



The UK's negotiating position with the EU is now that of a genuine sovereign nation

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It will probably be a long way to go before the UK/EU trade deal is signed off. The EU's own demands and agenda are already pointing in this direction, with Mr Barnier's rejection of British demands for a Canada-style trade deal, which tellingly, does not include any European Court of Justice supervision standards and demands. Mr Barnier's response is indicative of the different political cultures which will underpin the ensuing negotiations and offers little hope that the next eleven months of talks will be smooth. "We have proposed a trade agreement with a country that has a very particular and unique close geographical proximity, not like Canada, not like South Korea and not like Japan". And yet, this seems to be missing the point on Brexit. As the UK is moving away from the EU and widening its horizons for global trade outside of the EU's regulatory framework, it will be primarily looking to "get our own rules right, in a way that suits our own conditions ... For this reason alone, the UK "was never going to be genuinely committed to the project of turning the EU from a partnership agreement in trade to an object of reverence". In essence, the UK is now a genuine sovereign nation who has chosen to be independent and will negotiate on the basis of "a relationship of equals". David Frost's speech, the UK Chief negotiator, during his recent lecture in Brussels underpins a renewal call for a policy of regenerating British/UK

relations. It is a strategy worthy of the highest intellectual heirs of Burke – who is mentioned in his speech –, and a winning one at that. But as the trade negotiations will resume next week, the success of its outcome will also reflect on the capacity to conciliate different ingrained attitudes to government by both negotiating parties. For the UK, the state is "more of an organic creation, entwined with custom, tradition and spirit... where governance is deep-rooted in historical precedent ... "it would feel a bit unnatural to be governed by an organisation whose institutions seemed created by designs and not by evolution, and which vested authority outside the country". This vision encapsulates the very root of British Eurorealism which goes back to the time of the deep opposition to the Maastricht Treaty and has since then, been a distinctive feature of the decisive battle won in the UK Parliament, who has fought over the years to retain its sovereignty and vision of the world against the increasing encroachments of the EU agenda. Maastricht was the defining moment, considered then by the Conservative intellectual elite as an exercise in political and economic defeatism, which would threaten the very soul of Britain. The seeds of British opposition to European Government can therefore be traced then, when British Eurorealists, during the so-called Maastricht rebellion, were the first to point out, and with great hindsight, that the Maastricht criteria would generate unemployment, create a supranational Socialist European Government and be dominated by the demands of a German-led Europe. The 2016 "Take back control" slogan encapsulates the battle for Britain over these last 25 years whose victory is to be attributed to having taken on a courageous stance on the principles of freedom and democracy against a suffocating bureaucracy. Just as Brexit has re-established British self –

rule though national democracy and good sovereign institutions, it will also benefit from good trade. The Government's strategy to continue to set its own rules for its own benefit is the right way forward in modern advanced economies that are hugely complex but nonetheless adaptive and workable. In the words of Mr Frost, "It is possible to have high standards, and indeed similar and better standards to those prevailing in the EU, without our laws and regulations necessarily doing exactly the same thing." Having independent policy regimes in certain areas is of paramount importance. The model of the FTA (Free Trade Agreement) put forward by the UK "is the most appropriate for a relationship of sovereign countries in highly sensitive areas relating to how their jurisdictions are governed and how their populations give consent to it".

Given these different approaches, it is not surprising that Mr Barnier commented recently that "it would be a hell of a job to secure a successful outcome from the negotiation, given the British approach". But perhaps the EU will need to internalize that the UK is on course towards recovering full political and economic independence. Not acknowledging this, would be detrimental for the success of the ongoing negotiations. The ensuing negotiations will therefore not be a mere negotiating position based on EU supervision. They will be part of a wider underlying project which the UK is on course to carry forward "for the UK is a high-income economy which has been extremely open for a century ... and only want what other independent countries have".