



Foreign & Commonwealth  
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Mr James Moore  
(by email: [request-24035-a3be3014@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-24035-a3be3014@whatdotheyknow.com))

*Dera Mr Moore,*

Thank you for your letter of 18 December to the Officer of the Leader of the House of commons about the Lisbon Treaty. It has been forwarded to the Europe Directorate in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for reply.

The UK has a Parliament whose members are elected to take decisions that affect the nation. So there has to be a strong reason to have a referendum in the UK. There was no referendum on our entry into the then European Community in 1973: that decision was made by our democratically-elected Parliament.

There was a referendum on UK membership of the European Economic Community in June 1975. Thereafter, each Treaty change - including the adoption of the Treaty on the European Union, which formed part of the Maastricht Treaty - has been ratified by the democratically elected British Parliament.

The Lisbon Treaty adjusts existing treaties, in the same way as previous EU amending treaties negotiated by Baroness Thatcher, Sir John Major and Tony Blair (although, of course, not as wide or far reaching in scope as the Maastricht Treaty agreed by Sir John Major). All of these treaties were scrutinised and approved by Parliament without the need for a referendum.

The Lisbon Treaty completed its passage through both Houses of Parliament in the UK following 25 days of debate. The Bill received Royal Assent on 19 June 2008 and the UK ratified the Treaty on 16 July 2008. The House of Commons voted on a referendum amendment to the Bill on 5 March 2008. That amendment was defeated by 311-248 (a majority of 63). The House of Lords also voted on the referendum issue on 11 June 2008. The outcome was 280-218 against a referendum (a majority of 62).

While this government is strongly in favour of continued EU Membership and engagement in the EU, we are also pro-reform. It is clear that reform is needed to allow Europe to operate more effectively, and to ensure that its rules cover an enlarged Union of 27 Member States. The Lisbon Treaty provides this updated framework.

The Government believes that Lisbon Treaty is a good deal for the UK and good for the EU. Our membership of the EU has brought real benefits in jobs, peace and security. Through it, we belong to the world's biggest trading bloc. Over half of the UK's trade is within the EU,



with an estimated 3.5 million British jobs linked to it. Our membership allows us to live, work and travel across Europe and to receive free medical care if we fall sick on holiday. Improved maternity pay, the right to paid holidays and the reduction in mobile phone charges when abroad are just some of the practical benefits the EU has helped deliver. It allows Member States to co-operate effectively in tackling issues like organised crime and climate change, which do not stop at national borders.

Yours sincerely,

*L Kurt*

L Kurt (Mrs)  
EU Directorate  
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