

Will she? Won't she?

Sections of the press have spent huge amounts of time trying to second-guess Mrs May's Brexit plan. At last, it seems, instead of speculation we will finally have some detail. The Prime Minister will be making a speech tomorrow which will put some flesh on her oft-repeated phrase that "Brexit means Brexit".

Has she been dropping any hints? The consensus among the pundits is that she intends to take us out of the Single Market. However, In an interview with Sophy Ridge on Sky TV, she merely said that we would leave the European Union – big difference! She also denied claims by Sir Ivan Rogers about "muddled thinking" and "lack of a plan". Indeed, the interview saw her reiterate the point that with David Cameron having undertaken no Brexit planning, she and her team have needed time to study the issue in detail before triggering Article 50.

To suggest these few hints imply leaving the Single Market – alias a "hard" Brexit – is hardly an accurate interpretation. After all, her words were "What I'm saying is that we want the best possible deal, the phrase I've used is the best possible deal for trading with and operating within the single European market." Perhaps part of the confusion lies in her comment that "We will outside the European Union be able to have control of immigration and be able to set our rules for people coming to the UK from members states of the European Union." It's the old have-your-cake-and eat-it conundrum.

Pursuing the Liechtenstein Option would enable us to stay within the Single Market while considerably restricting immigration. Regular readers of this website will know that this is a possibility (Whether they support it or not) and no doubt Mrs May and her advisors also know this is a possibility, given her reputation for detail. It seems that

very few members of the Press are up to speed on this issue.

We are now reading speculation about the EU Customs Union, which is an irrelevancy. The Customs Union, very different from the Single Market, was a non-issue in the referendum debate. Do some people not realise that it isn't the same as the Single Market? One wonders. There has certainly been sufficient confusion in the City further to depress the value of sterling in the last week, meaning that consumers and motorists are suffering essentially because of potentially unreliable guesswork – and nothing more.

On the subject of free movement of people, however, Lodewijk Asscher, the Dutch Deputy Prime Minister, recently claimed that support for this cherished principle was eroding in other member states, mainly because of claims that cheap labour from Eastern Europe is enabling companies to reduce wages for native-born workers. This claim was made in the UK's referendum campaign and is an indication that the fallout from the Brexit vote has by no means been dissipated.

But what will be the long-term effects on the EU remains to be seen. We are again in speculation mode and there is all too much of this at the moment. Tomorrow in one area at least, some clarity will dawn.