

We Must Learn From The EU's Mistakes On Trade Negotiations

We are grateful to our friends at Brexit-Watch.org for permission to re-publish the article below, which was written by Jayne Adye, the Director of the grassroots cross-Party Eurosceptic campaign [Get Britain Out](https://GetBritainOut.org)

WITH THE WORLD focused on the crisis in Ukraine, it might be easy to forget the rest of the business the Government needs to concentrate on if we are to continue to function with our global ambitions as a country – and reap the benefits – now we have left the European Union.

While discussions with the EU over the Northern Ireland Protocol have certainly ground to a screeching halt, trade negotiations with other countries have become more intense, and the UK is continuing to cast our net wider and wider.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan has undoubtedly made a good start in her role as the Secretary of State for International Trade – with the conclusion of a unique free trade agreement with New Zealand, signing investment agreements with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), as well as sealing a deal with the USA to remove tariffs on British steel exports. Regarding the USA, however, trade experts have warned a broader trade deal between our two countries may be far off, so Ms Trevelyan must not fall into any kind of complacency.

For too long the UK has been forced to accept EU trade deals which were just about squeezed across the line. The EU had to take the route of least resistance to make sure every single Member State was content, rather than taking a course of

action which would bring the greatest benefit to the people living in the EU. After these deals were reached, making key changes to these agreements was nigh on impossible, leaving them unfit for the modern global economy.

We are out of the EU now, but it is worth pointing out a great number of the trade deals the UK has secured so far are 'rollover' agreements, copying what was already in place, instead of them being updated to reflect the interests and priorities of the UK now and in the future. With fresh trade talks having begun with Canada to reach a brand new and improved trade deal, the Government has shown it is aware of this flaw in rollover deals and is willing to make the changes required.

It is also worth noting that even when we have reached unique and tailor-made trade agreements with partners around the world, the Department for International Trade cannot afford to sit on its laurels while admiring its work. We must learn from the mistakes of Brussels and keep driving forward to develop these trade deals at every chance we can.

Undoubtedly this will take a great deal of time and effort – which is why it is vital the Prime Minister makes sure the Department receives the additional funding it requires to ensure the UK is in the best position possible to take advantage of the ever-diversifying global economy. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is reportedly undergoing an incredibly short-sighted, but significant restructuring, to focus on Ukraine. I would certainly argue much of this man-power and investment would be put to far better use in further embracing the need for more trade negotiators!

Again, this week we have seen US President Joe Biden intervene when it comes to a full UK-USA free trade agreement, claiming no deal would be possible if the UK 'damages' the Good Friday Agreement – a document President Biden so clearly does not

fully understand. Free trade agreements are, however, not signed overnight, and while it is a blow to see the President so clearly reaffirming his anti-British viewpoint, the current US President's time in office is limited. His staff are already having to cover up for his mistakes on a daily basis – most recently when he openly called for 'regime change' in Russia and threatened to respond "in kind" if Russia used chemical weapons. Yet another unwise statement at such a crucial time in Putin's war against Ukraine.

While it will be an uphill struggle, there is clearly a deal to be made with the USA by Anne-Marie Trevelyan at some point in the years to come, but key to our success will be taking the small victories whenever we can, and not over-playing our hand. One thing is certain, now we have managed to **Get Britain Out** of the European Union, we cannot allow our global ambitions to be neglected, and in an ever-evolving trade market we must be ready to be flexible to new trends and opportunities around the world.