**PRESS RELEASE**

**IMMEDIATE**

**6.04.2019**

**THE BREXIT SOLUTION? A ‘PREFERENDUM’**

**I THE PROPOSAL** At some future date, the UK should hold a multi-option ‘second’ referendum on perhaps the following five options:

a) in the EU and the € zone;

b) in the EU with the £;

c) in a Common Market 2.0;

d) in a Customs Union;

e) under the WTO.

**II BACKGROUND** New Zealand had a multi-option referendum in 1992; the parliament first tasked an independent commission to produce the options, and it identified five. Other countries – e.g., Finland, Sweden and Australia – have also used ‘preferendums’.

**III COMPROMISE** As was seen in 2016, binary voting can be divisive; secondly, as in the indicative votes, it can be inconclusive. More importantly, any second referendum of only two-options could be seen as unfair by supporters of any excluded options. In a preferential poll, in contrast, everyone may participate, stating not only their favourite 1st preference, but also, if they wish, their 2nd and/or subsequent preferences, their compromise option(s).

**IV INCLUSIVITY** The list of options should be balanced and, as in NZ, the final choice of options must be made by an independent authority. As a general principle, however, this final list should reflect the range of options ‘on the table’ and, given the 48:52 result of the 2016 referendum, the ratio of 2:3 for EU:non-EU options shown in para I above is probably fair.

**V THE COUNT**  Preferential votes may be counted in many ways. NZ used a two-round method, as did the UK in a 3-option plebiscite in Newfoundland in 1948. The single transferable vote, STV, is another possibility, but the modified Borda count, MBC, and the Condorcet rule “are the two best interpretations of majority rule.” (*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*, 2003, Iain McLean, p 139.)

Peter Emerson

Director, the de Borda Institute

36 Ballysillan Road, Belfast BT14 7QQ

[www.deborda.org](http://www.deborda.org/)

[pemerson@deborda.org](mailto:pemerson@deborda.org)

07837717979

02890711795