

## Europe and the “United” Kingdom

This tour will look at the current political situation in Britain following the Scottish vote against independence, and the vote for Brexit. The two central questions that we will examine are whether Britain can remain united in the long term, and how its relationship with Europe will look.

### Day 1:

Welcome to the United Kingdom. Participants should make your own way to our London hotel and enjoy the day at leisure. Instructions will be provided on how and when to check in. In the evening we will commence with a welcome dinner with our guest speaker, an Australian journalist covering British politics.

Overnight: London

### Day 2:

Our tour commences in earnest this morning. We will start with a walking tour of central London’s landmarks including Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park and more.

At midday we will proceed to Australia House where we will meet with Australia’s Consul General to London and former Foreign Minister Alexander Downer or a member of his staff (tbc). Mr Downer or his staff member (tbc) will provide us with an overview of the Australia-UK relationship, and the opportunities and threats that Australia sees in the post Brexit British environment.

In the afternoon we will enjoy a tour of the Palace of Westminster with an Australian political adviser working for a British MP, and see where and how parliament operates. We will also debate the future of the House of Lords, and seek to meet with a serving Lord.

If time allows, late this afternoon we will explore the Cabinet War Rooms.

Overnight: London

### Day 3:

This morning we will commence with a briefing from a leading British political journalist on the current state of British politics from a strategic standpoint.

Afterwards we will delve into the issues and challenges facing each major party, commencing with a briefing from a Conservative Party MP or senior activist on what challenges the Conservative Party faces. In particular, we will focus on the forces that catapulted Theresa May into No 10 Downing Street, and the schism between Brexit advocates and opponents in the party.

Later we will explore Jeremy Corbyn's Labor Party, hearing from both a Corbyn ally and a Corbyn opponent on what they see as the challenges and way forward for their party. Finally we will hear from a member of the Liberal Democrats about the direction and challenges facing that party (tbc).

In the afternoon we will follow a different route entirely, joining guides from a left leaning organization for a tour of Mayfair, one of London's most affluent areas. On that tour, our guides will attempt to show us what they perceive as the links between unregulated finance and British politics, and how it distorts the democratic process.

In the evening, participants may enjoy an optional Jack the Ripper tour (at additional cost).

Overnight: London

#### **Day 4:**

This morning we will turn our attention to the key theme of our tour, the future of the United Kingdom and its relationship with Europe.

To do this we will commence by meeting a leading political analyst who will take us through where things stand with regard to Brexit, why various areas voted as they did, and what can be expected going forward.

To this end, we will enjoy a panel discussion with proponents and opponents of Brexit from across the political spectrum, and including a member of UKIP as well as at least one passionate remain advocate (tbc).

Undoubtedly, one key issue in the Brexit campaign was that of immigration. After our panel concludes, we will enjoy a walking tour focused on immigration to the United Kingdom and London, focusing on the benefits and challenges it presents as we pass through a heavily Muslim and a heavily Jewish area. We will also meet with a local councillor representing one of these areas.

In the evening we will enjoy a traditional British pub crawl.

Overnight: London

#### **Day 5:**

This morning we will hear a British perspective on two other issues facing Britain, Scottish and North Ireland independence.

Afterwards participants will have time to explore the sites and sounds of London. We suggest the Tower of London. In the evening we travel to Belfast to continue our journey of exploration of future of Britain as a United Kingdom.

Overnight: Belfast

### **Day 6:**

Today we explore the violent past of Belfast and the role of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom going forward.

To do this we will first enjoy a tour led by a former IRA prisoner that will take us past key conflict sites, and the walls and murals that make up today's Belfast, as we take in our guide's views and experiences.

Afterwards we will hear from a Union loyalist, before having time to explore Belfast.

Overnight: Belfast

### **Day 7:**

This morning we travel to Edinburgh.

On arrival we will meet with a leading Scottish political analyst to discuss the Scottish Independence Movement and whether it has realistic prospects going forward, as well as the impact that Brexit may have. We will tour the Scottish Parliament and will meet a member of the SNP.

Overnight: Edinburgh

### **Day 8:**

This morning we explore Edinburgh castle, before having a half day at leisure.

In the evening we travel to Brussels.

### **Day 9:**

Having learnt much about the United Kingdom and how it sees itself in Europe today, we will hear how Europe feels in the EU capital.

We will commence with a guided tour of the EU Parliament.

Thereafter we will hear from an EU MP about the Brexit decision and its ramifications.

Finally we will again look into the controversial issue of immigration, especially Islamic immigration and the resurgence of European far right parties. We will endeavour to meet with a leader of the far right Vlaams Belang party, before taking a guided tour of the impoverished Molenbeek District of Brussels, nicknamed the Jihadist capital of Europe.

In the evening we will pay our respects at the memorial to the recent Brussels terror victims, and enjoy a farewell dinner as we reflect on our experience.