

# Brussels still open to an extension: 29 May Brexit update

*The UK is now the worst hit country in Europe when it comes to COVID-19, and while the country is embroiled in the Dominic Cummings affair, the UK and EU negotiating teams are still at odds over fishing. However, despite longstanding opposition from London, Brussels is still open to an extension to the Brexit transition period, write **Ros Taylor** and **Roch Dunin-Wąsowicz** (LSE).*



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The prospects for a future trade deal are bleak, with talks on the level playing field [approaching stalemate](#). But Brussels is still open to a 2-year extension – at least according to the EU negotiator Michel Barnier, who has said as much this week, invoking COVID-19 as the reason to avoid further imminent economic disruption.

Michel Barnier writes to opposition parties confirming the EU is open to extending Brexit transition phase by two years [pic.twitter.com/NAUAZWiBmQ](https://pic.twitter.com/NAUAZWiBmQ)

— Paris Gourtsoyannis (@thistlejohn) [May 27, 2020](#)

## According to [the FT](#):

“Brexiters have never properly grasped that, for its erstwhile partners, the EU is as much a political as an economic enterprise. European integration is an investment in shared security, stability and democratic values, as well as a source of prosperity. These are not things they can give away in a trade deal with Britain.”

Hauliers have warned the UK is not hiring customs agents fast enough:

NEW/EXC. Back in real world. The UK is nowhere close to meeting the target for 50,000 customs agents it needs for [#Brexit](#), and the govt. "misleading" about it – haulage, customs chiefs tell me. Stay with me briefly. It's mad. /1Thread<https://t.co/e7VluYHIAq>

— Peter Foster (@pmdfoster) [May 26, 2020](#)

The UK in a Changing Europe has published a [report](#) on how Brexit has changed, and will change, the UK Parliament, with contributions from Hilary Benn, Meg Russell, Tim Bales, Jill Rutter and others.

## On LSE Brexit

You might expect the EU to account for a lower proportion of UK trade than it did in 2016. But this is not the case. The LSE's Thomas Sampson crunches the numbers and says the Brexit trade shock is yet to come.

[EU trade is just as important to the UK as it was in 2016. Why?](#)

Katy Hayward explains why the British government continues to gaslight Northern Ireland when it comes to the issue of the borders.

[The Protocol & lack of consent: the British government continues to gaslight Northern Ireland](#)

## Beyond Brexit: the €750bn package

What is actually occupying minds in Brussels and other EU27 capitals is the €750 billion crisis recovery package proposed by the Commission, which is heralded as the [EU's Hamiltonian moment](#). The LSE's Iain Begg is [enthusiastic](#): 'The Franco-German proposal is imaginative and could be a game-changer.'

Best day of Brexit in ages, reminds me how much I've missed it

— Gabriel Roth (@gabrielroth) [May 24, 2020](#)