

Saturday 20th March 2021 18:45 -20:00

F17: The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Future of the UK-EU Relationship

37 members

Mover: Layla Moran MP (Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs).

Summation: Duncan Brack.

Conference believes that the Conservative government's EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement:

- A. Is a threadbare deal, bad for jobs, business, security, and the environment.
- B. Is the only 'free' trade deal in history to put up new barriers to trade instead of pulling them down, and leaves the UK services sector in total limbo.
- C. Represents a comprehensive betrayal of the promises made by the Leave campaigns during the referendum and by the Conservatives' 2019 election manifesto.

Conference further believes that this botched deal will make the British people poorer and less safe by, among other things:

- i. Erecting new and significant non-tariff barriers to trade in UK goods and services with the EU, putting at risk at least 3.3 million jobs, and pushing many businesses already struggling as a result of COVID-19 over the edge.
- ii. Putting up barriers to future foreign investment in the UK through creating permanent uncertainty over the UK's potential future divergence from EU standards.
- iii. Withdrawing from Europol, Eurojust and the Schengen Information System database.
- iv. Removing the rights to free movement of UK citizens to live, work, study and retire within the EU.
- v. Failing to put in place any frameworks for UK-EU cooperation on foreign, external security or defence policy.
- vi. Ending UK participation in the Erasmus programme.

Conference condemns the UK government for ensuring that the bill implementing the new treaty was pushed through Parliament with only a charade of democratic accountability and no opportunity to scrutinise its flaws.

Conference accordingly congratulates the Liberal Democrat parliamentary parties in the Commons and Lords for opposing the bill.

Conference notes that the Labour Party supported the bill, leaving the Liberal Democrats as the only major UK-wide pro-European party in Parliament.

Conference further notes that the new Agreement will be reviewed every five years and that, in any case, provides for the UK to join EU programmes by mutual agreement.

Conference believes that the future UK-EU relationship must be strengthened, to the benefits of both the UK and EU, and recognises that there are many ways in which this could be achieved, including, but not limited to, UK membership of the EU Customs Union, the European Single Market or both, and closer cooperation over health, climate change, environment, crime and policing, education, scientific research, foreign, security and defence policy.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrats' support for a longer-term objective of UK membership of the EU, as set out in the September 2020 conference motion 'The UK and Europe'.

Conference therefore:

1. Instructs the Federal Policy Committee to carry out a programme of work, including consulting widely within the party, to determine the best possible future framework for the UK-EU relationship across all policy areas, with the aims of:

- a. Demonstrating the benefits to UK citizens and businesses of a much closer relationship compared to the government's inadequate measures; and
 - b. Maximising public support for eventual UK membership of the EU.
2. Calls on the Liberal Democrat parliamentary parties in the Commons and Lords to expose the inadequacies of the government's arrangements and to promote the benefits of closer relations between the UK and EU.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes.

For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 6.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00, Monday 8 March; see page 8. Amendments selected for debate will be published in the Conference Extra and Saturday Conference Daily updates to the Conference Agenda. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.30 Friday 19 March; see page 5.

20.05 Policy motion

Chair: John Bridges. Aides: Jennie Rigg and Nick Da Costa (Vice Chair, FCC).