

Interview with Sadiq Khan: “London must have a seat at the table during the negotiations to leave the EU”

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*What will Brexit mean for the city of London? In an interview with EUROPP's editor Stuart Brown, the Mayor of London, **Sadiq Khan**, discusses his new 'London is Open' campaign, the effect of Brexit on Londoners, and whether there is a case for London having more say over how the money it generates in tax revenue is spent.*



What is the key motivation behind the London is Open campaign and how do you hope to get your message across to those both inside and outside the capital?

The London is Open campaign was launched to send the clear message that, despite the EU referendum result, London is still the most entrepreneurial, innovative and outward-looking business centre in the world – a city bursting with creativity and opportunity. We encourage people to add their own contributions using #LondonIsOpen and we want everyone to know that London is open for business, open to tourists, open for new investment and open for new talent.

Many EU citizens in London are concerned at what the consequences of Brexit will mean for their rights to stay and work in the UK. What would you say to those who might now be considering leaving to work elsewhere?

London has been so successful because we have been able to attract the best and the brightest from around the world – that will never change. It is important we give certainty to EU nationals living here and we need to make sure talented Europeans know we are open for business. I have already said I will challenge unfair visa rules which make it harder for London's businesses to bring in the world's best talent, who in turn create opportunities for people – many of whom are EU citizens – to come and work in the capital. This is another reason why London must have a seat at the table during the negotiations to leave the EU.

Do you believe staying part of the single market and maintaining free movement of EU citizens is vital for London's future prosperity?

During the referendum campaign I made it very clear I didn't want the UK to leave the European Union. But I completely respect the public's decision and it is now for the Government to develop a Brexit plan that will demonstrate clearly how the country's future prosperity can be achieved outside the EU, and its relationship with the single market. We need to square the circle of single market access potentially without freedom of movement and perhaps the upcoming elections in Europe will give the continent a chance to get this right. We need to proceed very carefully.

Do you think there is a case for London having more say over how the money it generates in tax revenue is spent?

The capital needs a stronger voice so we can protect jobs and growth from the economic uncertainty that lies ahead. London's population is the same size as Wales and Scotland combined, but we have far less control over how our city is run. We urgently need more devolution so we have more power to improve our city, including tackling issues around housing, air quality, health and crime.

It is clear Britain leaving the EU will place huge economic strain on Londoners – putting jobs and prosperity at risk – and that devolution is needed to help Londoners manage the transition out of the EU. I've relaunched the London

Finance Commission to come up with a comprehensive set of devolution measures and I expect the Government to give us the tools to ensure London continues to prosper. A stronger voice for London will be good for the whole country, because when London succeeds, Britain succeeds.

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Note: This article gives the views of the interviewee, and not the position of EUROPP – European Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics. Featured image credit: [Steve Eason](#) (CC-BY-SA-2.0)

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About the interviewee

Sadiq Khan

Sadiq Khan is the Mayor of London and was formerly the Member of Parliament for Tooting from 2005 to 2016 representing the Labour Party.

