

Repeal the 1972 European Communities Act

By Daniel Hannan MEP

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I'm Daniel Hannan, Conservative MEP for South East England, and the law I'd most like to scrap is the 1972 European Communities Act.

In 1972, most of us thought that Europe would be mainly concerned with cross-border issues like trade, competition and pollution. We didn't imagine for a moment that Brussels would become the main source of legislation in this country, decreeing what hours we work, what taxes we pay, what we plant in the ground and fish from the sea, who settles on our territory, what we buy and sell, and in what units.

The tendrils of Euro-legislation curl into even the tiniest crevasses, regulating matters which you'd have thought couldn't possibly have a cross-border dimension. The ban on mineral supplements and herbal remedies? Brussels. Car seats for 12 year olds? Brussels. The rigmarole you have to go through these days to open a bank account? Brussels.

In fact—brace yourself for an astonishing statistic—eighty per cent—*eighty per cent*—of the laws in the member nations are proposed by unelected Euro-officials.

I'm no anti-European. I speak French and Spanish, I've lived and worked all over the Continent. It's precisely because I believe in European values like freedom, democracy and pluralism that I've given up on the EU.

What's the alternative? Well, look at the wealthiest countries in Europe: Norway, Iceland, Switzerland: all inside the European Free Trade Area, but outside the EU. And you know what? Every one of these nations exports more per head to the EU than Britain does.

Oh, and for the privilege of giving up our democracy, we pay Brussels £12 billion a year—enough to scrap inheritance tax and capital gains tax, and still have enough left over to abolish stamp duty. In the 90 seconds that I've been talking, we've handed over £35,000. So I'll shut up.