

EU Corruption & IMF's Lagarde 'Guilty But Let Off'

Steve Hilton, former chief strategist for David Cameron, in The Sunday Times News Review (17th May) said "Spend time in Brussels and you will find in The European Parliament and Commission a vast, stinking cesspit of corporate corruption gussied up in the garb of idealistic internationalism".

How right that has turned out to be. Of course, it begs the question why didn't he say this earlier? But I suppose that really would be risking the sack.

Following that, The European Union's Court of Auditors failed to give the EU's accounts a clean bill of health for the 22nd year running. The report blasts the payments underlying the accounts as "materially affected by error", leading the Court to issue an adverse opinion on the legality of the payments.

An "adverse opinion" is rare in accountancy, issued only in serious cases where there is substantial departure from generally accepted accounting principles.

These findings only tell a small part of the true scale of EU wastefulness as only samples of expenditure are scrutinised by the Court.

Now we are asked to accept that a French court has found International Monetary Fund Chief Christine Lagarde guilty of negligence but did not hand down any punishment, or give her a criminal record. As French finance minister in 2008, she approved an award of €404m (\$429m; £340m) to businessman Bernard Tapie for the disputed sale of a firm.

Ms Lagarde denied wrongdoing, was not present in court, having left Paris for Washington DC (according to her website).

The IMF board said it retained "full confidence" in her leadership and she would not appeal against the ruling. She said, "There's a point in time when one has to just stop, turn the page, and move on and continue to work with those who have put their trust in me" she commented.

Well, Madame Legarde, you should consider whether the public have similar trust. We are sick and tired of EU bureaucrats in charge of mind-boggling expensive departments, drawing fat cat salaries paid by us, the taxpayer, and enjoying expenses accounts and a lifestyle thousands could only dream of.

Would you or I be treated so lightly if found guilty of such an offence? The sooner Great Britain is free of this corrupt maelstrom of fraud and greed, the better.

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The UK Independence Party

St Ives & The Isles of Scilly Branch