

Canada, Flanders Ukraine? What kind of relationship will the UK have with EU?

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News

Martin Banks reports on several different possible post-Brexit scenarios for the UK.



What kind of post-Brexit relationship will the UK have with the EU? | Photo credit: Press Association

Canadian Finance Minister Bill Morneau has said a post-Brexit trade deal between Canada and Britain should use the controversial EU-Canada agreement (CETA) as its basis.

Morneau said, “Our expectation is that Britain will ratify the CETA deal and be part of that deal with Canada.”

Asked whether the CETA deal would automatically result in a Canada-Britain free trade deal on the same terms after Brexit, Morneau said: “We’re going to respect the agreement that the UK has with

Europe and stand ready to work together after that's concluded."

He said that UK-EU talks "will precede any discussion with Canada. We believe that our discussion with the UK will be a positive one and will be founded on the basis of CETA."

Elsewhere, the Belgian Flemish minister president Geert Bourgeois has called for "a new sort of partnership" with the UK when it finally leaves the EU.

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He was speaking after a meeting earlier this week with David Jones, a minister in the British government's unit created to arrange its withdrawal from the EU. Jones was in Brussels to meet UK Conservative MEPs.

Bourgeois said he wants to maintain the "best possible" post-Brexit relations with the UK as, "Britain is an extremely important trading partner for Flanders. It is our fourth-largest export market and approximately 87 per cent of the trade between Belgium and the UK originates from Flanders. It is crucial that the trade across the Channel continues to flourish."

Negotiations on the UK's departure, he argued, should focus on developing a "new sort of partnership," adding, "It is of vital importance for Flanders that the ties with the UK remain strong and open, on an economic, cultural and scientific level, as well as a personal level."

Meanwhile, former senior ALDE group MEP Andrew Duff has urged the EU and UK to devise a transitional mechanism that will "carry the UK from membership via Brexit to a safe landing at its final destination."

Duff, a constitutional expert, said, "The best landing zone for both the UK and the EU would be a new association agreement.

"I say 'new' because from 1954 to 1973 the UK enjoyed an association agreement with the European Coal and Steel Community, negotiated by Jean Monnet (one of the founding fathers of the European Union and Pro-European Conservative minister) Duncan Sandys, after the UK had rejected the Schuman Plan."

Duff, who lost his seat in the last European elections, added, "That agreement dealt with market access and political cooperation, and spoke impressively of the need for an 'intimate and enduring' partnership between Britain and mainland Europe."

He went on, "While the chances of intimacy have no doubt been lost, the need for something enduring, by way of a durable settlement of the troubled relationship of Britain and Europe is greater than ever.

“Such a settlement would best be crafted in the type of association agreements that the EU concluded in 2014 with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

“The London establishment tends to shudder at the idea of Ukraine as a model for Britain. But they should take a look.”

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter for the Parliament Magazine

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