



Never mind the Backstop:

**This is a bad
deal, full stop.**

A report by the People's Vote campaign



Never Mind the Backstop: This is a Bad Deal, Full Stop

Foreword

Next week MPs will take part in the most important votes for decades determining our country's future for generations to come. It is now two months since the Prime Minister published her EU Withdrawal Agreement and accompanying Future Framework. The former sets out the detail of our departure from the EU and the latter a vague set of proposals about our future relationship with our nearest neighbours. We will vote on whether to accept the Prime Minister's so called "deal" on Tuesday of next week.

It is clear that a large number of Conservative MPs will not be voting for the proposed Withdrawal Agreement and equally clear that we have reached that conclusion for a variety of reasons. There has been much criticism and concern of the so called "Back Stop" in relation to Northern Ireland. We share many of those concerns but our opposition to the Withdrawal Agreement goes beyond the back stop.

Firstly, it is not the 'deal' we were promised and nothing is settled. In particular there is no trade deal - just a Future Framework that is so vague the Treasury cannot provide an economic assessment of it. It certainly doesn't provide the frictionless trade so critical for our manufacturing sector and the hundreds of thousands of jobs it supports. The framework fails to achieve the central aims of the so called Chequers Agreement. That was modelled by the Treasury and their independent assessors agreed it would reduce our future prosperity by at least 4 per cent.

If we leave without knowing and agreeing our eventual trading relationship with the EU the Brexit rows that have plagued British politics for two and a half years will go on and on.

Secondly, the backstop not only undermines the Union, it also delivers a customs arrangement over which we will have little - if any - say. We would in fact suffer the biggest loss of sovereignty in our country's history. No wonder so many Leave voters believe this "deal" is a betrayal of Brexit.

Thirdly, it is abundantly clear that whichever way you cut Brexit there is no deal better than the current deal we have with the EU.

We know the overwhelming majority of our colleagues will have thought long and hard about how they will vote next week. Some have made up their minds to reject the deal. Others are determined to support the deal - there are some who will vote for the deal on the basis it will fail and they will then secure some "Norway" deal. We believe you cannot engage in clever tactics on such an important matter. We urge colleagues who know the Withdrawal Agreement is bad for our country to vote against it next week.

We also appreciate there are some who may be tempted to give in to the inevitable pressure to support the Prime Minister's "deal" especially on the false premise that the alternative is no deal. We object to this not so subtle political blackmail especially as it is not the binary choice the Government has made out. Now is the time to put our country's interest first and foremost, especially the future prospects of younger people and reject the PM's Withdrawal Agreement. We can then look at the remaining options.

By Anna Soubry MP



Executive Summary

Trade

During the referendum campaign and subsequently in Government, Brexit supporters have consistently promised that a free trade deal with the EU would be quick and easy and the UK would be able to get the terms they promised because the 'EU needs us more than we need them.'

We were promised a better deal on trade than the one we currently enjoy in the EU, but the Withdrawal Agreement and the Political Declaration bring an end to frictionless trade with our largest trading partner; excludes us from trade deals across the world; and sells out our world-leading services sector.

There is no long-term free trade agreement with our largest trading partner. In fact, we haven't even really started to negotiate one and those negotiations will last for years.

The Economy

During the referendum campaign and subsequently in Government, Brexit supporters have consistently promised that leaving the EU would generate a Brexit dividend that would deliver more money for public services like the NHS, more jobs and higher wages across the UK.

The Brexiters long trumpeted the economic benefits of leaving the European Union but the Government's own economic analysis shows their own deal would seriously harm our economy and leave our country poorer. Growth and international investment have already stalled since the 2016 vote. Yet, we will continue to make payments into the EU budget until 2028 at the earliest but with no say over how that money will be spent.

The lack of an agreement on a future trading relationship with the EU provides for a total lack of the kind of certainty that British businesses crave, and international firms need to make investment decisions. The only certainty that the Brexit deal brings for the economy is that it will cause serious economic pain.

Sovereignty

Instead of realising the Brexiter mantra of taking back control, the deal will result in the greatest voluntary loss of sovereignty in the history of this country. We will enter into a transition agreement where we will have to accept all EU rules without having a say over them and the European Court of Justice will be able to pass judgement on the UK for at least eight years after the end of the transition period.

This deal would see the UK wilfully cede control over the EU's rule-making processes while continuing to take those rules. This is not what the British people voted for, nor something they would ever consent to. It is a deal which signs away power, influence and control.



The absence of a trade deal with our largest trading partner will leave the UK mired in negotiations with the EU for years over a future relationship, during which time we will be forced to abide by the EU's rules without having any say in deciding them.



Security

Leading Brexiters and the Government have consistently promised a security partnership with the EU which would be as good as the relationship which we enjoy today. In reality, however, we will have a weaker relationship on security, which will make it harder for the UK to deal with criminals who cross borders.

We were promised a deal which would be at least as good as the relationship we currently have, based on a “bold” and “strategic” new partnership. But the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration weaken our security arrangements, by cutting us out of Europol. The deal does not even manage to mention the European Arrest Warrant.

Security should be at the heart of this Brexit deal, yet it leaves many issues half-resolved or even barely discussed. Incredibly – and dangerously – we aren’t even close to a long-term security agreement with some of our closest allies in the EU.

Global Influence

Leave campaigners and the Government have promised that Brexit would lead to a more self-confident global Britain bestriding the world, unencumbered by ties to Europe. In reality, however, Britain has always been best able to stand tall in the world when we stand tall in our own European backyard.

Brexit was meant to allow a newly ‘independent’ United Kingdom to wield influence across the globe. Instead, this deal will see this country retreat from the world stage. Leaving the EU will reduce our standing with our nearest neighbours and diminish our standing across the globe. The reality is that it leaves with us with less power than the deal which we currently enjoy as members of the EU.

The deal provides no clarity about our future relationship with our allies in the European Union on the crucial question of how we interact with each other on the world stage to collectively tackle global problems like climate change, addressing illegal migration in the Mediterranean; standing up to the challenges posed by a revisionist Russia; or by tackling security threats across the globe.

NHS

The central claim made by leading Brexiters during the referendum campaign was that leaving the EU would mean we had a lot more money – infamously, an extra £350 million a week – to spend on the NHS, which they claimed was creaking under the pressure of immigration from the EU. In reality, the £350 million figure was grossly inflated, lower growth has led to less tax revenue and less money for public services like the NHS.

Inside the European Union, we can recruit and attract talent from across Europe and take advantage of the free flow of medicines across the EU. The Government’s proposed Brexit deal poses serious restrictions to both and the only people that will suffer are patients, as the NHS struggles to employ key staff and access vital medicines.



This deal provides no assurances for our NHS and its staff. In fact, with so many issues still unresolved, it leaves the entire UK healthcare system facing years of ongoing uncertainty.

Young People

Brexit campaigners and Government Ministers have promised as least as much in research funding for British universities as they enjoy in the EU, while also telling British students they would continue to be able to participate freely in Europe wide programmes. In reality, neither of those things are guaranteed.

As a member of the EU, young people can live, work, and study in 27 other countries. Under this deal, with their freedom of movement opportunities taken away from them, it will become harder, not easier, for them to pursue those kinds of opportunities after Brexit.

The deal fails to guarantee any of the benefits that EU membership offers young people, such as our continued participation in schemes like Erasmus, which will have to be discussed in future negotiations.

Rights

While Brexiters promised to uphold our rights, there is no guarantee that will happen. When leading Brexit campaigners have a long history of also championing the scrapping of various rights we currently enjoy, there are strong suspicions that they might not be in place indefinitely under future UK Governments without being underpinned in EU law.

We were promised the same workers' rights; frictionless travel; and environmental protections that we enjoy today and that these would never be taken away from British citizens. In reality, the deal only contains warm words and lofty intentions.

The deal fails to spell out how the same level of rights that British workers and the natural environment in the UK currently enjoy as EU members will be guaranteed after Brexit. Getting clarity on these issues will take years of complex negotiations.



Demand a vote on the Brexit deal



Trade

We were promised that a trade deal with the EU would be signed, sealed and delivered before we left the EU, but the truth is we haven't even started those difficult negotiations yet. What little we do know from the Government's deal is that it will not be as good as the one we currently have in the EU, with an end to frictionless trade and little on offer for our services sector. We will embark on years of torturous negotiations from a weaker position than the one we are in now to agree a free trade deal that will be the first in human history to start from the assumption that we will be agreeing to less trade.

Promises Not Delivered

During the referendum campaign and subsequently in Government, Brexit supporters have consistently promised that a free trade deal with the EU would be quick and easy and the UK would be able to get the terms they promised because the 'EU needs us more than we need them.' In reality, we haven't even started negotiating a future free trade deal and all we know is that the terms will be much worse than those we enjoy today.

Promise: The International Trade Secretary, Liam Fox, claimed that getting a trade deal with the EU would be "[one of the easiest in human history](#)."

Reality: After two years of negotiations, there is no trade deal with the EU. Instead, all we have is a non-binding Political Declaration, which is only a basis for more negotiations, which will take years.

Promise: The then Brexit Secretary, David Davis, promised "[a comprehensive free trade agreement and a comprehensive customs agreement that will deliver the exact same benefits as we have](#)" in the EU.

Reality: British businesses will have reduced access to European markets because of this deal. The Political Declaration makes clear that there will be customs checks and only "provisions on market access", rather than being in the Single Market on equal terms.

Promise: For the day Britain leaves the EU, Liam Fox pledged to have 40 free trade deals ready to sign "[one second after midnight](#)" and David Davis predicted a raft of fully negotiated new deals, which would result in a "[free trade area massively larger than the EU](#)."

Reality: The UK is years away from signing any trade deals with third-party countries and any future deal with countries like the United States will come with lots of unpleasant strings attached. In addition, we will be losing access to the EU's trade deals with over 70 countries worldwide.

Worse Deal Than in the EU

We were promised a better deal on trade than the one we currently enjoy in the EU, but the Withdrawal Agreement and the Political Declaration bring an end to frictionless trade with our largest trading partner; excludes us from trade deals across the world; and sells out our world-leading services sector.

1. The deal brings an end to free, frictionless trade with our largest trading partner.



In the EU: Through our membership of Europe's Single Market and Customs Union, we enjoy frictionless trade with our largest trading partner in goods and services. British businesses are able to import and export inside the world's largest common market without tariffs or regulatory checks, and where standards and rules are harmonised. In 2017, the EU accounted for 44% of UK exports and 53% of imports.

In the Deal: The Withdrawal Agreement makes clear this deal means an end to frictionless trade, with customs checks at our borders, which means manufacturing industries like car makers face delays, interruptions of supply chains, and substantial extra costs. In the Political Declaration, it states that regulatory checks on goods – which do not take place today – will have their scope determined by how closely the UK decides to align with UK regulatory rules. The result is lost trade through increased barriers or lost sovereignty, as the UK moves from rule-maker inside the EU to rule-taker outside, or both.

2. The deal excludes us from the EU's free trade deals with over 70 countries.

In the EU: As part of one of the world's largest trading blocs, we have access to free trade deals with over 70 countries across the world with countries like Japan, Canada and Singapore. And negotiations have started between the EU and nations like Australia and New Zealand. In addition, the size of Europe's economy and population means inside the EU, we are in a position of strength to negotiate better terms for free trade deals due to the huge size of the market we are part of.

In the Deal: Being outside of the EU's Common Commercial policy will mean the UK is no longer part of the EU's trade deals or involved in the ones currently being negotiated. The Government will have to renegotiate every single deal and have so far managed less than a handful. The Political Declaration merely recognises "the development of an independent trade policy by the UK" but the EU have always made clear that being outside the Customs Union precludes a third-party country, as the UK will be, from benefiting from the trade deals with other countries the EU collectively negotiates.

3. The deal sells out our service sector, which makes up 80% of our economy.

In the EU: The UK's world-leading services sector, which represents 80% of our economy; employs millions of British workers; and contributes billions of pounds in tax revenue, currently has full access to the EU market through our membership of the Single Market in services and passporting rights in financial services.

In the Deal: Outside of the Single Market, the deal offers little for our services sector. For example, in financial services, the Political Declaration makes no provision for the continuation of passporting rights for British financial institutions, which will mean billions in lost revenue and a reduced tax take. Instead, the deal gives the City only a basic level of access to the EU's markets, like that enjoyed by US and Japanese firms. Access would be governed by "equivalence" rules – the UK and EU both unilaterally deciding if each other have met the other's required standards – but this "equivalence" can be withdrawn at any time, which would deny UK firms access to EU markets.

Brexiternity



There is no long-term free trade agreement with our largest trading partner. In fact, we haven't even really started to negotiate one and those negotiations will last for years.

After two years of Brexit negotiations, all we know about our future trade relationship with the EU are unenforceable warm words contained in a Political Declaration, which is merely a framework from which to begin more negotiations. All this blindfold Brexit 'deal' provides is a promise of a potential free trade deal at some unspecified point in the future, with no clarity about the future relationship with our largest partner. A future free trade deal will take years to negotiate and we will be negotiating from an even weaker negotiating position than now, having handed over our biggest negotiating cards, like the divorce bill. The EU will have already got – via the backstop – most of what it wants on manufacturing trade while we desperately seek a deal for our service sector. The negotiations about our future trading relationship – which haven't really started – will take years, which will consume so much of Britain's energy, talent and effort, and will leave little government bandwidth to tackle other issues.



The Economy

Warnings about the potential economic damage from Brexit were breezily dismissed during the referendum campaign as 'Project Fear'. We were told that the British economy would thrive after a Brexit vote but, according to the Bank of England, the economy is already 2% smaller than what it would have been. And the deal itself looks to be even more disastrous for our economy. Every independent study, as well as official analyses by the Government and the Bank of England, have concluded that the Government's deal will be much worse for our economy than the one we have inside the EU. The expected substantial hit to economic growth will have an adverse knock on effect on jobs, wages, jobs and public services, which will negatively affect communities across the country.

Promises Not Delivered

During the referendum campaign and subsequently in Government, Brexit supporters have consistently promised that leaving the EU would generate a Brexit dividend that would deliver more money for public services like the NHS, more jobs and higher wages across the UK. But the reality is that the Government's own analysis of their deal predicts less economic growth, lower wages, reduced tax revenue and less money for public services.

Promise: As recently as November, the Prime Minister claimed that the Government's deal will leave the UK "[better off](#)", adding that a strong economy will continue to grow.

Reality: The economy is already 2% smaller than it would have been, and the Government's own analysis says that their own deal will shrink the economy, estimating that GDP will be 3.9% smaller by 2033 than if we had stayed in the EU.

Promise: Vote Leave promised an economic land of milk and honey outside of the EU, with [more money for public services and higher wages across the country](#).

Reality: Brexit is already leading to job losses. Almost 50 employers across the UK have publicly confirmed over 21,000 jobs will be lost directly because of Brexit, including the manufacturer Schaeffler in Plymouth and Llanelli and Wrightbus in Ballymena. In addition, the UK has lost £42 billion since June 2016 in business investment, which has cost a further 24,000 new jobs. This is just the tip of the iceberg because the UK hasn't even left the European Union. Indeed, under the Government's own analysis of the deal, wages will be 2.7% lower by 2030 than what they would have been, had we stayed in the European Union.

Promise: New found Brexit-enthusiast, the Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, continues to claim that leaving the EU will lead to large savings in government expenditure, which can be spent on "[public spending priorities](#)."

Reality: Our economy is already growing more slowly than it would otherwise have done, which reduces the amount of tax revenue the Government receives and means there is less money, not more, to spend on vital public services like the NHS. And the Government's own analysis says lower growth and less tax take will continue for years, while we will continue to pay into the EU budget.

Worse Deal Than in the EU



The Brexiters long trumpeted the economic benefits of leaving the European Union but the Government's own economic analysis shows their own deal would seriously harm our economy and leave our country poorer. Growth and international investment have already stalled since the 2016 vote. Yet, we will continue to make payments into the EU budget until 2028 at the earliest but with no say over how that money will be spent.

1. The deal will, the Government itself admits, lead to much slower economic growth.

In the EU: British businesses can enjoy frictionless trade across the EU's Single Market and Customs Union, which has underpinned British growth and prosperity for decades. The UK's economy is bolstered being part of the world's largest commercial bloc and from the free movement of goods, services, capital and people across it. There is also both economic certainty for British businesses and international investors through the UK being part of the EU Single Market and Customs Union and its common rule book.

In the Deal: The Government's own analysis of their deal predicts that the economy will be 3.9% smaller by 2033 than if we had stayed in the EU, which is the equivalent to over £100 billion every year, and that GDP per capita will be reduced by 2.7% annually by 2033, which is an average of over £1,000 for every person living in Britain. Very similar figures have been calculated by the Bank of England and by independent analysts like the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

2. The deal will make Britain a less attractive proposition for international investment.

In the EU: Leading international companies from all over the world, such as Japanese car manufacturers or American banks, choose to invest in Britain and set up their operations here in part because the UK is a direct gateway into the world's most lucrative single market, which creates hundreds of thousands of jobs in these firms themselves

In the Deal: Given the Brexit uncertainty, lots of international companies have already had to move their European headquarters, such as Panasonic to Amsterdam and UBS to Frankfurt, while others are setting up new European headquarters, like EasyJet have in Austria to operate its EU flights, and Nomura in Frankfurt to access the EU's financial markets. NIESR believe that the Government's Brexit deal is likely to discourage investment in the UK. Indeed, investment in the UK is already down, with both domestic and foreign companies holding back investment due to the Brexit uncertainty. Foreign direct investment has fallen 20% since the referendum.

3. The deal commits us to continuing payments to the EU until 2028 at the earliest, but we will have no say over how this money is spent.

In the EU: We pay into the EU budget, but we have a seat at the table when deciding how the entirety of the budget is spent, including what the main priorities should be. As a large member state and a net contributor to the budget, we have significant clout in these discussions. Additionally, as an EU member, projects in the UK can receive funding from the EU, for example for infrastructure, research, regional development or education programmes.

In the Deal: It looks a lot like 'taxation without representation'. Under the Withdrawal Agreement, we will be making payments to the EU until 2028 at the very earliest (and the OBR has suggested



they could go on until 2064), despite leaving in March 2019. For a decade at least, UK taxpayers will be handing money over to the EU but with no say over for our domestic government about how this money is spent. Despite the EU's commitment to honouring agreed funding projects, it is completely unclear whether the UK will continue to be able to receive funding for future projects under this deal.

Brexternity

The lack of an agreement on a future trading relationship with the EU provides for a total lack of the kind of certainty that British businesses crave, and international firms need to make investment decisions. The only certainty that the Brexit deal brings for the economy is that it will cause serious economic pain.

When it comes to the economy, this Brexit deal is no more than the throat-clearing phase of talks. It takes us out of the EU, but it offers no assurances as to what our future trading relationship will be with our nearest neighbours. Only one thing is certain about this Brexit deal: it will hurt the British economy, as the Government freely admit in their own analysis. The question – one which will not be answered for many years – is just how deep that damage will be. With the acceptance of EU rules a necessary part of gaining access to EU markets, talks between the EU and the UK will rumble on for years and will be the cause of unpleasant and painfully familiar debate at Westminster. Employers and employees will be forced to watch on as the UK attempts to negotiate a deal which will have consequences for all of them, and many businesses will choose to relocate, downsize or postpone investment decisions, as the economic pain begins to bite. Staff cannot be sure that their wages will rise, or jobs will be protected and, as our economy suffers, so will our public services. The Political Declaration calls for “an ambitious, wide-ranging and balanced economic partnership” but those warm words will take years of painful negotiations to realise and it will be clear from the outset that it will not be as deep and beneficial economic partnership as we currently enjoy.



Demand a vote on the Brexit deal

Sovereignty

Reclaiming sovereignty was at the heart of the campaign for Brexit, epitomised by the official campaign slogan 'take back control'. Yet, the Brexit deal is an affront to British sovereignty. In leaving, we lose any say in shaping EU rules or decisions, but the deal will see us continue to abide by EU rules and follow EU decisions. It turns us from rule maker to rule taker. Far from taking back control, this deal will see us lose control of our ability to shape our own destiny

Promises Not Delivered

Instead of realising the Brexiter mantra of taking back control, the deal will result in the greatest voluntary loss of sovereignty in the history of this country. We will enter into a transition agreement where we will have to accept all EU rules without having a say over them and the European Court of Justice will be able to pass judgement on the UK for at least eight years after the end of the transition period.

Promise: The centre-piece of the Vote Leave campaign was the claim that leaving the EU would allow the UK to 'take back control' of its money and spend £350m a week on the NHS. Indeed, Boris Johnson, recently had the chutzpah to claim that the £350m figure was "[too low](#)."

Reality: As the independent UK Statistics Authority has repeatedly pointed out, the £350m figure was a lie, as the net payments we make to the EU budget are much lower. And in the deal, we have agreed to a £50 billion divorce bill, where hand over a cheque to with nothing guaranteed in return. The deal commits us to paying into the EU budget until at least 2028 and the Office for Budget Responsibility has said that could continue until the 2060s.

Promise: Another central tenet among Brexit backers long repeated by Ministers at the highest level of government was that leaving the European Union would see the UK immediately "[take back control of our laws](#)" as soon as we left the EU, as the Prime Minister famously claimed in her Lancaster House speech.

Reality: The deal will turn the UK from being a rule maker with a seat around the table in EU decision-making into a rule taker, with laws being decided by the EU during the transition period without us having a say over them.

Promise: In the same speech, the Prime Minister echoed another core argument of Brexit campaigners by claiming that leaving the EU would "[bring an end to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice in Britain](#)."

Reality: The UK will continue to be completely under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice until the end of the transition period, which is scheduled to last for 21 months but could well be longer, and will be able to pass judgement on events in the UK for up to eight years thereafter.

Worse Deal Than in the EU

This deal would see the UK wilfully cede control over the EU's rule-making processes while continuing to take those rules. This is not what the British people voted for, nor something they would ever consent to. It is a deal which signs away with power, influence and control.



1. The deal will turn the UK from being a rule-maker to being a rule-taker.

In the EU: With a seat around the negotiating table, we can influence, frame and shape the rules of the European Union to make them more beneficial for our economy, our society and our citizens. We also enjoy a veto in several areas, like over our rebate and the EU's foreign and defence policy. We are fully represented across shared institutions like the European Council, Commission, Parliament and Court of Justice. We are a sovereign nation able to make our own choices, such as holding a referendum on our membership of the European Union.

In the Deal: The UK is committed during the transition period, which will last for a minimum of 21 months and very likely much longer, to abiding by all EU rules without having any say over them. We will then enter into a relationship where if we want to enjoy the kind of access to the EU markets which we enjoy today, we will have to mirror, shadow and follow EU rules but without having a say over them.

2. The deal will not bring an end to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

In the EU: The European Court of Justice (ECJ) interprets and passes judgements on EU law, which means that British citizens and UK businesses can seek legal redress at the highest court in Europe to ensure that their rights are upheld in the UK and across the EU and that a level playing field exists across all member states. Furthermore, we have a seat at the table in shaping the laws that the ECJ is ruling on and we have influence in the ECJ itself, where we nominate a British judge to sit in it.

In the Deal: The Withdrawal Agreement is crystal clear that the European Court will continue its jurisdiction in the UK throughout the transition period and will be able to pass judgement on events in the UK for up to eight years after the end of the transition period. This means that what will become a foreign court, over which we will have no control or influence, will continue to have control or influence over us. And we will no longer have the ability to shape the laws the ECJ rules on or be able to appoint a British judge to its bench.

3. The deal effectively means 'taxation without representation'.

In the EU: As one of the largest economies in Europe, we are a net contributor to the EU budget, but we have a say on how the entire budget is spent, so that much of the expenditure is on what we feel are our strategic priorities. Whilst the European Commission proposes the EU's budget, it cannot be signed-off unless unanimously approved by all Member States, currently including the United Kingdom. And we receive more EU funding for projects and programmes in the UK than many Member States including the Netherlands and Ireland.

In the Deal: For the entirety of transition, we will have no say over how UK taxpayers' money is spent. It will be "taxation without representation". In 1776, the US Colonies broke free from us because we taxed them without offering them representation. Now, we are actively walking into such a scenario ourselves. As the Withdrawal Agreement is clear that we will be making payments into the EU budget until at least 2028 (and the OBR has suggested until 2064). And the Political Declaration references that the UK might wish to participate in EU programmes but there is no mention of whether we what price we would have to pay to do so or whether projects in the UK would be eligible for funding.

Brexiternity



The absence of a deal with our largest trading partner will leave the UK mired in negotiations with the EU for years over a future relationship, during which time we will be forced to abide by the EU's rules without having any say in deciding them.

Throughout the transition period, which will last a minimum of 21 months and more likely longer, the UK will be stuck in the EU's regulatory orbit and forced to follow its rules but without any ability to shape them. We will become a voluntary rule-taker indefinitely. Under this blindfold Brexit deal, we will spend years debating the choice between losing sovereignty and losing trade. The EU has been clear that the more access to their markets we want – which is vital for British businesses and our economy as a whole – the more of their rules we will have to follow, without having any say over them. We will never enjoy complete unfettered sovereignty. No country in the world does. So, we will spend the next few years tortuously discussing how much trade we want to lose at what sovereign price.



Security

Proponents of Brexit have always dismissed the idea that our security arrangements would be in any way impinged by leaving the EU, guaranteeing a level of security co-operation with our European partners that is at least as good as we have today, if not better. The deal, however, offers little clarity about our future relationship on security but is clear that the UK will be outside some of the Continent's most valuable crime-fighting tools. In the 21st Century, serious crime, like terrorism, drug smuggling and human trafficking crosses borders at will and cannot be dealt with by nation states alone, which is why reducing security co-operation, as the deal does, will leave us all less safe.

Promises Not Delivered

Leading Brexiters and the Government have consistently promised a security partnership with the EU which would be as good as the relationship which we enjoy today. In reality, however, we will have a weaker relationship on security, which will make it harder for the UK to deal with criminals who cross borders. The UK has traditionally taken the lead role in Europe when dealing with the security of our Continent, but we will now not be involved in those discussions in Brussels.

Promise: David Davis, the former Brexit Secretary, promised a relationship on security with the EU that would [“keep our justice and security arrangements at least as strong as they are.”](#)

Reality: After two years of negotiations, all we have is a vague commitment to a future relationship on security, which we know will not match up to the strength of the relationship we have today.

Promise: In her Florence speech, the Prime Minister assured the nation that we would be getting [“a bold new strategic agreement that provides a comprehensive framework for future security, law enforcement and criminal justice co-operation.”](#)

Reality: We are not even close to a comprehensive framework for future security co-operation, which is still to be negotiated. What we do know is that we will be outside the European Arrest Warrant and outside of Europol, an organisation we used to lead.

Promise: During the referendum campaign, Vote Leave promised that the UK would negotiate [“a new UK-EU extradition treaty”](#) (presumably in place of our participation in the European Arrest Warrant).

Reality: There is no mention of the European Arrest Warrant in the Political Declaration, but neither is there of a new extradition treaty with the EU, which does not even seem to be being discussed. As a result, the deal could make it harder, not easier, to bring criminals back to face justice in this country.

Worse Deal Than in the EU

We were promised a deal which would be at least as good as the relationship we currently have, based on a “bold” and “strategic” new partnership. But the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration weaken our security arrangements, by cutting us out of Europol. The deal does not even manage to mention the European Arrest Warrant, a vital crime-fighting tool which has helped us track down British criminals abroad and bring them back to face the British justice system.



1. The deal leaves us outside of key European security arrangements, like Europol and the European Arrest Warrant.

In the EU: We benefit from Europe-wide security cooperation, including expedited extradition through the European Arrest Warrant and membership of Europol (which until recently was led by a Brit, Sir Rob Wainwright), which helps us in our fight against international crime and terrorism. We are also part of Eurojust, which helps us co-operate with other EU members when it comes to dealing with cross border-crime.

In the Deal: We will end up outside of the European Arrest Warrant, severely diminishing our ability to get back suspects to the UK to face British justice, which has happened thousands of times in recent years. When it comes to Europol and Eurojust, the Political Declaration merely talks about identifying “the terms for the United Kingdom’s cooperation”, which is a clear step down from the full membership and participation we enjoy today.

2. The deal does not provide for continued access to vital crime and security databases.

In the EU: We participate in the Schengen Information System II, an EU-wide database on organised crime and terrorist suspects; the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), which supports crucial information exchange between EU law enforcement authorities; and the Prüm Convention which allows for fast and efficient data exchange between the UK and other EU countries, from DNA databases, fingerprint identification systems and vehicle registration databases.

In the Deal: There is no mention anywhere in the Political Declaration about the UK’s future relationship with the Schengen Information System or ECRIS, so there is no guarantee about continued UK access to these vital databases. When it comes to Prüm, the Political Declaration only commits to the UK and EU establishing “reciprocal arrangements”, which are likely to be less deep or efficient as we have today, reducing or delaying access for our crime-fighting agencies to vital EU wide databases, which has alarmed serving police officers of all ranks.

3. The deal – and the loss of our seat at the table – will mean we have less of a say when it comes to then external security of our Continent.

In the EU: We have a seat at the top table and have always played a leading role in shaping the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policies and Common Foreign and Defence Policies. Through these ministerial meetings as well as institutional co-operation, we can shape and guide the external security of an entire Continent, for example in tackling security threats in the Indian Ocean; peace-keeping operations in the Sahel; combating illegal migration; or tackling the threats posed by Russia, including in cybersecurity.

In the Deal: We will have lost our seat at the table and the influence that comes with it. We will be reduced to relying on backchannels and diplomatic overtures when it comes to attempting influence European security and defence policy. The deal only commits us to taking part in Common Security and Defence Policy missions on a case-by-case basis, which raises serious questions over our ability to work in tandem with our European allies when it comes to tackling a range of common external security threats.

Brexiternity



Demand a vote on the Brexit deal

Security should be at the heart of this Brexit deal, yet it leaves many issues half-resolved or even barely discussed. Incredibly – and dangerously – we aren't even close to a long-term security agreement with some of our closest allies in the EU.

The Political Declaration's fuzzily worded assurance of a "broad, comprehensive and balanced security partnership" offers nothing in the way of detail, so the UK faces years of talks with the EU over how to keep the people of this country safe. Serious question marks remain over whether the UK will continue to enjoy access to vital EU-wide criminal-sharing databases like the Schengen Information System II and the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), while the UK's withdrawal from the European Arrest Warrant will result in endless discussions over agreed levels of cooperation over cross-border offences, arrests and extraditions. The deal also fails to provide any certainty over the UK's future cooperation with Europol and Eurojust, the law enforcement and judicial bodies which are at the heart of the EU. It is the duty of the government to keep the country safe and yet, incredibly, this deal poses countless questions about how it plans to do that after Brexit, which can only be answer by years of ongoing negotiations and complicated talks.



Global Influence

The Government and Brexiters have often claimed that leaving the European Union would lead to an increase in the UK's standing on the world stage. This deal does the opposite. By willingly giving away the influence which we hold in our own backyard, the Government's deal will also reduce the UK's power and influence on the global stage; reduce our negotiating clout with major powers; weaken existing key strategic partnerships; and decrease our ability to tackle global problems.

Promises Not Delivered

Leave campaigners and the Government have promised that Brexit would lead to a more self-confident global Britain bestriding the world, unencumbered by ties to Europe. However, Britain has always been best able to stand tall in the world when we stand tall in our own European backyard. Leaving the EU will see us lose influence across the globe at a time when cooperation with our international allies is more needed than ever.

Promise: The idea of leaving the EU to become a "[global Britain](#)" is so central to the argument in favour of Brexit that it was the centre piece of Theresa May's 2016 Party Conference speech. In her Lancaster House speech, the Prime Minister went further and said it was "[time for Britain to get out into the world and rediscover its role as a great, global, trading nation.](#)"

Reality: Outside the EU, far from being a more global Britain, we will be less influential in the world, as we will no longer have a constant seat at the table where European leaders frame the foreign policy of an entire Continent.

Promise: During the referendum campaign, the then soon-to-be Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson baldly asserted that after Brexit, "[we will not lose influence in Europe or around the world – on the contrary, you could argue we will gain in clout.](#)"

Reality: After two years of negotiations, all we have is a deal which gives us less influence than today on the global stage and where, during transition, the EU will be able to enter into international negotiations on our behalf.

Promise: The current Foreign Secretary, when taking office, suggested that Britain outside of the EU would be able to play the role of an advocate to reform the global multi-lateral order by delivering "[UN reform ... WTO reform ... \[and\] reform \[of\] the World Bank.](#)"

Reality: The Foreign Secretary can pretend Britain can unilaterally lead on reforming global institutions, but that job is made more difficult when we have weakened our relationship our closest allies in Europe; we are dealing with an unpredictable American President; China is exerting itself more on the world stage; and Russia continues to meddle in our internal affairs and that of other countries.

Worse Deal Than in the EU

Brexit was meant to allow a newly 'independent' United Kingdom to wield influence across the globe. Instead, this deal will see this country retreat from the world stage. Leaving the EU will reduce our standing with our nearest neighbours and diminish our standing across the globe. The reality is that it leaves with us with less power than the deal which we currently enjoy as members of the EU.



1. The deal will reduce our position as Europe's biggest and most influential foreign policy actor.

In the EU: As a member of the European Union, the UK influences and leads on the foreign policy of an entire Continent. This includes tackling illegal migration in the Mediterranean; standing up to the challenges posed by a revisionist Russia; providing political stability in the Balkans; and tackling security threats and providing peace-keeping operations across the globe.

In the Deal: We will lose our seat at the top table in being able to influence the foreign policy of an entire Continent. The Political Declaration calls for "flexible and scalable cooperation" in these matters. But the opportunity to attend "informal meetings" by the Council of Ministers and participation on a case-by-case basis in Common Security and Defence Policy missions does not even come close to the influence we enjoy today as an EU member.

2. The deal means that we will have much of our foreign policy decided for us during transition.

In the EU: With a seat around the table, we can influence and set the tone for the foreign policy of an entire continent. At the same time, we retain complete independence of action when it comes to defence, security, and foreign policy, as these are decided at EU level on the basis of unanimity and the UK has the right of veto.

In the Deal: In the Withdrawal Agreement, it is clear that during the transition period, which may very well be extended, the UK will be bound by all the EU's international obligations, without having a say over them. We will be handing over key decisions, which will impact on both us and the world at large, to others to make on our behalf for a period of at least 21 months. This represents a huge loss of sovereignty for any nation, let alone a permanent member of the UN Security Council like the UK.

3. The deal will reduce our ability to lead the fight against global problems.

In the EU: We are an integral part of one of the world's most influential organisations when it comes to setting international standards and collectively tackling global issues. We work directly and closely with our closest partners to address problems that cannot be tackled by nation states alone, like climate change; the mass movement of people; international development; and reforming global taxation.

In the Deal: The deal is aspirational at best, where we will lose the possibility to influence our nearest allies. Climate change does not stop at borders and the environment will always be strongly influenced by those geographically closest to us. Moreover, when it comes to developmental aid, we will no longer be part of the world's largest international aid donor, minimising our influence when it comes to framing the international development agenda. And the UK will lose its seat at the table in shaping cross-Europe plans to increase the tax take from global tech companies.

Brexternity

The deal provides no clarity about our future relationship with our allies in the European Union on the crucial question of how we interact with each other on the world stage to collectively tackle global problems like climate change, addressing illegal migration in the Mediterranean; standing up to the challenges posed by a revisionist Russia; or by tackling security threats across the globe.



After two years, all we have seemed to negotiate is a loss of our seat at the top table of European foreign policy-making for the duration of the transition period and a total lack of clarity about where we will sit in the long-term. It is unlikely any time soon that Britain will depart from the long-held view that our foreign policy interests are best served when working in concert with like-minded European countries. We will continue to need to work with key international allies like France and Germany but have not agreed how to do that, beyond traditional nation-state diplomacy. The global problems the world faces are not going away, yet the UK will spend years debating and negotiating how we involve ourselves in tackling them with our nearest neighbours. From climate change to cross-border crime and terrorism, from international aid to illegal immigration, the UK will spend time, effort and money working out new relationships, systems and structures to jointly deal with them with the EU, when we currently do that by simply having a seat at the table.



NHS

The Government's Brexit deal risks causing serious damage to our treasured NHS and to the nation's health. Ending free movement will make it harder for the NHS and other vital healthcare organisations, like social care providers, across the country, to attract the key staff they need, at a time when there are thousands of vacancies in crucial roles across the health service. The NHS was promised a huge boost by Leave campaigners, but healthcare professionals are increasingly concerned that it could be the biggest challenge faced by the health service since its formulation.

Promises Not Delivered

The central claim made by leading Brexiters during the referendum campaign was that leaving the EU would mean we had a lot more money – infamously, an extra £350 million a week – to spend on the NHS, which they claimed was creaking under the pressure of immigration from the EU. In reality, the £350 million figure was grossly inflated, lower growth has led to less tax revenue and less money for public services like the NHS (and will continue to do so, according to Government figures), and ending free movement will only heap pressure on the NHS by exacerbating existing staff shortages.

Promise: Vote Leave's infamous slogan about giving the NHS an extra £350 million a week didn't end with the referendum campaign, it has been consistently repeated by senior Government Ministers ever since, most notably by the then Foreign Secretary, [Boris Johnson](#).

Reality: As has been repeatedly pointed out by independent fact checkers, the UK has never paid the EU £350 million a week and the UK Statistics Authority wrote to Boris Johnson after in September 2017 telling him the claim was "a clear misuse of official statistics." In the real world, the Brexit vote has led to lower growth, reduced tax revenue and consequently less money for public services like the NHS.

Promise: Vote Leave went further than promising the NHS money by claiming that reduced immigration from the EU would "[reduce the pressure on the NHS](#)."

Reality: In a British hospital, you are more likely to be treated by an EU national than you are to be standing behind one in the queue. So, ending free movement, as the Government's deal does, will only make it harder for our NHS and social care system to recruit the doctors, nurses and care workers they so desperately need at a time of increasing staff shortages.

Promise: In the referendum campaign, the Chair of Vote Leave, Gisela Stuart, claimed stopping payments to the EU would allow us to "[abolish prescription charges](#)."

Reality: We will continue to pay into the EU budget until 2028 at the earliest (and probably for much longer) and there is no sign of prescription charges being abolished. In fact, they are going up – from £8.40 to £8.60 in 2017 and again to £8.80 in 2018.

Worse Deal Than in the EU

Inside the European Union, we can recruit and attract talent from across Europe and take advantage of the free flow of medicines across the EU. The Government's proposed Brexit deal poses serious restrictions to both and the only people that will suffer are patients, as the NHS struggles to employ key staff and access vital medicines.



1. The deal reduces the ability of the NHS to recruit frontline staff from the EU.

In the EU: Under freedom of movement rules, the NHS can recruit doctors, nurses and other staff from other EU countries as easily as they can domestically, without the burden and cost of red tape or visa-requirements. Under the most recent estimate by NHS England, 63,000 of its staff are EU nationals, and just under 10% of NHS hospital doctors are from other EU countries.

In the Deal: One of the few things that is clear under the deal is that free movement of people will come to an end. This means that it will be harder for the NHS to recruit staff from the EU, at a time when there are already severe staffing shortages for key roles across the NHS. Indeed, since the Brexit vote, there is increasing evidence of a Brexit of critical NHS workers, with thousands of doctors, nurses, and midwives leaving the UK in 2017 and 2018 and far fewer applying for jobs than before the Brexit vote.

2. The deal risks reduced access to lifesaving medicines.

In the EU: Medicines can flow freely into the UK from across the EU, due to the UK's membership of the Single Market and the Customs Union. This means no burdensome checks on the import of medicines, some of which have extremely short shelf-lives and would be ruined by any serious delays at the border.

In the Deal: The free flow of medicines will not be as it is today. Whilst the deal does not specifically mention that the UK will be leaving the Single Market and Customs Union, the Government could not have been clearer that it is their intention to do so. And there are strong hints in the Political Declaration, with references to the integrity of the EU's internal market and the UK's desire to end free movement that things will not be as they are today. Even the smallest delays or restrictions in the free flow of medicines would have devastating consequences for those that rely on them.

3. The deal leaves the UK outside of the European Medicines Agency.

In the EU: As part of the EU, the UK is part of the European Medicines Agency (EMA), which is currently based in London, and carries out scientific evaluations, on which the European Commission decides whether to authorise medicines for us in the EU. The EMA ensures that patients have timely access to new medicines, evaluates their marketing, and monitors medicines' safety in coordination with pharmaceutical companies.

In the Deal: The Political Declaration only commits the UK and EU to "explore the possibility of cooperation" with the European Medicines Agency, which is a step down from the full membership we enjoy today. That lack of membership could mean exclusion from EMA committees and working groups that oversee vital issues such as medicinal products and there is no guaranteed access to the scientific expertise of national regulatory authorities in other EU Member States. This could result in the process for authorising medicines in the UK facing red tape and delays. In addition, as the EMA cannot be based outside an EU member state, it is now in the process of moving to the Netherlands and 1,000 high-quality jobs will go with it.

Brexiternity

This deal provides no assurances for our NHS and its staff. In fact, with so many issues still unresolved, it leaves the entire UK healthcare system facing years of ongoing uncertainty.



Our NHS is left facing countless difficult questions, which successive governments will struggle to find answers to any time soon. Outside of the Single Market and with restrictions on free movement, the UK faces ongoing rows over the costs and distribution of vital medical supplies and barriers to employing the EU nationals the sector badly needs. There will also be endless ongoing debates over the extent to which the UK can continue to enjoy reciprocal healthcare schemes, like the European Health Insurance Card. With so much still to be settled, the negotiations will take years to provide clarity, which will leave the NHS facing damaging years of uncertainty.



Young People

The Brexit deal is terrible for young people. It takes opportunities from them by limiting their chances to work and study across Europe. And the economic downturn the deal will deliver will inevitably see young people hit the hardest, for the longest. Young people are having a Brexit deal forced on them, which they did not vote for, but which will affect them the most. The voices of young people have been ignored throughout the Brexit process and the result is a Brexit deal that will significantly limit their life chances.

Promises Not Delivered

Brexit campaigners and Government Ministers have promised as least as much in research funding for British universities as they enjoy in the EU, while also telling British students they would continue to be able to participate freely in Europe wide programmes. In reality, neither of those things are guaranteed, while the one thing that is, is that young people will lose the right of freedom of movement they currently have to live, work and study across the EU.

Promise: Eleven prominent Vote Leave campaigners, including Boris Johnson and Michael Gove, promised during the referendum campaign that [“scientists and universities should expect that funding will be much more generous after we take back control.”](#)

Reality: Since the Brexit vote, UK universities have begun to receive a lower proportion of European grants, losing £121 million in EU research funding compared to 2015.

Promise: The Prime Minister, Theresa May, promised that opportunities for British students under the Erasmus+ student exchange programme would continue [“until at least the end of 2020.”](#)

Reality: There is no mention of the ERASMUS programme in the Political Declaration at all. So, participation is only guaranteed until the end of the transition period and British students may not be able to take part after that.

Promise: In urging young people to embrace the benefits of Brexit, the then former Foreign Secretary told them that they would continue to “ever more intensively to [“go on cheapo flights ... meet interesting people \[and\] fall in love.”](#)

Reality: The Government has committed to ending the freedom of movement, making it harder, not easier for young people, the vast majority of whom voted to stay in the European Union, to pursue their dreams to travel, work and study across the EU.

Worse Deal Than in the EU

As a member of the EU, young people can live, work, and study in 27 other countries. Under this deal, with their freedom of movement opportunities taken away from them, it will become harder, not easier, for them to pursue those kinds of opportunities after Brexit.

1. The deal will result in young people losing opportunities to travel, study and work in Europe.

In the EU: Under the Erasmus+ programme, young people can study at any university in the EU and pay the same tuition fees as domestic students, which sometimes means paying nothing. Since 1987, over 200,000 students have taken advantage of this opportunity, with 15,000 UK students studying

in the EU in 2012 alone (the fifth highest in the EU). And young people can work anywhere they choose to across the EU, gaining valuable experience, income, and language skills, without cost or the need for a visa.

In the Deal: The Withdrawal Agreement ends the free movement of people after transition and the Political Declaration sets out that migration policies will be reciprocal between the UK and the EU. The Government's Immigration White Paper is clear that EU migration will be limited, which if reciprocated, as is almost certain, will reduce the ability of young people to live, work and study on the Continent. If a salary threshold is imposed, the numbers will plummet even further. Moreover, the Political Declaration does not even mention the Erasmus+ programme.

2. This deal is one that young people cannot afford.

In the EU: The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) allocates funding to areas with youth employment rates of over 25%. Since it launched, the UK has received €461 million to help young people in places like Merseyside, the West Midlands, Tees Valley and Durham, and South West Scotland. Young Brits are provided with career advisors, communication skills courses, and a fund for travel expenses. And a healthy, growing economy is essential to ensuring that young people have the strongest foundation possible on which to build their working lives.

In the Deal: The Political Declaration offers no guarantees that successful EU-funded youth employment initiatives, like the YEI, that so obviously benefit young people in the UK, would continue. And, with reduced income from tax revenue, there is even less guarantee that future UK governments would be able to fund equivalent domestic initiatives. Furthermore, every economic assessment made of the deal has found that young people will be worst affected – hit in their pocket hardest and for the longest.

3. The deal will restrict access to EU funding for British universities, which will decrease the opportunities for British students.

In the EU: The UK is one of the largest recipients of research funding in the EU. According to the Royal Societies, the UK received €8.8 billion in research funding from the EU between 2007 and 2013 (the fourth-largest in the EU) and have so far received €4.6bn under the EU's Horizon2020 programme. Universities UK have estimated that EU research funding generates more than 19,000 jobs across the UK and contributes more than £1 billion to GDP. It is of great benefit to universities, students and the wider economy.

In the Deal: The Political Declaration contains no reference to the UK's continued participation in research programmes like Horizon2020, so there is no guarantee of future European funding for British universities after the transition period. Indeed, leading academics have suggested that research money is already flowing away from the UK to other European countries, which is having a negative impact on research in this country.

Brexiternity

The deal fails to guarantee any of the benefits that EU membership offers young people, such as our continued participation in schemes like Erasmus, which will have to be discussed in future negotiations.



Demand a vote on the Brexit deal

Similarly, there is no clarity about the ability of young people to freely work in other European countries, nor for our universities about how they cooperate in research programs with their European counterparts or whether they will continue to receive funding from the EU . With so much undecided and so much of the next decade set to be dominated by the Brexit debate, young people's policy priorities – like housing, jobs opportunities and university fees – will be squeezed out of the political debate while successive governments give priority to delivering a Brexit deal that will determine the future life opportunities of a generation that did not vote for it.



Rights

As citizens of an EU Member State, Britons currently enjoy some of the most comprehensive worker and consumer rights of any people in the world and can benefit from the advantages of free movement. Similarly, Britain's natural environment is offered significant protection under EU laws. Brexiters have talked the talk of maintaining these rights but neither they nor the Government have offered any cast-iron guarantees that these benefits will continue. So, it is little wonder, given previous statements by many leading Brexiters, that many fear these rights will be vulnerable to the whims of future UK governments.

Promises Not Delivered

While Brexiters promised to uphold our rights, there is no guarantee that will happen. When leading Brexit campaigners have a long history of also championing the scrapping of various rights we currently enjoy, there are strong suspicions that they might not be in place indefinitely under future UK Governments without being underpinned in EU law.

Promise: In her Lancaster House speech, the Prime Minister promised that the UK would [“fully protect and maintain”](#) existing workers' rights.

Reality: Leading Brexit campaigners have a long history of demanding key rights be scrapped. For example, Boris Johnson has previously proposed scrapping the Social Chapter and Michael Gove has lobbied in Government for ending the EU Working Time Directive. With the deal offering no concrete guarantees, it is little wonder many are worried that these rights will not survive the policies of future governments without being underpinned by EU law.

Promise: During the referendum campaign, Brexiters Andrea Leadsom and Gisela Stuart promised that all EU Social Chapter rules [“will remain in place”](#) if the UK voted to leave the EU.

Reality: Although the UK and the EU can agree in principle to a provision that stipulates that neither party will drop their labour standards below current levels, in practice these 'non-regression clauses' are vague and weakly enforced and, by definition, do not take into account future legislation on employment protections developed by the EU after Brexit. So, proposed directives on zero-hours contract workers and on leave for carer's may fall through the Brexit cracks.

Promise: On the day after the triggering of Article 50, the then Brexit Secretary, David Davis, underlined that [“the workers' rights, environmental protection and consumer rights that are enjoyed under EU law in the UK will continue to be available in UK law after we have left the European Union.”](#)

Reality: As with the Social Chapter, it is unclear in the Brexit deal how or whether the non-regression clauses on level fields for standards will actually be enforceable or not. Indeed, the leaked Government Economic Impact Assessments raised the possibility that employment and other rights may be altered or repealed, praising the opportunity to regulate differently across a range of areas.

Worse Deal Than in the EU

We were promised the same workers' rights; frictionless travel; and environmental protections that we enjoy today and that these would never be taken away from British citizens. In reality, the deal only contains warm words and lofty intentions. Specific guarantees are conspicuous by their absence



and, as such, are vulnerable to being changed or scrapped by this or another UK Government in the future.

1. The deal does not guarantee the rights workers currently have.

In the EU: EU law currently guarantees British workers a range of protections in the workplace. EU law prohibits discrimination in the workplace on grounds of gender, age, ethnic or racial origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. In addition, women in the EU are legally entitled to at least 14 weeks' maternity leave and to protection against being sacked for being pregnant, while EU law also requires member states to provide for parental leave. Part-time workers' rights are also equal to those enjoyed by full-time employees, while all workers have rights if firms plan collective redundancies, go bust or are transferred to new ownership. Regardless of the make-up and views of the UK Government at any time, British workers know that their rights are protected and upheld by EU law, with a level playing field for minimum rights across the EU. In the EU, the UK currently has a seat at the table and can shape the minimum rights that workers enjoy across Europe.

In the Deal: Concrete protections for workers are conspicuous by their absence. There is no mention in either the Withdrawal Agreement or the Political Declaration of whether existing rights, which British people take for granted today, will be upheld. The non-regression clauses covered in the deal are difficult to enforce and vague. Without an underpinning in EU law, future UK Governments could scrap or reduce rights in the workplace as they so wish. In addition, future UK Governments will have no role in shaping future EU-wide rules on rights (including any formulated during the transition period) and British workers will not automatically enjoy them on their introduction across the rest of the EU.

2. The deal devalues the British passport, as there will be fewer uses for it.

In the EU: Today, through EU citizenship, a British passport allows its holder to live, work, study and retire visa-free anywhere in the EU through the principle of freedom of movement. In addition, EU citizenship also provides British citizens with the right to vote in European elections and can seek legal redress at the highest level in the EU by going to the European Court of Justice.

In the Deal: Our current birth-right to visa-free opportunities to live, work, study and retire across the EU is removed, which will see the opportunities for British citizens – currently based on the strength of their passports – severely curtailed. The Political Declaration merely states that the EU and the UK should establish “mobility arrangements”. In addition, the loss of the right to vote in European Parliamentary elections this year, will leave British citizens with no democratic say over how the EU is run at a time when it will introduce laws and rules that will affect them.

3. The deal does not guarantee the environmental protections we currently have.

In the EU: EU-wide rules are in place which offer a range of protections for the natural environment in the UK. Due to EU rules, protections have been in place for birds and natural habitats. The water framework directive protects rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters. The air quality framework directive has helped us tackle air pollution and the bathing water directive has helped put an end to the discharge of raw sewage. The UK is part of an unparalleled and strong negotiating body in international climate change summits and British utilities are amongst the largest buyers of



carbon permits in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. It has been estimated that as much as 80% of our environmental protections in this country are rooted in EU law.

In the Deal: The Withdrawal Agreement calls for non-regression when it comes to environmental standards, but the Political Declaration is much vaguer, calling only for a level-playing field. But this aspiration is not the same as the guaranteed standards underpinned by EU law, which we currently enjoy. Environmental charities have expressed concern that future UK Governments may not replicate current EU laws or weaken them or not enforce them as strongly as we do today. And, as with workers' rights, environmental rights in the future would be subject to the whim of domestic governments, who could choose to scrap or weaken them.

Brexiternity

The deal fails to spell out how the same level of rights that British workers and the natural environment in the UK currently enjoy as EU members will be guaranteed after Brexit. Getting clarity on these issues will take years of complex negotiations.

People across the country have good reason to be deeply concerned by the considerable uncertainty that this Brexit deal will cause them. The Political Declaration merely says the UK and the EU “are determined to work together” on the issue of rights, yet so much is still to be resolved. With the resolution of these complex issues delayed, employers and employees cannot be sure whether existing rights will remain in place and in what form. Future governments could choose to continually renegotiate with the EU for years to come on both workers end environmental rights or depart from European-wide standards and enter years of negotiations about how UK and EU law can co-exist in these areas. Against this uncertain backdrop, firms and their staff will all find it hard to plan for secure futures. These are vital issues, at the heart of the day-to-day lives of people across the UK. Astonishingly, the Brexit deal leaves them unresolved and creates years of uncertainty for workers across the UK.