Twitter Thread by David Henig



David Henig
@DavidHenigUK

Today's UK-EU trade deal reflection - what is rarely stated in discussions about the deal's shortcomings is that they reflect UK government policy choices - in particular that control of immigration and a US trade deal are a higher priority than an EU deal.

Thus, why was it not a UK government priority to secure for UK musicians the rights to tour the EU? Because that would probably have required a reciprocal right to be given to those in the EU, which we didn't want to give. Choice.

Meanwhile why did the UK government not seek or secure a reduction in food inspections for GB products going to the EU? Because that would probably have required fixing food regulations in a way that might have been an obstacle to a US trade deal.

Works the other way as well. Why did the EU refuse UK requests on mutual recognition of industrial testing? In part at least because of UK lack of commitment on maintaining the previous EU system of standards and conformity assessment which might be a problem in a US deal.

One of the strangest opinions in the London politics bubble is that the UK government isn't that bothered about a US trade deal, as it so obviously goes against the evidence. There might be domestic opposition, but this was to be Brexit Dividend Number 1.

Perfectly reasonable of course for the UK government to have political priorities. Just particularly strange that we don't discuss them in this way. And those who want a stronger relationship with the EU have to tackle the immigration issue in particular.

Really we need to get better at discussing the UK's political choices. Because whether immigration, deregulation, food, data rules, all will affect our trade policy.

But it isn't a conversation the government wants and hence there is no obvious place for it to happen.

The EU negotiation abstract of pre-December 31 is becoming real, and now we start to learn the impact of choices, and the immigration and US trade deal priorities. Let's see if those priorities hold or change with circumstances. /end