

Chapter 4 Decision-making and democracy in the EU

Context for this chapter

'In a speech to the European Parliament (EP) in July 1988, the then Commission President, Jacques Delors, predicted that within ten years (i.e. by 1998) 80% of economic legislation and perhaps also fiscal and social legislation, would be of EU origin. Since this statement, the amount and impact of EU law has been the subject of considerable, often passionate and critical, debate, linked to issues such as the loss of national sovereignty and decision-making powers, the regulatory burden for business and industry, administrative mechanisms for agriculture and fisheries, and the effect on national culture and identity.'

Vaughne Miller, 'How Much Legislation Comes from Europe?' (House of Commons Library Research Paper, 10/62)

'The Prime Minister claims, of course, that we have secured an 'opt-out' from ever closer union, and thus from political union. ... But this is little comfort, since we continue to be fully subject to present and future EU legislation, driven by the objective of full-blooded political union.'

Nigel Lawson, 'Lord Lawson's Chatham House speech - The Case for Brexit' (24 February 2016)

http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/lord_lawson_s_chatham_house_speech_the_case_for_brexit

Discuss whether the EU is destined to head for an 'ever closer union' in light of the two quotes.

Approaching the question: taking a position

The two quotes at the start of the chapter combine to show that a) the EU is producing *ever more* legislation, and b) the UK (or any Member State) continues to be 'fully subject' to that legislation, which ultimately aims to produce an 'ever closer' political union. When you bundle the information in the quotes together, you end up with a simpler question on which you can adopt a **position**: does the EU legislative process mean that 'ever closer union' is inevitable, regardless of how the Member States might feel?

Once you have taken a clear **position** on that question, you can (as you did in Chapters 1 and 2) proceed to use Chapter 4 to compile **evidence** to build the **arguments** that support your **position**. This, again, is a question without one correct answer, but the more persuasive answers will recognize that the Lawson perspective is perhaps an exaggerated one, and the EU legislative process needs to be considered in more detail to see the extent to which any Member State is 'subject' to that legislation. Can they *prevent* the EU legislating if they do not want it to? And if so, how?