

Why Ministers struggle to run government

The civil service has been used over many years to running the U.K. as a subject state of the European Union. It has given them a growing and activist agenda of legislation covering an ever widening range of areas. The civil service busied Ministers with trying to negotiate minor changes to the EU wishes. Parliament has been told to legislate a vast amount of derived law, with the civil service drafting complex and long versions of the initiating Directives and telling Ministers that was necessary to avoid infraction proceedings against the U.K. in the European Court. Much of it went through as long and complex unamendable secondary legislation under the authority of the European Communities Act.

The Treasury ran economic policy on the EU austerity model. They dictated tax and spend policy from the Maastricht debt and deficit controls. The EU's extensive net zero policy overarched energy, industrial and environment policy. Governments usually went along with these extensive directives. They either adopted the aims as their own or denied anything significant was happening.

Now we are out there is clear evidence that many civil servants still seek to keep Ministers and government aligned with EU policy. There is a reluctance or inability to grasp the opportunity Brexit offers. Ministers need to set new aims and insist on repeals and amendments to the EU ways. The U.K. needs to be far more flexible and innovative. The civil service has been disappointing in implementing Ministerial wishes to resolve the lop sided and unfair EU interpretation of the Northern Ireland Protocol, and the policy to end illegal cross Channel migration as a couple of examples. We need a new Union of purpose between civil servants and Ministers to shape an independent policy.