

Sharing data and security information

I find it strange that three Heads of Security Agencies had to speak out for fear that Brexit would damage exchanges of information between France, Germany and the UK after Brexit. Why should it? They would have to want to change their current procedures, or their governments would have to stop instructing them to make sensible exchange.

It is already the case that if the UK gets intelligence about a threat to lives in France it will tell the French authorities and vice versa. There are data sharing agreements, based on what we can usually share with due consideration of how each Intelligence service protects its own sources. The UK belongs to the Five Eyes grouping of the USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada where trust is even stronger and the sharing has gone further, and that will clearly continue after Brexit.

This seems to me to be another non problem, unless the EU side wants to make it a problem. As we have high quality and extensive intelligence it is unlikely they will want to reduce the flow of information, so they can just agree to carry on. The information share is usually bilateral anyway. Issues in the UK should be adjudicated by our court, and issues on the continent by their court.

An Extradition Agreement might be a better route for bringing suspects to trial in another country rather than trying to continue with the Arrest Warrant, where ECJ jurisdiction would be a problem.

Wikipedia

Last week I was asked some questions at a meeting based on wildly inaccurate information about myself and my views. I was told the basis for the questions came from Wikipedia so I looked up my entry.

I understand it is not the done thing to correct your own entry, so instead for greater accuracy I will record here where the entry is factually inaccurate, and also where it is particularly misleading.

Factual errors

I am not currently the co chairman of the Conservative Party Policy Review on Competitiveness. That job ended in 2010.

I do not act as the Leave means Leave pressure group spokesman

I am not Corporate Affairs Adviser at Concentric PLC

I have not been non executive chairman of Mabey Securities this decade

I completed and received a D Phil – not a PHD – at All Souls College, Oxford,

not at St Anthony's

I was elected to a fellowship by examination at All Souls in 1972 which led on later to a Distinguished fellowship.

I did not write an investment column "recommending investors pull their money out of the UK"

Misleading impressions

I have never spoken or written against civil partnerships and gay marriage and am not proposing any change to current laws. I regard the debate about capital punishment as being over and do not support its reintroduction. I never spoke or wrote in its favour.

[The benefits of Brexit](#)

Next Tuesday I have been invited to give a lecture in the Speaker's House at Westminster on the opportunities Brexit affords the UK. I have plenty of ideas of what can be better, and believe the UK can both be freer and more prosperous once we are out of the EU. That was why I campaigned and voted for just such an outcome. I will share more of the details with you on this site next week.

My vision will include discussing how to spend all the money we save from our contributions, which will boost both our growth rate and our balance of payments. It will look at opportunities to remove taxes we do not agree with but have to impose as part of our membership. It will examine the scope for a fishing and farming policy which is better for our farmers and fishermen, and will cut our dependence on imports. It will consider what a new migration and borders policy ought to look like, and set out how we can pursue a free trade agenda that will be good for jobs in the UK. There is a longer list than this, but these are some of the highlights.

I would be interested to hear from readers what they think we can do after Brexit that will improve our lives and government, given the freedoms we will gain to vary our laws and spend our own money. We have had months and months of being told by a small group of contributors here – and another small group of contributors to the national media – what they think the downsides will be. Most of these will prove as incorrect as the forecast of a recession immediately after the referendum vote.

The IMF would not win an election in the UK

The IMF was one of several international bodies and opinion formers who wanted the UK to stay in the EU. They misjudged that call, misunderstanding UK voters. Now they have issued an update report telling us that we have to take strong policy action to succeed. Their remedy is to abolish the regular increases in the state retirement pension which they think is too generous, and to put through a series of tax increases. They want to hike VAT on heating fuel from 5% to 20%, and to put up taxes on the self employed.

What a bizarre and negative mix. Why do they recommend this? Because they say our state debt to GDP is too high, yet it is very similar to the USA and below the levels in Japan, France, Austria, Italy and some other advanced countries. They fail to recognise that the state has bought in a substantial part of the debt they claim to be worried about.

It is difficult to see how taxing the self employed more would help innovation and economic flexibility. It would hit one of the flourishing areas of UK growth. Nor is it easy to see why pushing more people on low incomes into fuel poverty through a massive tax hike on domestic fuel would be a good idea. Nor does removing spending power from pensioners help promote a faster growing economy. This ticket would never win a UK election, and proves again UK voters are more sensible than the IMF.

The IMF does not even seem to be good at forecasting the UK economy. They were too gloomy about the likely short term impact of the vote. They now make much of the slightly slower rate of growth in 2017 compared to 2016, and blame Brexit. If they analysed the figures better they would see growth speeded up a bit after the Brexit vote, and started to slow in 2017 thanks to action to slow the economy taken by their friends at the Bank of England! The Bank has put up rates, sought to tighten car loans and consumer credit, stopped QE and is now withdrawing special lines of credit to the commercial banks. At the same time the European Central Bank has kept interest rates at zero, has printed a lot more money and has not restrained bank credit.

So could we have a bit more analysis and a bit less policy prescription? Oh, and they do condemn UK educational standards at the same time. No mention of the world class universities in the global top ten.

That Boris speech

We know that the Foreign Secretary's speech today was checked and approved by 10 Downing Street, and is a statement of government policy.

It is clear from the text that it remains government policy that we will leave the EU, the Customs Union and the single market in accordance with the Article 50 letter and Act, and the EU Withdrawal Bill.

It is also clear from the text that the UK will regain control of its laws and regulations, and will take the powers necessary to amend and improve the law codes once out as we see fit.

This should come as no surprise to all those who have followed the votes in the Commons on the Bill or who have read the PM's two speeches on this topic. It will nonetheless come as a surprise to those who have been writing that the government is about to reinvent the or a customs union, forego an independent trade policy, and accept the need to follow all new EU laws.

The speech does not offer us any guidance on whether we need and will accept a so called Transition period, or on whether we will agree to a substantial payment to the EU on departure. I assume the speech is silent on these matters because nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, and much has not even been discussed so far. I still see no need for a transition or for payments all the time nothing good is offered that we will transit to.