

Danuta Hübner
Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs in the European Parliament

“Institutional implications of the triggering of article 50”

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I have the feeling that nearly everything that can be said on Brexit at this stage of the process has been said. A rather large dose of uncertainty created by the absence of detail that might come with the notification of the Article 50 allows only for speculating and whatiffing.

Paradoxically, maybe, this lack of hard facts to build upon contributes to a sort of Brexit fatigue even before the real process has started.

Another misleading factor comes from rather surprising fiction we live in - as British economy is not doing bad - which leads to confusing impact of the referendum on the economy with the impact of the real Brexit on the economy. This will come in a longer term perspective, accompanied by the need for really hard choices that are not seen today.

Some of us have believed from the day one and we see it today even with more clarity that the referendum, even if needed, was ill conceived from the start. Somebody said it already - referendum was about the wish of the leader to stay in power and who did not believe it would become a reality.

Also, during the campaign there was no reflection on consequences, especially on far reaching, irreversible consequences that are really those that matter. Even the question in the referendum was not about issues that really matter for citizens. As a result, we see and regret that Ms May has chosen the control of migration (while there is already full employment in UK) over the single market.

But as we're where we are and we have heard that Brexit is Brexit, I have no doubt that the challenge today is to deliver Brexit intelligently, avoiding anything that can happen by accident and that either side will walk away from the negotiations. It is probably easier said than done but both sides should make an effort to come to negotiation table with a positive mind set, prepared to do everything we can to avoid a crush.

We do not know yet with sufficient certainty where our British friends would want to land at the end of this difficult journey, and I can only hope that we will be able to identify a shared objective rather promptly and agree where we want to be together in the post Brexit future.

Europe has always been about compromise building. The challenge will be to achieve something that can be called a good compromise. The tradition,

however, is the one of achieving compromises at the lowest level of common denominator. Taking into account that article 50 is structured in a way shifting the advantage balance toward the EU, this time around it can be different. Of course, the history of European integration proves that for some MSs compromise has always meant a failure. I feel tempted to say that our British friends belong to this group. So yes, there is a risk that UK can take a good compromise for a bad deal. And then we know that for them "no deal" is better than "a bad deal" and then it might mean jumping off the cliff. So yes, it is not going to be easy. And there are risks.

How I read the British attitude now ?

I believe they are determined to get through it, we hear it also from those politicians who voted to stay. So there will be notification of the intention of the UK to leave the Union. It is rather unfortunate that there seems to be a rather deep difference, or even a clear gap, in understanding how we work in Europe. Also, there seems to be limited awareness of logistics of leaving. And, last but not least, of costs of leaving.

The British Parliament has got a say in the process but not really sufficiently relevant.

I am actually disappointed that the Parliament supported Brexit or at least did not oppose it. It is in a way amazing that issue of that importance for the life of future generations is coped with with such a limited role of elected representatives of citizens.

And, what I said before, the reaction of markets and economic situation in response to referendum is read as reaction to Brexit itself. This is also rather surprising.

On our, EU side we are organised for this process. Architecture for negotiations is clear and in place. All institutions know their place in this process. The power of the EP comes from the fact that at the end of the whole process there is a consent procedure, during which the EP with a simple majority can endorse the withdrawal deal or, in case of a lack of such a majority, reject it. We are currently preparing our first resolution to give some guidance to the European Council guidelines for the negotiations as well as to create a space for reference when consent procedure will be launched. We will be expressing ourselves through resolutions in the course of negotiations. We are also in the process of collecting all possible information to ensure that the consent will be a well informed process.

It would be highly useful if both sides could be very clear as soon as possible on what is actually feasible. For the EU Treaties give guidance on the boundaries of the possible. There is a special relationship with the neighbouring countries envisaged in the Treaties. On the U.K. side politics seem to dominate.

So far we have not heard from the Brits any clear idea that would be a fully consistent framework. There is no clarity at all about the framework for the future, and this, the future landing zone, should be made clear rather quickly and also, quite likely, agreed as a framework with the EU by the end of this year.

What has been repeatedly underlined is a strong "no" to single market, to ECJ, to the custom union. A specific, unique framework for the future seems to be expected, most likely close to some sort of a comprehensive free trade agreement.

Those of us who had been through the accession process know that for such a deal one would have to create a comprehensive institutional framework that would provide for monitoring and surveillance

On a cut off date there will be full compliance or equivalence of norms, standards, rules, basically full harmonization will be there. The challenge will be to ensure the equivalence to continue, to be maintained because differences will emerge and grow. On both sides. Fragmentation will be inevitable to a certain extent. 27 and EEA will continue to deepen integration in areas where it exists as well as harmonize in new areas. But of course for regulatory convergence to be ensured both sides will have to be committed. There will be a need to agree on a dispute settlement framework. It is hard to imagine that for the implementation of withdrawal agreement and transition period it could be a different framework than the one of ECJ. There are ideas of reaching out to the EFTA court experience and its special relationship with ECJ. They maintain consistency of their judgements. Another option, which would be an arbitration joint tribunal, not affecting internal laws, is an option. Some experts are pointing to WTO or international tribunal in Hague options.

It goes without saying that any transitional arrangements would be possible only once there is clarity about the future framework. There is understanding, I believe, that we should aim at avoiding disruptions and legal vacuum. In my view as there is no legal basis for transition arrangements, this whole process and its institutional framework will have to be established within the framework of withdrawal agreement. Some of those transitional frameworks would then be incorporated into future settlement.

Without doubts Brexit as Prime Minister May sees it, will produce damage economically, politically, emotionally. Doing everything to mitigate this damage is our duty. And the full awareness on both sides that if no agreement is reached in two years, cliff edge Brexit will take place. And the logic of no deal better than bad deal means heading toward cliff scenario. But also let me say that hoping that making this no deal disaster a part of a kind of blackmail scenario will not work.