



Press Release: Lord Howell addresses Jersey Branch of Royal Commonwealth Society on the EU and the Commonwealth

In a speech delivered to the Jersey Branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Lord Howell of Guildford said that the European Union and the Commonwealth are not alternatives for Britain, whether economically or in security terms. They complement each other.

Why is this? The basic answer is because the modern hyper-connected world and the architecture of the modern Commonwealth are ideally suited. Unlike the EU, with its heavy and centralised top layer of intrusive administration and its governmental hierarchy of authority and control, the Commonwealth is a quite different kind of entity and structure.

It binds together not through officialdom and treaties but to a far greater extent through non-governmental and voluntary linkages and cohesion, in short through its peoples. Connectivity brings together, on a daily and continuous basis, every kind of profession, activity and interest in a way that no imposed order from above can ever do.

And of course the cementing agency, which brings all these people and interests together as never before in the Commonwealth context is the common working language (along with all the common attitudes and identities hidden within it).

Are not we lucky, and are not we in the UK absurdly short-sighted and inept in failing to utilize the colossal potential of the Commonwealth connection today and the even greater potential tomorrow? And is not HM The Queen more percipient than all her Ministers put together in seeing – as she forecast several years ago – that the Commonwealth was becoming ‘in many ways the face of the future’.

The Commonwealth is not only offering the fastest growing new markets; it is not only generating investment capital and new skills on a phenomenal scale. It is also the gateway to all the other rising powers of Asia and Africa and Latin America.

Lord Howell added: “The Crown Dependency and Island of Jersey is in fact a major and massive asset for the United Kingdom. It supports 140,000 British jobs and earns at least £2.5 billions a year for the UK Treasury.”



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

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Note to Editors

Lord Howell is President of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Chair of the Council of Commonwealth Societies, former UK Secretary of State for Energy, former Minister of State for the Commonwealth, former chair of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, former chair of the Conservative Party One Nation Group, former Deputy-Leader of the Conservatives in the Lords. He is the author of several books including the Commonwealth-oriented 'Old Links and New Ties', published in 2013, and 'Empires in Collision' in 2016.

The Royal Commonwealth Society, founded in 1868, is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world.