

Two views of Brexit

Brexit continues to dominate the media because there remain two different views of how to implement it.

There are those in the civil service who understand the wish of the majority to leave. They realise we voted to take back control of our money, our borders, our law making and our international relations, especially on trade. They are working diligently on what can come as soon as we leave. They are planning a new fishing policy, a new agricultural policy, new trade deals with non EU states, and much else. I am pleased they are and look forward to the results of their detailed labours for Ministers.

There are others who seem to think after Brexit we need to mirror all the arrangements and controls we had when in the EU. They have been busily mapping every nook and cranny of EU involvement and interference in our government and daily lives. They present each intervention or control as a problem, or as something we have to negotiate to continue it or to replicate it. They also seem to think the UK is in a weak position because in their view it needs to keep so much, so they recommend making many concessions to the EU negotiating position in order to cling on to something similar to what we have.

There is an irony here. The Remain advocates who encourage this type of thinking are often the same people who told us before the referendum that the EU did not have much power over us, that we remained a sovereign state even within the EU, and that Eurosceptics exaggerated when we claimed the EU now does control a lot of our lives. The vote has made a difference to their view on all this.

The truth is the EU does currently control a lot of matters which a self governing country controls for itself. We have agreed between remain and Leave advocates following the result that we should aim to take back control of our law making on departure, but to ensure continuity we will replicate in UK law all the features of EU law. Parliament will then at its leisure review, amend or repeal what we do not need or can improve.

This model should not be diluted by rushing to agree permanent extensions of EU law, or by seeking to newly bind us into decisions of the ECJ or into regulatory bodies we do not control. We can only take back control of our laws, our money and our borders if we leave with no further commitments to EU jurisdiction. We also need to remind the EU there is no legal requirement to pay a so called divorce bill, and I still want us to spend our money on our own priorities from the day we leave the EU. The government still states its policy as taking back control of our laws, our borders and our money. That is all a good idea. Let's set the deadline as 29 March 2019 and work to it. There is still enough time to ensure all works well under the WTO option if the EU continues to refuse a sensible discussion of a Free Trade deal.