

New borders and migration policy for EU

The Home Secretary has announced that she plans legislation in the UK to ensure more people traffickers can be caught or prevented from exploiting people by taking money to help them break the law. She also has made clear that this legislation will also allow the removal of illegals who do not qualify for asylum in a timely way, after their case has been considered.

Meanwhile the EU is acknowledging that its migration policy “no longer works”. The Commission has set out how Member states reject 370,000 asylum claims a year, but only return one third of these people to the states they came from. It chronicles how there were 1.8 million illegal crossings of the EU border in 2015, falling to 142,000 last year. It proposes a changed law to replace the Dublin convention, which states that each asylum seeker should apply for asylum in the first member state they enter. This has widely been seen as unfair on Italy, Spain and Greece who receive the bulk of the illegal arrivals and the asylum seekers.

The new scheme they want will entail a common migration policy with a solidarity requirement that all Member states contribute to housing those who qualify to stay, and help secure the return of those who do not. “The new Solidarity mechanism will primarily focus on relocation or return sponsorship. Member states would supply all necessary support to the Member State under pressure to swiftly return those who have no right to stay, with the supporting Member State taking full responsibility if return is not carried out within a set period. Member states can concentrate on nationalities where they see a better chance of effecting returns.”

The EU has very long borders, with difficult policing problems. They also now have substantial areas that are fenced to try to close off land routes. They propose the appointment of a senior person as Return Co-ordinator and a “High Level Network for returns”. Frontex, their border force, is to be expanded to “a standing corps with a capacity of 10,000 staff ” which “remains essential”. All illegals seeking to enter will be “health checked, finger printed and registered on the Eurodac database.

It is interesting to see how the EU is now trying to exert control over illegal migrants, and reminds us it is a much more difficult problem for the EU with massive borders including land borders, than for the islands of the UK.

Poor car sales

The attack on diesel and petrol cars continues to work. Sales were down in September on last year and well down for 2020 so far thanks to the CV19 effects as well. Battery electric vehicle sales grew, but are still only 6.7% of the total reduced sales. Various types of hybrid are being bought, but are often driven as normal petrol or diesel cars.

Taking back control

There are two ways from here to take back control properly from the EU on 1 January. The first is to do so by an Agreement about our future relationship. This would not only include a Free Trade Area but would also end the residual jurisdiction of the ECJ, end the payments to the EU and end any further ability of the EU to tie us to their laws.

The second is to leave without an Agreement and pass a short confirming Act of Parliament removing the remaining powers of the EU. This would build on the essential assertion of Parliamentary sovereignty in Clause 38 of the Withdrawal Agreement Act, confirming the notwithstanding clause over all residual matters.

I assume given the view of the EU it will need to be the latter. Far from undermining our standing in the world such an Act would be seen as a sign of strength by the UK, clearly setting out our independence. As the Supreme Court and the Commons has confirmed, the UK Parliament can make these laws and lead our country in the way required by the referendum decision.

The blame game over the EU

The official UK government wants a deal. Some of the Ministers want to avoid the blame for break down of the talks. As a result the talks continue after we were promised we would be getting ready for a WTO exit. This is holding the UK back, and diverting Whitehall attention from the many wins we can achieve if we just leave.

It is silly to carry on talking just to try to avoid the blame for breakdown. If there is no deal after all the wasted time so far, both sides will blame the other. Most people will lay the blame on the side they oppose, whatever the alleged or actual news background to the final break. I and many

Brexiters have seen enough to know the EU has never negotiated in good faith. It has peppered its statements with making it clear the UK must be seen to lose from exit. It has failed to accept that the UK voted to be free of EU laws, budget demands and their Court. It cannot even accept we will run our own fishery. The EU has never agreed to implement the clear requirement of the EU's own Treaty to pursue friendly relations with a neighbour based around free trade, nor to implement that part of the Withdrawal Agreement and Political declaration.

I want us to leave on WTO terms. I want us to cut tariffs on imports from non EU countries where we have been made to pay high tariffs on food, but to impose these new lower tariffs on the EU. This will allow us to rebuild our market share of food and fish. If we do not have all the boats to catch as much fish as the EU currently catches in our waters, then let us rebuild our over fished seas with more fish stock whilst we expand our own fishing fleet.

During our time enmeshed in the nets of endless EU red tape we have lost large amounts of market share in food and some manufactures. Let us follow a policy aiming to rebuild our home position with laws, budgets and incentives which suit us.

The rule of 6

On Tuesday night Parliament will have the chance to debate and vote on the Rule of 6 and the related restrictions against larger gatherings.

The decision will be about the Coronavirus Restrictions (No 2) (England) Statutory Instrument.

As someone who wishes to see more moves to relax controls that damage business and prevent large sectors that need social contact from working, there is a good case for not supporting this measure. As someone who wishes to see the death rate down and agrees that too much social contact can spread the virus too far too fast I need to listen to those who say there is a case for trying these controls for a bit longer.

The rule of 6 is the government's latest attempt to create a simple universal rule that might provide some brake on the spread of the disease. It has not been going for long, so the government says it should be tried for longer. You can also argue that we have had controls in place for many months, but they have not proved able to keep the disease down in the way a near total lock down for most did in April. Some think the virus has a life of its own regardless of controls and see the fall from April as a coincidence. Others seek to find patterns in the numbers to prove controls do reduce the spread.

The Conservative party membership is shifting its view from a substantial majority behind lock downs and strong government action, to the largest group

now favouring the more relaxed Swedish approach to create a better balance for business and normal life. Polls of the wider public still favour tough action to limit social contacts. There is a lack of specific scientific data to show which of the various measures tried in the areas visited with extra controls have a beneficial impact. There is also a worrying delay in getting results in those special areas and in some cases no evidence that the controls are working. The 10pm curfew is the most dubious and contentious ban, but that is not up for a vote on Tuesday.

I am interested in your views as I make up my mind concerning Tuesday's vote, particularly if you are a constituent.