

Exiting the EU – some factual background to where we now are

If nothing else is approved by Parliament we will leave the EU on 29 March 2019 with no Withdrawal Agreement or Future Partnership Agreement. If the government does wish to sign such Agreements it will need primary legislation to endorse them and to provide the large sums of money to pay for them . Those of you who want Brexit and are very critical of what has happened should study this carefully, as it shows a lot has been achieved to complete all the legal processes for exit next March. The present rows are about whether effective exit should be delayed and whether we should re-enter parts of the EU that otherwise we will simply leave next year. All the spin based on Project Fear Mark 2 gets in the way of a clear understanding of how we leave the EU, and what Parliament has so far decided.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

Referendum 23 June 2016 17.4 million vote to leave the EU, 16.1m vote to remain in EU

Told by government in a letter to all households that voters would decide and Parliament would carry out the decision.

16 March 2017 Royal assent to EU(Notification of Withdrawal) Act

Gained 3rd reading in Commons by 494 votes to 122

Given 3rd reading in Lords unopposed

This fulfils all international and EU law requirements to leave on 29 March 2019, with or without additional Agreements.

6 June 2017 UK General election. 83.3% vote for parties promising to implement Brexit

7.4% vote Lib Dem and 3% vote SNP pledging second referendum on terms of exit

EU Withdrawal Act royal assent 26 June 2018

Passed 3rd reading in Commons 324-295

Given 3rd reading in Lords unopposed

This means that from the date specified in the Act, 29 March 2019, the UK ceases to be a member of the EU and the jurisdiction of the EU and its Court ceases in the UK. All current EU law at that date becomes good UK law, subject to any future amendment or repeal the UK may wish to undertake.

Taxation (Cross border trade) Bill passes Commons July 2018

Amended to prevent UK levying customs for EU or other foreign country unless they levy customs for us on a reciprocal basis. Amended to require primary legislation before re entering EU customs union. Amended to prevent UK staying in EU VAT system. This is now in its Lords stages, but as it is a Tax/money Bill they cannot block the will of the Commons.

Currently in negotiation are

Draft Withdrawal Agreement containing a 21 month Transitional period, additional UK financial contributions after March 2019, reassurances to citizens living in each other's territory

A possible political Agreement about good intentions to negotiate an Association Agreement between UK and EU governing a future partnership. This could include a free trade agreement, a defence and security partnership, data sharing, criminal justice co-operation and much else. Thea UK insists on linkage between the two possible Agreements. Both sides say nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. Both sides need Parliamentary approval.

The so called Chequers compromise is the current UK offer to the EU over the future partnership. The EU has stated it cannot agree the idea of partial membership of the single market, nor the proposals on common customs and tariffs between UK and EU.

The EU has in the past implied that a Canada style free trade deal with fewer tariffs and more service provision than the EU Canada Agreement is on offer, but only for Great Britain. There remains a substantial disagreement between various parties on the issue of the Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland border. The UK refuses to split the treatment of Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK, which is important to the DUP members of the Coalition in particular.