

Political Thinking Meeting Report No 24

Chiltern U3A 'Political Thinking'

Meeting No 22 Monday 20th August 2018

Topic 1 The consequences of Brexit

The discussion focussed on material submitted by members which they considered interesting and informative for others to share.

1. Preferences as to type of Brexit,

Members were asked their preference for the various types of Brexit that seem to be possible, if not on offer.

Before Debate

Which would you prefer?

	yes	D/K	No
Chequers proposal basis			13
'Hard' BREXIT	7		6
Go with what can be negotiated with EU	1	1	11
Leave regardless.	7		6
Request to Withdraw Article 50 trigger	4		9

No Change after debate.

The options that commanded a small majority support were the second "Hard Brexit" and fourth "Leave regardless." Neither is current government policy.

2. View from Europe

An article by a Dutch journalist was considered

The view was that despite the long established good relationships between Holland and UK the Dutch would not support the British attempt to obtain special treatment.

The costs to the average Dutchman of the British leaving are substantial; however the cost of the consequences of allowing Britain to stay on its own terms are anticipated to be that every other member would also demand special terms, leading to the collapse of the Union as a result of internal strife. This would be far more damaging and costly to the average Dutchman than the departure of Britain.

“No deal is indeed better than a bad deal.” but for the Europeans, not necessarily Britain

3. Post leaving tariffs and food prices.

The suggestion has been made recent days that food prices in UK are likely to rise as a consequence of tariffs likely to be charged by the UK.

This view was refuted on the basis that legally the UK would be free to charge its own tariffs, high or low or none at all. Zero tariffs on food would mean cheaper food in UK shops.

The impact of zero external tariffs on UK agriculture would not be negligible.

4. Do we have to leave?

A view had been discovered that the triggering of Article 50 Notice of Withdrawal had no immediate legal effect. On the due date 31st March 2019 it would become effective, but until that date it could be withdrawn with no consequence other than just carrying on as before.

So a change of heart by a UK government before the due date could halt the Brexit.