

Immigration – Action Overdue

By Gerard Batten, UKIP MEP for London

Immigration into Britain is effectively uncontrolled, unlimited, and indiscriminate in the true meaning of that word. The problem can now no longer be denied – not even by the political parties responsible for creating it. During the recent General Election campaign it was noticeable that the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties all finally made some belated manifesto promises to control immigration, but they made it plain that their proposed controls only applied to “immigration from outside the European Union”. None of them could continue to pretend that a British government has any control left over immigration from inside the EU. But as an EU member it is not even true that we can control immigration from outside of the EU.

A story in the Daily Express on 10th June made the situation glaringly obvious. The Hungarian Government decided that 450,000 Ukrainians and Serbians who can speak Hungarian and prove they have Hungarian ancestry will be given Hungarian citizenship and a full EU passport. This would of course give them full rights to come to Britain. As I said in the Express article,

“It must be wrong that the Hungarian Government can give almost half a million people the right to move to Britain. Our new Government says it wants to control immigration from outside the EU but it cannot even do that. Hungary has just given 450,000 people the right to come to Britain, use the social services and claim benefits if they want to, and there is nothing our government can do about it. Hungary, and any EU state, has more control over our immigration policy than we do. This shows just how powerless we are.”

How did this situation come about? Britain’s membership of the European Union since 1973 has been the story of surrendering more and more power under the successive treaties while our governments pretended it wasn’t really happening. A report by the German parliament in 2006 estimated that about 83% of their new laws now come from the EU, and questioned if Germany could really still be called a functioning democracy. If that is true of Germany it is equally true of the UK, even if our politicians don’t have the courage to admit it.

The surrender of powers has included those over immigration and asylum. We cannot deny access to Britain to any of the 450 million or so EU citizens who have an automatic right of entry. However much we may like them and want to invite some here to live, work and study we have lost the right to “discriminate” in our choice of who we invite and who we don’t. Likewise in the field of asylum EU Directives now decide our Asylum policy and we cannot introduce a quota on numbers even if we want to. This control will increase under the Lisbon Treaty (European Constitution) as the EU rolls out a Common Immigration and Asylum Policy. If we don’t like it then there is only one solution: leave the European Union and regain control of our own borders and law-making powers once again.