

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD

Tel: 020-7584-2566 Fax: 020-7584 9402

E-mail: nsa@bahai.org.uk

When replying please

refer to: SRL-23389

24 February 2016

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To all believers in the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Friends,

A query was recently put to the Universal House of Justice regarding the appropriate Bahá'í response to the forthcoming referendum on whether the United Kingdom should remain a member of the European Union. In response, the House of Justice stated, in a letter written on its behalf dated 7 February 2016:

Clearly, this referendum, which will determine the United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union, is a political matter...

This being the case, the following guidance from a letter of the Universal House of Justice, dated 16 July 2013, applies:

... Bahá'ís should refrain from discussing the matter, especially within the Bahá'í community. Believers are, of course, entirely free to decide for themselves whether to participate in the referendum and how to vote, taking care that their doing so does not lead to an impression of aligning with a partisan perspective.

The discipline demanded of us is naturally not limited to conversations, but applies to all our communications, including our engagement on the Internet through websites, blogs, social media, and messaging systems.

Abstaining from taking sides on the issue does not of course mean that Bahá'ís are uninterested in the affairs of society. The opposite is, of course, the case, but the Bahá'í approach to the advancement of society is derived from the teachings enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, at the heart of which is the cardinal principle of the oneness of humankind. Thus for Bahá'ís to involve themselves in debates on partisan and therefore divisive issues would be contrary to this fundamental principle of the Faith. To understand this subject more deeply we urge you to study the letter dated 2 March 2013 from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of Iran, a copy of which is enclosed.

We have every confidence that the friends will be mindful of the high standard to which we are called, and will appreciate the imperative not to be drawn into divisive and contentious debates which lie at the root of so much of the suffering that afflicts humanity.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

National Spiritual Assembly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Patrick O'Mara', written over a horizontal line.

Patrick O'Mara,
Secretary

Enclosure

cc. Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi
Auxiliary Board members
Local Spiritual Assemblies and Groups