

On Thursday, millions of people from across the United Kingdom voted in the Referendum, and a majority expressed a desire that Britain's future is to be outside the European Union.

The outcome of this referendum has been determined by the people of this country. It is now the responsibility of the Government, with the support of Parliament, to take full account of the outcome of the referendum, and, in the light of this, decide upon the next steps. This morning, the Prime Minister David Cameron has offered a framework for when this process might formally begin.

The vote to withdraw from the European Union means that now we must all reimagine both what it means to be the United Kingdom in an interdependent world and what values and virtues should shape and guide our relationships with others.

As citizens of the United Kingdom, whatever our views during the referendum campaign, we must now unite in a common task to build a generous and forward looking country, contributing to human flourishing around the world. We must remain hospitable and compassionate, builders of bridges and not barriers. Many of those living among us and alongside us as neighbours, friends and work colleagues come from overseas and some will feel a deep sense of insecurity. We must respond by offering reassurance, by cherishing our wonderfully diverse society, and by affirming the unique contribution of each and every one.

The referendum campaign has been vigorous and at times has caused hurt to those on one side or the other. We must therefore act with humility and courage - being true to the principles that make the very best of our nation. Unity, hope and generosity will enable us to overcome the period of transition that will now happen, and to emerge confident and successful. The opportunities and challenges that face us as a nation and as global citizens are too significant for us to settle for less.

As those who hope and trust in the living God, let us pray for all our leaders, especially for Prime Minister David Cameron in his remaining months in office. We also pray for leaders across Europe, and around the world, as they face this dramatic change. Let us pray especially that we may go forward to build a good United Kingdom that, though relating to the rest of Europe in a new way will play its part amongst the nations in the pursuit of the common good throughout the world.

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