

50 simple chunks of Brexit reality to help MPs

Big picture

1. Proceeding with Brexit will not heal divisions in UK
2. There is no problem that being poorer helps.
3. All versions of Brexit will leave the UK poorer.
4. EU Member States are unlikely to allow UK to re-join for many years, possibly decades
5. MPs should not vote for any deal they believe to be bad for the country
6. Reviewing a previous decision using the same method on which that decision was based is not undemocratic

Withdrawal Agreement

7. The Withdrawal Agreement (WA) is not up for renegotiation
8. The Political Declaration (PD) might be tweaked cosmetically
9. The future relationship will be negotiated during the transition period
10. There will be no transition without the WA
11. There will be no WA without the Financial Settlement
12. A backstop cannot be unilaterally terminated, or it is not a backstop
13. There will be no WA without a backstop

Political Declaration

14. The PD is not a deal on the future relationship
15. The PD is wish list, not binding
16. The PD leaves huge, crucial questions entirely open
17. Negotiations on any future relationship may fail.

Article 50

18. Article 50 can be revoked unilaterally by the UK.
19. Article 50 can be extended, with EU27 agreement, if requested by UK
20. UK would retain vetoes, opt-outs, and rebate if it revoked Article 50 and remained a member of the EU

Future access to EU markets and programmes

21. The level of access to EU markets and programmes depends on the level of alignment to EU rules to which UK Government is willing to commit.
22. UK restrictions on Freedom of Movement for EU27 citizens will be reciprocated by EU27 for UK citizens
23. Frictionless trade is impossible outside the Single Market and the EU Customs Union.
24. Neither the Single Market or a customs union is enough alone for frictionless trade
25. Single Market membership requires Freedom of Movement, whoever is negotiating it
26. EFTA membership is technically very difficult to combine with customs union membership
27. EFTA/EEA membership requires acceptance of Freedom of Movement.
28. EFTA/EEA membership means little influence and no formal control over Single Market rules.
29. Adjusting the PD to include EEA+CU would not eliminate the need for a backstop.
30. A new EEA pillar with a customs union would not be off-the-shelf, and would need to be negotiated.

Government and opposition 'red lines'

31. UK Government has explicitly ruled out being in the Single Market, making this a hard, not a soft Brexit.
32. Labour has implicitly ruled out being in the Single Market by not accepting FoM or EU State Aid rules that are required for membership of it

EU27 priorities

33. The EU27's priority is to avoid a chaotic no deal Brexit while not crossing EU27 red lines (principally to protect EU27 citizens' rights, maintain integrity of Single Market and its four freedoms of movement: goods, services, capital, persons)
34. EU27 will not negotiate a future relationship that crosses their red lines.

No deal

35. If nothing is agreed and no action is taken, we leave on 29 March with a (catastrophic) no deal."
36. There is no such thing as a "WTO Deal"
37. No responsible Government or Parliament could allow No Deal
38. UK Government can choose to try to stop a No Deal Brexit at any time before it happens.
39. If no deal happened, it would be because the Government had chosen not to stop it and considered that appalling harm to the UK and its population was worth it to achieve their own political ends.

Tariffs and new trade deals

40. The UK already trades extensively with non-EU countries (many through EU trade agreements)
41. The projected economic benefits of new trade deals are very small compared to the cost of loss of full Single Market membership
42. There are already, in practice, no EU tariffs on goods from the poorest countries in the world (due to EU Everything but Arms agreements)

EU/UK citizens' rights and border controls

43. The WA does not protect all rights for EU Citizens in the UK or UK Citizens in the EU.
44. It does not allow either groups to live "exactly as before".
45. UK Government has complete control over its policy towards non-EU migration
46. It is impossible to enter the UK, except across the IE/Ni border, without having your passport checked

Article 50 extension

47. EU27 are likely to agree to an extension for a referendum on Ratify v Remain (given the overwhelming defeat of May's deal in Parliament, the deal to be ratified would probably be May's deal modified by Parliament)
48. EU27 are by now largely ambivalent about which one is chosen
49. EU27 are unlikely to grant an extension for more messing around with no obvious route to a solution.
50. EU27 are unlikely to grant an extension and will not reopen the WA due to a change of UK government

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