

The UK leaving the EU is no divorce and we certainly do not have to pay alimony

One of the more absurd analogies that pass for debate in the EU is that the EU and the UK need a divorce settlement. For a body which loves Treaties and lawyers it is bizarre. The Treaty makes no provision to require a departing state to pay an extra one off payment, nor does it seek or have any power over former states to carry on paying contributions. There is no need for lengthy negotiations on this obvious point. The answer to the request for a large one off financial contribution is No.

To make this a more interesting and longer article, I will however extend the divorce metaphor that so many like. Were this a divorce, it is between two high earning partners. The domineering husband, the EU, earns six times as much as his UK wife. He lives in a large suburban family home in Berlin, with a smart modern flat in Brussels. His wife has a country cottage in Wiltshire where she has retreated to as whenever they meet she just gets shouted at and told what to do. He has a large Mercedes. She drives a modern Mini.

Fortunately there are no children from the marriage. She is generously offering a clean break settlement to the husband to speed things up and to get on with her life, free of his endless demands for cash and obedience. It's none of her business that he has run up huge bills with his Greek affairs, as she did not agree to any of those and made clear her wish to keep out of it all at the time.

As the husband wishes to undertake the divorce in a foreign court and she intends to live under UK law it is difficult to see how the husband thinks he can carry on with his demands once his foreign jurisdiction no longer applies.