

Ten years after the Brexit referendum

The past, present and future of
the UK's relationship with the EU



New CER publication: Ten years after Brexit, Britain's European relationship remains unresolved

A decade after the Brexit referendum, a new essay collection by the Centre for European Reform, '[Ten years after the Brexit referendum](#)', brings together leading policy-makers, former politicians and senior officials, and analysts to reflect on what the past decade has meant for the UK, the EU, and the future of UK-EU relations.

The collection includes essays by Catherine Barnard, Ian Bond, Nick Butler, Catherine Day, Charles Grant, Peter Kellner, Julian King, David Lidington, David Miliband, Nicolai von Ondarza, Philip Rycroft, Daniela Schwarzer, John Springford, Anton Spisak and Nathalie Tocci.

The authors examine a wide range of topics, including the costs of Brexit, its political consequences, changing British public opinion, security and defence co-operation, and the future of the UK-EU 'reset' as the two sides prepare for the crucial UK-EU summit on July 22nd.

[John Springford and Anton Spisak](#), of the CER, write that Brexit has created a persistent drag on Britain's growth path. Its costs, they argue, have been visible in "the trade that does not happen, the investment that is not made, the productivity that is foregone, the political time that is lost and the taxes that have to rise."

[Sir David Lidington](#), former senior UK government minister, argues that Brexit "consumed a vast amount" of government and parliamentary bandwidth without addressing the grievances that helped produce the Leave vote.

[Philip Rycroft](#), former permanent secretary at the Department for Exiting the EU, writes that Brexit has made the UK union "more politically fragile, but separation more complicated", while [Catherine Barnard](#), a leading EU law scholar, argues that Brexit has not ended the gravitational pull of EU law: "A decade on, the argument has changed rather than disappeared."

[David Miliband](#), former UK foreign secretary, argues that "at just the wrong time, Brexit weakened Britain, weakened Europe and weakened the West." [Nicolai von Ondarza](#), of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, writes that Brexit became "one crisis among many" for an EU that has proved more resilient than many expected.

[Sir Julian King](#), former European commissioner for the security union, and [Ian Bond](#), deputy director of the CER, examine the consequences for European security. King argues that the UK and the EU “face shared threats to our shared values”, while Bond writes that the UK and its European partners have “ended up working together more often than not”, even as Brexit “reduced Britain’s institutional access and influence”.

[Nick Butler](#), an energy economist, argues that geography, infrastructure and shared climate goals create a powerful case for closer UK-EU co-operation on energy. [Peter Kellner](#), a leading pollster, examines the changing public mood, arguing that regret over Brexit has grown but does not yet amount to a settled desire to rejoin.

Looking ahead, [Nathalie Tocci](#), a leading Italian political scientist, argues that the UK-EU reset has “reached its limits”; [Catherine Day](#), former secretary-general of the European Commission, warns that “the more the UK wants, the more conditions will be attached”; while [Daniela Schwarzer](#), of Bertelsmann Stiftung, argues that the next phase must help Europe become “more resilient, more competitive and more capable of acting”.

[Charles Grant](#), director of the CER, argues that the reset has so far been limited because “there has been no serious or coherent British plan for getting significantly closer to the EU”, but that “both sides would benefit from the increased competition and dynamism that closer economic ties would foster”.

Commenting, Anton Spisak, assistant director at the Centre for European Reform and editor of the collection, said: *“Brexit has reshaped the UK’s economy, politics and place in the world, but even a decade after the referendum, Britain’s relationship with the EU remains far from settled. The old Leave-Remain divide may have lost much of its political force, but the grievances and strategic dilemmas behind the UK’s departure from the EU have not disappeared.”*

He added: *“As the UK and the EU enter a new phase of the ‘reset’ at the UK-EU summit on July 22, both sides have an interest in building a more ambitious partnership. But that will require political honesty in London about the trade-offs of closer ties, and greater imagination in Brussels about how to work with a large European country outside the EU.”*

Notes for editors:

To discuss the essays or request an interview with Anton Spisak, Charles Grant, Ian Bond or one of the contributors, please contact Kate Mullineux in the CER press office on pressoffice@cer.eu or +44 (0) 20 7233 1199.

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