

Glossary of Brexit Terms

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Introduction

Text from European Parliament Briefing at:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637911/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)637911_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637911/EPRS_BRI(2019)637911_EN.pdf)

On 14 November 2018, the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK) negotiators announced their approval of the legal agreement on the UK's withdrawal from the EU. At a special European Council meeting on 25 November 2018, EU leaders endorsed the draft withdrawal agreement, as well as the text of a non-binding political declaration setting out the framework for the future EU-UK relationship. While the process of approving the withdrawal deal (the agreement and the political declaration) began rapidly in both the UK and the EU, it immediately met with significant difficulties in the UK. In particular, the House of Commons' rejection of the withdrawal deal in the 'meaningful vote' of 15 January 2019, led to renewed UK attempts at renegotiation.

Although the EU and the UK eventually agreed additional guarantees with respect to the Ireland/Northern Ireland backstop, the withdrawal deal was again voted down on 12 March 2019.

Faced with the prospect of a 'no-deal exit' on 29 March 2019, the initial Brexit date, the UK government, as instructed by the House of Commons, eventually requested an extension to the Article 50 negotiating period. On 22 March, the European Council extended the UK's EU Membership until 22 May 2019, on the condition that the UK parliament approved the withdrawal agreement by 29 March. As the House of Commons rejected the withdrawal agreement for a third time, the new Brexit date was instead set, under that European Council decision, at 12 April 2019.

[Negotiations on extension to the Article 50 are continuing as at 11 April 2019]



Glossary

Acquis Communautaire: This is the entire body of European laws: all the **treaties, regulations and directives passed by the EU's institutions, plus all the rulings of the European Court of Justice.** Every EU member state has incorporated the **acquis** into their legal system.

Article 50: This is part of an EU treaty (the clause in the 2007 Lisbon treaty) that sets out how member countries can leave, with a two-year timetable for leaving. Article 50 was triggered by British Prime Minister Theresa May at the end of March 2017. The UK is allowed to stop the Article 50 process completely - but only if it wants only to extend it, and all the other EU countries must agree.

Backstop: Until the deal on the future relationship between the EU and UK is done, the backstop would keep the UK effectively inside the EU's customs union but with Northern Ireland also conforming to some rules of the single market. Currently, there are no border posts, physical barriers or checks on people or goods crossing the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Blind Brexit: The withdrawal agreement includes a political declaration on the future trading relationship between the two. **A "blind Brexit" refers to the possibility that this declaration is so vague (in order, presumably, to make it palatable to all the various Brexit factions in the UK) that Britain would leave with no clear idea of what Brexit might eventually look like.**

Brexit: This is the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU).

Brexiteer: A person who supports Britain's exit from the European Union.

Canada-Plus Deal: **A free trade agreement identical to the EU's deal with Canada** would abolish almost all tariffs on goods and reduce some – though by no means all – non-tariff barriers through mutual recognition of selected standards. But it would not cover some sectors, such as food or chemicals, that are important to the UK, nor many services, which account for 80% of **Britain's economy.**

Chequers Plan: Named after the British prime minister's **country retreat where it was hammered out,** this plan for the future relationship between Britain and the EU **would have seen the UK's departure from the single market and customs union** offset by a pledge to maintain a common standards rulebook for goods, food and agriculture, along with other continued regulatory alignments. The EU dismissed it as impracticable.

Citizens' Rights: The rights and protections offered to all EU citizens under EU law, including free movement and residence, equal treatment and a wide range of other rights related to work, education, social security and health.

Customs Union: EU members - plus Turkey, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino - trade without customs duties, taxes or tariffs between themselves, and charge the same tariffs on imports from outside the EU. Customs union members cannot negotiate their own trade deals outside the EU, which is why leaving it – while hopefully negotiating a bespoke arrangement – has been one of the UK **government's Brexit goals.**

Divorce Bill: This is the money the UK has agreed to pay to the EU under Theresa May's deal. It is based on the UK's share of EU budgets up to 2020 as well as continuing liabilities such as EU civil servants' pensions. The bill is widely expected to be about £39bn and will be paid over a number of years, with about half of it payable during the transition.

EEA/EFTA: The **European Economic Area is made up of the EU's single market** (see below), plus three European Free Trade Association members - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. They trade freely with the single market in exchange for accepting its rules. Switzerland is in EFTA but not the EEA. Bilateral accords give it special access to the single market. The four EFTA countries are not in the Customs Union and can negotiate trade deals with third countries such as China.

Europhile: A person who admires Europe or is in favour of continued participation in the European Union.

Eurosceptic: A person who is opposed to increasing the powers of the European Union.

Four Freedoms: The fundamental pillars of the EU's single market: (1) free movement of goods, (2) capital, (3) services and (4) people.

Free-Trade Agreement: A free-trade area is the region encompassing a trade bloc whose member countries have signed a free trade agreement (FTA). Such agreements involve cooperation between at least two countries to reduce trade barriers – import quotas and tariffs – and to increase trade of goods and services with each other. "Barriers" include import or export taxes (tariffs), quotas or licences that limit imports, and differing regulations on things such as safety or hygiene or labelling. The aim is increase trade in goods but also services.

Great Repeal Bill: A piece of legislation that will transpose, at a stroke, all existing EU legislation affecting Britain into domestic UK law to avoid a legal black hole and prevent disruption the day after Britain leaves. The British parliament is **then meant to "amend, repeal and improve" each law as necessary** – a gargantuan task.

Hard Border: Because of Brexit, a physical border could be erected between Northern Ireland, a constituent part of the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland, an EU member state. This raises concerns about the future of the Good Friday Agreement (or Belfast Agreement), a peace deal signed in 1998 which helped to end the Northern Ireland conflict (The Troubles).

Hard Brexit: A hard Brexit would take Britain out of the EU's single market and customs union and end its obligations to respect the four freedoms, make big EU budget payments and accept the jurisdiction of the ECJ - what Brexiters mean by "taking back control" of Britain's borders, laws and money. It would mean a return of trade tariffs, depending on what, if any FTA was agreed.

Lisbon Treaty: The Treaty of Lisbon between the EU Member States which amended the Treaty on European Union, including the insertion of Article 50 concerning a Member State's ability to withdraw from the EU.

No-deal Brexit: A no-deal Brexit would mean the UK leaving the European Union and cutting ties with it, but with no agreement at all in place.

Norway Model: This would see the UK out of the EU and Customs Union (and able to negotiate independent free trade agreements with third countries) but with enhanced access to the single market and selected EU programmes. But it would entail continued financial payments and acceptance of the core principles and legislation of the single market, with no participation in EU decision-making, so is seen by Brexiters as a betrayal of the referendum vote.

People's Vote: People's Vote is an advocacy group launched in April 2018, who calls for a public vote on the final Brexit deal. The People's Vote march is part of a series of demonstrations against Brexit.

Single Market: This is a system that enables goods, services, people and capital (money) to move between all EU member states, as well as Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. The **EU's single market is more** than a free-trade area. It aims to remove not just the fiscal barriers to trade (tariffs) but also the physical and technical barriers (borders and divergent product standards) by allowing the freest possible movement of goods, capital, services and people.

Soft Brexit: A soft Brexit, which not officially defined, would keep Britain in either the single market or the Customs Union or both. It could be achieved along the lines of the Norway model or via an FTA, but would require concessions on free movement, ECJ jurisdiction and budget payments.

Super-Canada Deal: Leading Brexiters have outlined greatly improved Canada-style free trade agreements they believe the UK can negotiate with the EU. This would include zero tariffs and zero quotas on all imports and exports; cover services as well as goods; ensure full mutual recognition of regulations and standards; and rely on technology to keep supply chains smooth.

Transition Period: A period designed to bridge the gap between the end of article 50 talks, when the UK leaves the EU, and the start of a future FTA. The two sides have agreed to a transition period - **the UK calls it an "implementation phase"** - to avoid the cliff edge outlined above that will end on 31 December 2020, although this may be extended by one or two years.

Withdrawal Agreement: The British Prime Minister has agreed a deal (it runs to 858 pages) with the EU on the terms of the UK's departure. It does not determine the UK-EU future relationship. It does include how much money the UK must pay to the EU as a settlement, details of the transition period, and citizens' rights. It also covers the so-called "backstop", which ensures that no hard border exists between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland after Brexit even if there's no deal on the future relationship in place by the end of the transition period.

WTO Rules: Countries that do not have free-trade agreements usually trade with each other under rules set by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). WTO is a global and international organisation, which deals with the rules of trade between different nations. It is the only global and international organisation that does this. The WTO agreements are lengthy and complex because they are legal texts covering a wide range of activities. They deal with: agriculture, textiles and clothing, banking, telecommunications, government purchases, industrial standards and product safety, food sanitation regulations, intellectual property, and much more. But a number of simple, fundamental principles run throughout all of these documents. These principles are the foundation of the multilateral trading system. See: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/fact2_e.htm for details.

Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

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