



January 2017

'Brexit means Brexit' - UK Outlines Plans for Brexit

Shortly after taking office on 14 July 2016, UK Prime Minister Theresa May resisted suggestions that the UK's Referendum vote to leave the European Union might not be followed through. She stated: "Brexit means Brexit and we are going to make a success of it". Since then, there has been much speculation over what Brexit actually means. Mrs May's speech to EU Ambassadors yesterday has provided some insight into the government's post-Brexit vision, although many issues remain to be clarified.

Mrs May set out twelve objectives for the UK's Brexit negotiations. Of particular relevance to firms trading in the UK and EU are the objectives for the UK:

- > to enter into a free trade agreement with the EU that will provide access to, but not membership of, the EU Single Market, but that may include elements of existing Single Market arrangements;
- > to include a customs agreement in the post-Brexit arrangements that avoids the UK being part of the EU Common Commercial Policy and EU Common Customs Tariff but allows tariff-free and "frictionless" cross-border trade;
- > to enter into its own trade deals with non-EU countries and establish its own tariff schedules at the WTO;
- > to enhance existing EU-derived workers' rights;
- > to reach an agreement with the EU on the post-Brexit EU/UK partnership at the end of the two-year Article 50 Brexit negotiation period; and
- > to have a smooth, orderly Brexit, involving transitional arrangements over a limited time and a phased process of implementation of the new arrangements.

All twelve objectives are summarised below.

1. Certainty

The final Brexit deal with the EU will be put to a vote before both Houses of Parliament. Upon Brexit, the UK government will maintain the body of existing EU law by incorporating it into UK law, to be amended by Parliament subsequently, as appropriate.

2. Control of Laws

UK laws will be made by UK legislatures and interpreted by UK courts upon Brexit. The European Court of Justice will no longer have jurisdiction in the UK.

3. Strengthen the UK

The UK will focus on empowering itself as an open, trading nation by strengthening relations between its four nations and ensuring that no new barriers to living and doing business are created internally. It is envisaged that each of the devolved UK governments will be engaged in Brexit negotiations through the to-be-established Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations.

4. Common Travel Area with Ireland

The Common Travel Area with the Republic of Ireland will be maintained with a practical solution that protects the integrity of the UK's immigration system.

5. Control of Immigration

The UK will seek to control immigration from the EU in order to reduce the strain on its public services and achieve a fairer Britain. This means continuing to attract international talent whilst limiting overall numbers.

6. Rights of EU and UK Nationals

The UK will seek to reach agreement with other EU leaders as soon as possible to guarantee the rights of EU citizens currently living in the UK and UK citizens in the EU.

7. Worker's Rights

The UK will preserve and build on EU law to protect and enhance workers' rights.

8. Free Trade

The UK will pursue a 'bold and ambitious free trade agreement' with the EU, outside of the Single Market. This agreement will aim to achieve the greatest possible access to the Single Market on a reciprocal basis, and the UK will cease to make large contributions to the EU budget.

9. Trade Outside EU

The UK will reject any arrangement that will prevent it from striking its own trade agreements with other countries. It will seek a customs agreement with the EU to achieve frictionless tariff-free trade, but will no longer be a part of the Common Commercial Policy or be bound by the Common External Tariff. It will use its post-Brexit freedom to conclude free trade agreements with non-EU states and set its own WTO tariff schedule.

10. Science and Innovation

In the fields of science, research, and technology, the UK hopes to continue collaborating with EU partners.

11. Crime, Terrorism and Foreign Affairs

The UK will also continue to cooperate with the EU to tackle cross-border crime, terrorism, and foreign affairs. Recognising serious threats to the common security of the UK and EU, the UK will seek practical arrangements with its EU allies on matters of law enforcement and intelligence sharing.

12. Phased Approach

Finally, the UK will adopt a phased approach to ease the transitional process of leaving the EU. This will involve concluding an agreement with the EU on the future partnership between the UK and the EU by the end of the two-year period under Article 50, with interim (or phase-in) arrangements for each issue, including financial services and immigration controls.

Mrs May has made it clear that she will not reveal the government's negotiating strategy, nor areas where it might compromise or agree to trade-offs with the EU. She does, however, recognise the importance of providing as much certainty as possible while moving through the process and says that, where the government can offer certainty, it will do so.

Further information about issues relating to Brexit can be found [here](#).

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