

Getting out of the EU is not mainly about trade – which has been doing badly with the EU anyway

The Remain media seem to think EU membership was just about trading arrangements, and that you cannot trade successfully outside the EU. Both these assumptions are completely wrong.

Leave voters voted to take back control of our money, our borders and our laws. We want the government to set out the enhanced spending plans, the tax cuts we can afford, the better migration policy and the improved laws that being independent will bring. We are the optimists. We think the UK can be better making her own decisions. We want to abolish VAT on domestic fuel and green products, we want to rebuild our fishing industry, and we want a fair migration system which controls numbers without giving preferences to some countries over others.

Remain seem to think sacrificing any of these freedoms is just fine if they can help us recreate the current trading and customs arrangements we have with the EU. Why are they so keen on the high tariff barriers the EU makes us impose on non EU imports? Why so keen on having to give away much of our fishery to foreign vessels? Why so keen to value EU trade more than non EU trade?

I have been sent an extract from official figures to remind me that our trade with the rest of the world, largely conducted under WTO rules with no special Agreements or FTAs, has been growing far faster than trade to the EU. Since 1998 our exports of goods to the EU have grown at just 0.2% a year, whereas our goods export to non EU has grown sixteen times faster at 3.3%. Our services exports have also grown faster to non EU than to EU. Last year we ran an overall deficit of £72 billion with the EU, but a surplus of £42 bn with the rest of the world.

If this single market and customs union is such a great boon to us, how come our goods trade has scarcely grown with it for almost twenty years? And if trading under WTO rules is difficult, how come our non EU trade is bigger than our EU trade and growing much faster?

It isn't worth paying £39bn to stay in this customs union.