

Note: I am indebted to Mme Marquardt, who teaches in CPGE B/L in lycée Janson De Sailly, for this file.

Glossary

- “I want my money back”
- “Get Brexit Done”
- “Take back control” – Breaking Point
- £350 million a week
- Brexit – Hard Brexit – Soft Brexit- No-deal Brexit
- The Erasmus programme – The Turing Scheme – Horizon
- The Northern Ireland Protocol - The Windsor Framework – The Backdrop deal
- Global Britain
- The Bruges Speech - The Bloomberg Speech – The Greenwich Speech (“Unleashing Britain’s Potential)
- Leave – Remain – Remainers- Brexiters – Brexiteers – Bremonoans - Bregret

Five Years On

Document 1 – VIDEO UK marks five years since Brexit amid calls to rejoin EU

TRT World, January 31 2025

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmJMa2QOO6s&ab_channel=TRTWorld

Document 2 – ARTE - Brexit : histoire d'une désunion

<https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/RC-016693/brexit-histoire-d-une-desunion/>

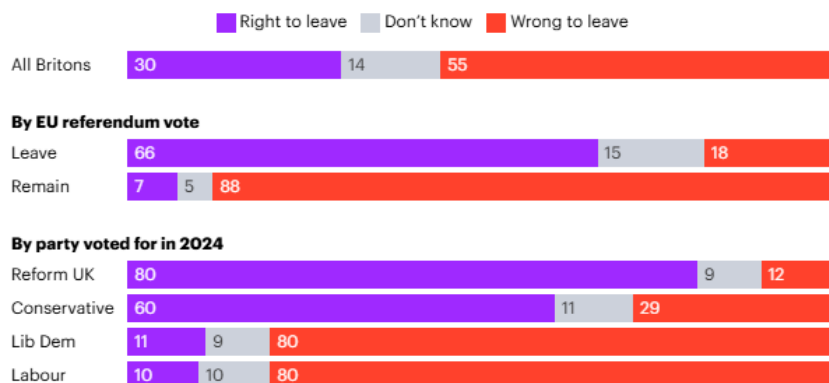
See also <https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/112300-000-A/irlande-du-nord-la-frontiere-de-tous-les-dangers/>

Document 3 – A YouGov Poll

<https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/51484-how-do-britons-feel-about-brexit-five-years-on>

One in six Leave voters now say it was wrong for the UK to vote for Brexit

In hindsight, do you think Britain was right or wrong to vote to leave the European Union? %

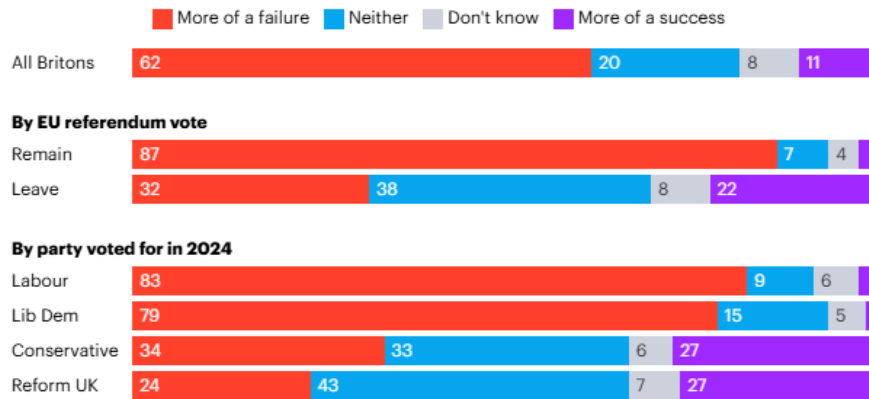


YouGov

20 - 21 January 2025 • Get the data

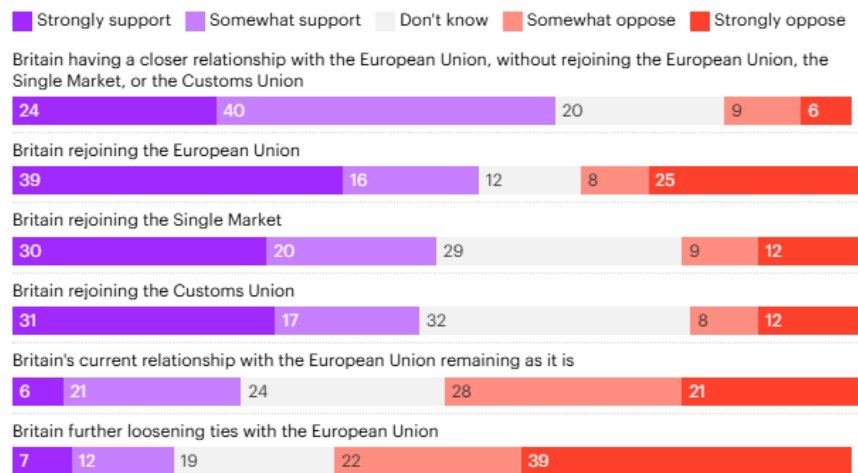
Only 11% of Britons say Brexit has been a success, with more Leavers saying it has gone badly than well

And so far, do you think that Brexit has been more of a success or more of a failure? %



Britons favour a closer relationship with the EU, with 55% of the public in favour of rejoining

And when it comes to Britain's relationship with the European Union, to what extent would you support or oppose each of the following? %



Document 4 - BBC News / Explainer Five key impacts of Brexit five years on

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdrynjz1glpo>

Five years ago, on 31 January 2020, the UK left the European Union.

On that day, Great Britain severed the political ties it had held for 47 years, but stayed inside the EU single market 5 and customs union for a further 11 months to keep trade flowing.

Northern Ireland had a separate arrangement.

Brexit was hugely divisive, both politically and socially, dominating political debate and with arguments about its 10 impacts raging for years.

Five years on from the day Britain formally left the EU, BBC Verify has examined five important ways Brexit has affected Britain.

1) Trade

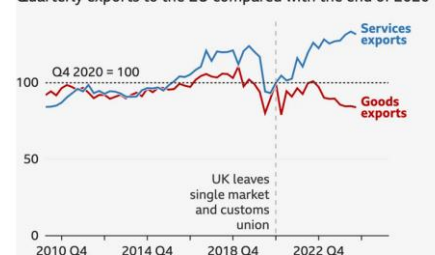
15 Economists and analysts generally assess the impact of leaving the EU single market and customs union on 1 Jan 2021 on the UK's goods trade as having been negative.

This is despite the fact that the UK negotiated a free trade deal with the EU and avoided tariffs - or taxes - being 20 imposed on the import and export of goods.

The negative impact comes from so-called "non-tariff barriers" - time consuming and sometimes complicated new paperwork that businesses have to fill out when importing and exporting to the EU.

Since Brexit UK goods exports are down services exports are up

Quarterly exports to the EU compared with the end of 2020



There is some disagreement about how negative the specific Brexit impact has been.

Some recent studies suggest that UK goods exports are 30% lower than they would have been if we had not left the single market and customs union.

Some suggest only a 6% reduction.

We can't be certain because the results depend heavily on the method chosen by researchers for measuring the "counterfactual", i.e what would have happened to UK exports had the country stayed in the EU.

One thing we can be reasonably confident of is that small UK firms appear to be more adversely affected than larger ones.

They have been less able to cope with the new post-Brexit cross-border bureaucracy. That's supported by surveys of small firms.

It's also clear UK services exports - such as advertising and management consulting - have done unexpectedly well since 2021.

But the working assumption of the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), the government's independent official forecaster, is still that Brexit in the long-term will reduce exports and imports of goods and services by 15% relative to otherwise. It has held this view since 2016, including under the previous Government.

And the OBR's other working assumption is that the fall in trade relative to otherwise will reduce the long-term size of the UK economy by around 4% relative to otherwise, equivalent to roughly £100bn in today's money.

The OBR says it could revise both these assumptions based on new evidence and studies. The estimated negative economic impact could come down if the trade impact judged to be less severe. Yet there is no evidence, so far, to suggest that it will turn into a positive impact.

After Brexit, the UK has been able to strike its own trade deals with other countries.

There have been new trade deals with Australia and New Zealand and the government has been pursuing new agreements with the US and India.

But their impact on the economy is judged by the government's own official impact assessments to be small relative to the negative impact on UK- EU trade.

Brexit trade deals official impact assessments

Trade agreement	GDP boost/impact £bn/year	% of UK GDP
CPTPP (11-nation)	+2.0	+0.08%
Australia	+2.3	+0.08%
New Zealand	+0.08	+0.03%
Possible US-UK	+1.6 to +3.4	+0.07 to 0.16%
Possible UK-India	+3.3 to +6.2	+0.12 to 0.22%
Brexit impact	-100	-4%

Source: UK government impact assessments



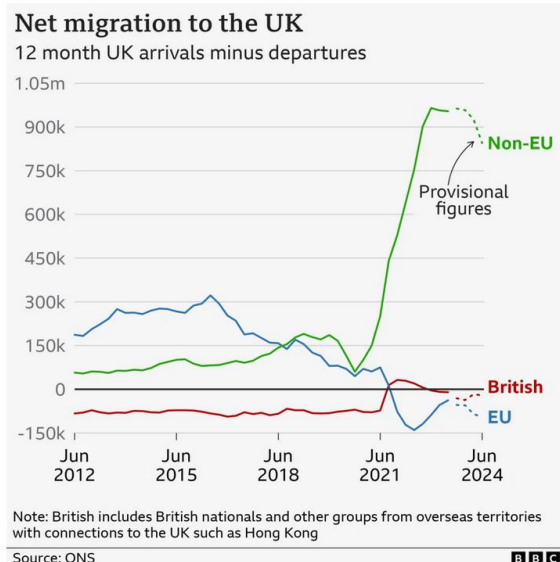
However, some economists argue there could still be potential longer term economic benefits for the UK from not having to follow EU laws and regulations affecting sectors such as Artificial Intelligence.

2) Immigration

Immigration was a key theme in the 2016 referendum campaign, centred on freedom of movement within the EU, under which UK and EU citizens could freely move to visit, study, work and live.

There has been a big fall in EU immigration and EU net migration (immigration minus emigration) since the referendum and this accelerated after 2020 due to the end of freedom of movement.

But there have been large increases in net migration from the rest of the world since 2020.



85

A post-Brexit immigration system came into force in January 2021.

Under this system, EU and non-EU citizens both need to get work visas in order to work in the UK (except Irish citizens, who can still live and work in the UK without a visa).

The two main drivers of the increase in non-EU immigration since 2020 are work visas (especially in health and care) and international students and their dependents.

UK universities started to recruit more non-EU overseas students as their financial situation deteriorated.

The re-introduction of the right of overseas students to stay and work in Britain after graduation by Boris Johnson's government also made the UK more attractive to international students.

Subsequent Conservative governments reduced the rights of people on work and student visas to bring dependents and those restrictions have been retained by Labour.

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3) Travel

Freedom of movement ended with Brexit, also affecting tourists and business travellers.

British passport holders can no longer use "EU/EEA/CH" lanes at EU border crossing points.

People can still visit the EU as a tourist for 90 days in any 180 day period without requiring a visa, provided they have at least three months remaining on their passports at the time of their return.

115 EU citizens can stay in the UK for up to six months without needing a visa.

However, a bigger change in terms of travel is on the horizon.

In 2025, the EU is planning to introduce a new electronic
120 Entry Exit System (EES) - an automated IT system for registering travellers from non-EU countries.

This will register the person's name, type of the travel document, biometric data (fingerprints and captured facial images) and the date and place of entry and exit.

125 It will replace the manual stamping of passports. The impact of this is unclear, but some in the travel sector have expressed fears it could potentially add to border queues as people leave the UK.

The EES was due to be introduced in November 2024 but
130 was postponed until 2025, with no new date for implementation yet set.

And six months after the introduction of EES, the EU says it will introduce a new European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS). UK citizens will have to
135 obtain ETIAS clearance for travel to 30 European countries.

ETIAS clearance will cost €7 (£5.90) and be valid for up to three years or until someone's passport expires, whichever comes first. If people get a new passport, they
140 need to get a new ETIAS travel authorisation.

Meanwhile, the UK is introducing its equivalent to ETIAS for EU citizens from 2 April 2025 (though Irish citizens will be exempt). The UK permit - to be called an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) - will cost £16.

145

4) Laws

Legal sovereignty - the ability of the UK to make its own laws and not have to follow EU ones - was another prominent Brexit referendum campaign promise.

150 To minimise disruption immediately following Brexit in 2020, the UK incorporated thousands of EU laws into UK law, becoming known as "retained EU law".

According to the latest government count there were 6,901 individual pieces of retained EU law covering things like
155 working time, equal pay, food labelling and environmental standards.

The previous Conservative government initially set a deadline of the end of 2023 to axe these EU laws.

But with so much legislation to consider there was concern
160 there was not enough time to review all the laws properly.

In May 2023 Kemi Badenoch - the Trade Secretary at the time - announced only 600 EU laws would be axed by the end of 2023, with another 500 financial services laws set to disappear later.

165 Most were relatively obscure regulations and many of them had been superseded or become irrelevant.

All other EU legislation was kept, though ministers reserved powers to change them in future.

And the UK has changed some EU laws. For example, it
170 banned the export of live animals from Great Britain for

slaughter and fattening and changed EU laws on gene editing crops.

Brexit has also given the UK more freedom in certain areas of tax law.

175 EU member states are prohibited from charging VAT on education under an EU directive. Leaving the EU enabled Labour to impose VAT on private school fees.

A zero rate of VAT on tampons and other sanitary products was introduced by the UK government in 2021. This

180 would not have been possible in the EU as the EU VAT Directive at the time mandated a minimum 5% tax on all sanitary products. However, in April 2022 the EU's rules changed so the bloc also now allows a zero rate on sanitary products.

185

5) Money

The money the UK sent to the EU was a controversial theme in the 2016 referendum, particularly the Leave campaign's claim the UK sent £350m every week to

190 Brussels.

The UK's gross public sector contribution to the EU Budget in 2019-20, the final financial year before Brexit, was £18.3bn, equivalent to around £352m per week, according to the Treasury.

195 The UK continued paying into the EU Budget during the transition period but since 31 December 2020 it has not made these contributions.

However, those EU Budgets contributions were always partially recycled to the UK via payments to British
200 farmers under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and "structural funding" - development grants to support skills, employment and training in certain economically disadvantaged regions of the nation. These added up to £5bn in 2019-20.

205 Since the end of the transition period UK governments have replaced the CAP payments directly with taxpayer funds.

Ministers have also replaced the EU structural funding grants, with the previous government rebranding them as

210 "a UK Shared Prosperity" fund.

The UK was also receiving a negotiated "rebate" on its EU Budget contributions of around £4bn a year - money which never actually left the country,

So the net fiscal benefit to the UK from not paying into the
215 EU Budget is closer to to £9bn per year, although this figure is inherently uncertain because we don't know what the UK's contribution to the EU Budget would otherwise have been.

The UK has also still been paying the EU as part of the
220 official Brexit Withdrawal Agreement and its financial settlement. The Treasury says the UK paid a net amount of £14.9bn between 2021 and 2023, and estimated that from 2024 onwards it will have to pay another £6.4bn, although spread over many years.

225 Future payments under the withdrawal settlement are also uncertain in part because of fluctuating exchange rates.

However, there are other ways the UK's finances remained connected with the EU, separate from the EU Budget and the Withdrawal Agreement.

230 After Brexit took effect, the UK also initially stopped paying into the Horizon scheme, which funds pan-European scientific research.

However, [Britain rejoined Horizon in 2023](#) and is projected by the EU to pay in around €2.4bn (£2bn) per

235 year on average to the EU budget for its participation, although historically the UK has been a net financial

beneficiary from the scheme because of the large share of grants won by UK-based scientists.

The future

240 There are, of course, a large number of other Brexit impacts which we have not covered here, ranging from territorial fishing rights, to farming, to defence. And with Labour looking for a re-set in EU relations, it's a subject that promises to be a continuing source of debate and
245 analysis for many years to come.

Clarification: This article has been updated to clarify the amount of time EU citizens can spend in the UK, visa free.

Document 5 - Brexit has some benefits, No 10 says on anniversary

BBC, 31 January 2025

The prime minister believes Brexit has had some benefits, Downing Street has said on the fifth anniversary of the UK leaving the European Union. A No 10 spokesman pointed to freedom from EU regulations, helping to make the UK a more competitive financial hub.

However, he said Sir Keir Starmer also wanted "to make Brexit work better for the British people" and strengthen 5 relations with Europe.

The Conservatives accused the government of being "determined to dismantle Brexit and drag us back into the EU's grasp".

But the Liberal Democrats criticised the Brexit deal struck by the Tories as "an utter disaster for our country" and called for close ties with the EU.

10 The UK officially left the EU at 11:00 GMT - midnight in Brussels - on 31 January 2020, three-and-a-half years after the the 2016 referendum. The government has marked the anniversary with little fanfare, with no official events to celebrate the occasion. Asked why the PM had not said anything specific for the anniversary, Downing Street said the government was "very much looking forward".

A Number 10 spokesman said: "We know we can do better to make Brexit work for the British people, that it's in the 15 UK's national interest to have a more co-operative relationship with the EU. "They're our largest trading partner and our closest neighbour, and will be vital in helping us to tackle ongoing threats to our security, and that's why we're working together with the EU to strengthen our partnership."

Asked what benefits Brexit had brought, he said the UK was "no longer bound by EU procurement rules". "That is a big benefit for us, as well as our freedom to adapt our financial services regulations to make them more suited to the 20 UK market environment, and that's enhanced London's competitiveness as a financial hub," he added.

Since winning power, Sir Keir, who backed remaining in the EU and once supported a second referendum, has promised to "reset" relations with the 27 nation bloc and secure a better deal with it. However, he has stressed the UK will not be rejoining the EU or the single market, which enables goods, services and people to move freely between member states who also apply many common rules and standards. The government has also pledged the UK will not 25 rejoin the customs union - an agreement between EU countries not to charge taxes called tariffs on things coming from outside the bloc.

Over the weekend Sir Keir will host German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, before attending a meeting of EU leaders in Brussels on Monday.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch called Brexit "the greatest vote of confidence in our country", but said there 30 was "still a lot more to do". She said a trade deal with the United States would be a "Brexit opportunity we need to take".

Nigel Farage, one of the key figures behind the Brexit campaign, said it had been a success constitutionally and in terms of foreign policy but admitted many who voted to leave would say "it's been a huge disappointment". The Reform UK leader said huge numbers voted for Brexit to cut immigration but the figures had gone up, which he blamed on the previous Conservative government. He rejected the idea the public had been misled about the benefits of Brexit, and 35 claimed that if he had been in charge immigration would have gone down.

Former chief Brexit negotiator Lord Frost told BBC Radio 4's Broadcasting House Sir Keir wanted to "inch us back into the orbit [of the bloc] by stealth", with rules on food standards and other areas set in Brussels. The Tory peer argued the current Brexit deal was working well and it was not necessary to start "tearing bits of it up again".

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey used the anniversary to reiterate his call for a UK-EU customs union deal, saying it would "unlock growth, demonstrate British leadership and give us the best possible hand to play against President Trump".

Green MP Ellie Chowns also called for the UK to rejoin the customs union and agree a youth mobility scheme with the bloc, which would make it easier for young people to study and work in the EU.

She added that "full membership of the EU remains the best option for the UK" and said her party would pursue "a policy to re-join as soon as the political will is present".

Document 6 - Why the Brexit debate will never die

Was it ever possible for the promised results to be delivered?

Will Dunn is business editor of the New Statesman. He writes on a range of topics including inflation, housing, the Bank of England, the world of work and the cost of living crisis.

By Will Dunn, *The New Statesman*, 31 January 2025

By the time Brexit sort-of actually happened, five years ago today, most people were already sick of talking about it. Most people had been sick of talking about it in June 2016, when a body of voters equivalent to 27 per cent of the population rewrote our geopolitical and economic status.

This, aside from the fact that most people didn't want Jeremy Corbyn to be prime minister, was the winning insight of the 2019 election: most people also wanted to forget about Brexit. To a certain extent that was achieved by the pandemic that arrived shortly after Brexit Day in 2020. But it's also true that many people will not be able to stop talking about Brexit for a long time, because it has changed our country in some fairly significant ways.

In a decade of talking about Brexit, nothing has been more popular than dodgy claims about economic impact. There was Vote Leave's famous bus-emblazoned bullshit about losing £350m on EU membership, and George Osborne's economically illiterate claim that Brexit would deflate the housing market (it's a pity it didn't). So far the most convincing model for the overall cost to the economy has probably been that of the economist John Springford, who used a "weighted basket" of other countries to model how a counterfactual, remain-voting UK would have performed after 2016. It looks like this:

Springford's model sensibly stops in 2022, where the energy price shock makes further comparison tricky, but it seems fair to say that by late 2021 the gap in actual GDP growth between Brexitland and Remainia was somewhere between £30bn and £40bn per year. This is a long way from being a crippling blow to the UK's £3trn economy. But it's also not great, and it's not a single shock – it's a long-term drag, particularly on goods exports, 41 per cent of which went to the EU in 2023. And it is very much not over, because there are parts of Brexit that are only just

being implemented; the third phase of the post-Brexit border regime has just begun today, and the cost to UK exporters of the new safety declarations has yet to be absorbed.

We can therefore thank Brexit for sharpening our economy to become more dependent on services (of which our exports have increased) and less dependent on goods (of which exports have decreased). So a Leave vote was a vote for a wealthier London full of office workers and against manufacturers and farmers. Remind me, was it sold like that?

A major reason many people voted Leave was to "take back control" of the UK's borders, which was widely understood to mean increased control of immigration. The UK's immigration certainly has changed since Brexit Day. In the year to June 2019, around 347,000 people came to live in the UK from outside the EU; in the year to June 2024, this had risen to more than one million people from outside the EU. More than twice as many people came to the UK from India in year ending June 2024 than came from the EU.

At the same time, people born in the EU represent the largest component of people *leaving* the UK; 44 per cent of long-term emigration is by EU nationals and 16 per cent is by British nationals.

Obviously, if people arrive to do the same jobs then there is no reason an economist should care what country they come from. According to Oxford University's Migration Observatory, however, people who arrived from the EU in 2022 mostly came for work, whereas people from South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and other non-EU regions came mainly for family reasons.

I'm not sure putting off Portuguese plasterers and attracting Indian in-laws was an explicit selling point of the Leave campaign. By June 2023, 72 per cent of Leave voters thought non-EU immigration was too high.

That is why Brexit will never be done. It didn't deliver the results it was supposed to. Economists will continue to point out that this is because it introduced more hurdles for businesses to jump through and took a further £10bn a year of investment (according to some estimates) out of an economy that was already dangerously under-investing. Populists will continue to claim that Westminster has

betrayed the will of the people and that Brexit must be “saved”, because it is obviously much easier to pretend this than to come up with a coherent plan for the economy. Brexit is either an ongoing frustration, or the gift that keeps

on giving, and we will probably still be talking about it in another five years.

This piece first appeared in the Morning Call newsletter.

Document 7 - Scotland knows Brexit is holding Britain back. Why won't Labour admit it?

Comment - John Swinney, *The Guardian*, Fri 31 Jan 2025

John Swinney is the SNP leader and the first minister of Scotland

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/31/scotland-brexit-britain-labour-eu-europe>

The pantomime season may be over, but when it comes to the government's much-repeated claim to be pursuing economic growth above all else, the cry of “It's behind you” is sounding ever louder. This classic panto joke works when everyone in the audience can see something clearly but the character on stage pretends not to. So it is with Boris Johnson's Brexit deal and Rachel Reeves's attempts to kickstart the economy. Reeves and Keir Starmer are ignoring what is blindingly obvious to everyone else: Brexit is a significant drag on Britain's growth prospects. They know it's true but refuse to acknowledge it and, more importantly, to do anything about it.

There is, however, nothing comical about this situation. The hard Brexit negotiated by Johnson took the UK out of the EU, the single market and the customs union and brought an end to freedom of movement. As a result, people are paying the price through higher food bills, lower growth and therefore lower tax revenue that could and should be spent on the NHS.

10 Today marks the fifth anniversary of the UK formally leaving this great project – in which countries come together on the basis of agreed values – to share and enhance sovereignty for the common good. For Starmer, however, it seems Nigel Farage is more of an influence on his decision-making than the interests of Scotland, where European freedom of movement in particular enriched our country in so many ways, culturally and economically.

15 To be clear, I don't see freedom of movement as merely a trade-off to secure business access to the huge single market. There are complementary benefits, helping business, communities and our world-class universities. Enabling people to live, love, work and study across the European Union is one of the EU's great achievements. And, of course, Brexit was driven through despite the fact that Scotland, as well as Northern Ireland, voted decisively to remain in the EU. This itself calls into question the idea of the UK as a voluntary union of equal partners.

20 The EU is not perfect, but its founding values – human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights – are precious fundamentals in our society that I want to protect and nurture. Those values are, however, being challenged internally and externally. So, as the European commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, made clear in her speech in Davos last week, that is all the more reason for countries that believe in cooperation to continue to work together in a shared endeavour to champion those values.

25 For many people, although those values will be keenly felt, it is the economic cost that matters most. This week the Scottish government presented yet more evidence of the continuing damage to trade and GDP as a result of hard Brexit. It simply isn't possible to claim that growth is the number one priority while engaging in a Westminster conspiracy of silence over Brexit. Labour appears to be casting around in an ever greater panic for ideas to boost growth, while ignoring all the evidence of the damage caused by the Brexit deal it inherited but refuses to seek to change in any meaningful way.

30 I believe it is time to fight back against that hard Brexit Westminster consensus. In the short term, the government needs to clarify urgently what it actually wants from its much-vaunted “reset” of European relations. The Scottish government is clear on our priorities: for example, we need an ambitious veterinary agreement to help our food and drink industry; we need closer cooperation on energy to help boost investment and tackle the climate emergency; and we badly need a youth mobility scheme to open up greater educational opportunities for our young people again.

35 A bolder and necessary step would be to join the single market and the customs union and refuel our trade with Europe. The Scottish government would be a willing partner with the UK government and the EU in pursuit of those goals, which would have a real impact on people's lives. I urge the government therefore to think again about its self-defeating red lines and to seek a genuinely closer relationship with our fellow Europeans.

For Scotland, the real prize, of course, is to become a member state in our own right for the first time. It is striking that EU countries very similar to Scotland enjoy higher productivity and greater equality than the UK. For Ireland, it has been said

40 persuasively that it was the policy flexibility that came with independence, alongside EU membership, that enabled economic take-off.

For the rest of the UK, it seems inevitable that the journey back to being an EU member state will start at some point. Surely it is better to start that journey now than to continue to put up with such ongoing, needless economic damage.

Document 8 - Five years on, we still haven't taken back control. Let's get it done

Nigel Farage, *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 Jan 2025

NIGEL FARAGE Nigel Farage is leader of Reform UK and Member of Parliament for Clacton

It is five years today since Brexit finally came to pass. The UK'S membership of the European Union ended officially at 11pm on January 31 2020 and our status as a free and independent state began.

5 At the time I called this the greatest moment in the modern history of our great nation. Those words came from the heart. For those of us who believe that charting our own course outside the anti-democratic EU is highly desirable, it felt as though we had got our country back.

10 But it hasn't been easy. First, Covid struck. This was followed by the Conservative government recklessly devoting itself to years of bitter infighting instead of ruling in the interests of the people and making sure Brexit worked. For them, this project was simply about political
15 convenience.

And now we have a Labour government run by Remainer-in-chief, Sir Keir Starmer, that is determined to take Britain back into the orbit of the EU via the back door.

This is a national tragedy. Because one thing on which
20 every honest person can agree is that the job has been left unfinished. Yes,

We would cut regulation and truly unshackle this great country and its people

there have been many great Brexit victories which must be
25 celebrated, particularly in foreign policy terms. But the full benefits of Brexit have not been realised – yet.

I believe it's now only a question of time before we can right this wrong.

British politics has changed. The days of the old two-party
30 system are over. Now, it is a threehorse race – and Reform UK has the momentum. Our membership has passed that of the Conservatives and is on its way to 200,000. Successive opinion polls show that we are tied or even ahead of Labour. We are the only party looking forward to
35 the next general election. For the good of the country this abysmal socialist administration must be turfed out and replaced by a governing party that believes in maximising Britain's potential, not talking it down.

A Reform UK government would seize the golden
40 opportunities that Brexit allows. Unlike Labour and the Tories, our party genuinely believes in this project.

Just consider how things stand in Northern Ireland today.

It is an Eu-inspired limboland. Hundreds of pieces of legislation there still conform to EU standards, not to
45 British standards. This is a travesty. A Reform UK government would tackle this straight away. We would cut

regulation and truly unshackle this great country and its people.

And whatever Kemi Badenoch may claim about being a
50 true Brexiteer, I don't believe her.

She has a special place in history when it comes to frustrating Brexit. As Business and Trade Secretary, she spared thousands of EU regulations that were supposed to be thrown on a "Brexit bonfire" from being burned. Her
55 failure to see through the Retained EU Law Bill is proof that the Tories never really believed in Brexit. Indeed, their unwillingness to light that Brexit conflagration has given Starmer the chance to crawl back to Brussels seeking a closer relationship. By retaining those laws, Britain is
60 perceived by the EU to lack the confidence, or the will, to strike out on its own. Reform UK would have as many bonfires as it takes to get the EU'S red tape out of Britain for good, to send the message to EU chiefs: we are never coming back.

65 The overwhelming reason that voters backed Brexit was immigration. People were sick and tired of having a porous border. Leaving the EU, they thought, would allow the nation to be far more discerning – to "take back control".

The fact that under the Tories the opposite occurred, and
70 immigration rocketed to unprecedented levels between 2020 and 2024, is a particular slap in the face. That trend is set to continue, with five million more immigrants expected to settle in the UK between now and 2032. This has done more than anything to damage faith in our
75 politics.

Thousands of those who arrive here do so illegally by boat. Under a Reform UK government, all should be turned back to the EU, through which they passed. We are the only party brave enough to leave the European Convention on
80 Human Rights and finally stop the boats.

Britain can do so much better, and leaving the EU properly so that it is truly liberated must be the next step. The UK government must focus fully on reforming areas such as fishing rights and taxes, which still bear the scars of our
85 EU membership. And I am putting Keir Starmer on notice that if there are any more betrayals, you can mark my words that there will be repercussions for Labour at the ballot box.

The time has come to let those of us who started Brexit in
90 2016 finish the job in 2029. Reform stands ready to do just that.

Starmer might be itching to rejoin the sclerotic bloc, but the argument is even weaker now than it was five years ago

David Frost, The Daily Telegraph, 31 Jan 2025

David George Hamilton Frost, Baron Frost is a former British diplomat, civil servant and politician who served as a Minister of State at the Cabinet Office between March and December 2021. Frost was Chief Negotiator of Task Force Europe from January 2020 until his resignation in December 2021. He was granted a Life Peerage in September 2020
Cf. Interview with Frost on Telegraph website / Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJrsDH6O6rs>

So it's five years since we finally left the EU, since that last surge under Boris Johnson when Britain picked over the traps left by the unreconciled Remainers and finally broke through the fence.

Many, at least in the political class, remain unreconciled, and claim the British people are too. Expect, this anniversary week, to be confronted by sheafs of opinion-poll paper, thick as autumnal leaves in Vallombrosa, telling us that we regret our decision and are just desperate to send our bureaucrats back to the Berlaymont and the best part of £20 billion a year to the Commission's account at the

I wonder. Plenty of polls in the years running up to the referendum saw public opinion jump and swoop around like planes trying to get down at Heathrow in last week's storms. Yet when we faced an actual decision, we thought hard, and said "no thanks". Actually getting out was the "nearest run thing you ever saw", to quote Wellington, but like Waterloo, it changed everything.

For, despite all the sound and fury of those years, despite all the wailing and gnashing of teeth of the Remain class in their personal Gehenna of the "non-eu" channel at Florence Airport, aren't we actually managing things perfectly well? Doesn't being outside the EU seem kind of ... normal?

Have we all forgotten how it used to be? The endless rowing about the British abatement and our budget contribution? The summit meetings with beleaguered Britain in a minority of one? The effort to knock Giscard d'estaing's scary European Constitution into shape? The fishing conflicts. The beef wars. The endless defeats at the European Court of Justice. The constant struggle to stay out of the euro and then not to get suckered into bailing it out again when it went wrong, as it will again. (Remember, we even lent the Irish £3.5 billion in 2010 to help them out – and precious little thanks we got for it from Ireland's inward-looking and graceless political class.)

And finally, the disdain and contempt with which David Cameron was treated in his trivial renegotiation for even daring to ask for things that might make all this a bit

better in future. Oh, and the six million (it turned out) EU migrants.

45 Can we really have forgotten all this? Don't we remember how bad it was? Compared to this, even the bickering over Northern Ireland, and one court case over sand eels on Dogger Bank, hardly registers on the Richter scale. Meanwhile we are getting on with governing ourselves.

50 So, what is this reset actually for? For sure, things haven't gone perfectly in the last few years. But it's our mess. We will, in the end, sort it out ourselves. Our biggest problems all predate Brexit: the economic sugar rush of immigration, a slothful and unreformed public sector, the ossified planning system, the net zero madness, and the growing levels of tax, spend, and regulation.

Now we have the freedom to solve these problems ourselves. We don't have to run to Brussels for permission to change VAT; to establish freeports; to change our farming support system; to reach new trade agreements; to do foreign policy deals with our old allies, like Aukus (between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States); to change our rules on gene editing or clinical medical trials; to alter our animal welfare provisions; to cut tariffs on things we don't produce ourselves; to protect the environment in our fishing grounds; to change our rules on driving licences, the size of lorries or the costs of car insurance; and much more. Nor are we sucked into their innovation-killing rules on AI or their free-speech-euthanising Digital Services Act.

Yet Keir Starmer thinks our current relationship with the EU is not normal, is so bad it needs his famous "reset". He's drunk the Remainer Kool-aid – he believes our trade is falling and our economy is collapsing, even though even the IMF has to admit that, since we finally left the EU'S economic zone at the end of 2020, we've grown faster than France, Germany, and indeed the whole eurozone. Not difficult, admittedly, and we should be doing better – but why does he think tying ourselves to them again will improve things?

He seems to think that all is well with the neighbours. Has he looked over the fence recently?

They only stop bashing each other over the head with the garden tools to tell us how wonderful things are and how we should come and join them.

Keir Starmer sympathises. He wants in again, to stop us doing foreign policy without asking Brussels first and to give the EU control over our food-and-drink sector. He's pushing a Bill through parliament that lets the EU set our goods regulations. And – I guarantee it – he's ready to give up full control of our fishing grounds, which is now so tantalisingly close in 2026 after years of quota-sharing.

Starmer and his friends are winning the polling if not the argument. He's spent years suggesting that Britain's First Disobedience, that tasting of the fruit of the forbidden tree of national independence, has brought upon us all our woe. Now it's beginning to pay off.

We can't let this happen. Sadly, the Brexit movement has largely shut up shop in the past year or two. But we

105 mustn't allow the debate to be lost without a fight. So, I and some colleagues have been working to create a new campaigning and information body, to provide honest information about Brexit and the opportunities that national independence can give us. Watch this space – and do get in touch if you think you can help.

110 We don't need, and I don't want, to refight the Brexit wars. There's no need for it. We can govern ourselves perfectly well. We just want to be left to do it.

In my vision of the future, the Brexit argument is over, and Britain has two major parties, both patriotic, both in favour of national democracy, one of the Left, one of the Right, using all their efforts to deliver the best results for the British people. There's a lot to do before we reach this point. But we have begun the journey, and it's a journey forward to the future, not one back to 120 Brussels.

A historically complicated relationship (Copyright Mme Marquardt)

"We have our own dream and our own task. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked but not combined. We are interested and associated but not absorbed." (Winston Churchill, *Saturday Evening Post*, 15 February 1930)

Britain chose not to become a founding member of the European Union (EU) for several reasons:

- Tradition of "splendid isolation" from Continental affairs in the 19th century.
- Importance of the Commonwealth.
- "Special relationship" with the United States.
- Strong tradition of parliamentary sovereignty.
- Importance of coal for British energy and industry (the EU started as the European Coal and Steel Community, the ECSC, founded in 1951).
- Opposition especially from the left: fear of loss of control over industrial policy, leaving workers worse off.

But in the 1950s and 1960s, attitudes began to change:

- European integration moving forward on Britain's doorstep.
- The colonies gradually gained independence.
- The "special relationship" with the United States was called into question, especially in the context of the Vietnam War (≈1950s-1973).

After Charles de Gaulle's France vetoed British entry several times in the 1960s, Britain finally became a member of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973.

A newly elected Labour government then renegotiated the terms of Britain's membership and held a referendum on 5 June 1975. 67% of Britons voted "yes" or "stay"; 33% of Britons voted "no" or "pull out".

But new objections to the EEC began to emerge in the following decades:

- The Treaty of Maastricht (1992/1993) created a more political union, whereas many Britons wanted Europe to remain an economic project. This also ran counter to their tradition of parliamentary sovereignty. The EU's Single Market (*marché commun*) is based on free movement, especially of people (*liberté de circulation*). For Britain, that translated into fear of immigration from poorer countries. After the Eastern enlargement of the European Union (2004, 2007), Britain under Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997-2007) was one of the few countries that placed no restrictions on Eastern workers coming to the United Kingdom. The result was an increase of immigration in some areas (fear of the "Polish

plumber”).

- Resistance to the adoption of the Euro.
- Symbolic and emotional aspects play a role, e.g. abandoning traditional British units in favour of the international system. Tabloids have been spreading lies about Europe for decades (the EU decides the curvature of bananas, Euro bills make you impotent...).

This also led to a shift in parties’ attitudes towards Europe:

- While socialist Jacques Delors was President of the European Commission (1985- 1995), Labour became more comfortable with European integration.
- The Conservatives became more eurosceptic. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) renegotiated the British rebate, i.e. that Britain had to contribute less to the European budget (“I want my money back”). Conservatives were also deeply divided over the Treaty of Maastricht (1992/1993) during the premiership of John Major (1990-1997). David Cameron (2010-2016) then tried to rejuvenate the party by changing that. In 2006, he told his party that it needed to stop “banging on about Europe”.

Brexit timeline: events leading to the UK’s exit from the European Union

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- In a referendum held on **23 June 2016**, the majority of those who voted chose to leave the European Union.
- On **29 March 2017**, in writing to European Council President Donald Tusk, **the Prime Minister formally triggered Article 50** and began the two-year countdown to the UK formally leaving the EU (commonly known as ‘Brexit’). The UK had long been expected to leave the European Union at 11pm on 29 March 2019. However, following a House of Commons vote on 14 March 2019, the Government sought permission from the EU to extend Article 50 and agree a later Brexit date.
- On **20 March 2019** the Prime Minister wrote to European Council President Donald Tusk, **asking to extend Article 50 until 30 June 2019**. Following a European Council meeting the next day, EU27 leaders agreed to grant an extension.
- On **2 April 2019**, the Prime Minister announced she will seek **a further extension to the Article 50** process and offered to meet the Leader of the Opposition to agree a deal that can win the support of MPs. At a meeting of the European Council on 10 April 2019, the UK and EU27 agreed to extend Article 50 until 31 October 2019.
- On **19 October 2019**, the Prime Minister’s new Brexit deal was lost on amendment in the Commons. In accordance with the *European Union (Withdrawal) (No. 2) Act 2019* – commonly known as the ‘Benn Act’ – the Prime Minister wrote to European Council president Donald Tusk, **to request an extension to the Brexit process**. On 28 October 2019, EU Ambassadors agreed a further Brexit extension to 31 January 2020.
- On **12 December 2019**, Boris Johnson won a majority in **the UK General Election** and reaffirmed his commitment to ‘get Brexit done’ by 31 January 2020.
- On **23 January 2020**, **the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020** received Royal Assent. This is the legislation that will implement the withdrawal agreement negotiated by the UK and the EU.
- At 11pm on **31 January 2020**, the UK left the EU and entered **a transition period**.
- At 11pm on **31 December 2020**, the transition period ended and **the United Kingdom left the EU single market and customs union**.

You take a look [HERE](#) at the campaign Leaflet the Cameron Government published at the time

BBC News, 2 February 2024

On February 1 2023, The government has set out new post-Brexit trade arrangements between Northern Ireland, the rest of the UK and the European Union (EU).

Northern Ireland's largest unionist party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), refused to support earlier plans but has backed the new deal.

It clears the way for the Northern Ireland Assembly to meet again - two years after power-sharing collapsed.

Why does Northern Ireland need a Brexit deal?

Trade between Northern Ireland, the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland was straightforward before Brexit - all parties were in the EU and shared the same trade rules.

However, when the UK left the EU, a deal was required to allow trade to continue between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The EU has strict food rules, and requires border checks when certain goods - such as milk and eggs - arrive from non-EU countries like the UK. Paperwork is also required for other goods.

But the idea of checks at the Irish border is a sensitive issue because of Northern Ireland's political history.

It was feared that introducing cameras or border posts as part of checks on incoming and outgoing goods could lead to instability.

How will the new Northern Ireland trade deal work?

The new deal agreed between the UK government and the DUP - called "Safeguarding the Union" - will reduce checks and paperwork on goods going from Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) to Northern Ireland.

There will be no routine checks on British items being sold to consumers in Northern Ireland.

However, some British products brought in for processing, such as raw materials and components, will still face full customs processes.

DUP leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson said the deal meets his party's objectives. He said: "We're no longer in a situation where if you bring goods in to sell in Northern Ireland, you need a customs declaration."

The UK government will also introduce two pieces of legislation, to guarantee Northern Irish goods can be sold in Great Britain in all circumstances, and to confirm Northern Ireland's place in the UK.

A new body called Intertrade UK will work to boost trade between UK nations. At present, some online shoppers in Northern Ireland are told goods sold in the rest of the UK are not available for them to buy.

What are the Northern Ireland Protocol and Windsor Framework?

The first agreement with the EU, called the **Northern Ireland Protocol**, came into force on 1 January 2021.

That introduced new checks on goods from Great Britain, at Northern Ireland's ports.

The checks applied even if the goods were to remain in Northern Ireland. **This angered unionists and led the DUP to boycott Northern Ireland's power-sharing administration at Stormont.**

The Windsor Framework was announced by Rishi Sunak and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

The protocol was amended by another agreement called the Windsor Framework, which was adopted by the UK and EU in 2023.

It created two "lanes" for goods arriving in Northern Ireland from Great Britain:

- A **green lane** for goods remaining in Northern Ireland
- A **red lane** for goods which may be sent on to the EU

Products going through the green lane do not need checks or additional paperwork. Red lane goods are still subject to checks. A ban on certain products - like chilled sausages - entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain was removed. And Northern Ireland no longer had to follow certain EU rules, for example on VAT and alcohol duties.

The Windsor Framework also introduced a mechanism called the "Stormont brake", which would let the Northern Ireland Assembly object to new EU rules which would affect Northern Ireland's trade arrangements.

Despite the DUP's refusal to support the Windsor Framework, the system of green and red lines started operating on 1 October 2023.

The BBC's NI economics and business editor John Campbell says the new deal maximises the flexibility allowed under the existing Windsor Framework, without changing its fundamental elements.