

THE TRUTH ABOUT BREXIT

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Here's the truth about Brexit, the "punishment" that some people claim the EU is trying to inflict on the UK, and the real consequences of "no deal"...

The EU isn't punishing the UK for Brexit. We are punishing ourselves. Losing all the benefits of EU membership IS punishment. Just like no longer being able to use the fitness equipment or the weights would be the punishment for quitting the local gym.

You might well put on weight because you cancelled your gym membership. But you wouldn't turn around and say "Hey, the gym's punishing me for leaving by making me fat!" That's the consequence of losing your gym membership, not the fault of the gym.

Identical logic applies to the EU. The EU is not trying to be vindictive, or to teach us a lesson. It is merely applying the rules of Article 50.

Article 50 consists of a simple set of rules that explains exactly what happens when a country decides to leave the EU. Note that the UK was fully involved in agreeing Article 50, and that a Brit (Lord Kerr) drafted it! Article 50 was written in 2009, 7 years *before* we had the referendum. So successive governments have known exactly what leaving under Article 50 would entail.

The third rule of Article 50 states that all EU treaties *automatically* cease to apply to a country exactly 2 years after they invoke Article 50. In the UK's case, that's March 29, 2019 (at 11pm). We lose all treaty benefits by default ("no deal") unless a deal is in place.

If you're finding it difficult to visualise the Article 50 legal process, imagine a conveyor belt with a pool full of sharks at the end. WE chose to get on the belt, totally unprepared. It *will* dump us in the sharks on 29 March 2019 at 11pm, unless we reach a deal.

Again, none of this is "punishment", it's just how Article 50 works. Remember, Theresa May knew this *before* she invoked Article 50 to begin the process of separating the UK from the EU. Remember too that we are the ones who chose to leave, it's not the EU sending us away.

At the moment, we enjoy the benefits of over 750 treaties as EU members. Many of them cover free trade with the EU and 40+ non-EU countries. But they also address a huge range of other issues, from air worthiness to drivers licenses, UK & EU citizen rights, food safety, etc.

The EU have proposed many different templates for our future relationship. We rejected them all. Our attitude is like going into Thorntons, and demanding that they rip open all their selection boxes of chocolates so that we can pick our absolute favourites.

If we fail to agree a deal, all those treaties will end, poof, just like that. In the blink of an eye, at 11pm on 29 March 2019, we will go from 750+ treaties to none. Life in the UK will change instantly as a consequence of losing all the benefits of those treaties.

We will suddenly have nobody we can trade freely with, without tariffs. Planes may lose the legal right to fly. You may need an international driver's license to drive on the Continent, and a visa too. Hundreds of other aspects of day-to-day life will be impacted.

Of course, each of those 750+ treaties can be replaced by a new agreement. But every one of those new agreements will have to be negotiated one-by-one. Some with the EU, some with individual countries both inside and outside the EU. That's a staggering amount of work!

So when you hear somebody saying "We'll be fine with no deal" they're really saying "don't worry, we'll manage to sort out side arrangements for over 750 treaties with each of 27 EU countries, and dozens more countries around the world, all before 11pm on 29 March 2019."

How believable does that sound? Can a Government that has not even managed to agree on a Brexit strategy, over 2 years after the referendum, magically conduct hundreds of *successful* side-negotiations in the next six months? That's why "no deal" is so bad. That's why people sound panicked.

So far, we've only talked about the consequences to the UK. But of course there's also the NI border, Gibraltar, the fate of UK citizens in the EU & EU citizens in the UK, and many other issues. Under "no deal", all these become unknown unknowns.

The only real "Project Fear" is the terror those who understand how the Article 50 process works feel at the prospect of failing to reach a deal before the clock ticks down to 11pm on 29 March 2019. And that's the truth.

P.S. Some people imagine that "no deal" means the status quo. We have a shared responsibility to correct them. No deal is as far from the status quo as it's possible to be. No deal = no withdrawal agreement = no transition period. Over the cliff edge we go on March 29 2019.

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

The Article 50 treaty:

<http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-European-union-and-comments/title-6-final-provisions/137-article-50.html>

The 750+ treaties we benefit from as EU members:

<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Dn2ws66WsAAch9B.jpg>

<https://t.co/E4BCpJdPOC>

Future templates for the UK-EU relationship (presented by the EU):

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/slide_presented_by_barnier_at_euco_15-12-2017.pdf)

[political/files/slide_presented_by_barnier_at_euco_15-12-2017.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/slide_presented_by_barnier_at_euco_15-12-2017.pdf)

Map of free and liberalised trade deals benefitting EU members:

<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Dn9OSYqWsAA8nh0.jpg>