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As a Dane who has lived in the UK for many years it is hard not to see the oncoming referendum as a referendum on those of us who are EU migrants living here. Whether we make a positive contribution or not to the UK others must decide. One of the reasons I came here was that from an early age the UK has exerted great cultural influence on the rest of Europe. As a teenager back in the eighties I would listen to Radio Luxembourg weekly to pick up what was on the pop charts in Britain. Top ten hits in the UK would take 3-4 weeks to reach the Danish pop charts. I often took smug pride in being the first at my school to have bought a single from the local record store before it got sold out when 3 weeks later it eventually topped in Denmark. Through music the UK still reaches into the culture of younger generations worldwide.

On a more mature level the UK is undoubtedly a cultural giant. In many respects second to none when it comes to scholarly experts in foreign history, politics and geography. This is evident from literature and the many highly acclaimed TV programmes on foreign topics produced in the UK. Much of this stems from its past history as an outward looking empire but also from its traditions of exploring and studying other cultures worldwide with an agnostic attitude devoid of crude prejudice used to justify exploitation that other exploring nations often assumed. This rich knowledge is admired and treasured globally. Were the UK to leave the EU the scholars upholding these virtues in the UK would of course not vanish from day one. But the inevitable isolationist agenda within the UK would likely shrink resources devoted to new scholars following in their footsteps. The UK would lose clout and over time, precious understanding of the rest of the world and consequently influence.

The UK is important for the EU to assume a balanced triumvirate among the biggest member states: Britain, France and Germany. This serves to ensure that power within the EU as a whole does not fall unevenly on just one country. Unfortunately David Cameron has marginalised the UK within the EU since he took office so the balance of power has therefore tipped towards Germany. The Germans have only reluctantly taken up the leadership role. They are acutely aware that an EU where the agenda is set by Germany invokes widespread resentment in the longer term. Boris Johnson's preposterous comparison between the EU and Hitler's ambitions illustrates the suspicion that Germany is deviously scheming to establish its hegemony in Europe.

The UK is a great soft power projecting ideals for human rights, liberal values and the rule of law globally. This is something EU member states anxiously hope it will maintain and strengthen. If it were to withdraw from the EU and were then trying to assert its influence this would only bemuse the rest of the EU: First the UK dismisses the remaining EU members. Then confusingly it asks for them to appreciate its point of view. Leaving the EU would only weaken the UK's influence.

The UK is also a great military power. But Scotland would likely reopen its own independence debate if dragged out of the EU. This would trigger complex talks on

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the future and location of Trident. The resulting emasculation of both the UK and the EU would have very negative geopolitical consequences and is undoubtedly Putin's wet dream and fits perfectly with his divide and conquer ambitions.

The UK's sacrifice in WW2 was not the most advantageous or opportune choice at the time. If anything it was driven by idealism rather than narrow self-interests. It has benefitted Europe and the rest of the world for generations after WW2. As the only victor of WW2 that has been on the right side of history since then, Britain is seen as a sort of father figure by a lot of non-UK EU citizens. It would be met with genuine sorrow if it were to withdraw itself.

Only 2 years ago England and Wales and Northern Ireland followed the Scottish referendum with great trepidation. As a Dane and EU citizen I dearly hope the UK will remain part of the EU for the same reasons.

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