

Open letter to Mrs Merkel

Dear Mrs Merkel

I read that your visit to the UK is to improve relations between our two countries. You will find the UK willing to be a good friend and ally. You will also discover that many UK people feel the EU has behaved badly, petulantly and against its own interests over Northern Ireland, fishing, vaccines and other matters which it has decided to turn into disputes. All the time the EU does not grasp that we have taken back control and intend to make our own laws and decisions there will be pointless friction.

The EU's attempt to control and prevent trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland is particularly provocative given the acceptance by both sides to the Protocol that the integrity of the UK internal market was as important as the integrity of the EU single market. Our substantial trade between GB and NI is no threat to trade between NI and the EU, as it is properly controlled and regulated to be internal trade only. The continuing wish to treat UK fish as if it were still a common EU resource is also an unfortunate aggression. The permanent pressure to get the UK to conform with all EU rules and regulations is a silly attempt to thwart one of the aims of Brexit.

You will have noted that the UK has seen a sharp improvement in its balance of trade since we left, as we do not need to rely so heavily on imports as we came to do during our period in the EU. The UK will have more options both to make and grow more for ourselves and to source imports from outside the EU as we open better trade deals with non EU countries and regions. The UK has been much more the customer than the supplier in our trade with the EU, so we expect to be treated well to keep our custom. The EU's wish instead to treat us some naughty errant colony is a good way to hasten the search for substitutes for EU food and goods.

The EU is no longer able to control us through its Treaties and law codes, and we no longer answer to the European Court of Justice. Our two countries still have disagreements about the withdrawal details, where neither side can claim it is uniquely right in its own interpretation given the vagueness and contradictions in the texts. The truth is anything that requires enforcement and compliance in the EU is clearly under EU control, and anything needing it in the UK including Northern Ireland is under UK control. I trust you will understand the realities and wish to heal a bruised relationship. If Germany and the EU understand our intent to govern ourselves there is plenty of scope for trade, friendship and joint venture.

Yours sincerely

John Redwood