

The Alternative Mandate: our Brexit demands

The United Kingdom has left the European Union, but this represents only the end of the first phase of the Brexit process. As coronavirus disrupts the fabric of our society and we head into another massive economic crisis, we are determined to offer an alternative to the vision put forward by the likes of Boris Johnson, Victor Orban and Matteo Salvini.

In the context of an era-defining crisis of the economy, the state and public health, we pledge ourselves to a renewed project of resistance, and we will campaign to maintain and extend our rights, protections and

environmental commitments.

We launch this Alternative Mandate as our set of demands on the Brexit negotiations, in the understanding that it must be matched by a continued push for a transformed EU that can be a force for progress, and for real solutions to the problems which caused Brexit to happen.

Achieving these goals, whether over the next five years or over the next fifty, will require a mass movement that is pluralistic, and which stretches across Europe and collaborates across parties and well beyond national and continental frontiers.

Cooperation to tackle the global health crisis

The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted our economies and societies. It is also, by definition, an international crisis, and has shown the inadequacy of a response which seeks to compete, rather than cooperate, across borders. The context of an unprecedented global recession and concurrent pandemic fundamentally alters the context of the Brexit negotiations. While many politicians seek to blame the migrants who have kept our society functioning and to make the poorest pay the price for the crisis, we will offer a vision of internationalism and solidarity, to demand:

- International coordination across Europe and beyond to pool knowledge and resources, and collaborate on research and build capacity
- Continued British membership of the European Medicines Agency and the European Health Insurance Card scheme on a permanent basis
- The UK's continued participation in vital EU science and research funding schemes
- Fundamental change in the pharmaceutical industry, based on public funding and control
- A plan of public investment and economic democratisation, rather than cuts and privatisation

Freedom to move, freedom to stay

Ending free movement with Europe amounts to the biggest expansion of border controls in the UK's recent history. It will make millions of people more precarious and vulnerable to exploitation, reliant on the goodwill of charity and at the mercy of their boss, landlord and successive governments. Even the 3.5 million EU citizens living in the UK have not yet had their rights guaranteed, and the future for UK citizens in the EU is also still uncertain. These same people were excluded from voting in both the 2016 referendum and the 2019 general election. We believe in fewer borders and less restriction on the movement of people – at every turn and around the world. Therefore, we will campaign for:

- Free movement rights to continue as part of the final Brexit deal.
- An unconditional 'right to stay' for all European citizens living in the UK, granting equal rights to work and access social security and public services, written into primary legislation and replacing the current Settled Status application system; and for an equal system to be applied to UK citizens in the EU.
- The extension of the franchise to all UK residents and all UK citizens living abroad.
- A continued and improved commitment to refugees, including upholding human rights and calling for safe routes, and universal acceptance of the right to seek sanctuary and of granting refugees proper support and rights at least as good as those accorded to them by international law.
- The end of the 'hostile environment' and immigration detention
- Free movement provisions in all post-Brexit trade deals

Combat the climate crisis

Humanity and life on Earth faces an existential threat, and one that does not respect borders. On paper, the UK government is committed to a legally binding target of Net Zero Carbon by 2050 - but this target is too late to stop catastrophic climate change and we are nowhere near being on course to meet it. The Leave campaign was funded and supported by climate change deniers, and the UK's departure from the EU must not provide an excuse to step back from commitments to tackle the climate crisis.

We will campaign for:

- The UK to at least keep pace with carbon reduction targets set by the EU
- The UK to continue to participate in European forums and discussions on combating the climate crisis, and to push for faster and more concerted action
- A unilateral UK target of Net Zero by 2030, written into law



Environmental protections

Around 80% of the UK's environmental protections come from the EU. Almost all of our laws around habitats and wildlife, beach quality, air quality, wilderness protection, water pollution and noise pollution are drafted in Brussels. Hundreds of sites of natural beauty, including Dartmoor, the North York Moors, Epping Forest, Cannock Chase, Flamborough Head and Snowdonia are protected by EU law. And yet, despite previously giving assurances in earlier drafts of Brexit legislation, the government did not include any guarantees for the environment when it passed its Withdrawal Agreement in January 2020. We will campaign for:

- No loss of protections for any part of the environment as a result of Brexit
- The UK to automatically keep pace with future improvements to environmental protections coming from the EU



Workers' rights

Europe-wide workplace rights are the result of tens of millions of trade unionists and others struggling over decades to improve the lives of workers and their families. Limits on working hours, annual leave, equal pay, maternity rights and parental leave, protections for agency workers, health and safety, and protection against discrimination in the workplace - all are derived wholly or partially from EU law. Senior government ministers have been explicit about their desire to scrap these legal protections for workers as part of the Brexit process, and are open about their intention to introduce new and restrictive anti-union laws. We will campaign for:

- Levelling up, not levelling down: no loss of rights for workers
- Dynamic alignment with new rights for workers introduced after we leave the EU
- Improved rights for unions to organise at work, including the repeal of all the UK's anti-union laws



Human rights

Leaving the EU will not take us out of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) - which is what guarantees, for instance, the abolition of death penalty - but it means that a future UK government could step out of it. It has been Conservative Party policy to scrap the Human Rights Act, the legislation that enshrines the ECHR in UK law. Meanwhile, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights has already been scrapped from domestic law by Theresa May. This charter provided additional rights on things like the 'right to be forgotten' and discrimination protections. It also enabled citizens to take the government to court over legislation which is not compatible with a fundamental right, something which they can't do simply under the ECHR. We will campaign for:

- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, or the equivalent rights and access to justice, to return to UK law
- Protection of the Human Rights Act
- Protection and expansion of civil liberties, data and privacy rights



Our democracy

The Brexit process poses an unprecedented threat to our democracy. The EU Withdrawal Act contained multiple ‘Henry VIII’ powers, giving the government the right to change and repeal primary legislation without a vote in parliament. Boris Johnson’s prorogation of parliament was a calculated attack on our democracy. And yet, Brexit happened in part because of a crisis of democracy, and this could be a moment of democratic renewal. Now is the time to make the proactive case for deep and lasting reform to our constitution. We will campaign for:

- A convention, or other means of mass consultation, with a view to a far-reaching reform to the UK constitution
- A consolidated written constitution, making instances like the 2019 prorogation of parliament impossible
- Proportional representation for all elections in the UK
- Meaningful decentralisation of power from Westminster to nations and regions
- The abolition of the use of the Royal Prerogative to deprive parliament of oversight over matters of trade, foreign policy and defence
- The replacement of the House of Lords with an elected second chamber
- Votes at 16

Consumer protections, food standards and animal rights

There is huge uncertainty about the general state of regulation in our economy after Brexit. Should the UK sign a trade deal with the United States and not maintain alignment with EU rules, the standard of our food and other products could plummet. As part of the EU we benefited from food laws restricting import of chlorinated chicken, many uses of hormones and pesticides in animal production - all are illegal in the EU but legal in the US. It is European law which defines animals as 'sentient beings', and which provides around 80% of our legal protections for animals. The EU also bases its regulatory model on the risk-averse 'precautionary principle', which keeps more harmful products off our shelves, unlike in the US where heavy corporate lobbying ensures more dangerous products go on sale. We are reliant on EU directives and schemes when it comes to our protection from unsafe products and practices. We will campaign for:

- Full continued UK participation in the European regulatory framework when it comes to consumer rights and protections



Protecting jobs and communities – not private profit

Brexit has already cost hundreds of thousands of jobs, as businesses have relocated. In the coming years, Brexit and the economic turbulence it will cause could be used as a pretext for austerity, restructuring and deskilling. This, as much as the loss of rights and regulations, is a threat to the livelihoods and standard of living of many people. We will campaign for:

- No loss of jobs, pay or conditions for workers as a result of Brexit. We demand public ownership and democratic control in place of corporate bailouts, off-shoring, asset-stripping and closures
- Practical solidarity with workers and communities negatively impacted in the UK and the EU
- A worker-led green transition for polluting industries and arms manufacturers, promoting diversification
- Strong trade unions in every workplace
- The UK to at least keep pace with EU anti-trust and tax avoidance rules

Agriculture and fishing

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the most controversial of its policies, and has been criticised for benefiting large scale landowners at the expense of small farmers and producers. The Common Fisheries Policy has also been criticised, but in practice it is the UK's implementation that is the most regressive aspect. Research by Greenpeace revealed that more than two thirds of the UK's fishing quotas are owned by just 25 businesses. Leaving the EU presents an opportunity to come up with a new and more equitable system, but only if there is the political will in the House of Commons. We will campaign for:

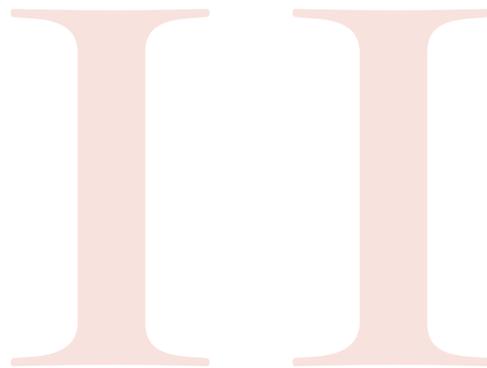
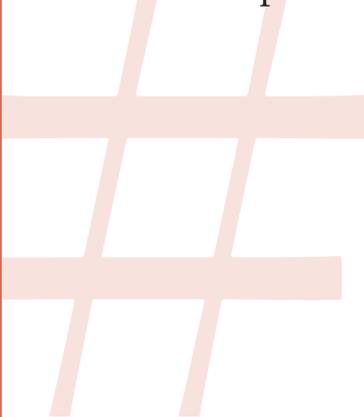
- A new system of state subsidies for agriculture which prioritises the rights and prosperity of small producers and agricultural workers, promotion of the democratic ownership of land, preservation of culinary heritage and diversity, lowering emissions, improved animal welfare and food quality and safety
- A new system for fisheries and quotas in the UK which prioritises the rights and prosperity of small fisherman and workers at sea, lowering emissions, sustainability of fish stocks, and animal welfare
- Both these new systems should also help ensure affordable food for all, protect the interests of small producers in poorer countries, and promote just transition to sustainable food production whilst protecting biodiversity including the marine environment



Trade justice

The UK is about to embark on a series of trade negotiations which could fundamentally alter our economy and society. Modern trade deals not only affect employment and trade relationship through tariffs, but can have massive impacts on regulations, public services, medicine prices, human rights and our ability to tax big business. A US trade deal is a particular concern as it would draw us away from EU standards and protections and into a US-style deregulated economic model. Worse still, neither the public nor our MPs have the power to stop such a trade deal, or to scrutinise the negotiations. Although EU standards of transparency and accountability are not perfect, they are considerably better than the UK's. We will campaign:

- Against a US trade deal that would result in more deregulation and pull us into the US's foreign policy orbit
- Against any trade deals that incorporate corporate courts (ISDS)
- For democratic rights through which trade negotiating documents are public, and MPs have the right to control government negotiating objectives and, if necessary, stop a trade deal
- A new trade policy based on the right of poorer countries to develop, levelling up rather than race to the bottom, binding commitments to human rights and the urgent need to tackle climate change rather than endlessly liberalise trade relationships



Science research and culture funding

The UK's science and academic research currently receives a large proportion of its funding from the EU. The UK is the second largest recipient of EU research funding through the Framework Programme (FP7) funds. Between 2007 and 2013, the UK received €8.8bn in research funding, much more than it contributed. 71% of this went to universities, which are more dependent than ever on these funds to produce vital research. Meanwhile EU membership has, via programmes like ERASMUS+, has brought a wealth of cultural and educational benefits to the UK, enriching our social fabric, academic institutions, providing individual opportunities and widening horizons. We will campaign for:

- The UK's continued participation in European research funding programmes, including Horizon Europe (the post 2020 research scheme) and the European Research Council
- The UK's continued participation in ERASMUS+ and other similar schemes of exchange and access to education
- Full access to Creative Europe and other cultural programmes that facilitate cultural exchange, mobility and cross-border collaboration for artists and creatives
- A defence of the UK's higher education sector against any programme of cuts and marketisation in the context of Brexit

International solidarity

Brexit has been used as an excuse to attack and degrade the aid budget, and use development funds to increasingly meet the needs of UK business and the financial sector. We reject this model as regressive and neo-colonial and will work for a radically different form of international solidarity that includes:

- Curbing arms exports and the promotion of peace-building over military interventions
- A large increase in publicly controlled financial flows from the north to the south to allow countries to develop in a sustainable manner, including through technology transfer
- Placing public services, economic democracy, and corporate taxation and regulation at the heart of a fight to reduce global inequality

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“In the context of an era-defining crisis of the economy, the state and public health, we pledge ourselves to a renewed project of resistance.”

ANOTHER EUROPE IS POSSIBLE