Twitter Thread by Phil Syrpis



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There are a lot of Brexiters in the media this week making points about sovereignty, and about how the EU has not come to terms with the UK's independence.

I have some questions, which it might well be fruitful to ask them. 1/9

1. How do you understand the concept of sovereignty? What are the circumstances in which you might agree to make binding commitments to other independent states or trading blocs? 2/

2. What sort of commitments are you prepared to make in order to get trade deals with other states/blocs? And, to what end (why not trade on Australian-style terms with the wider world)? 3/

3. Do you accept that the EU has the right to impose its own rules as a condition for access to its market? Given the UK's involvement in the single market, and in the creation of its regulatory infrastructure, this feature should not come as a surprise. 4/

4. Do you accept that there is a need for borders (which were not needed while the UK was part of the single market) between states/blocs with different regulatory regimes? 5/

5. How are these borders going to work in January? What tariffs, checks etc are going to be required? How in particular are the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland going to be addressed? 6/

6. At the moment, Brexiter and Govt rhetoric insists that 'sovereignty' and 'unfettered trade' are mutually compatible goals. See https://t.co/vTI7qzGKel 7/

> One of the root causes of the Govt's Brexit difficulties is that it has overpromised.
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> 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
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> — Phil Syrpis (@syrpis) December 7, 2020

The reality is that they are not. The Govt must know this. The negotiations would not have limped on for as long as they have, had the Govt not shown willingness to agree to certain rules in return for (eg) tariff-free trade. 8/

The debate is all about the nature of the trade-offs, and the balance between rights and responsibilities.

Those who deny that trade-offs have to be made are not helping anyone. Every possible outcome will be said to be a 'betrayal'. 9/9