

Buying things from the EU

We are still waiting to learn if the rest of the EU wants to impose tariffs on all their many agricultural exports to us, and on the cars they send us. Most of the things we export to them are tariff free under WTO rules or would be subject to very low tariffs. All services are tariff free, the things like aerospace parts and planes are tariff free. The EU sell us so much more of the limited number of items that do attract serious tariffs under WTO schedules.

I would like to reassure people who are worried about this. If by any chance the rest of the EU does turn down our offer of tariff free trade in an unlikely fit of self harm, we can find plenty of cheaper and better substitutes.

You do not have to buy German or French cars. There is now a good choice of models, prices and specifications available from a range of UK car factories. If the EU wants tariffs on cars I would recommend the factory owners increase their UK capacity, as we will be wanting more home produced vehicles.

A visit to one of England's vineyards taught me that England makes some good white wines. There are plenty of good Australian and Californian reds as well as English.

There are many great English cheese, so you don't need to buy French. There is such an abundance of choice. Our diary industry was held back and made smaller by EU policy, with a long period of restrictive quotas. It needs more domestic demand for higher value added products.

Our supermarkets do rely on a lot of continental fresh produce, but there are other possible sources at home and abroad outside the EU which would be more attractive if they go for the EU tariff option. The UK could remove tariffs on rest of the world food where they produce things we cannot produce here which would bring those prices down.

In a world of oversupply, with low rates of world inflation, being the customer has its advantages. All the time we remain in the EU we have to impose high tariff barriers on food from the rest of the world. Out of the EU we can cut or remove tariffs, and can bargain for a better deal for our exporters at the same time. The EU would be silly to make it dearer and more difficult for us to buy their products, when there is plenty of choice elsewhere.