

## Only with a clean Brexit will we be able to reap the benefits of leaving the European Union

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Written by

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The national debt stands at nearly £1.8 trillion, and rising fast; based on the [latest ONS figures](#) it grew at a staggering £2,158 per second between March 2016 and March 2017. And it will continue to grow every moment we continue to run a deficit and borrow money. Austerity has not worked – and we never really had it anyway; to try and continue down the road of borrowing our way out of debt will only make the British people suffer more and longer. The best way to get out of any financial difficulty is of course to cut waste and inefficiency, but we must also focus on the best ways to generate more wealth; and to be bound to the costly and restricting European Union – and denied the ability to strike our own trade deals – would totally undermine our capability to do so.

It's not rocket science. Only by realising our true potential to trade under our own steam on the global stage can we really start conquering this debt mountain. Greater exports will mean more money comes into the UK economy. This spreads out across all businesses. The profits made, the wages paid, the facilities and services used all generate a higher tax take. Higher tax revenues will turn our internal deficit into a surplus and, along with around £9 billion saved by not giving it to the EU, we can therefore increase spending on essential services and start to pay off the eye-watering debts.

Trade agreements with countries outside the EU will inevitably reduce costs in many areas, making people feel better off. Currently many businesses find it more cost-effective to open another tin of cheap labour rather than invest in improved productivity. The right industrial strategy will help us lift our productivity, which in turn will enable employers to have the

funds to increase people's training and then remuneration. This will help reduce the deficit, turn it into a surplus and then we can get to work on the national debt.

The only way to do this is through a clean Brexit – not a 'soft' Brexit' or a 'hard' Brexit as our media, politicians and expert commentators keep referring to. Clean Brexit means a future outside the Single Market, the Customs Union and jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). Be under no illusion: 'soft' Brexit is simply code for staying in the EU. Rather than sabotage our chances of success, politicians of every hue should be backing our negotiators.

Under damaging EU directives enforced by the ECJ, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face the same burden of regulations as multi-nationals and big companies which employ thousands of people – and which can afford the staff to deal with the never ending burden of red tape. Indeed, these large multi-nationals revel in regulation as it keeps the competition out. Yet SMEs have to shoulder the same loads with nowhere near as many people to share the weight. It is incredibly punitive, counter-productive and has hindered investment, growth and profitability for the past 40 years. SMEs are the engine room of the UK economy. Combined, we create over 60% of employment.

Successive governments have signed up to one European treaty after another over the past 40 years. They've tossed aside our sovereignty like giving away the crown jewels piece by piece. Only by regaining our sovereignty and power to make our own laws can we win the great prize that is there to be won.

The Labour Party – supposedly the great party of the working class – has shown its true colours and betrayed every ordinary man and woman on our streets. There are a few wonderful exceptions, but the party's EU policy is damaging the country's position endlessly. Strange to think that Jeremy Corbyn was all for leaving the EU until elected leader, and then damaging the country by going back on his word. His party has bowed to the EU bureaucrats for many years while jobs have disappeared overseas and levels of pay and productivity have been tied down in excessive EU red tape. Labour voters are also victims: wages lowered, schools overfull, GP surgeries and hospitals overcrowded, roads gridlocked: all these things hurt the working man and woman most.

In Brexit, the Labour Party is continuing to place political expediency and its own self-interest above the nation – to disguise its own divisions, incompetence and duplicity in wanting to keep the UK in the EU in all but name only. Its shadow cabinet demands more clarity from the Government while it has flip-flopped over its own position like one of the MPs flipping their taxpayer-funded accommodation before the expenses scandal broke. Its leaders aren't even sure whether they want to stay in the Customs Union or Single Market after we've left the EU. In July 2017 Jeremy Corbyn said the party was against membership

of the EU Single Market but then backtracked after an internal outcry.

We've since heard mutterings about a 'new single market relationship' with Brussels to secure trade benefits. Remaining in the Single Market would not so much as be sneaking back into the EU through the back gate as kicking in the front door with a bottle of champagne in hand to re-join the party. Maybe another Labour MP is eyeing up their future employment prospects as an EU Commissioner, Envoy or President with all the financial benefits lavished by EU taxpayers. Staying in the Single Market and Customs Union would mean remaining under the rule of the ECJ, unable to sign our own trade deals and forced to continue paying billions to Brussels every year.

The Labour Party even suggests paying Brussels to guarantee Britain access to the EU Single Market after March 2019. What nonsense! Just look at the enormous trading deficit which has never generated a surplus in goods since we joined the bloc. If anyone should be paying for market access, it should be the EU paying us. In effect, by remaining committed to the Single Market in this way, we would be paying Brussels for the right to buy their goods!

Does that sounds like a fair deal?

Maybe the Labour Party has its sights on its own prize – the next general election. Sabotaging Brexit negotiations and exploiting any disunity within the Conservative Party will not only jeopardise any hope of a clean Brexit, it would also shorten the odds of an election in the short-term. The Labour Party is even holding its own talks with Brussels in case the government does fall – which can only pull the rug from under our negotiators even further, to the detriment of the whole nation.

While previous Conservative governments have also traded away our sovereignty, it is encouraging to hear Theresa May talk about walking away from the EU without a deal – and being prepared for such a scenario. This is something I have been calling for since the referendum: to go into any negotiation you have to be prepared to walk away. Not to do so would show immense weakness and embolden the other side.

Meanwhile the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, is seemingly undermining our negotiating position. To say that he does not want to spend taxpayers' money now on proper preparation for a no-deal scenario is at best stupid, and at worst a clear signal to the EU that they can continue to drive a hard bargain. But negotiations are not so much about politics as business – we're talking about money and future trading terms. It's about having a cold, hard business head and behaving in a businesslike manner.

We will never have a hope in negotiations if we look weak. Our negotiations need to take a hard line or they will be run around the mulberry bush for ever; and we may end up in a never-ending transition period, which would be disastrous for the British economy and the

British people, and a betrayal of all we voted for. We should not barter anything away to suffer more years of huge trade deficits, crippling regulation, stifling of our rights to make trade deals.

I warned immediately after last year's referendum that we must be ready for a no deal situation. Finally the Prime Minister has confirmed that we can be an 'independent trading nation' immediately if talks fail. If this happens, it will be the EU that misses out. We have everything to gain. Are you listening Mr Hammond?

I'm fully behind Mrs May, the Government and our negotiators in their attempts to get the best deal we can, but we must be ready with arrangements and contingency plans in place, in case we leave without one. We can manage and will survive and prosper without one.

We must instead develop a coherent economic plan, industrial strategy aimed at supporting British manufacturing and some serious investment. Businesses need to be encouraged to invest in new technology which will boost productivity, increase wages and up the tax take, cut the deficit and help reduce the national debt.

Mrs May has said that the ball is in the EU's court. They are on a slippery surface and have no real weapons to fire at us. We must volley their attacks. We must take control; drive in the direction we want; and join the rest of the expanding real world. The world is open to trade. Big economies will welcome us back. Developing countries need our trade, not our aid. Great good can flow from this, not just to us but to our many friends and partners worldwide.