

The EU is not ready to negotiate yet

Listening to the EU reactions to Mrs May's generous and sensible proposals on residence and citizenship, I concluded we are still months off the EU being ready to discuss our future relationship in a productive way. They seem to think it is our problem, not a joint problem. They seem to think we have demands, when they have rather more demands that we do not have to grant.

It will take time for the EU to understand that they are the ones who want us to pay them money when there is no legal basis for such a claim. They do not seem to be proposing paying us to leave. They are the ones who have large exports in agricultural products and cars where under WTO rules we could impose tariffs that will hit demand for their products. Most of our exports to them are tariff free or low tariff under WTO rules. They are the ones who wish to take advantage of our jobs market for many unemployed people on the continent. The UK is not seeking more access to jobs in the rest of the EU. It is the EU that values all the intelligence and security support and back up we give them.

The good news from their point of view is we do not wish to place barriers in the way of their trade with us. We will not throw out the many people who have come here legally to live and to work. We will continue to offer them security and Intelligence assistance. All we ask is similar treatment in return.

It is quite normal of the EU to leave agreements to the last minute. They may well go on posturing and misunderstanding for many months. It is crucial that all the time the EU think the UK will shift its position or change its mind the UK government remains strong and shows we have no need to make concessions or change our stance. The UK is making a generous offer which will be much needed by businesses and farmers on the continent, by EU citizens living in the UK and by all EU people who benefit from the UK's many contributions to the life, trade, culture and security of our continent.

Over the months ahead more voices on the continent will demand that their national governments and the EU put in place good arrangements to carry on with our trade and other links. The UK media should calm down and realise this is all going to take time, and see that the UK must not shift its stance at all during what could be a period when the EU misjudges and thinks they are in a strong position to dictate.

They need to keep in mind the government's instructions from the UK voters – take back control of our money, our laws and our borders. That is exactly what we will do. That leaves plenty of scope for a strong and good future relationship, without us being under the jurisdiction of the ECJ and without us paying them money we do not owe them. There is plenty of time to ensure border checks work, trade flows, planes fly and tourists arrive, just as happens today, and as happens for non EU countries into the EU.