

Technology at the border

I cannot believe that Remain and their media friends are still going on about how goods move across borders. The UK government last year set out how technology can ensure smooth passage of goods. Now we are being told this would all take time to develop and set up. I have good news for them. It is all old hat, and is up and running for non EU trade already. Firms running just in time supply chains for components into the UK have no problems with components entering from outside the EU at the moment, despite the alleged tariff and non tariff barriers to trade that exist for non EU trade today. If all our trade becomes non EU trade after March, what is the problem? We know how to handle it.

I have more good news for firms worried about this. Inbound goods for their factories in the UK have to clear UK customs, not EU customs to enter the UK. There is no need and no plan I know of to impose new barriers at our borders when we leave the EU that will detain lorries and cause unacceptable delays. It is in our own hands.

Let me try again, as one who has imported and exported from a UK industrial base. There are already electronic manifests for each consignment, allowing fast passage across a border as the authorities know what is in the truck or container. There is a trusted trader scheme allowing electronic filing to replace manual document inspection. Any VAT, Excise or tariff due can be deducted electronically away from the frontier to settle the bills. This also happens today for our EU trade, as our frontier with the rest of the EU is already a VAT, Excise and currency border.

The so called Irish border problem is a put up job by the EU trying to make life difficult. The government should tell them we will use current methods to deal with border issues after we have left. These include today anti smuggling police and revenue activities on both sides of the Irish border, and police co-operation over criminals seeking to move from one country to another. If the EU continues to make heavy weather of this the government should say we will not be paying them any extra money after March 2019 when we leave.