

BREXIT AND TRADE CHOICES IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

CEPR AND NIESR

LONDON, 7 FEBRUARY, 2018

It is likely, although not certain, that the United Kingdom will leave the European Union. What remains highly uncertain is the direction that British economic policy will take, leading up to, during and following any Brexit process, and whether such an exit will be a single event or a series of adjustments stretched out over a number of years. There is also uncertainty about how the European Union will configure its policy towards the UK and about how the UK will, or should, react to any retaliatory action by the EU.

A conference on this topic is being convened, under the aegis of CEPR, by David Vines of Oxford University and Paul Gretton of the Australian National University. It will be held at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research in London on 7 February 2018. Participants will consider alternative frameworks for managing the movement of goods, services, capital and labour in the run-up to exit, as exit happens, and afterwards, and how these might relate to the global trade architecture.

Those participating in the conference will recognise the reality that, if the United Kingdom does not retain the preferential access to European markets that has been afforded by membership of the European Union, then its future prosperity and wellbeing will depend on its capabilities in global markets, including those of Asia, the Americas and Africa.

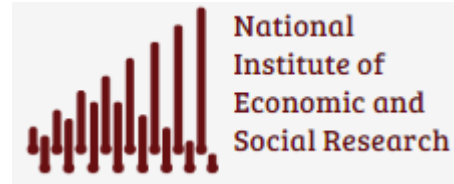
The meeting will consider three scenarios:

- (i) seeking to remain in the EU customs union and/or single market,
- (ii) withdrawing into a more protectionist environment vis a vis Europe but seeking the exchange of trade preferences – *i.e.* preferential trade agreements - with selected non-European trading partners, and
- (iii) shifting to a more open trading environment in which the United Kingdom unilaterally opens its external borders in a WTO consistent manner, both towards Europe and elsewhere.

Among other issues, participants will examine the detail of how option (iii) could be carried out, including giving effect to the principles laid out for the operation of the global trading system as overseen by the WTO.

The conference will bring to the UK a number of participants from outside Europe, principally from Australia and Asia, to help inform the policy choices facing Britain. The experience of Australian and Asian policymakers and advisers in carrying out unilateral liberalisation will be brought to bear on Britain's choices, and the current negotiation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will be considered.

The conference will also bring to the UK participants from the WTO and the OECD to provide insights on the global trading system and its administration. This will enable consideration of the changing face of global trade diplomacy, given the failure to finalise the Doha Round of trade negotiations.



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Hosted by NIESR, 2 Dean Trench Street, London SW1P 3HE
7 February 2018, 09h00 - 16h15

PROGRAMME

- 09:00** **OPENING**
Welcome: **Jagjit Chadha** (Director, NIESR)
- 09.15-10.30** **SESSION 1: A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL BENEFIT**
Chair: **Jim O'Neill** (former Commercial Secretary to the Treasury)
- Presenters: **Paul Gretton** (Australian National University) and **David Vines** (Oxford University and CEPR)
“Towards a Framework for Trade and Investment Policy in Post Brexit Britain”
- Monique Ebell** (NIESR) “Could New Trade Deals Soften the Blow of Hard Brexit?”
- Discussants: **Ivan Rogers** (Former Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the European Union)
- 10.30-10.45** **COFFEE**
- 10.45-12.30** **SESSION 2: THE CHANGING FACE OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, AND THE HUB AND SPOKES APPROACHES TO LIBERALISATION**
Chair: Creon Butler (UK Cabinet Office)
- Presenters: **Joe Francois** (World Trade Institute and CEPR), to be presented by **Ian Wooton** (University of Strathclyde and CEPR)
- Alan Winters** (Sussex University and CEPR)
- Rebecca Riley** (NIESR) “Effects on the UK manufacturing of China and of Eastern Europe”
- Discussants: **Jim Rollo** (Sussex University and CEPR)
- Alan Swinbank** (University of Reading)
- 12.30-13.30** **LUNCH**
- 13.30-14.30** **SESSION 3: OPEN REGIONALISM, STRATEGIC COMPETITION IN ASIA FOR GROWTH**
Chair: **David Gruen** (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Government)
- Panellists: **Shiro Armstrong** (Australian National University)
- He Fan** (Peking University)
- Sam Reinhardt** (Australian Treasury)
- 14.30-14.45** **TEA**
- 14.45-16.15** **SESSION 4: THE UNITED KINGDOM’S TRADE CHOICES IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**
Chair: **David Vines** (Oxford University and CEPR)

Panellists: **Peter Drysdale** (Australian National University)

Jim O'Neill (former Commercial Secretary to the Treasury)

Ivan Rogers (Former Permanent Representative of the UK to the EU)

Tim Yeend (Chef de Cabinet and Principal Advisor to the WTO Director-General, WTO)

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