

There will be no economic blockade of the UK when we leave the EU

Those who most want us to stay in the EU think the EU is a dreadful organisation. They wrongly say the continent will mount an economic blockade of the UK, stopping us importing medicines and food, to starve us back into membership.

There are many reasons why they cannot do this. It would mean breaking international contracts to supply. It would mean overturning World Trade rules. It would mean contradicting the EU Treaties which require the EU to have friendly relations with neighbouring states and to promote free trade with them. It would mean the EU acquiring new powers to prevent private companies and individuals doing business with UK customers and suppliers.

Let's take the case of food imports. Food coming through a UK port will be checked and charged customs by UK authorities. They can do so away from the border, and can ensure smooth passage through our ports. Why would they want to suddenly hold up goods that we are importing just fine today through those same ports the day after we leave? Why wouldn't they levy customs as they levy VAT and Excise today, electronically.

Or let's take the case of medicines. A continental drug supplier will have the same contract to supply the same drugs on March 30 2019 as on March 29th 2019. The NHS has tested and approved the drugs for us. The company has factory based test facilities with inspection systems that satisfy the NHS today. They will still satisfy the NHS on March 30th 2019.

So why would the supplying company wish to withhold supplies and face a legal challenge from the NHS? Why would a continental port wish to hold up the export of goods for further checks, when these goods have all been produced to EU standards and checked in situ?

Some say the port of Calais will delay our exports going to the continent, demanding more checks at the frontier. If they do then the ports of Rotterdam, Antwerp, Zeebrugge, Ostend and Amsterdam would love to take the business and will not wish to hold them up. Many of the lorries going back to Calais are continental lorries running empty and wanting to pick up a new revenue earning load as soon as possible. Why would the continental port wish to get in their way?

The EU has many powers, but it does not have the power to impose an economic blockade on a friendly European state that happens not to be a member of the EU. The private companies involved all want to keep the business.