

The European Union Perspective and EFTA*

[With thanks to the unknown credible author who wrote this good article on EFTA* membership for the UK.Ed.]

It seems to me that this blog and other commentators have looked at Brexit entirely from a United Kingdom perspective. Take a quick look at this from the perspective of the remaining members of the European Union - the EU27.

Let us look at Southern Ireland. It has a great deal of traffic plying from Dublin to Liverpool and Dublin to Holyhead. This week there were two items of interest with regard to Dublin port.

The first is that the Irish State has started dredging Dublin Bay (<https://afloat.ie/port-news/dublin-port/item/37526-dredging-in-dublin-port-begins-with-material-dumped-in-dublin-bay>) and the second is the introduction of the world's "largest Ro-Ro Ferry" (<https://afloat.ie/port-news/dublin-port/item/37536-world-s-largest-ro-ro-ferry-to-be-introduced-on-dublin-routes-linking-mainland-europe>) which will:

Make a maiden call this week to Dublin Port from Zeebrugge and is to be followed with an introduction on the Rotterdam route

The obvious reason for doing this is that Ireland's goods and animal exports can avoid the island of Great Britain and ply from Dublin Port to Belgium (Zeebrugge) and Holland (Rotterdam). If the French berthing points are deep enough, then expect to see direct routes from Dublin to France. [This route would avoid all UK border issues. Ed]

This will directly affect the ports of Holyhead and Liverpool. It would seem unlikely that unemployment would not be caused in Holyhead by such action. It is surprising that the Welsh Assembly and its leader Carwyn Jones have together not picked this up.

Border Inspection Posts or Points (BIP); - there are three in Southern Ireland: Dublin Port, Dublin Airport and Shannon Airport. For the purposes of this blog, in France there is Brest, Dunkirk and Le Havre. In Belgium there is Ostende and Zeebrugge. In Holland there is Rotterdam. (https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/vet-border-control/bip-contacts_en)

Note that Calais is not a BIP and neither is Dover.

Dunkirk has recently been extended and can cope with 5000 consignments a year. This is nowhere near enough for the volume of traffic that will hit it in the event of a No Deal World Trade Organisation (WTO) only Brexit.

Last time I travelled with Eurotunnel there was a plaque on the side of the train that said: "Via the Channel Tunnel. Each year, Eurotunnel carries 1,600,000 trucks to and from the UK with a total trade of £91 billion"

Don't forget that the European Union is not leaving the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is leaving the European Union.

Why should Ireland, France, Belgium or Holland expand their Border Inspection Posts to ameliorate the fact the United Kingdom is leaving the European Union? Why should any of these four countries employ more border force personnel or BIP personnel or Veterinary Surgeons because we are leaving? If you were a member of the Government of any of these states wouldn't you say?

"Look, you are leaving and need more BIP capacity; you are going to have to pay for it and their staff, salary and pensions."

I know I would be tempted to do so if I were them. {If 60% of trade was with the UK, then the question should not be asked and the necessary investment would require to be made. Ed.}

Returning to Ireland, there is the vexed question of the Irish Border. Whilst the Island of Ireland is not united the Irish Border CANNOT be ignored. It is 300 miles long. It undulates and

crosses farms leaving some fields in the North and some in the South. The border posts have gone. I saw a tweet where it was stated that one post was now a boxing gym.

The point being that the Irish border is the only land border between the United Kingdom and the European Union. If Mrs May is true to her word, Antrim will not be in the European Single Market whilst Dublin will be. To ensure the integrity of the single market, the border will have to be enforced. {I.e. Not a security Border, and so contrary to the Good Friday Agreement, but certainly a goods transfer crossing border with inspections and electronic gadgetries.}

In terms of scale, 91,000 Irish companies trade with the UK. After Brexit, their customs declarations will create an eight-fold increase in paperwork volume. There will be special permits, extra investment, more paperwork and potential delays. Ports and airports will need extra infrastructure, such as temporary storage facilities for customs clearance. The Revenue itself will need a big increase in staffing levels. (<http://www.eureferendum.com/blogview.aspx?blogno=86630>)

The European Union has also got its own agenda to consider. Under the Treaty of Rome it is: "DETERMINED to establish the foundations of an ever closer union among the European peoples"

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_establishing_the_European_Economic_Community and that is what it is intending to do. There has been in the press discussion of a new treaty amongst the Euro States and amongst the wider (European) Union having a single Finance Minister and diluting still further national states veto and increasing the use of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV). There is even discussion of a European Union Army. Why wouldn't they? [It is in the course of formation and the UK aspect in PESCO must be resisted. Ed.]

The European Union is determined to retain the integrity of the European Single Market of which it is a part with Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein and it will not allow the United Kingdom to become an ad hoc member whilst not following the rules of that market. {These include CONFORMITY ISSUES AND SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATES. Please see the article in corcordanceout.eu on The Irish Border and Race Horses. Ed.}

There are those who say that the United Kingdom complies with all the rules now so it will continue to do that after it leaves. That's the point though. The United Kingdom is leaving.

The United Kingdom leaves and the European Regulatory Regime ceases when we leave because we are not a member so AFTER we leave the European Union can only ensure we obey the Regulatory Regime (the rules) of the market if we do the administration i.e. the paperwork. {But who will trust the UK and why should they? Ed.}

No Deal means a WTO {Tariffs only in issue not Standards. Ed.} Regimes as some politicians have said. If the United Kingdom has Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) or Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA's) or Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) that is NOT a WTO only regime. That's a deal or deals.

After the United Kingdom leaves under a No Deal WTO only regime it will have to allow imports of goods which it would not have allowed if it were in the European Single Market and so the European Union will want to ensure that its market is not undermined by such goods entering the market.

I do not think this is unreasonable. I am a leave voter remember. I just think that's logical. There will be barriers to Trade.

If we leave under a No Deal WTO only regime then access to databases and interfaces will cease. United Kingdom driving licences will no longer be recognised. This will impact on all who drive on the continent on holiday or on business.

All this because the Theresa May {and David Davies. Ed.} has insisted that the United Kingdom must leave the European Single Market.

As Faisal Islam tweeted: "... the need for this call by the PM illustrates that being in the Single Market is not the same as being in the EU. The United Kingdom should apply for EFTA*

membership. Many of the above issues would be ameliorated if we did. We would stay in the European Single Market for a start. Iceland wants us to join. Norway wants us to join, the President of the EFTA court wants us to join, Michel Barnier has publicly suggested it. The European Union has even said that we can invoke Article 112 of the EEA Treaty if we do. Let's do it.

No Deal is NOT a credible option {Let the UK re-join EFTA* as a stepping stone. Ed.}

*Ed: - There are excellent arguments along these lines in FLEXCIT by Dr R North. Please open the link to EUReferendum.com. The CIB are in favour. Both these sites are in favour as a means to EXIT the EU, but using EFTA as a stepping stone only. EFTA would not be the final destination. EFTA would avoid the vassal state horror of the PM's transition. Immediately on 29//3/2019 if the UK moved straight into EFTA then the following would happen: -

1 There would be no ECJ but there would be the EFTA court...quite different.

2 There would be no payment of £40 Billion. (Norway pays voluntarily monies to assist backward EU Eastern States but these are trade beneficial to Norway and are negotiated and Norway has control.

3 No 100% obedience to EU Regulations and Directives, but about 20% only as they apply to trade.

4 UK Fisheries would be free of the CPF and UK territorial waters under International Laws up to 200 miles, subject to Median lines, would apply. [Existing rights would fall away in the same way those holders of US\$ premium of 100% lost that money overnight under Maggie.]

5 UK could negotiate all trade deals worldwide.

6 No EU Customs Union memberships for EFTA members [despite the Brexit Committee Chairman confirming the opposite after 2.5 years of Brexit Mania! about that on radio 4 at 0800 on the 4/4/2018: Mr Hillary Benn. In the same interview he was wrong also about items 2, 3 above.]