

Brexit threat? Sir Keir Starmer breaks cover to announce he wants to “renegotiate” with EU

This report has been co-published with our affiliated organisation, [Brexit Facts4EU.Org](https://BrexitFacts4EU.org). We are most grateful for their original research into the raw data which backs what follows.

While Tory Chairman of Defence Select Committee calls for rejoining Single Market

And Lord Hannan opines the Single Market would have made sense

All while the PM hangs on grimly to power as the vultures continue to circle

So, you thought the Brexit war was over, that the last General election settled the issue once and for all and that, apart from Northern Ireland’s Protocol, Brexit was indeed “done”.

Harold Wilson famously said “*a week is a long time in politics*” and when it comes to securing Brexit a truer word was never spoken. For as this report shows, here we are again facing the prospect of having to fight the arguments for and against joining the Single Market all over again.

Yesterday the Prime Minister won the support of his MPs but

the numbers were less convincing than he would have liked. There is now every prospect his backbench critics will simply carry on undermining him because, for some, **reversing Brexit is their ultimate goal**.

In this report we draw to your attention the confluence of various events or pronouncements and leave readers to consider where these might take us.

Sir Keir Starmer changes Labour's position – again

Readers will remember when Labour leader Keir Starmer promised to respect the outcome of the EU referendum only to call subsequently for a second referendum to try and overturn the result.

Only recently Starmer went on record saying that Brexit was a settled issue and that Labour would not seek to take the UK back into membership. He still says that, but now he has added a caveat – a nuanced position that conflicts with the policy of accepting Brexit.

Yesterday on LBC's Nick Ferrari Show, Starmer used the opportunity to say he would seek a better Brexit deal for the British people. In other words he would have to initiate negotiations on the Brexit deal and our relationship with the EU.

Starmer's latest clarification means we now face going into a General Election with the prospect of Labour offering to re-open the whole matter of Brexit again, with pro-EU campaigners such as Labour Peer Lord Adonis working to make Labour's goal be membership of the Single Market. Sir Keir Starmer's words were:



“What I want to do, and what we would if we were in government is make Brexit work. Which is make sure that we’ve got a better deal that works, whether it’s that for businesses because so many businesses are struggling with the extra bureaucracy. They just want to trade well with their European partners and of course across the world.”

– The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP, LBC, 06 June 2022

Tory Chairman of Defence Select Committee Tobias Ellwood calls for Single Market membership

Backbench Conservative MP, Tobias Ellwood, who also chairs the defence select committee, and was one of the 28 Tory MPs to have publicly called on Boris Johnson to resign before Monday’s vote, has urged the prime minister to rejoin membership of the EU’s Single Market. Writing in the House of Commons magazine “The House” on 1 June, Ellwood said:



"The single market means the free movement of goods, services, capital and people.

"It would see £7bn of paperwork and checks go, and boost our economy by restoring free trade to sectors demanding change.

"It would require acceptance of some EU regulations. However, UK industry, from food to pharmaceuticals, chemicals to motor manufacturing, says they would be better off working with one common standard rather than having to follow two: both a UK regulatory system and the EU one for most exports.

"There remain understandable reservations about the free movement of people in relation to benefit claims which would need addressing, but this is not insurmountable.

"If joining the single market (with conditions) results in strengthening our economy, easing the cost of living crisis, settling the Irish problem at a stroke and promoting our European credentials as we take an ever greater lead in Ukraine, would it not be churlish to not face this reality?"

– Tory Chairman of Defence Select Committee, Rt Hon Tobias
Ellwood MP

The lost “opportunity” of the Single Market would now be senseless

Meanwhile, writing in the Daily Telegraph, Dan Hannan argued that leaving the EU but remaining in its Single Market would have resulted in a painless exit, allowing a smoother transition. But would it? Would the UK then have later been able to leave the Single Market and escape the EU’s judicial oversight? What sovereignty would have been obtained on freedom of movement for instance?



“Staying in the single market, or large parts of it, would have saved us a lot of trouble. Had we declared, immediately after the 2016 vote, that we intended to return to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

“An opportunity was lost – and lost permanently. The two strongest arguments for retaining many single market arrangements were that it would ease the transition and, by finding compromise, spare us a lot of broken friendships. That moment has now passed.

“During the withdrawal talks, Britain paid a steep price for total regulatory freedom. To have made that payment but now not to use the freedom would be senseless.”

– Lord Hannan, Daily Telegraph, 04 June 2022

Whilst Dan Hannan was careful to describe this “opportunity” as being “lost permanently”, it begs the question why he raised it at all.

SUMMARY

Let us recall what the Single Market means:

- Regulations for goods and services being set by the EU without any democratic oversight or participation by the UK
 - Paying a negotiated cost to the EU for the privilege
 - Being under the judicial rules of the Courts of European Justice in Luxembourg
 - Having free movement of migrants within the EU, including visa arrangements with associate members of the EU
 - Having regulations for all UK businesses even if they do not export to the EU
 - Being in a rigged market that gives advantage to goods without any equivalent advantage to the UK's strength in services
 - Accepting the differing application of Single Market rules in EU members states that are not level and which give advantage to home producers
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