

## **Futility of EU Referendum Bill**

by Francis Bennion

There ought to be some reassurance for those who wish to have a referendum that there is a Bill before Parliament — but it is meaningless

Sir,

You say of James Wharton MP's Bill (leading article, 20 June 2013) that putting a referendum on the statute books under such a Bill 'is the only way that people will be reassured that one will take place'. People should feel no such reassurance. The Bill is an illegitimate and ineffective attempt to bind a future Parliament, namely the one that Parliament has decided by section 1(2) of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 will be chosen in a general election to be held on 7 May 2015. The Bill requires the Secretary of State, before 31 December 2016, to appoint the day on which the referendum is to be held. But the new Parliament elected on 7 May 2015 will be free to repeal this requirement.

It may very well do so, for all that the MPs who will shortly waste their time considering this futile Bill can tell. To obviate such time-wasting, the Speaker should rule the Bill out of order.<sup>1</sup>

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### **References:**

None

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<sup>1</sup> Published in *The Times* 22 June 2013.