Twitter Thread by Phil Syrpis



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One of the root causes of the Govt's Brexit difficulties is that it has overpromised.

We can, it is said, reclaim our sovereignty, with the freedom to make our own rules, and, at the same time, retain many of the advantages of EU membership. 1/14

The reality is that we cannot.

Unless we agree to certain standards and rules (and there is scope to argue about which rules), there will be borders, and checks, and tariffs. 2/

There will always be a relationship between rights (eg tariff free access to EU/UK markets) and responsibilities (eg abiding by level-playing field commitments). 3/

A 'good' outcome for the UK, in the Govt's view, would involve access gains (eg fewer border checks) without corresponding obligations (or with weak, or difficult-to-enforce obligations). 4/

The chances of this sort of 'good' outcome are low. The EU looks likely, in the face of the threats in the Internal Market Bill and now the Finance Bill, to insist on rigorous governance provisions. [Also, such provisions are the foundation of the single market.] 5/

It is easy to understand why Vote Leave overpromised way back in 2016. They had a referendum to win.

It is far harder to understand why, in the years since 2016, there has not been a dampening of expectations. 6/

As a result of the mythologised hype, any deal will look like desperately thin gruel. It is literally impossible for any deal to live up to the expectations which Vote Leave and the Govt have spent years stoking. 9/

So, as deals hove into view, the UK finds itself unable to commit. Why? Because the Govt knows that the Brexit it is proposing to deliver does not match the claims it has made, and is still making, for Brexit. 10/

Much of the commentary underestimates just how difficult it will be for PM Johnson to sell a thin deal whose disruptive consequences will start to become apparent in a matter of days. 11/

So, he is stuck in a familiar place - overpromising and underdelivering.

I can't help thinking that he would be in a much better political place had he started toning down the Vote Leave rhetoric some time ago... 12/

...enabling a more mature debate to take place, about the UK's preferred balance of rights and responsibilities, and about the nature of the UK's continuing relationship with the EU. 13/

That debate hasn't happened. Instead, the Govt's rhetoric has pushed the UK towards an ever harder Brexit.

Lots of damage has already been done. And there will be lots more to come. 14/14