

Brexit: EU Will Protect the NHS from TTIP?



The future of England's National Health Service (NHS) is more secure within the European than out with the bloc, a leading public health figure said in the *BMJ*.

Martin McKee, professor of European public health London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, argued that the EU's international trade agreements protect public services including healthcare and leaving the bloc in the June 23 Brexit vote could put the NHS in jeopardy.

Conversely, pro-Brexit campaigners have said that the NHS would be protected from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the U.S. if the UK voted to leave the bloc in June.

But McKee says this stance puts the NHS at serious risk. "Many of us have been seriously concerned about TTIP. Public services, such as health, social care, and education, long considered matters of national responsibility, could be opened up to international trade. Existing public providers simply would not be able to compete with the might of global corporations," he says.

The public health figure acknowledges these concerns are valid but says that leaving the EU would expose the NHS to greater risk. He argues that initial negotiations on TTIP were led by trade rather than public services experts.

"This has now changed completely," he says. "The health community, along with others, has made a powerful case for why public services need to be protected. And those negotiating on behalf of the EU have had to listen."

This lobbying has influenced the tenets of the TTIP that now includes protection for public services with health a priority.

"Recent leaks have confirmed that the US is pushing its own interests strongly, but both the European Commission and the president of the European Parliament have made it absolutely clear that unless the Americans accept European protections for health services and public health there will be no agreement."

McKee warns that outside the EU, the UK would have to negotiate an independent deal with the U.S. claiming the prominent Brexit sympathisers do not have the interests of public health at heart.

Source: [The BMJ](#)

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Published on : Thu, 5 May 2016