

The Prime Minister and Brexit

There can be little doubt that Boris Johnson became Leader of the Conservative party and went on to win a substantial General election victory to get Brexit done. He replaced Theresa May whose civil servants negotiated the UK into a very weak position creating a Brexit that looked like membership without the seat around the table. She left office owing to the Parliamentary pressures. The Opposition worked with Remain forces inside government to create a Brexit in name only leading to enough Conservative MPs wanting her to resign to uphold the result of the referendum.

Two years on from his victory at the polls, and one year on from getting the UK out of the EU formally, the Brexit voting public wants him to use the freedoms the UK has now regained to make us a more prosperous, independent, well respected country with global reach and more domestic activity. Many people are pleased the UK did use its freedom to stay out of the EU vaccine policy, leading to the early development and deployment of a successful UK vaccine. We want more examples of how we can do better for ourselves and the wider world by nurturing talent and trusting policy makers and inventors at home.

My advice to the Prime Minister is to rebuild lost voting support by enjoying some Brexit wins. This should begin with energy policy. We should detach from more and more dependence on energy short Europe, linking our fortunes to a continent that relies on Russian gas and too many windfarms. The UK needs to extract more of our own gas and oil pending the investment in reliable renewable power, perhaps through pump storage and hydro, perhaps through green hydrogen from windfarms when they are working.

It should continue with banning large supertrawlers from the continent and rebuilding a UK fishing industry with proper regard for our fish stocks. It should include growing more of our own food with suitable support for farmers. It should entail remodelling VAT, taking it off green products and energy. He needs urgently to reassert control, unilaterally if necessary, over GB/NI trade.

He will lose his core supporters and more of his Brexit voters if he does not return to this unfinished agenda.