

An issue that came up regularly on the doorstep before and during the election was about our future relationship with the European Union. It is an issue that bubbles away in the background most of the time but on occasion is catapulted into the spotlight on the back of other events. With the launch of two campaign groups in the space of a week it is beginning to get coverage again.

The Prime Minister has made it very clear that we will have a referendum on our future relationship with Europe by the end of 2017. He wants to conduct negotiations with his EU counterparts to try and secure a better deal for the UK and then take the outcome of those decisions to the country. Legislation to provide that referendum is currently progressing through Parliament and has already cleared the Commons and is now in the House of Lords.

However I cannot help feel that the launch of the two campaign groups is slightly premature. While I recognise that there are some people who no matter what deal is struck want to leave the EU. Likewise there are those who can see no bad in the EU and want to stay in. I sit somewhere in the middle. I am a confirmed Eurosceptic but I am not a natural “outer”. I can see the good as well as the bad of the EU and therefore genuinely want to see what the outcome of negotiations is before I decide how to vote in a referendum. If we have the status quo without reform of certain areas such as migration or business regulation then my vote will go one way, but if we do get a better deal for Britain it may go another.

I believe many are in the same boat and so the launch of campaign groups may only serve to heighten the noise to such an extent that we all stop listening. It is an important decision for the country and one that needs our full attention.