

Still Time To Make That Brexit Trade

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Now that the prime minister has sent in her notice to leave the EU, attention turns to the negotiations. Not just because they're going to determine whether Brexit is a success. They're also an opportunity to make money.

Every sneeze in Brussels will move markets. Lead negotiators David Davis and Michel "Barmie" Barnier's facial expressions will swing currencies. Each election in Europe will change the cards at the negotiation table. Traders can't wait for the opportunities all this represents.

The market moves have already begun. The pound tumbled after the referendum result. The stockmarket is up thanks to our big companies' foreign earnings. Theresa May's letter to the EU triggering Article 50 moved the pound once more.

But you haven't missed out.

If you think about it, nothing has really been decided yet. The negotiations haven't started. The outcome of Brexit is all to play for. There are two more years of volatility to come. It's time to get in now to start profiting.

The French EU negotiator has come up with a negotiation timetable. Six months to disentangle our policies, six planning the future and six managing the transition period in case of disruption. The last six months are needed to finalise things.

I'm not sure where the two-year period deadline comes from. Article 50 makes it clear that the period can be extended if both sides agree it's necessary.

There's no incentive for either side to impose the artificial deadline. Britain will want to continue any unfinished negotiations and the EU will look very vindictive if it doesn't agree.

But then again, vindictive seems to be the order of the day in Europe. The Europeans and their remain camp allies keep saying we can't "have our cake and eat it".

But why can't we eat *our* cake?

The whole premise of the negotiation is deeply flawed in a way no wants to acknowledge. If a policy is good between two EU nations, why does it become bad when a nation leaves the EU?

Why does free trade between the EU and UK become a bad thing when the UK leaves? Why does cooperation on air traffic control become a bad thing when the UK leaves? And why does cooperation on nuclear materials become a bad thing when the UK leaves?

The answer is of course, that none of these things become a bad proposition for either side. Both parties benefit from them. That's why they were a good thing while the UK was inside the EU. The fact that these policies of cooperation are good is the basis of the EU. Do they become bad when we leave? Of course not!

Whether a policy between two nations is good or bad is not determined by the political union they belong to. It's either a sound, mutually beneficial policy or not. That should be the relevant question in the negotiations – where is cooperation mutually beneficial and where isn't it.

But for some unknown reason, the EU won't let the UK "cherry pick" just the mutually beneficial areas of cooperation. It's as if the UK is getting something and the EU is giving. But, again, cooperation and trade are mutually beneficial. That's why they were good, and still would be with the UK outside the EU.

In the same vein, the EU's bad policies will remain bad if we keep them. Stupid regulations are stupid, whichever parliament enacts them. The whole point of leaving is to keep the good and get rid of the bad. You should only cooperate on policies that are mutually beneficial – the most basic consideration of cooperation in the first place.

Threatening someone with the withdrawal of mutually beneficial policies is the sort of behaviour you expect from a petulant

toddler. The EU is threatening us with self-harm.

The all or nothing attitude of the EU – in or out – is far worse than cherry picking. It's the strategy Miss Trunchbull uses on Bruce Bogtrotter in *Matilda*. Being forced to eat a whole cake is dangerous and vindictive.

Cherry picking versus the Bogtrotter strategy

The EU is requiring the negotiations to be fully finalised before they're formalised – the Bogtrotter strategy of all or nothing. The British want a steady process of agreements on an issue-by-issue basis – cherry picking. That's because, on an issue-by-issue basis, a deal is a certainty.

The European negotiators can't deny cooperation on air traffic control is a bad thing. They can't deny trade is a bad thing. They can't deny police cooperation is a bad thing. If we got agreement on all these separately, there'd be no issues.

The EU can only deny the deal as a whole on purely political grounds – by claiming the balance favours Britain over the EU. Which of course it does – that's why we're leaving!

The best example is of course security. Terrorism is a global problem. The idea that the EU will no longer cooperate with a country on security because it left the EU is political suicide.

Perhaps I'm too optimistic though. The EU's attempt to block Britain from organising trade deals with other countries while it's still in the EU is a blatantly vindictive strategy. Theresa May threatened to end cooperation on security already.

Freedom of sheepdog movement

I listened to a BBC podcast about Brexit this morning. The Remain camp economist pointed out that the end of Britain in the EU would mean pets need passports to visit the continent. Farmers in Northern Ireland with fields in the Republic would not be allowed to let their sheepdogs cross the border.

This is utterly excruciatingly infuriating. It shows how stupid the EU is and why we should leave, not stay. If the EU really is dumb enough to have rules like this with its neighbours, we'd be exposing the EU for what it has become – absurd. It's no wonder the UK's trade with the outside world isn't great. The EU's policies to the rest of the world are ridiculous and prevent us from trading with them.

So Northern Ireland poses an enormous opportunity for David Davis, the UK's lead negotiator. It's very unlikely that the EU will make life difficult on the Northern Ireland border with Ireland. Any stupid policies there would be too obviously stupid, even by EU standards. As the Irish politician and minister of defence put it, when the border was enforced, "it brought with it sectarian violence. [...] So we are not returning there."

Northern Ireland is Davis's opportunity to illustrate why the EU can't play hardball on any issues. It would be too awful for their voters.

But giving in to sensible demands in Ireland will beg the question – why is anywhere else any different? If we have a decent arrangement on trade, travel, policing and all the rest with Ireland, why not the rest of Europe? What makes cooperation, trade and freedom of travelling sheepdogs a bad idea?

Nothing.

Until next time,

Nick Hubble