

If you only read one summary before Rishi Sunak's imminent N.I. deal, read this one

**A superb article from the Rt Hon Sir John
Redwood MP tells you all you need to know**

**What follows is about the sovereignty of the United Kingdom as
an independent country, free of the EU's empire and fulfilling
one of the key promises made in the EU Referendum.**

Yes, on the surface it relates to the imminent N.I. deal being
stitched together by the UK Government and the EU Commission
behind closed doors – without the elected representatives of
the people most affected being part of these discussions.
However the principles at stake affect every single person in
the United Kingdom.

If Brexit is ever to mean independence, sovereignty, democracy
and freedom from the EU empire, then this is a battle we must
not lose.

**In this guest article he lays out the issues and
debunks the myths – in a 2-minute read**

**‘Protecting the peace and restoring the
United Kingdom
as a sovereign country’**

A guest article for CIBUK.Org by the Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP



© John Redwood 2023

The Unionist community in Northern Ireland has been ignored and angered by the actions and words of the European Union. The Northern Ireland Protocol has as its first Article a statement that the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement takes precedence over the Protocol.

Article 1 – Objectives

1. This Protocol is without prejudice to the provisions of the 1998 Agreement in respect of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland and the principle of consent, which provides that any change in that status can only be made with the consent of a majority of its people.

2. This Protocol respects the essential State functions and territorial integrity of the United Kingdom.

3. This Protocol sets out arrangements necessary to address the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland, to maintain the necessary conditions for continued North-South cooperation, to avoid a hard border and to protect the 1998

Agreement in all its dimensions.

– The Northern Ireland Protocol

As the extract above confirms, the Protocol states that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland is to be upheld and all has to proceed based on the principle of consent. The hard won peace in 1998 established Stormont as a devolved Assembly where all decisions were to be agreed between the two main communities, Republican and Unionist.

With its Protocol, the EU has broken the Belfast Agreement's promise of consent – and of democratic government

The EU's insistence that all new laws passed by the EU apply to Northern Ireland breaks that promise of consent. Northern Ireland sends no Ministers to the Council to frame the laws and has no MEPs in the Parliament to approve them.



The European Court of Justice is the ultimate authority on how those laws are interpreted and enforced. For this reason all Unionist parties in Northern Ireland refuse to return to Stormont to govern in agreement with their Republican colleagues.

Left: EU Court, © CJEU

This is fundamentally about sovereignty, not trade

The EU wishes to portray this dispute and the rest of Brexit as a matter of trade, when it is primarily a matter of who governs.

There are various ways of smoothing the passage of goods between Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland that do not require EU laws to apply to Northern Ireland and do not end up in the European Court of Justice.

It is the EU's refusal to explore such options that have left this issue unresolved for so long. The EU should return to the negotiating table willing to accept Article 1 of the Protocol and the Articles of the Good Friday Agreement, and to see they are incompatible with Northern Ireland having to accept EU law and the EU Court.

Neither is this about 'hard border' controls

The UK and the EU have both said they do not want new physical border controls. There is no need for them. The EU now seems to want to walk away from this promise, by proposing new border posts and controls between GB and Northern Ireland, whilst respecting the wish not to have such further controls between NI and the Republic. It is neither sensible nor fair to suggest creating a complex internal border within the UK to avoid one with the EU.



The UK would happily make it an offence to seek to send

unwanted or non compliant goods to the Republic from Northern Ireland, and would use full state powers to enforce against smuggling. Checks needed on GB to NI trade can as now take place at the premises of the company despatching the goods from GB or at the premises of the buyer in NI. All will be covered by the usual standards, enforcement and electronic paperwork that is used to regulate internal trade in GB.



Trusted trader schemes work well.

Surely a UK supermarket chain which can send sausages to Liverpool without a border check at the city edge can also be trusted to send the same sausages to Belfast for its store there?

Restoring a government to Northern Ireland and its people

The UK government has said it cannot accept proposals which do not result in the restoration of Stormont. As Unionists have made clear, it will require a sensible fix on trade issues which end the idea that Northern Ireland is governed by EU laws and is still under some influence or jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

The EU/UK trade agreement has reference to an independent arbitrator for disputes, not to the ECJ. That is what is needed as a long-stop in issues of UK to EU trade across the invisible Northern Irish border. People in Northern Ireland

will follow EU rules and requirements for anything they export to the Republic as all countries selling into the EU need to do, but not for the rest of their business activity.

In conclusion

The Prime Minister tells us there is no deal yet that tackles the democratic deficit as well as the trade issues though progress has been made in talks. The only deal that can work is one which satisfies both communities in Northern Ireland, restoring the need for consent that is the essence of the Good Friday Agreement.

The world looks on wanting power sharing to be restarted. The Protocol was a temporary Agreement to defer sorting out trade and governance issues to allow UK withdrawal from the EU. Trade for Northern Ireland as part of the UK with the EU was meant to have been settled as part of the general EU/UK Free Trade Agreement, which is where it belongs.

It is worrying that six years on from the Brexit vote the EU still wants to pass laws for a part of the UK and wishes us to impose border controls between one part of our country and another.

– By the Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP, Sun 19 Feb 2023
(Parts of the above are based on an article by him, first published by the Telegraph online)

Observations

No surrender

Firstly, we are once again grateful to the Rt Hon Sir John

Redwood MP. We feel his points are well made and sum up the most important issues which readers should be aware of before the Whitehall spin machine goes into action – quite possibly on Tuesday next week – to promote the Sunak Government's new N.I. deal with the EU.

CIBUK.Org has always been clear. We will not accept any deal unless it restores Northern Ireland to its rightful place in the United Kingdom, respecting both the Act of Union 1800 and the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in their entirety.

In addition, Facts4EU is one of 15 Affiliated Organisations which comprise CIBUK.Org. Late last week CIBUK took soundings from the leaders of CIBUK's Affiliates. Here are the three questions they responded to, in order of severity:-

1. Should the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill 2022-2023 be made law?
2. Would you go further and resile from the Protocol completely?
3. If the new deal shows that the ECJ remains the ultimate authority in law (no matter how it's phrased) would you back this as a compromise you could accept? Or reject it on the basis that sovereignty is absolute or it is nothing?

These leaders each have influence and reach a large number of voters. Of the 14 who have so far replied, every one of them was in favour of rejecting a compromise over the NIP.

Naturally CIBUK has sought also contacted the DUP and TUV for their views on the current situation.

The original article can be found [here](#).

This report has been co-published with our affiliated

organisation, Brexit Facts4EU.Org.

Please support our work today, to keep us going

Main image : Montage © CIBUK.Org 2023