



## Plugging in the British: EU foreign policy

by Ian Bond  
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In foreign policy terms, Brexit has the potential to make the UK more autonomous but less influential, and the European Union more united but less active, unless both sides can find a new mutually beneficial way to work together. That's the key risk highlighted in a new policy brief '[Plugging in the British: EU foreign policy](#)' by the Centre for European Reform that explores how the UK and EU might co-operate on foreign policy and development after Brexit.

This is a bad time for Europe's foreign policy strength to be called into question with challenges from Russia, Turkey, and China, and a US president who is critical of the EU and NATO. There's obvious value in the UK and EU maintaining the closest possible foreign policy co-operation after Brexit. If Britain means what it says about continuing to work in tandem with the EU it should move quickly to find an accommodation and accept limits to its freedom of action internationally in order to maximise its influence in EU decision-making. Equally, if the EU wants to have the UK in its corner it should find a way to allow London to contribute to shaping its foreign and development policies even though it is outside the bloc.

*"The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy has been a great multiplier for Britain. We have persuaded our partners to support UK foreign policy aims in places like Somalia and Zimbabwe. Now we shall need mechanisms to try to keep UK and EU policies aligned after Brexit, learning lessons from countries like Canada, Norway and the US who already have to do this,"* said Ian Bond, director of foreign policy at the CER and author of the paper.

'Plugging in the British: EU Foreign Policy' is the first in a series of publications as part of a joint project with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Great Britain Office that explore how the EU co-operates with partners outside the bloc in areas other than trade, with the aim of informing Britain's Brexit options. The second paper will focus on defence, and the third on law enforcement and counter-terrorism.

### Note for editors:

For further information on the policy brief and to request an interview with Ian Bond, please contact Nick Winning in the CER press office on [pressoffice@cer.eu](mailto:pressoffice@cer.eu) or + 44 (0) 20 7233 1199. Follow CER and Ian Bond on Twitter on: [@CER\\_EU](#) and [@CER\\_IanBond](#).