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Britain and the European Union

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1. Preamble

Even the most fanatical supporter of the European Union must admit that around the institutions of the EU, "there yet hangs about them an aroma which is not wholly pleasing", to borrow a phrase of A.C. Benson. Examples of unethical, wrong, deceitful – many epithets could be applied – behaviour are, as the saying goes, too numerous to mention; a well-documented one concerns the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).[1] Evidence for such shortcomings are so numerous and widespread one has reluctantly to conclude that there is probably not a single EU institution that operates with unimpeachable probity. Familiarity with revelations of corruption, venality, conflicts of interest and so forth has blunted their impact in the public mind. Even in 1994, members of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities were surprised that the numerous examples of fraud gathered by that committee was not followed by forthright public outrage.[2] More than 20 years later it seems that all hopes of having institutions operating with efficiency and honesty have been abandoned, and even attempts to limit corruption are enfeebled.[3]

Hence, even supporters of the EU admit the need for reform. No one is advocating an unreformed EU. The need for such reform is, indeed, so pressing that, according to the supporters of continuing EU membership, Britain needs to remain

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in order to be able to enact the necessary reforms.

After several months of gruelling negotiations, Mr Cameron, the UK Prime Minister, was able to negotiate some very modest reforms. The great difficulties and delays he experienced augur ill for carrying out more far-reaching reforms. Usually, institutions that have decayed to the extent one observes in the EU are unreformable;[4] like the League of Nations, they must be allowed to die and, with luck, assist in the birth of something new and better.

The reform of institutions begs the question of ultimate aims. One cogent British criticism of the EU is that it aims towards a federal State. The Continent has had its share of megalomaniacs, such as Napoleon and Hitler, who rejoiced in the idea of pan-European hegemony. In the latter case it was envisaged to last a thousand years. The fact that these enterprises failed so miserably does not, apparently, deflect the zeal of the federal advocates, from which one might infer that they are indeed motivated by fanaticism rather than any kind of rational or critical thinking.

The British idea of a pan-European grouping was more akin to a superior – in the sense of being more effective and encompassing more members – version of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Voting against continuing membership of the EU does not preclude a renewed attempt to create an EFTA. As a free trade association, the EU turned out to be highly inefficient – it accumulated too much excess ideological baggage. One might say the same about the now defunct Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or Comecon). The referendum could, indeed, be greatly enhanced if an additional question were posed – "Would you like the UK to join/(re)create EFTA?"[5]

Even opponents of the EU are likely to concede that, at least, the EU has helped keep the peace between erstwhile warring partners. This is perhaps an overly generous concession. It can indeed be asserted as an objective fact that there has been

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no general outbreak of belligerency in Europe comparable to the First and Second World Wars in the 20th century. We do not, however, know what would have happened without the EU. Given the trend of shrinking armies and corresponding military budgets, economic constraints alone may have sufficed to achieve that result.[6] It is, perhaps, noteworthy that the neutral countries Norway and Switzerland are not EU members, and another neutral country, Belgium, albeit a member, was chosen as the site for the administrative headquarters. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that Europe has been free from hostilities. There are countless points of friction, the Basque Country and Northern Ireland being just two of the more prominent ones. These have not diminished during the hegemony of the EU. On the contrary, the EU commitment to borderless travel and free movement of workers has made it easier for people with hostile intent to operate.

Most of these points of friction could be lubricated into peaceful coexistence if the concept of a transnational EU were truly consummated: the big states would wither away, federal countries like Germany and Italy would revert to something like their pre-unification structures, and Spain could adopt its "historic regions". At a stroke, disputed territories like Transylvania, Wallonia and Flanders would become "independent" (within the larger framework). The ideal would be for each territory to have roughly equal size (hence, one would not wish to recreate every petty German principality). Within a (properly functioning) supranational framework, there would be no need to fear "Balkanization". No one territory would have a preponderant population or economy. Alas, such a logical development of the EU concept does not look likely to be realised.

Moving beyond belligerency, it becomes very hard to perceive what real added value the EU has brought to the continent.

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2. Standards and harmonisation

The EU is often praised for having removed tariff barriers. The generations of politicians who were active in creating the EU doubtless had painful memories of the economic stagnation that followed the protectionism that was trendy between the two world wars. It should, however, be borne in mind that by removing something that was artificially erected in the first place – in some instances by the same people who subsequently removed them – one does not thereby acquire very much merit. It is rather like a small child who wilfully damages some household item in order to garner praise for subsequently mending it. As for the removal of passport checks at borders (Schengen), with the – naturally regrettable – increase of criminality and terrorism, its disadvantages are now being discovered and it may even have to be abandoned.

Any commercial system benefits from voluntary adherence to common specifications and standards.[7] It is not necessary, as the European Commission thinks, to impose a vast range of mandatory standards with the force of law.[8] Any individual manufacturer not adhering to a relevant standard would be so commercially disadvantaged as to soon go out of business.[9] The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a voluntary organisation,[10] and its continuing success (tens of thousands of standards issued so far) is a measure of the validity of the voluntary system. Moronically, the EU has carried its directive-based system beyond all reason. This was particularly noticeable in England, which had a different system of commonplace weights and measures from the metric system of the continent and the English scientific community. Thus, for example, petrol could no longer be sold in gallons even though most motorists simply fill up the fuel tank when it is getting empty; it is not necessary to precisely quantify the amount in a pan-European unit. To be sure, a nationally standard gallon should be used in order to allow the prices of petrol from rival suppliers to be readily compared. The same applies to milk, which

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was formerly sold in pints – a handier volume than one litre. Since milk is locally produced and consumed, it is irrelevant to be able to compare supplies in the UK with those from other countries; besides, a currency conversion would need to be carried out. One could continue by considering vegetables sold in markets, and so forth. The flood of directives prescribing how this or that should be certified seems to have contributed to the increasing tendency for buyers of equipment to ascribe more weight to the certifications (CE, GMP etc.) possessed by the equipment rather than to its intrinsic performance, much to the irritation of the manufacturers. This is hardly a way to foster technical innovation!

When it comes to more complex matters, such as public health, the advantages of joining forces to determine, for example, the maximum safe amount of pesticides in drinking water would appear to have certain advantages. In order to make a proper job of determining such limits, onerous scientific work is required, such as extensive and lengthy animal studies and wide-ranging epidemiology. Since we are all *Homo sapiens*, so the argument goes, why repeat this work in every country? Very large countries such as the USA seem to manage very well with a single centre undertaking such determinations, serving a population comparable in size with that of the EU. Numerous European agencies now parallel well-known bodies in the USA, such as the EPA and FDA.[11] All is not well with these relatively new European agencies, however. The problems with EFSA have already been mentioned. The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) is in continuous conflict with the chemical industry. Unlike a national agency, one cannot simply go along to its office, usually to be found in the capital city, and listen in to its deliberations, or make a personal enquiry. ECHA, for example, is located in Helsinki. For the majority of EU citizens, three days would have to be allocated for a visit lasting a few hours. In fact, I do not even know if its sessions are open to the public – it would be in keeping with the general preference of the EU for secrecy

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and opacity for them to be held *in camera*. Revealingly, its physical location is not apparent on its website (and cannot be found, e.g. by searching for "address"). Personal accessibility may have provided a check to the seemingly inexorable drift of all these agencies towards corruption. Even in 1981, an appraisal of environmental lead concentrations concluded that "in view of the uncertainties, a child's or pregnant woman's living conditions should surely be scrutinised at somewhat lower blood concentrations than the present limit of 1.69 μmol/L (35 μg/100 mL) *set by the EEC*" (my emphasis).[12] One of the newer agencies is the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).[13] From the beginning, its main concern appears to have been the desire to hide deficiencies of large manufacturers and operators within the aviation industry, rather than the EU citizenry. Earlier in 2016, it was decided that the public would no longer have access to the Mandatory Occurrence Reports (MOR) of flying-related safety incidents, nor the findings from accident investigations. Why? These agencies, over which citizens have practically no control, increasingly interfere in essentially arbitrary ways with the lives of citizens – the prohibition of the sale of incandescent light bulbs, and of substances (e.g., ascorbic acid) deemed to constitute the raw ingredients of medicines, are just two examples from a great many. All these actions seem to be designed to promote the interests of some doubtless highly profitable industry, rather than facilitate the smooth functioning of commercial markets, let alone promoting a safer environment. The recent scandal involving the car manufacturer Volkswagen, which, it has emerged, over many years systematically evaded emissions controls on diesel-powered cars through an elaborately constructed deceit, is the most recent manifestation of the regulatory chaos into which years of dishonesty have brought us.[14]

There is always a danger, when organisations become too large, that they become impossible to manage well. Even within the UK, the National Health Service (NHS) project "Connecting for Health", which was intended to equip the NHS with a

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common computing infrastructure, failed irreparably.[15] The NHS is, admittedly, a colossal organisation in itself. Health is, actually, one area in which the EU has had relatively little influence so far. The Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) is a modest, Luxembourg-based organisation with only about 50 members of staff. There are good scientific reasons for not trying to integrate national health agencies: regional differences in diet and genetics make it very unlikely that uniform standards are appropriate throughout the continent.

Regional differences of culture and language are even greater. Such differences have enormous impacts on people's behaviours. This is manifest in the existence of considerably different motoring speed limits in different countries. Given the general trend towards mindless harmonisation, it is likely that there will be attempts to impose uniform speed limits throughout Europe in due course. One of the unfortunate characteristics of EU harmonisation is what we might call "lowest common denominatorism": harmonisation always selects the least onerous standard to prevail. A good example is the colour of car headlamps. France, alone, required headlamps to be yellow, making them much less dazzling to oncoming motorists, hence making an important contribution to road safety. This regulation was harmonised and although French motorists *may* still use yellow headlamps, they are no longer mandatory and, in practice, nowadays only a very small proportion is to be found – presumably it is simpler for the manufacturers, most of which are multinational, to install a single kind of lamp regardless of country.

In summary, EU achievements in standardisation are paltry, and much of its efforts rank as officious interference in the work of voluntary bodies such as ISO, or gratuitous interference in the lives of private citizens.

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3. Civilisation

Since, however, the EU aims to go well beyond a mere free trade association, one should look more widely at what it has achieved in terms of civilisation. Language is, of course, a pillar of civilisation and perhaps the first thing that strikes an observer is the execrable quality of the language of official EU documents. I write about those in English, my native tongue – I hope that those reading this article will tell me whether one can say the same about those written in other languages.

The EU spends a lot of money on cultural activities, especially if one includes activities such as restoring buildings, sport and science. At first sight it is difficult to see what all this spending has achieved other than crowding out private funds. It has surely made it more expensive, because bureaucrats' salaries have to be paid, and more unpredictable, because grants have to be applied for with a small success rate. Tourism, although often called an "industry", can equally well be called a cultural activity. The EU bureaucracy is heavily involved in promoting tourism. Article 6 of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* states that "The Union shall have competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States. The areas of such action shall, at European level, be ... (d) tourism". Article 195 encourages "the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector". Notice how vague, to the point of meaninglessness, the language is. What is a "favourable environment"? Development of tourism has spoiled many "underdeveloped" areas, such as Liguria, to name just one example. Of course, it may well be argued that this would have happened anyway, even without the EU. When, in the 1980s, the locals started to cash in, opening shops selling *panini* etc. in the – at that time still authentic – villages of the Cinque Terre, there was little evidence of direct EU involvement. Tourism is an activity that is intrinsically self-defeating – the endpoint of development is that it becomes pointless to travel to the place, since it is like staying at home with the added

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inconvenience of the journey. It is completely superfluous for the EU to encourage such development (because it happens anyway through a kind of Gresham's law process). If there was an iota of intelligence within the EU bureaucracy, it would have acted to positively *discourage* such self-defeating development, such as overriding local permission to construct a road to Corniglia, which spelt the end of that place as somewhere truly worth visiting. Wordsworth is appropriate here, perhaps more so than to the object about which it was originally written:

Schemes of retirement sown
In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure
Must perish; how can they this blight endure?

As well as its Directorate-General Tourism Unit, the European Commission has several offices concerned with retirement; the Directorate-General (DG) for Economic and Financial Affairs is concerned with pension schemes, as is the DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, and the DG for Health and Consumer Protection with other related matters such as the health of pensioners which, it would appear, is adversely affected by tourism. It seems inevitable that in an organisation as large and complex as the European Commission, different parts are working in opposition to each other. Numerous other examples could be found. At the very least, this mass of opposing actions means that progress towards any goal is lamentably slow (as is demonstrably the case) and helps to explain why Horace's epigrammatic *Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus* so aptly describes the work of the European Commission.

Science is not explicitly mentioned in the list of areas of action given in Article 6 (loc. cit.); the closest we have is "(b) industry". Articles 179-188 do, however, refer to "research and technical development" (RTD); the RTD programmes have become an important source of funding for many scientists in Europe. Never mind that these programmes are intended to promote the competitiveness of European industry (Article 179); national governments have reduced their allocations to scientists

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to the point that they are obliged to rely on EU RTD funding for anything that requires more than very modest expenditure. Never mind that appraisals of these programmes have repeatedly condemned their inefficacity; the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities found in 1994 that the RTD programmes actually diminished European industrial competitiveness.[2] These criticisms have fallen on deaf ears and one finds that they are repeated in very similar terms each time a fresh appraisal is carried out. It is, therefore, astonishing that 150 fellows of the Royal Society of London, including Stephen Hawking and Alan Fersht, opined that "leaving the EU would be a disaster for science".[16] The main fear of the authors is loss of funding; F.S. Oliver refers to "the English professors, who fell prostrate in adoration before the prosperity of cotton-spinners" – one merely needs to substitute "DG XII – Research & Innovation" for cotton-spinners. In 2010, more than 10,000 scientists signed a petition strongly criticising the research and development activities of the EU.[17] Among the comments appended to the signatures, one finds many like "The procedure for applying for EU grants is now a huge barrier, and is putting Europe in an uncompetitive situation in comparison with the rest of the world" and "I no longer consider any of these funding schemes viable for attracting top candidates in my field". As far as I am aware, nothing effective has been done to address these deficiencies. It is no wonder that, among scientists of calibre, there is an almost universal perception that the EU programmes, and *a fortiori* the projects funded by them, are, at best, mediocre.

Mainstream RTD projects are supposed to have a significant commercial impact and participation of one or more major companies is virtually essential if the project is to have a chance of being funded. Yet, if some planned R&D did indeed have a viable commercial outcome, surely it would be a worthwhile investment for the company without the involvement of the EU. That submitted proposals are, in reality, Potemkin villages is further evidenced by the fact that according to the

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*research*eu results* magazine nearly all completed projects end with the plea "more research is required". Indeed, the business model of many seemingly entrepreneurial start-up companies see their best chances of survival to lie in securing a big EU grant, and once they have boarded the gravy train they acquire the taste for continuing in that vein.

Eight years ago, I was a member of a project consortium. Seven years ago, we received the pleasant news that our proposal had passed all the evaluation thresholds. Due to the incompetence of the evaluation panels (although the letter from the European Commission does not state that – but having served as an evaluator, I well know that panel members are carefully instructed to only allow roughly that number of proposals to pass for which there is funding), 115 projects likewise passed all thresholds, but funds were only sufficient to support 26 of them. After waiting more than a year for further news, I redesigned the project to be wholly financed by industry (i.e., the academic partners received funds to cover their share of the work directly from the industrial partners); the redesigned project was arranged to achieve more over a slightly shorter timescale and with a budget of *about half* of that of the original proposal, a large part of which was taken up merely to comply with the onerous reporting and other obligations to the Commission.

Having previously been a member of a funded project consortium, I can well attest to the colossal waste of resources within these programmes. An old and valued friend of mine acts as an independent consultant to a score of nanotechnology projects, reporting back to the project officer. After evaluation, he often recommends that a project should be terminated, but no such action is ever taken, because it would look bad in the file and reflect adversely on the promotion prospects of the officer, presumably because he would be judged as incompetent for having allowed a failing project to be funded in the first place.

So much for science. Let us look at regional development. Through its Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the EU has an

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activity which allows poor regions to acquire facilities, such as playing fields, or renovate dilapidated ones, such as waterworks and railway stations, which they would not otherwise be able to do. It is a pleasant gesture of solidarity between the richer and poorer parts of the EU. Surely, however, one does not need the enormous – and correspondingly expensive – bureaucracy that accompanies these measures to achieve the same end. Many prospective private entrepreneurial initiatives are likely to have been stymied – crowded out – by the ponderous ERDF and associated programmes – to say nothing of the opportunities for embezzlement and other forms of corruption that they create. In other words, they effectively promote criminality and dampen vigorous honesty. To be sure, this would scarcely have been the intention of the creators of the programme. Nevertheless, unintended consequences are a very typical feature of complex systems,[18] and knowledge of that has been around for quite a long time, so there is little excuse for the deep-seated naïveté so apparent in these overwrought but at the same time pretentious and turgid programmes.

4. The Common Agricultural Policy

The most expensive – and most controversial – part of the EU is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). A very different view is presented in official documents: the 50th anniversary of the CAP was marked by the publication of an elaborate panegyric,[19] to which doubtless Orwell would have accorded a grudging admiration for such an exemplary display of Newspeak (or rather one of its dialects, NEUspeak). This flagship policy has, at times, consumed almost 90% of the overall budget of the EU. At present, the proportion hovers between 40 and 45%. The idea of the policy, introduced in 1962, is to guarantee prices for farm produce. In other words, the real market is set aside and replaced by an artificial world affording breathtaking opportunities for

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fraud and corruption. The official view is that the policy has been blindingly successful. Blindingly indeed: the predictable outcome of vast surpluses ("butter mountains", "wine lakes" and so forth) that already began in the 1970s is considered to be one of the successes of the policies ("Farms are so productive..."); [19] it took over 20 years for this gross mismanagement to be corrected. The price of achieving this productivity has been appalling. The rural farming landscape has been transformed to become an agro-industrial system; it appears to have inspired the inhuman "systematisation" programme that began in Romania in 1972 (in which small villages were razed and the inhabitants concentrated into tower blocks in larger settlements). The loss of ecosystem diversity within this agro-industrial system is horrifying. Very many formerly abundant native European species of plants and animals of all kinds have become rare or have completely died out. From the beginning, the focus was on "efficiency" and "competitiveness". Only in 2011 did ecological aspects begin to be considered: [19] under a new CAP reform, "ecological competitiveness" (whatever that means) was to be strengthened. In reality, the loss of diversity is likely to continue, since the EU bureaucracy seems to be very much in favour of the introduction of genetically modified organisms. If they are allowed to get their way, we shall end up with the kind of agriculture practised nowadays in the USA, with general herbicide spread on fields of crop plants modified to be resistant to it.

The focus of the CAP has only ever been on price and quantity. Since the introduction of the policy, the quality of food within the EU has gradually declined. Already in the mid-1980s, Frédy Girardet, whose restaurant *Girardet* in Crissier, Vaud was at the time considered to be the best in the world, [20] lamented that it was no longer possible to obtain ingredients, especially vegetables, of the first quality in Europe. Tasteless fruit and vegetables, prion-containing beef and bland cheeses – these are

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some of the legacies of the CAP, as far as the consumer is concerned. The agronomist will also be concerned by the colossal loss of diversity in the varieties of comestible foods grown commercially. If farmers are to benefit from an EU subsidy,[21] they are obliged to plant the prescribed varieties. A hundred years ago, over 2000 varieties of apples were sold commercially in France; nowadays, only a handful of inferior varieties are authorised to be harvested commercially, and these "EU varieties" are the same regardless of country.

It is true that the UK has been particularly critical of the CAP and instrumental in bringing about certain reforms. Nevertheless, the British government never seems to have been able to drive home such laudable initiatives. An illustrative example occurred in 1994. Italy and Spain refused to obey milk quotas, and a court judgement fined the Italian government 2300 million GBP (over 4000 million in today's money), and Spain a lesser amount. The European Commission subsequently decided to overrule that court judgement. This decision was challenged in the European Court by the UK government, but the challenge was withdrawn after the Italians and Spaniards threatened to block the European budget if the fines were enforced.

In summary, more than half the entire EU budget has been spent on a system that has ruined the rural ecosystem and delivers expensive food of poor quality to the citizens of Europe. No better example of lowest common denominatorism could be found – and this is hailed as the only real success of the EU.

5. Deceit at the heart of Britain's relations with the EU

A thesis that has been often promulgated asserts that at the time of Britain negotiating to join the EU (then called the European Economic Community, EEC), it was clear enough, at least to the then Prime Minister, Edward Heath, and his chief negotiator

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Geoffrey Rippon, that the ultimate goal of the cosily named "Common Market" – at first sight no more than a free-trade zone – was political union. That might in any case have been deduced from a study of the writings of the principal architects of the Common Market, figures such as Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman. Apparently, Pierre Werner, then Prime Minister of Luxembourg, had written a report about moving towards full economic and monetary union as a necessary prelude to political union, which was being circulated in 1970, at the start of the renewed negotiations for British entry. Nevertheless, it was decided that these prospects were to be concealed. Upon Britain's entry into the Common Market at the beginning of 1973, Edward Heath declared that "There are some in this country who fear that in going into Europe we shall in some way sacrifice independence and sovereignty. These fears, I need hardly say, are completely unjustified."

Events since that infamous television broadcast have amply justified the thesis of deceit. On the Continent, the goal of ultimate political union has continued to gather momentum. Not all leading British politicians have been complicit in the deceit; Margaret Thatcher is probably the most prominent opponent, but even she could do relatively little to stem the tide. The longer such deceit continues, the more intricate it becomes and the more difficult to disentangle. The milk quota affair referred to in Section 4 illustrates the real impotence within the system; even a very modest piece of resistance crumbled.

The Continent might well wonder why Britain is making a fuss over all this. After all, the maxim of Louis XI, "Qui ne sait dissimuler ne sait pas régner", has long been a favourite, and at various times in the past large parts of continental Europe have enjoyed a kind of economic and political union, under Napoleon or Hitler, for example. It was, therefore, not so very surprising that the colossal deceit associated with the introduction of the

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euro as a common currency[22] seems to have been barely noticed within the Eurozone countries, at least at the time.

As Tolstoy is reputed to have said, "Every deceit is an evil." It is not something that can simply be set aside when it is not required (e.g., to conceal the real nature of the EU). It becomes pervasive, an endemic mentality akin to a disease. This is now particularly apparent when one looks at all the statements being made by those in favour of staying in the EU. To take just one example, Carolyn McCall, CEO of easyJet, has come out strongly in favour of continuing membership, apparently solely on the basis that it is necessary for the continuing commercial success of her airline.[23] But easyJet already has what are effectively subsidiaries in non-EU countries such as Switzerland,[24] which presumably operate very profitably. EU membership and successful airline operation do not, therefore, appear to be linked. Indeed, it is in the nature of true entrepreneurialism to be able to make a success out of any set of circumstances. The circumstances of the EU, with its enormous overhead of officious regulations and salaried officials, seem to be more trying than most, but for those with a certain mentality, the EU presents its own peculiar opportunities.

Many of the supporters of continuing EU membership base their support on economic arguments. Most of the statements made in this regard are unqualified and unqualifiable, either because they base their arguments on certain trends observed in Britain, the EU and the rest of the world, but cannot compare those trends with what would have happened had Britain not been a member of the EU (other than via speculative extrapolations); or because they base a comparison of future trends, in particular when Britain is to leave, on the assumption that for the EU it will be business as usual without Britain, and this assumption leads to even wilder speculative extrapolations.[25] It is interesting to compare – even from a purely stylistic viewpoint – the rather

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turgid document from the Bank of England[26] with the upbeat essay that won the 2014 Brexit prize.[27] Both documents take a neutral view, but the impression is that the dull one is against leaving, and the exciting one is for it. Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, notes that the report[26] concludes that "EU membership has *likely* increased the dynamism of the UK economy" (my emphasis); following the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee hearing on 8 March 2016, the Governor was widely reported as having asserted that leaving the EU posed the biggest domestic risk to financial stability.

The misdemeanours of EFSA have already been mentioned[1] – selectively ignoring data in a scientific evaluation. They represent a particularly egregious form of deceit, not least because it is difficult for a lay member of the public to notice that something is amiss.

The EU, of course, has no monopoly on deceit. Louis XI has already been mentioned; there are prominent examples from English political history long before the era of the EU. Returning to Carolyn McCall, it is interesting to note that she received an honorary doctor of science degree from Cranfield University in 2014; point 3 of the Cranfield University Reform League's 5-point plan for the future of the University is "to abrogate mendacity as a management tool in the administration of the University".[28] The point here is that deceit, mendacity and so forth are all around us, but when they are ineradicably embedded within the highest governing authorities, percolating downwards and all around us, a return to probity seems like a hopeless ambition.

6. The nature of the EU

The EU is undoubtedly a bureaucracy, which Parkinson defines as "rule by officials" (i.e., a type of oligarchy).[29] Nevertheless, he

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gives no examples, probably because there were none when the book was published.[30] Louis XI's maxim may be acceptable when uttered by a monarch who seemed to have the best interests of his country at heart and eschewed extravagance and idle luxury, but makes no real sense if applied to a (representative) democracy, and is even less appropriate for a bureaucracy. The bureaucrat's right to rule implies that he or she must be honest and competent. The role corresponds to de Jouvenel's *rex*,[31] responsible for order and stability. Too often, the European Commission usurps the function of *dux*, responsible for innovation – this is properly the responsibility of private citizens and their groupings. Whatever his antecedents, as soon as an official takes up his position, he starts to lose touch with reality. For him to assume more than a caretaker function is to vastly inflate his (or her) role. One notices this in the "calls for proposals" issued by DG XII for the research and technical development programmes. These calls, written by bureaucrats, are usually hopelessly behind the real cutting edge of the science and technology.

In order to combat that inevitability, the bureaucrats are often advised by "experts", grouped into panels such as the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR). I remember an occasion when I was asked by an EU official to comment on a SCENIHR report on some aspect of nanotechnology. My comment was highly critical of the report. To my surprise, the official wholeheartedly agreed with my assessment but, he remarked, he could do nothing with it because it was not accepted practice in the Commission for officials to criticise the panels that they had appointed.

So it goes on. Like Parkinson's Mr Cypher,[32] the official quickly acquires the ability to be infallibly wrong – whenever, that is, he has the opportunity to make a decision.[33] More often than not, it would appear, the decision is effectively imposed on the official by means of intensive lobbying, which is endemic

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within the European Commission. Tolerance of a lobbying culture cannot be justified by negligible salaries paid to officials, as is customary in some countries, especially in Africa; on the contrary, EU officials tend to be well paid, receiving well above the average. The motivation for acquiring more through lobbying, expenses etc. appears to be simple greed, and the EU well deserves its epithet of "the ultimate gravy train".

7. Conclusions

If one is entitled to do so, one certainly should have voted. It was a rare opportunity to contribute to a truly momentous decision. The Continent – both EU and non-EU – is awaiting the outcome with bated breath. No one really knows what will happen when the UK leaves. It is the second largest member state, and still officially recognised as one of only two world powers within the Union. The enormous effort expended to prevent Greece from leaving – even the Eurozone, let alone the Union – bespeaks a tremendous fragility, which in itself takes away confidence in the EU's future. The loss of prestige to the Brussels bureaucracy will be immense when the UK leaves; it may never really recover; hence, Brexit presages the ultimate breakup of the EU as a whole.

Why should this be cause for regret? The EU has, perhaps, performed a useful function in the post-war decades. There is no reason why it should continue indefinitely. One must be pragmatic. Genuine reform is hopeless – even the most sanguine politician, official or observer must, in his heart of hearts, know that. Sometimes it is best to make a fresh start. Hopefully, the lessons of the past will have been learned and – dare one hope it – all of Europe will be forever grateful to the citizens of the UK for having acted with boldness and vision.

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2. *Financial Control and Fraud in the Community* (HL Paper 75). London: HMSO (1994).
3. The European Assembly, or Parliament, seems to head the list of corrupt institutions, ordered according to the degree of corruption. Former MEP Peter Skinner was recently found guilty of one count of making a false instrument, one count of fraud and one count of false accounting in criminal proceedings at Southwark Crown Court. He had embezzled almost 500,000 GBP in the guise of "expenses" between 2004 and 2009 [*Kent Messenger* (31 March 2016)]. Regrettably, it seems that one has to assume that all MEPs are corrupt; only the degree of corruption varies. Given the effectively minuscule role of the European Parliament in the operation of the EU, its main function appears to be to provide the opportunity for its members to "live in effect for free", as the prosecutor in the Skinner case remarked [*Kent Messenger* (18 March 2016)].
4. Actually, as far as one can tell the institutions of the EU were bad from the start (the European Economic Community, later renamed the European Community and finally renamed the European Union). The classic mistake of clothing them "from the outset with convenience and dignity" was made. The buildings of the European Commission, Parliament and Courts of Justice were indeed magnificent, seemingly lacking nothing [C.N. Parkinson, *Parkinson's Law*, pp. 76 ff. Harmondsworth (Middlesex): Penguin Books (1965)]. Parkinson continues "It is now known that a perfection of planned layout is achieved only by institutions on the point of collapse".
5. At the time Britain was a member (prior to accession to the EEC), the EFTA's Secretariat appears to have had a staff of about 70. Interestingly, although it now has fewer members, its Secretariat numbers around 100! Such an increase is, of course, entirely to be expected (Parkinson, loc. cit., pp. 11 ff.[7]). In comparison, the EU general secretariat employs about 3500 people, and the staff of the European Commission, which is a kind of glorified secretariat, employs 33,000 people. Another 6000 work in the general secretariat of the European Parliament (source: http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/administration/ index_en.htm)

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6. Oddly, though, budgetary constraints have not sufficed to prevent military adventures in the Middle East, Central Asia and elsewhere from being undertaken.
7. See, for example, the general introduction in the paper by P. Hatto, Standardization for nanotechnology. *Nanotechnol. Perceptions* **3** (2007) 123–130.
8. Any bureaucracy needs to justify its existence, see Parkinson, loc. cit.[7] (the whole book).
9. One can think of international standards as "lubricants" to overcome the "friction" inherent in international trade.
10. ISO was founded after the Second World War. It continued the work of the International Federation of the National Standardizing Associations, founded in 1926.
11. Environmental Protection Agency and Food and Drug Administration, respectively. Their existence, of course, begs the question why the EU cannot simply adopt the US standards.
12. D. Gloag, Sources of lead pollution. *Br. Med. J.* **282** (1981) 41–44. This article was subsequently criticised for dangerously underestimating the presence of lead [R. Russell Jones, Sources of lead pollution. *Br. Med. J.* **282** (1981) 477], making the official position of the EEC even more incongruous.
13. ECHA was only founded in 2007, but its website already claims that it "is becoming the world's leading regulatory authority on the safe use of chemicals".
14. The scandal began in the USA, which has stricter emissions limits than the EU. But even in Europe, the deceit was used to promote the idea that VW diesel-powered vehicles are somehow "clean".
15. G. Sampson, Whistleblowing for health. *J. Biol. Phys. Chem.* **12** (2012) 37–43.
16. Letter to *The Times* (10 March 2016).
17. J.J. Ramsden, Widespread dissatisfaction with European Union research funding. *J. Biol. Phys. Chem.* **10** (2010) 3–4.
18. P.M. Allen and M. Strathern, Complexity, stability and crises. In: *Complexity and Security* (eds J.J. Ramsden & P.J. Kervalishvili), pp. 71–92. Amsterdam: IOS Press (2008).
19. *The Common Agricultural Policy: A Story to Be Continued*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union (2012).
20. Author of *La cuisine spontanée*. Paris: Laffont (1982).
21. As most of them do, but it is difficult to stand aside from the system unless

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one sells one's produce exclusively in local markets. Farmers have, therefore, been nudged into becoming more adept at looking at screens to optimize their subsidies than actually growing crops or rearing animals. This favours larger farms, which can afford to have staff exclusively dealing with the screens.

22. B. Connolly, *The Rotten Heart of Europe*. London: Faber & Faber (1996).
23. Letter to *The Sunday Times* (14 February 2016).
24. Easyjet Switzerland SA, based at Geneva airport.
25. Interestingly, I have not seen any arguments for remaining within the EU that do not at the same time emphasize the need for the EU to be reformed, and assume that it will be. Given the dismal track record of attempted reform, this is a very optimistic assumption indeed.
26. *EU Membership and the Bank of England*. London: Bank of England (2015).
27. I. Mansfield, *A Blueprint for Britain: Openness not Isolation*. London: Institute of Economic Affairs (2014).
28. https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4121980
29. C.N. Parkinson, *The Evolution of Political Thought*. Boston (Mass.): Houghton Mifflin Co. (1958).
30. The Soviet Union, which had some bureaucratic characteristics, is considered by Parkinson to be a theocracy (of Communism) within the larger category of oligarchy [C.N. Parkinson, *The Evolution of Political Thought*. Boston (Mass.): Houghton Mifflin Co. (1958)].
31. B. de Jouvenel (tr. J.F. Huntington), *Sovereignty: An Enquiry into the Political Good*. Chicago: University Press (1957).
32. C.N. Parkinson, *In-laws and Outlaws*, pp. 109–122. London: John Murray (1964).
33. "Getting it wrong" could not be better illustrated than by the design of the dreary twelve-star EU flag. As A.W.F. Edwards has pointed out [Letter to *The Times* (21 February 1992)], "its design is hardly appropriate for a grouping of European states. None of the countries involved has a star in its flag, a symbol which is distinctly non-European ... Indeed, the natural conclusion on comparing the flag with others is that it is probably an American state flag (Indiana and Alaska both have gold stars on a blue ground) ... The Community should hold a competition for a new design, which needs to be a bold reflection of the European heraldic tradition rather than the draft of an EC directive for a 12-wire Europlug."

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ჯერემი ჯ. რამსდენი
ნანოტექნოლოგიების საპატიო პროფესორი,
ბაკინგემის უნივერსიტეტი

ბრიტანეთი და ევროკავშირი

(ანოტაცია)

საკვანძო სიტყვები: ბრექსითი, ევროკავშირი, რეფორმა, ეკონომიკური პოლიტიკა, საზოგადოებრივი პოლემიკა, გაერთიანებული სამეფო

გაერთიანებული სამეფოს ევროკავშირის წევრად დარჩენა-არდარჩენასთან დაკავშირებით არგუმენტების ჩამოყალიბებასა და ახსნას ბოლო არ უჩანს. ევროკავშირის მომხრეებიც კი აღიარებენ რეფორმის აუცილებლობას. ამგვარი რეფორმის საჭიროება იმდენად საშურია, რომ ევროკავშირში დარჩენის მომხრეთა აზრით, ბრიტანეთი სწორედ ამ აუცილებელი რეფორმების განსახორციელებლად უნდა დარჩეს. ერთა ლიგის ანალოგიურად, ევროკავშირს გარდაცვალება უნდა ვაცალოთ და თუ გაგვიმართლებს, რაღაც ახლისა და უკეთესის დაბადებას შევუწყოთ ხელი.

ინსტიტუციების რეფორმა საბოლოო მიზანთან დაკავშირებით კითხვას ბადებს. ბრიტანეთის მხრივ ევროკავშირის მკაცრი კრიტიკის ერთი მიზეზი ისაა, რომ ევროკავშირის საბოლოო მიზანი ფედერალური წყობის დამყარებაა. კონტინენტურმა ევროპამ თავისი წილი მეგალომანიაკები უკვე საკმარისად გამოსცადა ნაპოლეონისა და ჰიტლერის სახით, რომელთაც პანევროპული ჰეგემონიის იდეა ხიბლავდათ. ის ფაქტი, რომ ასეთი ჩანაფიქრის განხორციელება ორივეჯერ ძალიან ცუდად დასრულდა, ფედერალური წყობის დამცველებს აშკარად არ აცვლევინებს აკვიატებულ მიზანს. აქედან შეგვიძლია დავასკვნათ,

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რომ ეს ადამიანები ფანატიზმით არიან შეპყრობილები და არ გამოირჩევიან რაციონალიზმითა თუ კრიტიკული აზროვნებით. პანევროპული გაერთიანების ბრიტანული იდეა უფრო მეტად წააგავდა ევროპული თავისუფალი ვაჭრობის ასოციაციის (EFTA) განვითარებულ ვერსიას. ევროკავშირი კი უაღრესად არაეფექტური აღმოჩნდა თავისუფალი ვაჭრობის მხარდამჭერის როლში.

ევროკავშირის მოწინააღმდეგენი აღიარებენ, რომ ევროკავშირმა, სხვა თუ არაფერი, მშვიდობის შენარჩუნებას მაინც შეუწყო ხელი ამჟამინდელ მტრულად განწყობილ პარტნიორთა შორის. თუმცა, არ ვიცით ევროკავშირის გარეშე რა მოხდებოდა. იქნებ, გასათვალისწინებელია, რომ ნეიტრალური ქვეყნები, როგორიცაა ნორვეგია და შვეიცარია, ევროკავშირის წევრები არ არიან, ხოლო მესამე ნეიტრალური, თუმცა, ევროკავშირის წევრი ქვეყანა – ბელგია, ადმინისტრაციული შტაბ-ბინის ლოკაციად შეირჩა. და მაინც, ვერ ვიტყვით, რომ ევროპა საომარი მოქმედებებისგან სრულიად დაცულია. უამრავი ცხელი წერტილია და აქედან ყველაზე გამორჩეულია ორი – ბასკეთი და ჩრდილოეთ ირლანდია. ეს პრობლემა ევროკავშირის ზეობის პერიოდშიც კი იოტისოდენად არ შემცირებულა. სულ პირიქით, ღია საზღვრებისა და დასაქმებულთა თავისუფალი გადაადგილების ვალდებულებამ, ევროკავშირმა რომ დააკისრა წევრ ქვეყნებს, მტრული განზრახვის მქონე ინდივიდებს კიდევ უფრო გაუიოლა ვერაგულ ჩანაფიქრთა განხორციელება.

ევროკავშირს ხშირად აქებენ სატარიფო ბარიერის მოხსნის გამო; მაგრამ ისიც უნდა გვახსოვდეს, რომ ხელოვნურად შექმნილი ბარიერების მოხსნა (ზოგ შემთხვევაში იმავე ხალხის მიერ, ვინც ისინი დააყენა) დიდ დამსახურებად არ უნდა ჩაითვალოს. შენგენის ზონაში სასაზღვრო გამშვებ პუნქტებზე პასპორტების შემოწმების გაუქმებას რაც შეეხება, კრიმინალისა და ტერორიზმის ზრდის სამწუხარო ტენდენციის პირობებში, ახლაღა აღ-

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მოაჩინეს ამის სავალალო შედეგი და, შესაძლოა, მათ მიერვე დაწესებული მავნე კანონი კიდეც გააუქმონ.

როდესაც საქმე უფრო კომპლექსურ საკითხებს ეხება, მაგალითად, საზოგადოებრივ ჯანდაცვას, ყველა ქმედება, თითქოს, გამიზნულია უდავოდ მაღალშემოსავლიანი და მომგებიანი ინდუსტრიის ინტერესთა ხელშესაწყობად და არა – კომერციული ბაზრების შეუფერხებელი ფუნქციონირების მხარდასაჭერად, უსაფრთხო გარემოზე რომ აღარაფერი ვთქვათ. ჯანდაცვა, ფაქტობრივად, ერთადერთი სფეროა, რაზეც აქამდე ევროკავშირმა შედარებით უმნიშვნელო ზეგავლენა მოახდინა. ლუქსემბურგში მოღვაწე მომხმარებელთა, ჯანმრთელობისა და სურსათის აღმასრულებელი სააგენტო (CHAFEA) ერთი მოკრძალებული ორგანიზაციაა, სადაც მხოლოდ 50 შტატიანი თანამშრომელი მუშაობს.

საერთო ჯამში, სტანდარტიზაციის მხრივ ევროკავშირის მიღწევები ძალზე მცირეა და მისი მცდელობების უმეტესობა სხვა არაფერია, თუ არა ოფიციოზის მხრიდან ისეთი ნებაყოფლობითი ორგანოების მუშაობაში ჩარევა, როგორიცაა ISO ანდა კერძო მოქალაქეების პირად ცხოვრებაში უმიზეზოდ ცხვირის ჩაყოფა.

ევროკავშირი უამრავ ფულს ხარჯავს საზოგადოებრივ საქმიანობაზე, განსაკუთრებით ისეთზე, როგორიცაა შენობების აღდგენა, სპორტი და მეცნიერება. მართალია, ტურიზმს უფრო „ინდუსტრიად“ განიხილავენ, მაგრამ მას საზოგადოებრივი საქმიანობაც შეიძლება ეწოდოს. „ევროკავშირის ფუნქციონირების შესახებ ხელშეკრულების“ 195-ე მუხლი შეეხება „ხელსაყრელი გარემოს შექმნას ამ სექტორში საწარმოთა განვითარებისათვის“. ყურადღება მიაქციეთ, რაოდენ ბუნდოვანია აღნიშნული კანონის ენა. ტურიზმის განვითარებამ მოსპო მრავალი „განუვითარებელი“ რეგიონი, მაგალითისთვის ლიგურიის დასახელებაც კმარა. ტურიზმი ბუნებრივადაა ფუჭი საქმიანობა. ევროკავშირის მიერ ამგვარი განვითარების ხელშეწყობა სრუ-

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ლიად ზედმეტია (რადგან ტურიზმი თავისთავად ხორციელდება გრეშამის კანონით წარმართული პროცესის შედეგად). ევროკავშირის ბიუროკრატებს ინტელექტის მინიმალური დოზა მაინც რომ ჰქონოდათ, ისინი ასეთ დამღუპველ განვითარებას, პირიქით, შეაფერხებდნენ.

ევროკავშირის განსაკუთრებით ძვირადღირებული და ყველაზე საკამათო ასპექტია საერთო სამიწათმოქმედო პოლიტიკა (CAP). ნამდვილი ბაზარი გვერდზე გადადეს და ხელოვნური პროდუქტით ჩაანაცვლეს, რომელსაც თაღლითობისა და კორუფციის სულისშემძვრელი შესაძლებლობები აქვს მინიჭებული. მას მერე საერთო სამიწათმოქმედო პოლიტიკის (სსპ) მთავარი ზრუნვის საგანი მხოლოდ ფასი და რაოდენობაა. ამ პოლიტიკის დანერგვის შემდეგ, ევროკავშირში საკვების ხარისხი თანდათანობით გაფუჭდა. უგემური ხილი და ბოსტნეული, პრიონისშემცველი[1] საქონლის ხორცი და გემოდაკარგული ყველი სსპ-ის მემკვიდრეობის მცირე ჩამონათვალია მხოლოდ, რამდენადაც მომხმარებლისთვისაა ცნობილი. თუ ფერმერები ევროკავშირის სუბსიდიებით ისარგებლებენ, ვალდებული ხდებიან მხოლოდ ევროკავშირის კანონმდებლობით ნებადართული ჯიშები დარგონ. ასი წლის წინათ ვაშლის 2 ათასზე მეტი ჯიში იყიდებოდა კომერციული მოგების მიზნით საფრანგეთში; დღეისათვის კი მხოლოდ თითებზე ჩამოსათვლელი რაოდენობის ჯიშის გაყიდვაა ნებადართული და ეს „ევროკავშირის ჯიშები“ ყველა ქვეყანაში ერთი და იგივეა. მოკლედ, ევროკავშირის ბიუჯეტის ნახევარზე მეტი დაიხარჯა ისეთი სისტემის შექმნაზე, რამაც გაანადგურა სოფლის ეკოსისტემა და უხარისხო, ძვირადღირებული საკვების ამარა დატოვა ევროპის მოქალაქენი.

კონტინენტურ ევროპას თუ უნდა, თავი იმტვრიოს იმაზე ფიქრით, ბრიტანეთი რატომ ტეხს აურზაურს ამ ყველაფრის გამო. ბოლოს და ბოლოს, ლუდოვიკო XI-ის გამონათქვამი: ვისაც დამალვის უნარი არა აქვს, ვერც ქვეყნის მართვას მოახერხებსო – დიდი ხანია, რაც ევრო-

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კავშირის მესვეურებს უსაყვარლეს ფრთიან ფრაზად ექცათ. კონტინენტური ევროპის დიდ ნაწილს წარსულში არაერთხელ უსარგებლია ეკონომიკური და პოლიტიკური კავშირებით, მაგალითად, ნაპოლეონისა თუ ჰიტლერის მმართველობის პერიოდში. ამიტომ, არც თუ ძალიან გასაკვირი იყო, რომ კოლოსალური სიყალბე – ევროს საერთო ვალუტის სახით შემოღება ევროზონის ქვეყნებში, ლამის, არ შეუნიშნავთ.

ვინ იცის ზუსტად, რა მოხდება, როცა გაერთიანებული სამეფო ევროკავშირს დატოვებს. იგი სიდიდით მეორე წევრი ქვეყანაა და დღემდე ოფიციალურადაა აღიარებული ევროკავშირის ფარგლებში არსებული ორი მსოფლიო სახელმწიფოდან ერთ-ერთად. ბრიუსელის ბიუროკრატიის პრესტიჟს მძიმე დარტყმას მიაყენებს ბრიტანეთის გასვლა; შესაძლოა, ვერც ვერასოდეს აღიდგინოს დაკარგული სახელი; ამგვარად, ბრექსითი ევროკავშირის მთლიანობის სამუდამოდ დარღვევას ნიშნავს. პრაგმატულები უნდა ვიყოთ. ნამდვილი რეფორმა შეუძლებელია – ყველაზე ოპტიმისტი პოლიტიკოსი, ჩინოვნიკი ანდა დამკვირვებელიც კი საკუთარ გულის გულში მაინც უნდა ხვდებოდეს ამას. ზოგჯერ ყველაფრის თავიდან დაწყება ჯობია. იმედია, წარსულის გაკვეთილების გათვალისწინება მოხდება და, გავბედავ იმაზე ფიქრსაც, რომ მთელი ევროპა სამუდამოდ მადლიერი დარჩება გაერთიანებული სამეფოს მოქალაქეებისა, ასე თამამად და წინგახედულად რომ იმოქმედეს.

[1] პრიონი – ცილოვანი ინფექციური ნაწილაკი, აღმოაჩინეს 1982 წელს. მდგრადია დუღილის ტემპერატურისადმი, UV-სხივებისადმი, 70%-იანი ეთანოლისა და ფორმალდეჰიდის მოქმედებისადმი. იწვევს ე.წ. ნელ (დუნე) ინფექციებს ანუ ლეტალურ ნევროლოგიურ დაავადებებს [იხ.: გოგიჩაძე გ., გედენიძე ა., ჭუმბურიძე ჯ. (2009). სამედიცინო ტერმინოლოგიის ქართულ-ინგლისურ-რუსულ-ლათინური განმარტებითი ლექსიკონი. თბილისი: „მერიდიანი“].

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