

## Britain and Europe

*This debate took place in Bristol on 23 April 2010, during the campaign for the general election. It was broadcast on Sky News. In this excerpt, each leader presents his views on Europe.*

– **AUDIENCE MEMBER:** “Hello, I'm Chris Nelms, I work in the building trade. I can't see any advantage of us being in Europe. I think there's far too much interference politically and legally, and I just wonder what you intend to do to stop it?”

– **ADAM BOULTON, moderator:** “How are you going to tackle Europe, David Cameron?”

– **DAVID CAMERON:** “Very directly, Christopher, I think we should be in Europe, because we're a trading nation, we're part of Europe, we want to co-operate and work with our allies in Europe to get things done. But I do agree with you that we have let too many powers go from Westminster to Brussels, we've passed too much power over and we should take some of those powers back. I want us to be in Europe but not run by Europe. There will... you'll hear big differences between me and the other two parties. I don't want us to join the euro, I want us to keep the pound as our currency. I don't want us to give up the British rebate. I want to make sure we get value for money for what we put into Europe. I want to cut some of the bureaucracy, some of the rules, some of the regulations that I think drive business so mad. That's the agenda you'd get from a Conservative government in Europe. To those who say somehow this would be isolation, I say nonsense. President Sarkozy of France, he stands up for France in Europe. Angela Merkel in Germany, she stands up for Germany in Europe. I would do exactly the same for Britain in Europe”.

– **ADAM BOULTON:** “Thank you. Nick Clegg?”

– **NICK CLEGG:** “I actually worked for the man who was sent by Margaret Thatcher, would you believe it, to bat for Britain in Brussels. What I learned when I was there was this: the European Union is not perfect - of course not. This is a club that took 15 years to define "chocolate" in a chocolate directive. Anything that takes 15 years to define chocolate is not a model of democratic efficiency. What I also learned was this, that there are a whole load of things, whether we like it or not, whatever your views on Europe and the European Union, which we simply can't do on our own. We can't deal with international crime that touches and affects every single community in this country on our own. We can't deal with climate change on our own. The weather doesn't stop at the cliffs of Dover. We can't regulate these wretched banks that got us into so much in the first place which now sprawl across countries. I don't think the European Union is perfect. I want it reformed, that's why I want to lead in the European Union. But we're stronger together and we're weaker apart”.

– **ADAM BOULTON:** “Mr Brown?”

– **GORDON BROWN:** “You know, there's three million reasons why we need to be part of the European Union, and they're called jobs. Three million jobs depend on our membership of the European Union. Half our trade is with the European Union. 750,000 businesses - I'm sorry it's not your business, raising the question about the building trade - but 750,000 businesses trade with Europe. The idea that we should again be isolated and on the margins and not in the mainstream of Europe would be a terrible, terrible mistake. Now, I worked with the European leaders through the global financial crisis. I had to persuade them that we had to restructure our banks and they had to restructure their banks. I had to persuade them they had to work with America in the G20, but when Europe and America works together, we are so much stronger. Stronger to deal with climate change, which is one of my priorities, stronger to deal with the economy, stronger to deal with international crime, stronger to deal with terrorism, let us never again be an empty chair in Europe. My fear is that David's policy would put us in that position”.