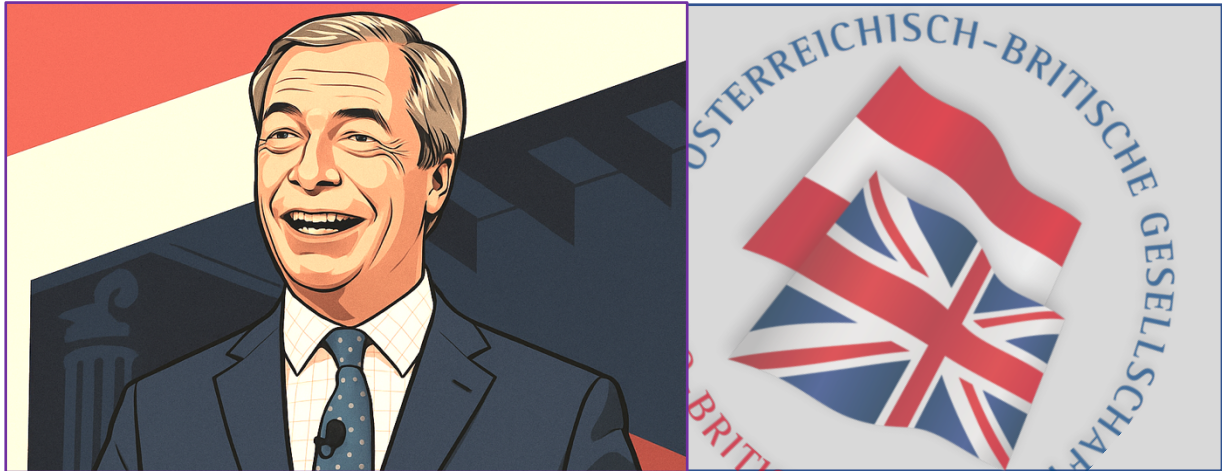


# Pub Populist as Prime Minister?

by Prof Melanie Sully



He fought for decades for Britain to leave the EU. He scored huge electoral successes with different parties and was instrumental in bringing about the downfall of three prime ministers: David Cameron, Theresa May and Rishi Sunak. He is reckoned to be one of the most influential politicians in Britain this century. Nigel Farage with his Reform Party is now shaking the very foundations of British politics and posing an existential threat to the old two party system.

Reform UK was born out of the Lockdowns during the pandemic. It protested against the Establishment and what it saw as heavy handed decrees of the State. This was more than Euroscepticism, it embraced opposition to what it saw as mad environmental policies and so-called woke ideas on gender and asylum seekers. It railed against the big banks, the BBC, the International Monetary Fund and the World Health Organisation. His campaign paid off and in last years election Farage was elected as a Member of Parliament.

Farage initially damaged the Tories tarnished by scandals and economic disasters. But more recently Farage has switched to attack the Labour government which has failed to bring about the change many voters had hoped for. He has even supported more state ownership of major utility companies. Last week Reform scored a stunning success at the local elections and snatched victory from Labour in a byelection.

At 61 Farage is a man to be reckoned with. He has survived cancer, a car accident and a major airplane crash.

His success lies in his talent for communicating with voters on the doorsteps, in pubs and farms. He is attracting many young people, chiefly white males.

Farage reckons he has an even chance for getting into No 10 Downing St at the 2029 election. He has been laughed at in the past, but he is the only one grinning now.

**The Austro-British Society is looking forward to your views and comments!**

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#### *About the author*

**Melanie Sully** (Prof. Dr.) is a Board Member of the Austro-British Society, editor, writer and consultant, who was for many years professor of political science at the Diplomatic Academy, Vienna. Formerly Voice of America radio correspondent, Dr. Sully acts as a consultant on good governance projects for the Cultural Department of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Austria. Further she has worked as a consultant for the OSCE on projects such as parliamentary standards, comparative legislatures, as well as women's political participation. She gave presentations on parliaments and ethics and legislative standards for parliamentarians in Tbilisi and for the Council of Europe, gave Guest Professorial Lecture, for politics at the University of London, and has given expert evidence to the House of Commons.

The opinions expressed in this article are entirely hers and reflect in no way the opinions of the ABS.

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