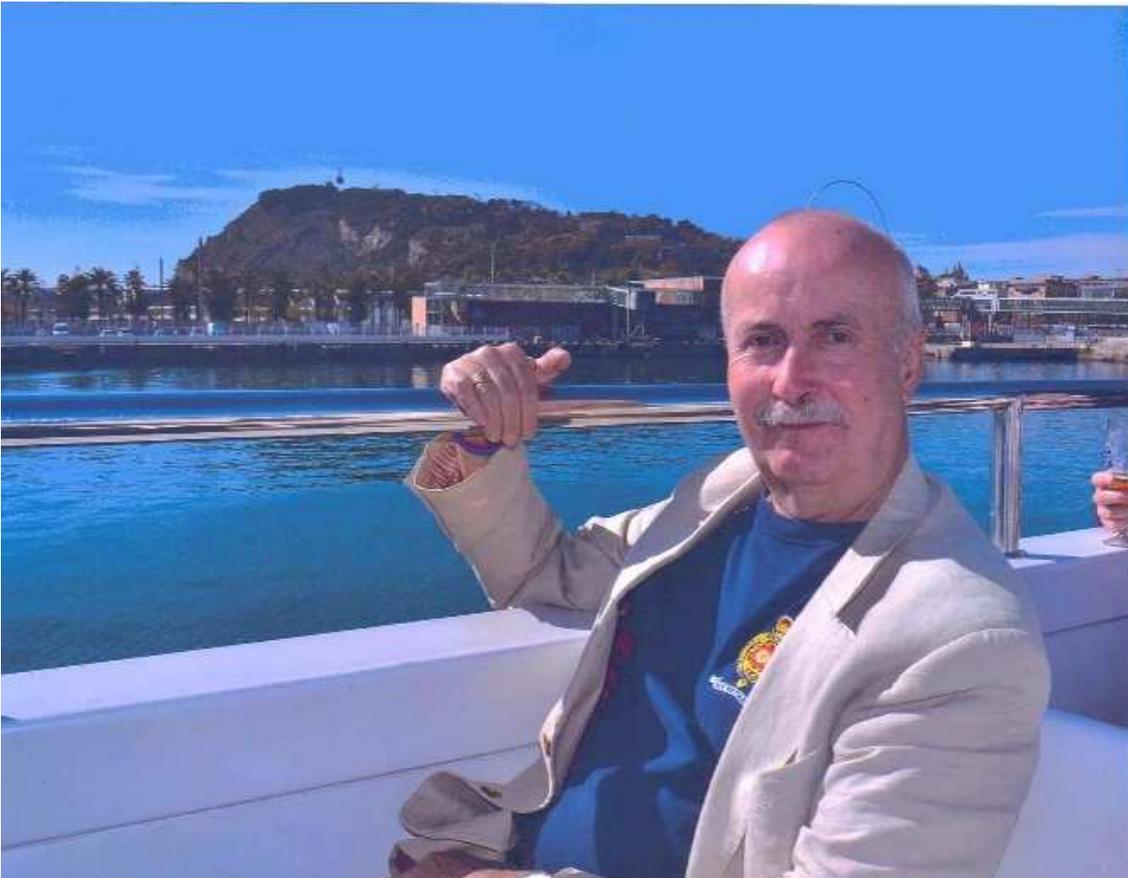


Newsletter Summer 2016



The FECMA President's Column

It would be no exaggeration to say that the result of the United Kingdom referendum on 23 June, 2016 on the question of UK membership of the European Union sent shockwaves right around the world. When asked by my European colleagues in the months leading up to the referendum about my thoughts on the outcome (and I was asked this question many, many times), I always maintained that the issue always revolved around the head and the heart. The head would say yes to membership for all the right common sense

reasons (stability, security, peace, economics and so on) and the heart would say no for all the wrong, emotional reasons (independence, immigration, sovereignty, borders and so on). As the referendum date loomed closer and closer, it became clear that the heart was beginning to overrule the head, not helped by dire warnings of doom and gloom from alleged “experts” at home and abroad, be they from the Remain camp or the Leave camp. Nevertheless, a close call was predicted with Remain as the close winner. The Leave win caused consternation and the post mortem is likely to dominate the airwaves for many months, if not years, to come.

I have said many times in the past, both in this column and elsewhere, that the British never really fully bought in to what became known over the years as the “European Project”. The UK never joined the Euro, not least because they never genuinely qualified under the EU’s laid down criteria. The British turned further against that aspect of the “Project” as they witnessed the qualification criteria “amended” (because not enough countries truly met the requirements and only four countries would never have been enough to make the venture a success) in order to allow less suitable applicants to join. It always reminded me of a Sales and Marketing Director who came to me after a visit to Mexico to assess a potential new agent and distributor for that country of our company’s products. He listed all the attributes, which included infrastructure, product knowledge, skilled personnel, dedicated distribution and all the rest. However, when I pointed out to John that the agent was in fact insolvent, even a Sales and Marketing Director could see that proposed agency was a non-starter. Schengen was a no go for the UK, and it was always clear that Britain was not on the European political integration train, and never would be. Britain never went fully metric – new born babies are proudly recorded in pounds and ounces, distances between points of departure and arrival are displayed in miles, and even though the Brits buy petrol at the filling station in litres, the fuel economy of the cars they drive are inevitably advertised in miles per gallon!

The heart overruled too on the subject of immigration. Whatever the economic

facts may be, perception abounded that Britain was a small island and a population approaching 65 million was already straining resources to no longer elastic limits. Immigration is such an emotive subject that no matter who published what statistics, Joe Public took a distinctive pull up the drawbridge view. Non membership of Schengen perhaps shielded the UK from the EU-Turkey deal, but again here was Joe Public being warned of the imminent arrival of waves of Turks from amongst their 88 million ranks.

Shock too amongst those who actually voted Leave. Did they really want to Leave or was this just a protest vote intended to give the ivory tower EU Commission and Eurocrats a firm kick up the bottom? Brussels this, Brussels that – Joe Public did not elect you and your colleagues Mr EU President, nor did they elect your staff. All the Leavers wanted to do, perhaps, was put a shot across your bows, make you sit up, listen, take note and reform. Even the Remain camp recognised that reform was necessary (an ineffective European Parliament in an expensive building in another country a costly train ride away from the Executive – Brits call the line between Strasbourg and Brussels “The Gravy Train”). But Leave did carry the day, and now we live with the consequences.

The UK will soon apply for Article 50 and begin the two year exit negotiations. It will not be easy, and I for one (who voted Remain) wish we were not in this position. I am from the camp which says better to fight on the inside for what you believe in than snipe from the outside. However, my years in the credit management profession have taught me that if I cannot co-operate officially, I can still co-operate! There are challenges ahead for us all, whatever our profession, but credit management lies at the heart of business, whether it be in Birmingham or Berlin.

We credit managers have the major role in the success, prosperity and profitability of business, and whether in or out of the EU, we have the Federation of European Credit Management Associations (FECMA) as our own

European family. We meet, debate, discuss, promote best practice and ethics, educate, share, assist and support. FECMA is not affiliated in any way to the EU so is not damaged or weakened by the departure of the UK from the European Union. Indeed, the Chartered Institute of Credit Management in the UK, as the principal founder of FECMA, is as committed to promoting the status and the professionalism of the credit manager across Europe as it is back in the UK and the value of member associations to their own members can only be enhanced by this family unity. Perhaps this has been a kick up our backsides too – now is not the time to retreat behind the barricades. Some might want to do just that, raise the drawbridge and look forward to Christmas. Credit managers cannot, and nor should they – for us the time for family unity has never been more vital.

Glen Bullivant FCICM



FECMA Council meeting in Malta

The decor of the Fecma Council meeting this Spring was the historical and beautiful Island of Malta. The MACM (Malta Association of Credit Management) was the host. This Association celebrated their 15th Anniversary with a great organised Conference. Most of the FECMA Council members attended the Conference with interesting speakers and workshops. MACM launched the MACM Credit Management Reference Book. For more information about that please contact info@macm.org.mt.



The FECMA Council talked about several different issues on Credit Management in Europe. New Credit Management Associations are being set up and the Council was happy to receive a presentation about the Polish Credit Management system from Robert Dyrzcz, the founder of the Polish Institute for Credit Management. The Fecma members try to help these young Associations were possible. Good to mention that Spain joined in November 2015 and Switzerland will join later this year.

And of course the Fecma Council talked about the Fecma Pan European Congress which offers a platform for the expert exchange about the current status as well as ongoing developments in the field of international Credit Management. Organised in 2013 in Budapest and in 2015 in Brussels, both Congresses were a huge success and to be continued.

The goal is to update and inform participants through not only focussed presentations held by well experienced guest speakers, but also discussion rounds with the participants and finally the intensive exchange with colleagues from all over Europe.

The next FECMA Congress will be held in 2018 in Malta. The MTA (Malta Tourism

Authority) informed the Council about the outstanding possibilities and advantages of organising the FECMA European Congress on Malta. Just a short list: Short flight from major European Cities, national language is English, a good choice of 4 and 5 star hotels, short transfer times, Mediterranean climate, service provision, good value for time and money, EU membership and Euro currency and last but not least the Maltese famous hospitality.

For an impression of the first two FECMA Congresses please look [here](#).



Time to work and time to relax

After the FECMA Council meeting MACM offered the Council a winetasting evening at Delicata's. The most famous Maltese Winery. Delicata offered the Council a range of beautiful wines, accompanied by nice bites!
