Twitter Thread by Edwin Hayward ■ ■



Edwin Hayward ■ ■
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A few thoughts in advance of seeing the Brexit deal, assuming it's not scuppered at the last.

1. It will save industries, in the short term. For all the problems it *won't* solve, there is at least that. Tariffs would have finished off some sectors like switching off a light.

2. Expect a lot of confusion (through ignorance, and deliberate obfuscation by certain segments of the media) between free trade and frictionless trade. Trade that is free can still come with plenty of friction. Those extra £billions in customs paperwork won't go away.

3. There may be a standstill or implementation period. If there is, that will be helpful because it will let us get further down the road of vaccinating against the coronavirus, and resolving one crisis before plunging into the rest.

4. Any standstill will trigger a huge wave of "you told us scary things would happen, but they didn't." If you're counting along, it will be the 3rd such wave. First was during the negotiations while we were still EU members. Second during transition when EU rules still applied.

5. Those are just words. But the damage to the economy is real. So a standstill remains preferable, though teeth may have to remain gritted a while longer as a result.

6. Expect a few positive surprises. (Not compared to EU membership, but to what would otherwise have been.)

7. Half the media focus will be on the fish. But 99.9% of the damage will come from the non-fish parts of the deal.

8. How have services fared? They're what keep our trade deficit from being a larger trade deficit. They can't get stuck at ports, but they can suffer from changes.

9. Speaking of ports... In the absence of a standstill period, the chaos will begin (continue?) very soon in the new year. 7 sets of customs declarations and other forms will see to that. Even one extra minute per truck guarantees massive tailbacks.

10. Two things may relieve some pressure at the ports, neither good:
- There are dozens of new direct ferry services between Ireland and the Continent, all introduced in the last 12 months or so. These include the 2 largest Ro-Ro ships in the world. So less via the landbridge.

- Hauliers may not come. We rely on EU drivers for the vast majority of transport, and they are spoiled for choice because there's a shortage within the EU itself. The horrid, inhumane situation down in Kent the last few days will have sent a very loud "avoid the UK" message.

11. No matter how bad the deal turns out to be, don't expect major improvements any time soon. Boris Johnson will stay lashed to it well beyond the point logic dictates. We have already had plenty of chances to see just how little he believes in proactivity during the pandemic.

12. The ERG, hard Brexiters and people like Farage will proclaim it a sell-out. That was a nailed on given, as clear as night follows day. Nothing will ever satisfy them. So that doesn't matter. The only thing that does is, how many people listen to them.

And there you have it. Wasn't going to jinx it by having thirteen points - we're in enough trouble as it is.

Remember, the deal - whatever it is - is *better* than no-deal AS WELL AS *worse* than EU membership.

Merry Christmas.