

schools, which focus on (for example) music, sport, technology or special educational needs. There will be different educational approaches, too. We recognise that some children do better at single-sex schools, some parents prefer religious schools and that 'non-academic' children deserve as rewarding an education as their peers. UKIP will raise the status of technical education to make it equal to academic schooling. We shall allow early specialisation in technical subjects for some pupils and create new exams in technical or industry-related subjects. This will require recruiting more technicians and engineers to teaching - and paying them appropriately.

UKIP is concerned about politically slanted teaching in schools, especially in History, English and 'Personal and Social Education'. We believe in as much independence as possible for schools and teachers. However there is a need for clear guidelines to ensure fairness and freedom of thought. The EU promotes the brainwashing of children, so that they grow up believing uncritically in the 'European ideal'. Under Labour, EU propaganda in schools has greatly increased. Brussels makes no secret of its desire to control education. Unlike the other parties, we can promise that this will never happen to British children.

We shall also review the role and responsibilities of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), with a view to making them more accountable to the communities they serve, less bureaucratic and less prone to 'politically correct' dogma. We do not rule out radical schemes, such as vouchers for parents to send their children to private schools, or schools outside their localities, where these meet their needs better. More generally, UKIP seeks to break down the 'wall' between private and state schools, for we value the role of both in educating our children.

UKIP believes in genuine citizenship education including an understanding of British history. This includes learning to think, criticise and argue as well as obey the law. Citizenship is not about fashionable 'isms', but about independence of mind, responsible behaviour and 'life skills' such as managing money, understanding road safety and practical care for the environment. Such skills are neglected in schools although they are essential to success in the modern world.

UKIP will stop the sale of playing fields. We regard good sporting facilities as an essential part of good schooling. The long-term educational and social benefit of sport in schools should not be sacrificed to short term profit. We deplore the decline of competitive sports and other outdoor activities in schools, and will take appropriate measures to reverse this trend.

Higher and Further Education

UKIP strongly believes in the concept of 'life-long' learning. We see this as worthwhile in itself and good for the economy - creating a well-trained, flexible workforce equipped with modern skills. We regard further education as a positive investment, increasing employment and contributing to the knowledge based economy. We recognise that many highly skilled men and women want to learn new skills, such as information technology, to increase their employment options. Others have missed out on schooling in the past but wish to learn now. UKIP therefore supports a further education system that responds to a wide range of needs and offers a wide range of courses and opportunities. We shall promote community colleges and

home study and - as with schools - we shall raise the status of technical education so that it is equal to academic study.

UKIP aims to restore to universities their original purpose: the study of humanities and sciences, based on objective inquiry and freedom of thought. We believe that universities should be largely self-financing, with institutions encouraged to promote "curiosity-led" research and academic freedom. We shall explore various mechanism for independent funding, such as transferable loans which students repay directly to the academic institutions of their choice. UKIP opposes attempts to introduce 'political correctness' regimes on campus - this includes ideologically skewed courses and programmes sponsored by the EU which place propaganda before truth. UKIP will encourage the setting up of private universities and colleges. These will not be 'bastions of privilege' but will (with government help) give scholarships to students from less advantaged backgrounds who have great potential.

Pluralism and choice in higher education are the best ways to achieve excellence. We seek to restore the British tradition of independent scholarship - but make it available to all. Part of the 'Independence Dividend' will be converted into an 'Education Dividend' with the abolition of tuition fees.

Withdrawal from the EU will mean an end to discrimination against overseas students, especially those from Commonwealth countries. We believe that overseas students play a crucial role in fostering friendship and promoting international development.

Transport, the Environment and Energy

Transport

Propagandists for the EU present it as 'environmentally friendly'. They would have us believe that without help from Brussels we cannot address environmental problems or provide good public transport. In reality, the EU is part of the problem. It aims to impose a system of central planning where 'one size fits all' - but in reality no one is satisfied. Some of the most controversial aspects of rail privatisation, such as the creation of Railtrack as a private monopoly, were introduced to comply with EU rules - yet in many EU countries the railways are still owned by the state. EU membership drains away money that could be used to create better roads and railways. Independence will enable us to address the UK's unique transport problems instead of following irrelevant directives.

In rural areas especially, we must assume that the car will continue to be the main form of private transport, for reasons of efficiency and convenience. We are not in favour of laws and taxes which penalise the motorist - they are both ineffective and highly illiberal. There is no point in telling motorists to 'get out of their cars' when public transport is unavailable or unsafe. UKIP supports an integrated transport system, with easy transitions between car, bus or train, where cycling and walking are also encouraged. In improving our public transport, we can learn lessons from other countries, including EU member states such as the Netherlands, and non-EU states such as Switzerland - which despite its mountainous terrain has the best transport infrastructure in Europe.

In general, UKIP favours free market solutions in transport. However unlike the Conservative Party we do not see privatisation as an article of faith. We address transport policy on a case-by-case basis, taking local conditions into account. For example, UKIP will work with the Countryside Alliance and other rural forums to tackle the problems of rural transport - in particular for children, the elderly and people on low incomes. We share Mayor Livingstone's opposition to the partial sell-off of the London Underground (although we disagree with him on other issues, notably the euro).

UKIP is persuaded by calls from the Federation of Small Business to reduce fuel tax. High fuel taxes do not protect the environment but do threaten Britain's global competitiveness. They destroy jobs, ruin businesses and threaten the future of British farming. The haulage industry, rural economies and the poor are worst affected by these high taxes. Independence would mean that we could set our own fuel tax without having to justify it to the EU - as the Norwegian Parliament did in September 2,000. UKIP rejects the 'Climate Change Levy' as another stealth tax on business.

Fuel and road taxes will be earmarked for spending on transport. UKIP supports adequate funding for bypasses, upgrading major routes, road and railway maintenance and provision of cycle lanes. Private car Road Fund Licence (RFL) will be structured to encourage the use of the least polluting vehicles, although some historic vehicles may be exempt. We would explore, in consultation with transport providers, radical solutions to transport problems, including the use of coastal shipping, inland waterways and lighter than air technologies.

The Environment

Environmental policy is about *empowerment* - of local communities, businesses and individual citizens. The EU stands for the opposite: centralisation, crippling regulation, edicts by unaccountable officialdom. Recent history has shown us that centralisation has failed. The planned economies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were amongst the most polluted societies on Earth. The original ecology movement believed strongly in local control. Today's 'greens' support regulation on a grand scale. Often they seem to dislike people more than they love the planet. We would like to return to the environmental movement's founding principles: respect for diversity; accessible and transparent political institutions; local accountability and human responsibility for natural resources.

UKIP supports a balance between the needs of economic growth and environmental concern. Small and medium-sized businesses have a crucial role to play in environmental policy - because they serve local communities, it is in their interests to promote a healthy environment. The EU policy of imposing cumbersome directives and issuing contestant threats has proved to be counter-productive. Like excessive taxation, it encourages illegal behaviour rather than public service. UKIP believes that free-market solutions to environmental problems work better than state control. Yet the market must operate against a background of pragmatic and fair regulation. An effective environmental strategy must work on three levels:

- * Awareness of global responsibility;
- * National interest;

* Local circumstances - environmental and economic;

As the party of decentralisation, UKIP believes that the enforcement structure for environmental regulations should be greatly simplified. Wherever possible, enforcement will be returned to local authorities, acting under the general direction and support of central agencies which answer to Parliament. UKIP sees a link between sound environmental management and a return to democratic accountability at all levels.

Accordingly, UKIP policy is to encourage the development of strong, well-equipped environmental monitoring teams answerable to local authorities. A primary function of these teams will be the surveillance of the human and animal populations, integrated with environmental monitoring in all its aspects, to detect and where possible prevent adverse health effects attributable to environmental pollution. In this context, UKIP is concerned by the alarming rise in conditions such as asthma, the emergence of significant levels of childhood leukaemia and the number of unexplained clusters of previously rare cancers. We shall promote studies to determine the causes. There will be full local involvement in such studies to prevent cover-ups by central government.

UKIP is free market in its approach to new housing and industrial growth. Nonetheless, we are concerned at the concentration of this development in the South East of England. This reflects wider imbalances, which are bad for the economy and society as well as the environment. UKIP seeks to redress such imbalances - not through extreme forms of state intervention, but through practical measures good for business and the environment.

A modern, efficient communications network and transport system will make areas outside the South-East of England more attractive to investors. Good communications make it easier for businesses in the regions to compete. Regions such as the South-West and North-East of England will not be disadvantaged by withdrawal from the EU. Current levels of EU funding (UK money "returned" to us) available to more deprived areas of the UK would continue (through the domestic budget) to encourage economic development in those areas.

UKIP takes note of public opposition to Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and the failure of government to respond adequately to those concerns. This is because the British government has become subservient to the Biotech corporations and EU bureaucrats who support them. UKIP will protect absolutely the consumer and organic farmer from genetically modified products and will allow further testing, subject to appropriate controls. It is wrong that important issues like these are decided by the unelected European Commission: The Commission is planning a massive increase in the testing of chemicals on animals, a situation which has been condemned as unnecessary by scientists and the chemicals industry. However, the British Parliament will have no say in this decision: no vote will be allowed in Parliament, and even if it was and every MP voted against the new Chemicals Policy, it would still be enforced by the EU. A free Britain would be able to decide its own policy.

Energy

Whilst the long term effects on global warming of CO₂ emissions remain unclear, the continuing, spiralling use of fossil fuels undoubtedly affect the long term quality of life on our planet. We are committing Britain to a 10 year target of 20% energy production from renewable sources - biofuels, wave, wind, solar and hydrogen technologies. Funding will be targeted towards research into renewable energy to make Britain a world leader. UKIP supports private initiatives in developing alternative energy. We support 'ethical capitalism' and, most important of all, ethical behaviour by consumers. Britain has been a leader in both these areas. UKIP sees connections between prosperity, job creation and concern for the environment.

Independence and Home Affairs

Preserving Common Law

British common law and trial by jury are under attack. New Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw has signalled his intention to restrict trial by jury. Meanwhile, the Tories want to abolish double jeopardy - the rule that prevents individuals from being tried twice for the same offences. But the underlying threat to our legal system comes from membership of the European Union and the attempt to introduce a unified legal system for the whole EU.

'Corpus Juris' is the term used by the Eurocrats for legal unification. The proposed legal system will be quite different from what we are used to in Britain. For example, suspects may no longer be innocent until proved guilty, but will have to prove their innocence. This is the Napoleonic system, which we once fought successfully, but which prevails in much of continental Europe. In some EU countries, there is no right of *habeas corpus*: this means that prisoners can be held for long periods without charges being brought.

Another threat to British liberty is the Europol, the Orwellian sounding EU police force. Based in The Hague, this shadowy organisation was reputedly to combat drugs and organised crime. Its remit now covers political subversion - as defined by the European Commission and its bureaucrats. From next year, these 'Euro-police' will be allowed to operate in member states at the request of a European Public Prosecutor. They will be allowed to hold people without trial - and there will be nothing that national governments can do to help their citizens. Unlike national police forces, the Europol will have diplomatic immunity. That means they cannot be sued by members of the public for false arrest, brutality or damage to property.

As an independent democracy outside the EU, we shall keep our own criminal justice system, our own police force and our own laws, as Norway and Switzerland have done. Our legal systems (English & Welsh, and Scottish) might not be perfect. Where they need to be changed, we shall reform them ourselves - through Parliament.

Corpus Juris and Europol are indicators of the EU's totalitarian direction. They illustrate the growing helplessness of governments and parliaments against the monolithic Euro-state. For those who value freedom, they underline the need for withdrawal.

Only a vote for UKIP is a vote against Corpus Juris and Europol.

Human Rights

In modern Europe, Britain effectively invented human rights. Freedom of speech, association and religious belief, free trade unions, parliamentary reform and respect for property rights were all pioneered in Britain. We have for centuries provided safe haven for those fleeing religious, political or racial persecution, a proud tradition that has enriched our economy and society.

After World War II, British politicians worked strenuously for international guarantees of freedom and justice for all. In 1951, we were amongst the first signatories to the European Convention of Human Rights and were a founder member of the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. UKIP supports the principles of that Convention, because they are based on individual freedom rather than state control. But we believe that the Convention should be regarded as a series of guidelines or broad brushstrokes, rather than as a binding legal code to be enforced without regard for differing national circumstances. The original aim of the Convention was to provide a flexible framework - in contrast to EU law, which is dictatorial, insensitive and dogmatic.

As such, UKIP supports the inclusion of the Convention of Human Rights in British domestic law. But the Human Rights Act (1999) is too rigid and so, ironically, is against the spirit of the Convention. Instead of creating a culture of freedom and responsibility, it has become a pretext for politically correct interest groups to impose their will on the government, society - and those they falsely claim to represent.

UKIP would therefore repeal the Human Rights Act and re-enact it to ensure that it is applied in a manner compatible with British custom and common law. The areas of defence and national security will be exempt from its provisions.

British liberty is under threat from the EU through edicts that pass themselves off as 'human rights law'. The aim, we are told, is to 'give Europe a soul' or prove that the EU is more than purely an economic machine. In reality, such edicts reinforce the power of the European Commission, its bureaucracy and its Court of [In]Justice. They bring closer the creation of a new state called 'Europe'. The 'Charter of Fundamental Rights' - approved as a consultative document at Nice - is the precursor to an EU Constitution. The Charter's principles are quite different from those of the Convention and resemble more closely the constitution of the old Soviet Constitution. The Charter is based on 'social rights' which can be defined by the state and take precedence over individual freedom. Under the Charter, freedom of speech and publication, freedom to run religious organisations or private clubs can be overruled - in the name of 'human rights'. UKIP regards this as a travesty, to which the British people will never submit.

UKIP - like the British people - believes that the state exists to protect freedom. This is quite different from the Napoleonic model favoured by the EU - where all rights come from the state and so the state can take them away.

Withdrawal from the EU is the only way to protect human rights and uphold freedom under the rule of law.

Crime

UKIP sees connections between rising crime - against both people and property - and economic imbalance, family breakdown, poverty in the midst of plenty and the lack of education in responsible citizenship. We believe in addressing all these issues because job creation, opportunity and social stability are the best ways to reduce anti-social behaviour. We also believe that education plays a crucial role in socialising young people. This is why we aim for an education system meeting the needs of all students, gives them good role models and sets an example of social responsibility.

At the same time, UKIP regards safety as one of the most important human rights of all. Crime is socially unjust - most of the victims are not the rich, but the less well off. A disproportionate number belong to ethnic minorities. UKIP believes that freedom from crime is not a privilege but a right to be enjoyed by all citizens. As such, we shall not tolerate enclaves of crime, whether in inner city or rural areas. UKIP supports deterrent sentences. Unlike the Tories in particular, but also New Labour, we do not see the solution simply in terms of building more prisons and locking more people up. Not all custodial sentences have to involve prison. It has been shown that strong rehabilitative regimes, which involve vocational or outdoor skills, and reparations to victims, have more success in preventing young offenders in particular from re-offending. UKIP supports non-custodial sentences where possible, especially for 'victimless' crimes and non-violent offences. Too many are sent to jail for non-violent crimes better dealt with within the community, and too many young men are sent to adult prisons, where their needs cannot be met.

For some heinous offences, we reinforce that 'life means life'. Prisoners should not be offered early release if they still pose a danger to others - such leniency brings the law into disrepute, as evidenced by 'anti-paedophile' protests, for instance. UKIP opposes legislation which, in certain types of offence, gives anonymity to the accuser but not the accused. This procedure contravenes natural justice, as does the rule that prisoners have to admit their guilt to be considered for parole. We recognise also that laws against soft drugs divert police time and resources from serious crimes, draw young people into a criminal subculture - and inflict needless suffering on the chronically ill, such as MS sufferers who use cannabis. UKIP would investigate the effects of the controlled legalisation of soft drugs.

UKIP values the police both for their vital crime-fighting tasks and for their wider role in holding communities together. Unlike the police in many EU countries, ours are primarily public servants. We believe that this ethos of public service has become tarnished in recent years, by too much bureaucratic procedure political correctness. Police services should be answerable to and reflect the interests of the communities they serve, to which effect we would seek a radical reform of the police complaints system in order to improve scrutiny and accountability.

UKIP is resolutely opposed to racism wherever it occurs, including the police. However, some of the rhetorical gestures of 'anti-racism' and 'diversity training' have proved to be less than productive. A better approach would be to put more police on the beat, especially in areas of high crime and social deprivation. More full-time and special constables and would be recruited, especially from ethnic minorities, reconnecting police with local communities. We insist upon 'colour-blind' policing that is at once fair-minded and resolute. We support 'zero tolerance policing' with an emphasis on criminals, not motorists.

Immigration

UKIP includes British people of all ethnic backgrounds who are concerned about the future of their country and do not wish to be ruled by Brussels. This reflects our belief in individual freedom and equality under the rule of law. We are proud of Britain's history of offering refuge to individuals - and whole communities - who have faced persecution or genocide. Immigration has enriched Britain economically, socially and culturally, contributing to the workforce and the professions at all levels, making this country a more creative and interesting place to live. As such, UKIP represents British people of all races and religions. Indeed we are the only party properly to do so, because we truly believe in British citizenship, based on shared values of tolerance, freedom and respect for the law.

Unlike other parties, UKIP believes that immigration policy rests solely with the British government and Parliament. Withdrawal from the EU means that there will be no further moves towards a 'pan-European' immigration policy. That means, in turn, that we could accept skilled immigrants, many of them from countries with closer historical ties to Britain than the EU, who will contribute to areas such as IT, medical research and education. The experience of Canada and Australia has shown the benefits of admitting immigrants on the basis of skill and experience, not national or ethnic origin.

This does not mean, of course, that we advocate 'relying' on immigration to make up skill shortages. UKIP is strongly committed to educating, training and promoting a skilled workforce of British people from all ethnic backgrounds and all sections of British society.

UKIP also redress some of the iniquities caused by our membership of the EU. It is patently unjust, for example, that EU 'nationals' can bring their families to Britain automatically, whilst Commonwealth immigrants have to wait years to unify theirs. UKIP supports an inclusive concept of British nationality. We believe in tackling racial prejudice, but in ways that emphasise our common citizenship and our shared values.

Freedom and Fairness

Equality under the rule of law means empowering individuals, so that they can reach their full potential and contribute to the wider society. This is quite distinct from the politically correct campaigns for 'group rights', which emphasise differences between sections of society and give power to self-appointed activists. The European Commission favours divisive group rights over individual empowerment - a stance reflected in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Taken to its logical conclusion (which it will be), EU 'anti-discrimination' policies mean that a Christian school could be forced to employ atheist teachers or a Muslim organisation to appoint Christian managers. UKIP believes that the British tradition of case-by-case reform works better than abstract 'rights', enforced with scant regard for circumstances. We note that most countries in the EU are in practice much less tolerant of racial or religious minorities than Britain. Only outside the EU will Britain be a truly inclusive society.

As a party, we also recognise the importance of marriage in building a stable and

prosperous society. It is the most appropriate context for bringing up children. UKIP will therefore restore tax advantages to married couples with children under the age of eighteen. We shall review current legal practices that seem to favour divorce and allow parents to escape financial and moral responsibility for their children.

We shall not discriminate against committed couples in areas such as taxation, pensions, inheritance, 'next-of-kin' rights and immigration.

Asylum

UKIP favours the expeditious processing of asylum applications, conducted fairly and openly, with asylum seekers housed in reception centres from their arrival until the granting of asylum or deportation. These reception centres will not resemble prisons. Families will be kept together and educational opportunities, such as language teaching will be provided. However asylum applicants will be closely monitored during the application process. The current system, which affords the opportunity to 'disappear' makes a mockery of the law and creates new social problems. Illegal workers, for example, are vulnerable to exploitation. They are also competing unfairly with our least well off.

Britons of all ethnic origins favour a firm but fair asylum policy, the absence of which fuels racial conflict. The failure to rigorously police asylum applications is profoundly *illiberal*. Lax policies are unjust to genuine refugees and to the wider public. They reward criminality and punish law-abiding behaviour. Rigorous but just asylum laws are essential to preserve a free and tolerant society, where there is an atmosphere of trust.

Freedom from the EU will allow us to give precedence to those refugees who have come to Britain as a first port of call, rather than first claiming asylum in another EU country, such as France or Italy. The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees is seriously outdated - outside the EU, an independent Britain could press for its reform.

Agriculture

A Special Case

UKIP is committed to maintaining a vibrant and diverse agriculture. We also believe that the unprecedented crisis in agriculture is largely due to the inherent failures of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Therefore, we believe that the UK's continued membership of the EU is incompatible with the survival and prosperity of agriculture. Accordingly - and in line with our broader policy of withdrawal from the EU - a major plank of our agriculture policy is our withdrawal from the CAP.

Although UKIP is committed to free-market principles, we do not advocate removal of all agricultural subsidies. On the contrary, we recognise that agriculture is a special case. It cannot survive and prosper in a completely free market, against unrestricted global competition, allowing free-reign to cheaper imports.

The countryside is not just a machine for producing food and other essentials. It is not even an "industry". It forms part of our national heritage and belongs to the nation as whole. The whole nation has an interest in the countryside, it must support that

heritage.

Crisis Measures

UKIP will introduce an immediate injection of financial support, specifically targeted on areas of most need, to halt the drift from the land, farming bankruptcies and the growing level of hardship in rural areas. This would enable us to develop and implement longer-term strategies. Freed from the restrictions imposed by EU membership, such support could be provided without higher taxes.

Land management contracts

In addition to accommodating the needs of the countryside, and those who work in it, any payment scheme to farmers has to change the fundamental basis of agricultural support. The farmer must not be seen as the beneficiary of 'handouts' but must become a valued contractor providing service which the taxpayer wants and is prepared to pay for. To meet this requirement, UKIP proposes a voluntary scheme which we have called the "Land Management Contract Scheme" (LMCS).

The basis of this scheme is that individual farmers would be invited to draw up specific contracts in respect of their farms, in which the style of land use and management would be agreed. This would include such parameters as crops grown, methods of cultivation, employment levels, animal stocking density and types of husbandry, pesticide and herbicide usage, public access, wildlife conservation and similar factors.

Support would be calculated on the basis of the notional income which would be generated by a highly intensive farm - where production efficiency was the only criterion. Payments would reimburse farmers for notional losses arising from compliance with contract conditions. By this means, socially and environmentally desirable practices - including forestry - would be rewarded, without farmers suffering a loss of income.

Hill farming/less favoured areas

Despite such provisions, there will be farms in remote or 'less favoured' areas (such as hill farms) which will not be competitive or provide an adequate living. In these circumstances, where there is a social benefit in maintaining agricultural activity - such as the maintenance of rural employment, landscape maintenance, wildlife conservation, etc. - additional support should be provided.

UKIP would favour channelling this additional support through an extension of the LMCS, thus encouraging farmers to deliver specific services in exchange for the payments made.

Organic Farming and Animal Welfare

UKIP would like to see more farmers converting to the organic system of agriculture. We are also concerned at the inability of UK producers to satisfy the growing demand for organic produce - and our increasing reliance on imported produce, much of which could readily be grown in this country. Support provisions will be accommodated in our LMCS.

Similarly, there should be recognition for farmers developing and converting to "welfare friendly" methods of animal husbandry. Freedom from the EU will mean that Britain can maintain and improve upon its standards of animal welfare, without being dragged down to a 'European' mean. We oppose EU plans to 'harmonise' animal welfare legislation and so relax restrictions on cosmetic testing, guidelines on medical or scientific testing (vivisection) and the long-distance live transport of animals. UKIP regards such indifference to animal cruelty as evidence of the inhuman and authoritarian nature of the EU 'project'.

Young farmers and Retirement Schemes

UKIP believe that young people with suitable qualifications should be given special assistance to equip their own farms, through the medium of "soft" loans. Landlords should be afforded tax breaks to let farms to suitable young applicants. We would also like to see a special hardship fund set up to buy out elderly farmers so that farms can be released onto the market intact, and thus made available to young farmers.

Marketing and Rural Development

Special assistance should be given to farmers and producers to develop electronic marketing schemes, through the Internet.

UKIP also supports the development of farmers' markets, with buildings and public car parking provided by local authorities. There should also be special support for farming co-operatives. To ensure fair competition between farmers' enterprises, small shops and supermarkets, we believe that local taxation should be equalised, with uniform business rate levied on shelf space used for sales, rather than on trading area.

New retail development will be supported if there are benefits to town centre renewal. However, UKIP supports a more liberal approach to planning and regulation of farming enterprises. Farms should be free from unnecessary restrictions which limit diversification. They should be allowed to set up farm shops selling a wide range of goods instead of being limited to what is produced on the farm. We would also like to see farmers permitted to diversify more easily into non-agricultural enterprises, where their environmental impact is minimal or well-contained.

UKIP deplores the attack on country sports by illiberal politicians and pressure groups, and will uphold the traditional liberties of country people. We support access to the countryside for walkers and the preservation of traditional rights of way. However we believe that an unrestricted 'right to roam' is ecologically damaging and imposes intolerable stresses on small farmers, especially in less favoured areas. Accordingly, we shall amend the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to take account of local conditions.

Freedom from the dead hand of the EU will not solve the whole of agriculture's problems. It is the start of a wider cultural change, in which rural policy is brought from the fringes to the centre of government. To enable this process to take place, the current Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries should be replaced by a Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, which would act as a champion for rural communities.

Fisheries

Whilst Britain remains in the EU, it remains entrenched in the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The CFP promotes the immoral waste of our fishery resources and forces fishermen to throw back, dead, more fish than are landed for consumption. As such the CFP represents the most illogical, grotesque and wasteful use of one of Britain's most valuable natural resources. It sums up, as a single policy most facets of what is wrong with the EU and its centralised, remote form of administration that it seeks to impose on other areas of our national life.

The EU seeks more control over British fishing grounds, depriving our fishing communities still further of this unique resource and proposes absolute central control which will reduce Britain's quotas still further, whilst allowing other EU members a greater share of our fishing grounds.

Only by withdrawal from the EU can our fishing grounds be protected and the stocks effectively managed. Fishing stocks, particularly North Sea cod, are on the point of permanent extinction. UKIP proposes "fishing-free" zones to allow sustainable stocks to recover, the prohibition of certain fishing methods that are environmentally damaging and unsustainable. We would draw upon the experience and successes of Norway in its management of its fishing grounds. A sustainable fisheries policy would be developed in close co-operation with our fishing communities and fisheries experts with the primary basis being one of exclusivity of fishing rights given to the British industry (up to 200 miles) within International Law. Access by EU members and other countries will be granted by bi-lateral agreement.

Defence and Foreign Affairs

The UK Independence Party supports a strong, effective defence policy for a free and independent nation. This means ensuring that our Armed Forces are properly funded, adequately equipped and freed from unnecessary political interference. On all three fronts, successive Tory and Labour administrations have failed. UKIP will redress the balance in favour of our service personnel. We value their dedication and professionalism, and will reward them with decent pay, good opportunities and access to the latest technology.

UKIP recognises that there are substantial differences between civilian and military life. This is reflected in military law and recruitment. We shall free the Armed Forces from political correctness and attempts to impose civilian nostrums, without regard for operational effectiveness. The Armed Forces will be exempt from sex and disability discrimination laws, so that they can determine their own policies in such areas. However UKIP supports attempts to encourage ethnic diversity in the Forces, including recruitment from Commonwealth countries. The Reserve Forces should be expanded rather than cut. UKIP would seek to reverse the decline of Cadet Corps in schools and local communities - especially disadvantaged communities. There, military recruitment would boost employment opportunities and increase social inclusion.

Withdrawal from the EU will mean that our defence procurement policy is no longer dictated by a commitment to integration. This would free us from the closed, inefficient system that gave us the Tornado (the F3 version of which had to be excluded from front line combat zones in the Gulf War, the Merlin (at £100M per

airframe the most expensive helicopter on record and the Eurofighter (£60M per airframe), which is five years late and three generations behind technology leaders. Freed from these EU projects, we could purchase equivalent technology from the US at far lower cost, or buy into hi-tech US enterprises which would greatly enhance our military capability. Liberation from the EU would free up funding for recruitment, training and equipment, and for the expansion of both our regular and reserve forces.

On leaving the EU we would also withdraw from the 'Rapid Reaction Force'. This is, as Commission President Prodi has made clear, an embryo European Army for a European superstate, subordinated to Brussels. As such it will not 'defend' us but threaten our independence. A self-governing Britain will work constructively - but not always uncritically - with her allies in North America, Europe and elsewhere. We are not isolationists, but nor do we envisage ourselves as 'world policemen'. British forces have a valuable peacekeeping role, in areas of strategic concern or historical ties to Britain. We see NATO as the cornerstone of Britain's defence policy. This underpins our special relationship with the USA.

A UKIP foreign policy will aim for a world of self-governing nations, trading freely and co-operating where appropriate. We shall reform overseas development policy: aid should go to local communities themselves rather than handed to governments or bureaucratic agencies. Aid will be conditional on decent standards of individual freedom and fiscal honesty, but we shall not use it as a weapon to destroy traditional ways of life. Such conditions will also be applied to the remission of international debt.

UKIP supports the Council of Europe's original objectives as a positive alternative to the EU. This is because they encompass the whole European continent, not just a supposedly privileged portion. Unlike EU diktat, they are based on voluntary co-operation rather than the surrender of national sovereignty.

EU membership ties Britain to an over-regulated, under-populated province of the globe. An independent Britain, by contrast, could be a major player on the world stage. Friendship with the United States and our role in the Commonwealth link us directly with more than a fourth of the world's peoples, and some of the richest and fastest-growing economies. The Commonwealth is the most ethnically and culturally diverse international body apart from the UN itself. Freed from the EU, we can use our influence to promote freedom, tolerance and fair trade.

Our opponents call us 'little Englanders'. We say that they are frightened of the world.

The Constitution

The UK Independence Party supports the principles and values of the British political system: constitutional monarchy; Parliamentary government; common law and the Union. The British constitution has great flexibility and a proud tradition of democratic reform. It has adapted well to changing social conditions, providing stability, continuity and an underlying sense of freedom. There have been no revolutions in Britain since 1688 and no extremist movement - right or left - has ever gained mass support. Our history and our political system vary markedly from those

of continental Europe. We aim to preserve and build upon our best political traditions - but we can only do this as an independent and free people.

As such, UKIP opposes moves to abolish the British constitution and replace it with rigid EU law. We oppose attempts to balkanise our country into 'regions' answerable largely to Brussels. And we deplore the gradual loss of Parliamentary authority under both Tory and New Labour regimes. To shore up our constitutional tradition, and protect it from future attacks, we believe that a few key reforms are needed.

UKIP therefore supports a new Bill of Rights for the United Kingdom. This will prevent at any time in the future any treaty that irrevocably vests national sovereignty in any agency other than Parliament and the Crown. This Bill of Rights would be a Magna Carta for the twenty-first century, guaranteeing our independence and securing our democratic freedoms.

UKIP also seeks to redress the balance of power in favour of Parliament - and away from an over-mighty Executive. We shall therefore seek legislation to circumscribe the government's ability to produce secondary legislation, and its reliance on Enabling Acts. There is a pressing need to formalise the system of Select Committees, to fund them adequately and give them statutory powers to require witnesses to attend. Equally, we need to give statutory authority, via Select Committees, to implement the findings of Parliamentary Ombudsmen.

The relationship between MPs and their constituents is a crucial part of the British political system. UKIP believes that the MP's principal responsibility is to his or her constituents, not as mere party delegate. UKIP MPs would place their constituents' interests first and be prepared to think and act independently. Giving Parliament more teeth will encourage constructive criticism of government by MPs. It will also keep Ministers on their toes and lead to more open government.

UKIP believes in two-chamber government. We regret the weakening of the House of Lords through a mixture of opportunism, politics of envy and misguided reforming zeal. Already, conscientious and independent-minded peers have been replaced by 'cronies' who have nominal power but lack any moral authority.

Part of the EU myth is a decentralised 'Europe of Regions'. This means the break-up of nation states, the creation of toy-town parliaments in place of national assemblies - and the *upward devolution* of power to EU institutions lacking historical roots. In other words, regionalism is an illusion, another EU confidence trick. UKIP seeks consensus, not divisive rivalry, between the nations of the United Kingdom. We oppose growing moves to abolish the UK as a political entity by creating 'regional assemblies' that override local government. The EU project of a balkanised Britain has been aided by the reorganisation of local government under both Heath and Thatcher. UKIP believes in restoring the county as the basis for local administration. Where possible, we shall return to pre-1974 boundaries.

As a democratic party, we aim to widen participation in local politics. One device we favour is greater use of the referendum - when it is called for by citizens' petition. Referendum campaigns will reconnect local governments with the communities they serve. This will ensure that local government is properly representative. It will keep at bay both bureaucracy or politically correct excess. At national level, too, all major constitutional questions should be approved by referenda. UKIP supports the creation

of an objective, impartial Referendum Commission. To us the referendum is a supplement to representative government, not a substitute for it.

UKIP fully supports the right to self-determination of all peoples. We shall therefore oppose any attempt to force on the people of Northern Ireland any constitutional change without their full and informed consent.

We condemn the notion of state funding of political parties, which imposes yet another unwelcome burden on taxpayers and gives rise to the dangerous possibility that the state can, in effect, strangle political opposition at birth by denying funding.

Above all, UKIP can promise that no EU 'constitution' or charter will be used to override British law. **No other party can do that.**

8/2/01