

'Hook, line and stinker'

It is not often that we feel compelled to publish an opinion piece of our own.

When we do, it will usually cover a seismic event such as the death of a leader, an international crisis or the outbreak of war. What happened at the UK-EU summit in Lancaster House deserves to be put into that category.

A mood of deep foreboding now hangs over the United Kingdom as we digest the implications of the terms of this appalling agreement which was cooked up between government ministers and their EU counterparts behind closed doors.

'Surrender on steroids', 'Brexit betrayal', 'Back in the EU cage' – the superlatives barely do justice to the sense of outrage that people feel as a result of this shameful and squalid settlement.

There will be plenty of time to delve into the detail of what has been agreed, suffice to say at this stage it represents a dreadful deal for Britain, the headline terms alone leaving one in utter despair.

SUMMARY OF EU-UK SUMMIT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

1. SPS

- The two sides have agreed to 'work towards' a wide-ranging deal on the basis of UK dynamic alignment with EU rules overseen by the European Court of Justice with

a financial contribution from the UK.

2. Defence

- A new Security and Defence Pact has been announced but we still await detailed texts.
- At its core, the agreement is primarily a commitment to dialogue and to explore cooperation across several areas already familiar from other EU third country agreements.
- It sets the stage for the UK to align with existing forms of EU third country agreements, such as participation in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations and an administrative arrangement with the European Defence Agency.
- Momentum is sought on the currently stalled PESCO projects.
- Also the two parties 'should swiftly explore any possibilities for mutually beneficial enhanced cooperation created by the SAFE instrument' – the EU's £150bn borrowed fund.
- Ministers have hailed this deal as a boon to our defence industries but it raises questions about our relationship with NATO, 'Five Eyes' and defence and procurement relationship with the United States.
- Furthermore French demands mean Britain will have to pay a fee for UK firms to be able to bid for contracts as part of the EU's new €150 billion defence fund.

3. Energy

- The two sides will explore the possibility of the UK's participation in the EU's internal electricity market
- The UK will work towards the linkage of the EU's

emission trading system (ETS)

- The former is significant because it signals EU willingness to explore UK participation in areas of the single market beyond agri-foods.
- ETS linkage is encouraged by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and will be based on the principle of dynamic alignment including a financial contribution by the UK.

4. Youth Experience Scheme

- The two sides will work to facilitate free movement of 'young' people (18-35).
- The UK is committed to working towards Erasmus+.
- The numbers potentially coming over could be as many as 80 million.

5. Fishing

- The biggest betrayal of the lot
- The UK has conceded the extension of the 2020 fisheries transition to 2038, a further twelve years.
- The 2020 agreement slowly reduced the quota fished by the EU over the last five years by 25% and set a cut-off period to 2026.
- The long-term cost will amount to more than £12bn.
- The UK will then be resigned to having its coastal waters exploited not just of fish, but environmentally through their use of industrial gill-netting and waste disposal.
- The political and economic fall-out for coastal communities will be devastating. Fishing is a highly emblematic industry.

6. E-gates

- UK passport holders may be able to use EU e-gates at some EU borders thanks to bilateral agreements to get their passports processed and therefore no longer have to queue to get their passports stamped, but this is not the full agreement Sir Keir suggested it was.
 - What a Brexit win!
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IMPLICATIONS OF SUMMIT

1. Democracy

- No details supplied by the government of the nature of this deal in their election manifesto.
- Abolition of the European Scrutiny Committee in Parliament.
- Any deal can just be signed off without question or vote.
- Much of this will involve a direct transfer to unelected European Court of Justice.
- As a consequence the UK will be a rule-taker not a rule-maker: the worst of all worlds.
- A reassertion of EU/International law over UK/sovereign law.

2. Security

- Huge implications for NATO.
- Jeopardise the Five Eyes and UK-US relations.
- Compromise lines of accountability in the Western

Alliance.

- Britain will have to pay for the privilege of accessing the £150bn loan for defence equipment.

3. Financial & Administrative Cost

- UK will have to pay into the EU institutions once again.
- Additional international regulation will also impede UK's competitiveness
- ETS/Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism will severely damage our manufacturing industry
- UK already has some of the highest energy costs in Europe. This agreement will make things worse.
- This could lead to a rise of 10p/litre in the price of fuel.
- It will amount to an 'EU reset tax'.

4. Diplomacy & International Trade

- How will the government reconcile ever closer co-operation with the EU with international trade agreements around the world?
- Will this jeopardise India & US trade deals if the UK has to align with EU standards?
- Will this jeopardise Anglo-US relations?
- Where does this leave the UK in relation to a purported Gulf trade agreement?

5. Trust

- The summit represents a further corrosion of the trust

between political parties and the voters.

- No one voted for this agreement.
 - It is a betrayal of all those who voted for Brexit in 2016.
 - The political fall-out could be immense.
 - It remains to be seen the extent of the change of the political landscape in the years ahead.
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DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS

The measures agreed above are merely a snapshot of what is coming down the line, but perhaps even worse is the lack of democratic accountability that has accompanied this appalling deal.

Sir Bill Cash has noted that one of the first things this Starmer government did on getting into office was to abolish the European Scrutiny Committee which would at least have had the power to question ministers on the terms of the summit.

Instead the Prime Minister has the power to sign off these terms without so much as a raised question or a single vote in Parliament.

This deal represents nothing less than the surrender of UK

sovereignty to an unelected foreign power in flagrant breach of both the Labour Party's election manifesto and the referendum result nearly ten years ago. In short it is a betrayal of democracy itself.

The battles we have fought so hard to win may now need to be fought for all over again. We cannot let this go, we cannot let them get away with it.

We will never surrender.

The views expressed above are those of the editor and do not reflect the views of CIBUK as a whole.