

Cut the deficit – Leave the EU

By Andy Smith

Britain's Coalition Government says its top priority is to tackle the country's record budget deficit and restore confidence in the British economy.

Savage cuts must be made in public expenditure over the next five years. The axe will fall on every area of spending, including health, education, and defence. There is no doubt the Coalition will have to take drastic action if it is serious about bringing down Britain's huge deficit – which currently tops £150 billion.

But does it really need to cut vital front-line services when tens of billions of pounds are being wasted every year on this country's membership of the EU? By coming out of the EU we could save vast quantities of taxpayers' money – enough to wipe out the deficit, reduce taxes *and* invest in the economic recovery!

The Government admits that belonging to the EU costs the British taxpayer some £14 billion a year. But that doesn't include the indirect costs. According to research by Gerard Batten for the Bruges Group, the total price tag for belonging to the EU is well over £60 billion per year. That's equivalent to around £1,000 for every man, woman and child in Britain.

Then there is the “hidden cost” – the burden imposed on our businesses by all the red tape and regulations. Being shackled to the EU damages our international competitiveness and stops us trading freely as we choose. So the *actual* cost to “UK plc” is considerably higher still.

In the view of think-tanks such as the Bruges Group and the TaxPayers' Alliance, belonging to the EU is crippling our economy. In contrast, countries such as Switzerland and Norway survive perfectly well outside the EU. Both have stronger economies and a higher standard of living than Britain.

There is no very good reason to stay in the EU. In fact, it is now clear beyond doubt that Britain would be better off out. By cancelling our membership of the EU, the Coalition could wipe out the UK's budget deficit well before the next General Election is due.

And it would even enable the Chancellor to cut taxes and repair our overstretched public services so that we put the recession well and truly behind us. Withdrawing from the wasteful, pointless, corrupt EU is common sense. “Do the Math”, as the Americans say!