

1775 The EU Referendum and UEASU passed 29 October 15

Proposer: Connor Rand (Undergraduate Education Officer)

Seconder: Chris Jarvis (Campaigns and Democracy Officer)

Union Notes

1. In May 2015, UK citizens elected a new Government. During the Queen's speech, an announcement was made that in 2016, the UK will be having a referendum to decide if the nation should remain in, or leave, the European Union.
2. National or UK-wide referendums are regulated by the Electoral Commission under the Political, Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA).
3. The principles that govern political activity by charities also apply to referendums. This means
4. That, depending on the nature of the referendum issue or question, there may be some circumstances in which it is appropriate for a charity to set out the pros and cons of a yes or no vote for their beneficiaries.
5. At UEA we have a diverse membership, with students from more than 120 countries and many of those are members of the European Union.

Union Believes

1. That where charities wish to campaign for a 'yes' or 'no' vote in a referendum, the Charity Commission requires that they consider carefully the Commission's guidance on campaigning and political activity by charities.
2. In exceptional cases charities may consider that the outcome of a referendum is likely to directly affect, positively or negatively, the delivery of their charitable objects. Advice suggests that Students Unions are not likely to be definable as an "exceptional case".
3. However we have a wider duty to do our utmost to inform our members about the pros and cons of our EU membership.

Union Resolves

1. To seek detailed legal advice on the approach that it will be safe to take as a Union to the referendum once it is formally called
2. In any event to encourage students to take part in the debate and process, (re)publishing pros and cons for students as supplied by the variety of campaigns campaigning for both a 'Yes' vote and a 'No' vote
3. To ensure as many students as possible are registered to vote in the EU referendum.