

Next week we get to vote on our future relationship with the European Union and I have to say deciding on how to vote has been a real struggle and I am still not convinced either way. As someone who ALWAYS knows what they think on an issue I am most discombobulated.

I am struck by how appalled I am by both campaigns. Neither have been particularly helpful in providing facts which may persuade the undecided one way or another and as a lifelong politico I feel embarrassed for my industry. Politicians from both sides have put forward arguments backed up by flimsy statistics and projections. Leave cannot provide an economic plan, Remain cannot provide a cast iron guarantee on immigration, yet both claim that the other will bring Armageddon if they win.

It is a referendum so my vote is equal to everyone else's and each individual will have different priorities. Many will vote on what it means to their family and household. Some will be guided by their type of employment and what industry they work in. Others might decide on the community they live in, their environmental views, or simply party politics. Personally, I have three competing priorities – the impact on my family, my constituency and my ministerial portfolio.

The Prime Minister said of course we would thrive outside of the EU. Boris Johnson said he was not anti immigration. So with just over a week to decide how to vote am I any clearer on which is the right box to put my cross in? No not really because there is probably no right answer. No one can predict what will happen and unfortunately Nelly, the psychic elephant, is too busy predicting the outcome of Euro 2016 to tell me what the future holds for the nation in or out of the EU!