

Trust you, Mrs May?

In an article in the Sunday Times, Prime Minister Theresa May implored voters to trust her to deliver Brexit. "I will ensure that we take back control of our borders...our money...[and] our laws." she said.

But why should we trust her? After being office for over 18 months, there is no sign that she has come up with a trustworthy exit route that would see us make a clean break with the EU while at the same time allowing trade to continue reasonably seamlessly. Coming back to work after a week's holiday, I signed on to my computer to find that nothing has changed; nothing has progressed. Mrs May and the Brexit negotiations are still going round in circles. An unworkable "customs partnership" is still being pursued even though no less than HMRC has described the current proposals as "unviable." Michael Gove likewise claimed that there were "significant question marks" about them. Mrs May has split her cabinet into two asking them both to pursue what, to any intelligent analysis, are two different but equally impractical solutions to keeping our trade flowing with the EU, including across the Irish border.

Why should we trust her when the obvious solution – at least in the short term – to this problem is under her nose but she has so far steadfastly refused to change tack and replace her unworkable proposals with something which will get us out of the EU while giving her a longer breathing space to negotiate a longer-term arrangement? I am referring, of course, to the EEA/EFTA arrangement. Nigel Moore has written an article which sums up its strengths. Yes, it has weaknesses too – I hardly need point that out to regular readers of this blog. The weaknesses are, however, far fewer than those of the

arrangements Mrs May is proposing. In particular, we can regain total control over our fishing, we can keep goods flowing across the Irish border and we will be beyond the reach of the European Court of Justice. For more on this, please see also the "EFTA 4 UK" Facebook page.

Why should we trust her when she seems so keen to keep us shackled to the European Arrest Warrant? Her argument that other extradition routes are more costly and time consuming is a red herring. The EAW is fatally flawed and has exposed UK citizens to flawed criminal justice systems abroad on the basis of the flimsiest of evidence.

Why should we trust her when, under her watch, several agreements have been signed without Parliamentary debate (and possibly without some MPs even being aware of what is going on) which tie us to the EU's military programme?

The *Daily Express* published an article today about a secret document, known as FC030/1048, which, it claimed, was locked away under Official Secrets Act rules for almost three decades. The author's identity is unknown, but was most likely a senior civil servant in the Foreign Office. The document, which was written before we joined the EU, suggested the Government should keep the British public in the dark about what EEC membership means predicting that it would take 30 years for voters to realise what was happening, by which time it would be too late to leave. Thankfully, the author was wrong about the last point but correctly predicted that "the increased role of Brussels in the lives of the British people would lead to a "popular feeling of alienation from Government".

There is nothing new here. Christopher Booker mentioned this paper in a piece for the *Sunday Telegraph* six years ago, having discovered it as far back as 2002. However, the *Express* is bringing it to our attention at a very opportune moment. Mrs May has been given the chance to rebuild trust in the

government and in politicians in general. She is asking for our trust and if she delivers a successful Brexit, the beginning of that rebuilding of trust will be part of her legacy. Getting rid of her current Brexit advisor, the untrustworthy Europhile Civil Servant Ollie Robbins, whose poor advice may well be hampering her, would be a good start, but she needs to go a lot further.

As things stand, Mrs May is leading us towards a chaotic Brexit in Name Only which will only further alienate voters from the political system while possibly precipitating the worst crisis in her party since 1846. It is not too late for her to change course – after all, she did promise not to call an early General Election and then changed her mind. That decision proved disastrous, but as far as Brexit goes, a change of direction would actually prevent, rather than precipitate a disaster, both for the Conservative party and for the country as a whole.

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