

# 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 dairy 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.

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## Further exchange with Education Minister

Yesterday I lobbied an Education Minister again about the proposed fair funding of schools and Wokingham's needs. I am also pressing for a suitable pledge in the Conservative Manifesto.

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## The BBC wants to change the news, not report it

Yesterday I was phoned to be asked onto the BBC Radio 4 Today programme this morning. They said they wanted me to answer questions about how the election would change the UK's ability to negotiate a good new relationship with the EU. I was happy to do so, and said I could make any time at their studio. It seemed like a good topic, and central to what the PM said about her reason for calling the election.

They then proceeded to ask me a series of questions all designed to get me to disagree with the UK negotiating position and Prime Minister. I explained that I supported the PM, agreed with her Brexit White Paper and stated aims, and suggested if all they wanted to do was to criticise her they should approach the Opposition parties. They continued to try to get me to disagree. They did not seem to have read the White Paper or the PM's speech on the topic, so I had to tell them what was in them and why I agreed with them.

I explained again that their thesis that the Leave supporting MPs were in disagreement with the PM and were "rebels" was simply untrue. We are not in disagreement with the PM and we have been strongly supporting the government's statements and legislation on Brexit. She said she would get back to me about the invitation to go on, with the details.

She did not of course bother to, as it was clear I was unwilling to feed their view of what the news should be.

I then found another Leave supporting Conservative MP had been given the same treatment, and he too had thought the BBC were trying to change the news rather than reporting the position. When I came to do a live interview on some other BBC programme I was faced with the same stupid thesis and had to explain on air how wrong their idea was.

I do not know who is feeding the BBC this nonsense, but it is frustrating that they do not accept the truth from those whose views they claim to be reporting, and do not bother to get back and openly say they do not want you

on because you won't say what they want you to say.

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## Make the money central to the election

The Prime Minister rightly said we need to take back control of our money.

One of the important things the government can do in this election is to say Goodbye to the austerity economics of the EU budget rules and Mr Osborne's tenure. One of the pleasures of Brexit, a positive for voters of all persuasions, will be the ability to spend the net contributions we currently send to Brussels. Once we are out we can offer tax cuts and more spending with no rise in borrowing. Spending the money at home will help our economy and put more of our people to work here, instead of having to send the money abroad and run a larger balance of payments deficit.

We could remove VAT on domestic fuel, tampons and green products. We could spend more on the NHS, training more UK people as nurses and doctors. We could spend more in our schools and do more to promote better roads and public transport.

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## June 8th General Election

The pound has risen against both the dollar and the Euro on news that Mrs May is seeking a new mandate to implement Brexit. The cost of government borrowing has also fallen, with bond prices rising.

She tells us "Britain is leaving the EU and there can be no turning back....The country is coming together but Westminster is not". She wants a mandate given the way the Opposition parties are behaving over the Brexit negotiations.

I look forward to the election, and assume Labour will also be running on a platform of wanting to make a success of Brexit.