

OPINION: The Myth of a Peaceful Trade Bloc: How the EU Became a Power-Hungry Beast

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The concept of a European trade bloc was an appealing one—initially. It promised free movement of goods, services, and people, making it easier for nations to trade, collaborate, and prosper. However, as history has shown, this well-intentioned idea morphed into something far more sinister and threatening. What started as a pragmatic solution for cooperation has become a bloated, authoritarian machine that seeks ever-increasing control over its member states and their sovereignty.

When the European Union was conceived, its founding principles focused on economic cooperation, the elimination of trade barriers, and ensuring that Europe would never again be ravaged by the wars and conflicts that had marred its past. At first, it seemed to offer a promising framework for peaceful collaboration among European nations, facilitating greater prosperity through shared trade, standards, and a common market.

But somewhere along the way, the EU strayed from its original purpose. It gradually shifted its focus from economic cooperation to political control. The dream of a cooperative trade bloc transformed into a centralised bureaucracy that seeks to dictate policy on everything—from immigration to fiscal regulation. The union became a force that constantly encroaches on national sovereignty, disregarding the unique needs and values of its individual member states.

One of the most glaring examples of this shift is the insistence that EU law trumps the laws of individual member states. The EU has empowered itself to impose regulations and directives upon countries, undermining their ability to govern according to the will of their citizens. In the UK's case, the situation became untenable. The idea that Brussels—an unelected body—could override laws passed by the UK Parliament and the wishes of the British people was a stark violation of democratic principles.

It wasn't just about trade or cooperation anymore; it became about

power—unchecked, unelected power. The EU's political ambitions led it to expand its *authority* into areas where it had no business interfering. The decisions of the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice began to have far-reaching consequences for member states. As these bodies gained more control, the sovereignty of nations like the UK was systematically eroded. Laws that had been enacted by the British government were rendered subservient to the decisions made in Brussels. It was no longer about free trade or collaboration; it was about subjugation.

For the UK, it became increasingly clear that staying within the EU would mean surrendering control over key aspects of its domestic and foreign policy. The “trade bloc” was no longer a fair partnership—it had become an institution that dictated terms to its members, regardless of the damage caused to national interests. The EU had turned into an entity that sought to expand its *powers* further and further, with little regard for the consequences on the lives of its citizens.

This is why, despite the challenges, it was ultimately the right decision for the UK to leave the EU. The referendum result demonstrated that a majority of the British people wanted to regain control over their laws, borders, and destiny. The desire for sovereignty, for a Britain that could make its own decisions without interference from Brussels, was clear.

However, the politicians who were meant to deliver Brexit sabotaged the process at every turn. Instead of honouring the will of the people, they sought to water down the deal and keep the UK tied to the EU in all but name. The compromises they negotiated were a betrayal, as they left Britain still shackled to EU regulations, with the spectre of EU law continuing to loom large over our legal system. Rather than embracing the full freedom that Brexit offered, our politicians compromised on key issues, allowing the EU to maintain influence over UK policies in ways that were never intended.

The failure to fully break away from the EU reflects the tragic reality of modern British politics: a political class that remains wedded to the idea of the European project and fears the consequences of independence. They were willing to ignore the voice of the people, opting for half-measures and political expediency rather than the bold and decisive action that true sovereignty demands.

In the end, the idea of a trade bloc was indeed fantastic—but it became something far more dangerous as the EU grew into a power-hungry monster. The UK made the right choice in leaving, but the politicians we entrusted to deliver a clean break failed us. We must now remain vigilant, not only against the growing tide of EU overreach but also against the potential actions of a political class that has shown time and time again its willingness to ignore the voice of the people. Our democracy and sovereignty are not just threatened by foreign powers but by those within our own ranks who would sacrifice national interests for political convenience. The battle for true independence doesn't end with Brexit—it continues as we fight to ensure that the will of the people is always respected, and that no government, in Britain or beyond, ever undermines our hard-won freedoms again.

Footnotes:

1. The Role of UK Parliament in Allowing EU Laws: While it's true that EU laws were implemented in the UK by an act of Parliament—the European Communities Act of 1972—the key point here is that the UK Parliament had no effective control over the creation or enforcement of these laws. The European Union's legal framework has an automatic primacy over domestic law, meaning that once these laws were passed by EU institutions, they superseded UK law. The British Parliament was forced to comply with legislation that it did not create and had limited input in shaping. This is a fundamental issue when it comes to the sovereignty of Parliament, as it meant that the UK was bound by laws made by institutions over which it had little to no influence.

2. EU Legislation Overruling Domestic Laws: One of the most notable examples of EU law overriding UK domestic law is the infamous case of the *Factortame* saga. In this case, the European Court of Justice ruled that the UK's Merchant Shipping Act of 1988, which restricted the rights of foreign-owned vessels to fish in British waters, was incompatible with EU law. The European Court ordered the UK to suspend the law until it was amended, a clear example of how EU law took precedence over UK domestic legislation. While this was done in the name of European integration and the free movement of services, it highlighted the erosion of national sovereignty.

Another example comes from the area of human rights law. The European Court

of Human Rights (ECHR), although not directly part of the EU, has influenced UK law through its interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights. The *Hirst* case in 2005, which ruled that the UK's ban on prisoners voting was a violation of their human rights, saw the UK government under significant pressure to implement the ruling, despite widespread opposition from British voters. The UK Parliament had to comply with the ECHR's ruling, even though many MPs and the public were against it.

3. The Consequences of Opposing EU Law: Had the UK Parliament attempted to oppose EU laws, the consequences could have been severe. Under EU law, member states are legally bound to adhere to the principles of the European Union, and non-compliance could result in legal action by the European Commission. Member states could be taken to the European Court of Justice and fined for failing to implement EU law. Furthermore, the UK could have faced sanctions in the form of restrictions on its access to the single market, which would have had economic consequences. These penalties served as a stark reminder of the limits to national sovereignty within the EU framework.

4. The EU's Role in Protecting Rights and Standards: Proponents of the EU often argue that the union has been a force for good, particularly in terms of human rights, environmental protection, and workers' rights. While it's undeniable that the EU has contributed to harmonising certain standards across Europe, this does not necessarily justify the erosion of national sovereignty. Many of the rights and standards promoted by the EU could have been achieved through domestic legislation or international agreements outside of the EU framework. In fact, the UK had its own robust legal and regulatory systems long before joining the EU, and much of the progress made in areas like environmental protection and workers' rights was driven by domestic political movements and global agreements, not the EU alone.

5. Economic Arguments for Staying in the EU: Critics of Brexit will often cite the economic benefits of EU membership, arguing that leaving the union has resulted in trade disruptions and economic instability. However, the reality is that the UK's economy has proven resilient, and new trade deals are being negotiated independently of the EU. Moreover, the cost of EU membership—estimated to be billions of pounds annually—was a financial burden that the UK no longer has to bear. While there have been short-term economic adjustments, the long-term benefits of regained sovereignty and independence should not be underestimated.

6. The Undemocratic Nature of the EU: One of the central criticisms of the EU is its democratic deficit. Many of its key institutions—such as the European Commission, which has the power to propose and implement legislation—are unelected. Members of the European Parliament are elected, but they have limited legislative power compared to the Commission. The European Court of Justice also holds significant influence, and its rulings often override national laws. The lack of democratic accountability in these decision-making bodies has been a major concern for many EU critics, especially in the context of sovereignty.