

Peter Foster Europe editor of the Daily Telegraph

Key points in Opening Remarks, Panel Two: *Whose Europe is it anyway?* **Media and public opinion.**

Peter Foster began by arguing that Brexit was in the UK's DNA. Nobody should have been surprised. At one level, there was an inevitability about the result of the Referendum. And there were no quick fixes as regards future UK-EU relations.

David Cameron, the former UK prime minister, was responsible for calling the referendum and for coming up with a very arbitrary immigration target for the UK, which proved impossible to achieve.

The subsequent prominence of politicians such as Boris Johnson (and Donald Trump in the US) was because they were different: they were "box office".

Inescapably, because of geography, the UK's divorce from the EU would still leave the two sides living next door to each other.

The UK would have to remake its relations with Europe in an original manner, bearing in mind that no-one had explained to the UK public how the law and politics underpinned the single market and jobs.

The EU faced a dilemma common to all *Ancien Regimes*. "If you flex, you die. And if you don't flex you die".

Elaborating later in the discussion, Peter Foster said the EU was aware of its democratic deficit and had been "absolutely unable to heal it".

He said Europe had "failed a lot of European citizens". Citing Italy, he argued that the rise of Matteo Salvini, leader of the populist Northern League and now deputy prime minister, was symptomatic of the economic problems created by the EU's single currency, the euro. In Germany, Angela Merkel had made a "massive mistake" in allowing uncontrolled immigration during the Syrian refugee crisis of 2015.

Ends

Summary by Peter Norman