

Tony Benn talks sense

6.3.08

Here is a letter to all MPs, including Conservatives, from Tony Benn, the highly distinguished former "old" Labour MP and left wing activist of the highest integrity, on the Lisbon Treaty.

"I am writing to ask you to make it possible for me - and every elector in Britain - to vote on the Lisbon Treaty in a Referendum.

"For the Lisbon Treaty transfers important powers which belong to us, to others in Europe we do not elect, cannot remove, and who therefore do not have to listen to us in the way that MPs listen to their constituents.

"Britain must work closely with its European neighbours, but if this cooperation is to succeed, the arrangements must be democratically approved by all the people of Europe.

"There is a case for a fully Federal Europe. But surely those who take that view should, as democrats, want to win a majority for it in a Referendum.

"That is why this decision must be made by the British people as a whole, because it will affect us all irrevocably and the Lisbon Treaty can never be amended or repealed by any future government that we elect.

"Moreover, if three-line whips are imposed, telling any MPs how they must vote, it could not then even be argued that Parliament had decided the matter freely.

"For all these reasons I hope you yourself will feel able to vote for a Referendum, thus safeguarding the rights of your electors".

I don't agree with much that this remarkable man has said over the years, but strikes a cord....