

Brexit: Deal or No Deal

Written by Rajnish Singh on 12 December 2018 in Opinion
Opinion

Now that UK Prime Minister Theresa May has the backing of the EU27 for her Brexit deal, MEPs Fredrick Federley, Seb Dance, and Charles Tannock discuss what's next in the UK-EU divorce saga



With only a few months left until the UK officially leaves the EU, the three deputies were asked to give their perspective on Theresa May's remaining challenges for a special joint Parliament Magazine/EU40 Brexit debate.

Giving a Swedish perspective on the Brexit crisis, ALDE deputy Fredrick Federley noted that his country and Britain had been long-standing friends. Yet following the Brexit vote he felt, "we were close allies, but now we're losing one of our biggest political partners."

The ALDE member warned that if the UK left the EU without a deal, "Sweden will lose €180m euros in trade, and 8,500 jobs." He feared that the economic downturn caused by a No Deal Brexit could even trigger a global recession.

RELATED CONTENT

- [Juncker: Brexit deal 'best and only deal possible'](#) [1]
- [EU court ruling on Article 50 offers UK way out of Brexit 'mess', say campaigning MEPs](#) [2]
- [MEP pours scorn on last-ditch Brexit scramble](#) [3]
- [Brexit Deal: Reaction to EU approval of withdrawal agreement text](#) [4]
- [British MEPs warn that Theresa May's government is 'imploding around her'](#) [5]
- [Brexit withdrawal agreement throws future of millions of EU and UK citizens into limbo warn rights groups](#) [6]

With immigration having played a major role in the Brexit referendum campaign, Federley pointed out that there were a considerable number of Swedes living and running businesses in the UK, who were now understandably anxious about what is happening.

"I have several friends who, for the last two years, have been trying to prove how long they've been living in the UK, so that they can get the right to stay." Commenting on the UK's shambolic approach to the Brexit negotiations, Federley said, "Sweden has always respected the UK, almost like a bigger brother. But now it seems the UK is behaving like a teenager."

The status of the Irish border has also proven to be a major sticking point in the Brexit negotiations. ECR deputy Charles Tannock pointed out, "I did talk about it at the time, but nobody was listening to people like me."

The UK Conservative took a swipe at the DUP and their demands on Theresa May, saying, "If the DUP had any sense, which clearly they don't, they should be delighted. Northern Ireland will have a special economic status, being both in the single market and in the customs union. It will inevitably become a magnet for foreign direct investment."

"Sweden has always respected the UK, almost like a bigger brother. But now it seems the UK is behaving like a teenager"

Pointing out the DUP's contradictory position, Tannock said, "They're obsessed with being exactly the same as the rest of the United Kingdom when it suits them. At the same time they have different laws on abortion and same-sex marriage. In addition, in the past, they have sought lower corporation tax rates, VAT rates harmonised with the Republic of Ireland. "

He said the Northern Ireland situation was inevitably going to be problematic. "You cannot square

that circle of a totally open border with no impediments, no structures. Northern Ireland will need some 'light touch' regulatory checks even if the whole of the UK stays in the customs union."

This was why Theresa May was forced to accept the so-called "backstop". Tannock said he believed that many of the leading Conservative Brexiteers were willing to see a closed border return to Northern Ireland, and in doing so risking a resumption of violence.

He took aim at fellow Conservatives, particularly members of the informal European Research Group (ERG) led by Jacob Rees-Mogg.

"They [the ERG] believe that there is some kind of global Great Britain, as part of Anglosphere countries, an 'Empire: Mark Two' project. This is really a pure fantasy that was cooked up by the Brexiteers, led by people like Daniel Hannan MEP and others."

"If the DUP had any sense, which clearly they don't, they should be delighted. Northern Ireland will have a special economic status, being both in the single market and in the customs union. It will inevitably become a magnet for foreign direct investment"

With the growing uncertainty over whether PM May will be able to get her Brexit deal passed by the House of Commons, S&D deputy Seb Dance said there was now a good chance for a second referendum/People's Vote.

"If we don't get a general election, then all options are on the table, including, of course, a public vote, with the option to remain."

Despite the leader of his own Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn not openly supporting a People's Vote, Dance said he believed that, under current rules regarding fixed-term parliaments in the UK, a general election following any rejection of May's Brexit deal would be highly unlikely, and that the Labour Party would subsequently back a People's Vote.

He emphasised that this was not a re-run of the 2016 Brexit referendum; "This is now a very different proposition to 2016, because we can say to people this is what Brexit really is, not the fantasies and promises. And this is what Remain looks like."

Meanwhile, Tannock said he believed that a No Deal scenario was unlikely. "There is a very large majority of MPs against a No Deal. Therefore, I think that it is almost impossible given the parliamentary arithmetic."

He added, "But I also agree that I can't really see where the numbers are for Mrs May to get her deal through parliament. We are in a constitutional crisis situation and the only easy way of solving this, is holding a second referendum, a People's Vote."

Despite the political drama in Westminster as to whether the UK will be leaving the EU, Fredrick Federley pointed out that "in the mindset of the EU and the 27 Member States, the United Kingdom has already left." Yet at the same time, he did offer a quantum of solace: "Although we are moving ahead [with Brexit] and we're sad, we will welcome you back at any moment."

About the author

Rajnish Singh is commissioning editor for the Parliament Magazine

Tags

[Brexit](#) [7]

Categories

[International Relations](#) [8]



Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [EU Elections 2019](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2019](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)
[MonitoringDods](#)
[ResearchDods](#)
[EventsDods](#)
[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics HomeThe](#)
[HouseThe](#)
[Parliament](#)
[MagazineHolyrood](#)
[Total PoliticsPublic](#)
[Affairs NewsCivil](#)
[Service](#)
[World](#)
[PublicTechnology](#)
[Training](#)
[JournalDods](#)
[Parliamentary](#)

[CompanionVacher's
Quarterly The
European Union and
Public Affairs
Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster
BriefingDigital
Health & Care
ScotlandMEP
AwardsThe Skills
SummitScottish
Public Service
AwardsPublic Sector
Procurement
SummitPublic
Sector ICT
SummitCyber
Security
SummitCyber
Security
2017Training
Journal Awards](#)

**Partnership
events**

[The Health and
Care Innovation
ExpoCivil Service
LiveCivil Service
AwardsChief
Nursing Officer for
England's
SummitWomen into
LeadershipThe
Youth Justice
ConventionSocitm
Spring
ConferenceNHSCC
Annual Members'
EventDods at Party
Conference](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/brexit-deal-or-no-deal>

Links

[1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/juncker-brexit-deal-%E2%80%98best-and-onl-deal-possible%E2%80%99>

[2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-court-ruling-article-50-offers-uk-way-o-t-brexit-%E2%80%98mess%E2%80%99-say-campaigning-meps>

[3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/mep-pours-scorn-last-ditch-brexit-scramble>

[4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/brexit-deal-reaction-eu-approval-withdrawal-agreement-text>

[5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/british-meps-warn-theresa-may%E2%80%99s-goverment-%E2%80%98imploding-around-her%E2%80%99>

[6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/brexit-withdrawal-agreement-throws-future-millions-eu-and-uk-citizens-limbo-warn>

[7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/brexit>

[8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/international-relations>