

BCC: 'No deal' not an option for business communities

Today the BCC publishes the results of a post-election survey on business views on the UK's objectives in the EU negotiations.

10th July 2017

One month on from the General Election, the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) today (Monday) publishes a post-election survey of over 2,400 companies, which shows that while businesses have a range of views on their preferred objectives for the UK in Brexit negotiations, there is almost no support to conclude UK-EU talks without a trade deal.

Asked to consider which option came closest to their view about what the UK's Brexit negotiation objectives should be, the survey – carried out just after the election – showed:

- **2% said leave the Single Market and Customs Union, and rely on WTO rules for trade (leave without a trade deal with the EU)**
- **34% said remain in the Single Market and Customs Union**
- **13% said remain in Customs Union only (no hard borders or tariffs, but limited scope to negotiate trade agreements with third countries)**
- **11% said remain in the Single Market only (accept EU regulations and rules in return for full access to market)**
- **28% said a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and a customs agreement (the government's pre-election objectives, set at the Prime Minister's Lancaster House speech)**
- **12% said don't know or 'other'**

Respondents were also asked about a transition period, and which of the following options they believe is best for their business:

- **46% said 'a transition period of three years'**
- **22% said 'a transition period of longer than three years'**
- **17% said 'no transition period'**
- **15% said 'don't know' or 'other'**

Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said:

"Our results make it clear that there are a range of business views on what the UK should be seeking in a final deal with the EU, but there is near-universal consensus that a deep and comprehensive agreement is needed. 'No deal' isn't seen as a viable option. Businesses want a pragmatic settlement on the practical, real-world issues that affect their operations, not arbitrary political red lines.

"By more than three to one, businesses want a transition period on the way to

a final agreement with the EU. This is critical to prevent firms facing the prospect of repeated, costly adjustments to new trading conditions. If companies have to change their business model once in 2019 and again several years thereafter, the competitiveness and investment potential of our firms will be undermined.

“Getting transition arrangements on the negotiations agenda as quickly as possible would give businesses – many of whom are considering big investment decisions now – the confidence to press ahead.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) survey received responses from 2,422 business people from all regions of the UK online between Monday 12 June and Wednesday 14 June 2017. Of the businesses surveyed, 91% were SMEs, 25% operate in the manufacturing sector, and 75% operate in the services sector. The results were weighted to align to the BEIS 2016 business population estimates.

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

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