# Labour warns of £9 billion trade loss as Farage's EU stances threaten UK economy



A senior Labour minister is set to accuse Nigel Farage of undermining the UK's economic interests by advocating policies that would damage trade with the European Union, as Labour intensifies its efforts to counter Reform UK's rising popularity in the polls. Nick Thomas-Symonds, the European affairs minister, plans to deliver a major speech warning that a Reform UK government could slash UK trade by £9 billion, with significant consequences for jobs and food prices.

This development comes amid Labour's push to secure a permanent trade deal with the EU on food and drink products, aimed at reducing border checks and easing costs for supermarkets and consumers. The current temporary arrangement, instituted in June, suspends checks on certain fruit and vegetables imported from the EU, including tomatoes, grapes, and peppers, until January 2027. This interim deal has been welcomed by industry representatives and is seen as critical to maintaining smooth trade flows. The government intends to build on this foundation to finalise a long-term sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement within the next 18 months, reflecting a broader strategy to align standards with the EU and stimulate economic growth.

Thomas-Symonds will criticise Farage’s approach, accusing him of advocating for policies that would reverse these trade gains and reintroduce burdensome red tape. Farage has positioned himself staunchly against the current SPS provisions agreed in May, which cover a range of areas including fishing rights, defence cooperation, a youth exchange scheme, and passport e-gates. Writing in the Telegraph, Farage described the deal as a surrender of UK sovereignty that risks drawing the country "back into the orbit of Brussels." He further promised that a Reform UK government would undo these arrangements through new legislation.

One of Farage's most controversial proposals involves plans for mass deportations of illegal migrants, a move criticised by former Tory Attorney General Dominic Grieve, who warned it could trigger the collapse of the post-Brexit trade framework. Such a breakdown would end free trade arrangements, data-sharing agreements, and security cooperation with the EU—pillars of the UK’s post-Brexit relationship which many experts consider vital for economic and national security.

Labour’s stance, as articulated by Thomas-Symonds, emphasises pragmatic engagement with the EU, focusing on “sovereignty exercised in the national interest.” The minister argues that maintaining and deepening alignment with EU standards will boost growth, support farmers and fisheries, and protect consumers from food price hikes. “Nigel Farage's manifesto at the next election will say in writing he wants to take Britain backwards, cutting at least £9 billion from the economy, bringing with it a risk to jobs and a risk of food prices going up,” Thomas-Symonds is expected to say. “Farage wants Britain to fail. His model of politics feeds on it, offering the easy answers, dividing communities and stoking anger.”

Reform UK, however, rejects Labour’s accusations, arguing that it is the current Labour government that has done the most harm to British businesses. A spokesperson for Reform UK contended that high taxes and Labour’s failure to abolish retained EU laws are stifling economic success, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises. The party positions itself as a challenger to the government’s strategy, promising to unwind what it sees as damaging EU entanglements and restore economic vitality through deregulation.

The ongoing debate highlights the continuing political friction over Brexit’s legacy and future UK-EU relations. While Labour seeks to consolidate trade gains through negotiation and regulatory alignment, Farage and Reform UK promote a more combative approach that eschews existing agreements. The government’s focus on securing a long-term trade deal within 18 months illustrates its commitment to stability and economic pragmatism amidst these political challenges.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/farage-brexit-labour-eu-deal-b2814550.html), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-65584495), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/aug/02/nick-thomas-symonds-reform-uk-farage-brexit-trade-impact)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/farage-brexit-labour-eu-deal-b2814550.html), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/3c34cfb3-5e83-4f42-b5b6-2ec749cabdb9), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/labour-government-announces-trade-priorities-with-eu)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/farage-brexit-labour-eu-deal-b2814550.html), [[5]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/07/25/nigel-farage-reform-uk-brexit-immigration-deportations/), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/aug/02/nick-thomas-symonds-reform-uk-farage-brexit-trade-impact)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/farage-brexit-labour-eu-deal-b2814550.html), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/aug/02/nick-thomas-symonds-reform-uk-farage-brexit-trade-impact), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/labour-government-announces-trade-priorities-with-eu)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/farage-brexit-labour-eu-deal-b2814550.html), [[7]](https://www.reformparty.uk/media-releases/150823-economic-impact-claims-farage-politics)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/farage-brexit-labour-eu-deal-b2814550.html), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-65584495), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/labour-government-announces-trade-priorities-with-eu)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/farage-brexit-labour-eu-deal-b2814550.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-65584495> - This BBC article covers recent UK political developments, including criticism of Nigel Farage's Brexit policies by government ministers. It details concerns about the impact of these policies on trade, estimating a £9 billion hit to the economy if Reform UK were to implement changes. The article also highlights Labour's push for a permanent trade deal with the EU on food and drink, and the temporary agreements in place to ease border checks. Commentary includes opposition warnings that Farage's approach risks undoing key post-Brexit arrangements and damaging business confidence.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/aug/02/nick-thomas-symonds-reform-uk-farage-brexit-trade-impact> - The Guardian reports on European affairs minister Nick Thomas-Symonds' speech accusing Nigel Farage of damaging Britain's trade interests through proposed Brexit policy changes. The article explains Labour's stance on negotiating enhanced UK-EU agreements to maintain and improve trade facilitation, particularly focused on food and agricultural imports. It details criticism of Farage's deportation proposals as risking the collapse of key deals underpinning free trade, data sharing, and security cooperation with the EU. Labour warns that reverting to older arrangements would create burdensome red tape and harm businesses.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/3c34cfb3-5e83-4f42-b5b6-2ec749cabdb9> - The Financial Times analyses the implications of Brexit-related trade negotiations between the UK and EU, emphasising recent temporary agreements that delay border checks on certain EU food imports until 2027. It highlights Labour's efforts to pursue a permanent deal to reduce costs and simplify regulatory processes. The article reflects on Nigel Farage’s criticism of these arrangements as limiting UK sovereignty and outlines government warnings about potential economic damage and increased bureaucracy if Farage’s Reform UK successes continue. It further discusses sector-specific concerns, especially from farming and fishing industries.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/07/25/nigel-farage-reform-uk-brexit-immigration-deportations/> - The Telegraph article outlines Nigel Farage's political strategy, including his pledge to introduce mass deportations of illegal migrants and criticisms of current EU-UK sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) arrangements. It covers reactions from political opponents, including warnings from former Tory Attorney General Dominic Grieve that such policies could end the post-Brexit trade deal with the EU, resulting in loss of free trade and security cooperation. Farage’s position reflects a broader rejection of current UK-EU agreements, promising legislative undoing of existing provisions to reclaim UK sovereignty.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/labour-government-announces-trade-priorities-with-eu> - The UK Government’s official website announces Labour’s priorities for continuing trade negotiations with the European Union. It focuses on securing a long-term agreement on food and drink imports to preserve trade fluidity and minimise border checks. The statement highlights recent temporary measures preventing new checks on certain EU agricultural products, with plans to finalise permanent deals within 18 months. The government contends that aligning UK standards with EU regulations will benefit growth and consumers by lowering food prices and simplifying export processes for farmers and fisheries.
7. <https://www.reformparty.uk/media-releases/150823-economic-impact-claims-farage-politics> - This Reform UK party press release challenges Labour’s accusations regarding economic damage caused by Nigel Farage's policies. It argues that the Labour government has inflicted far greater harm on British businesses through high taxes and failures to duly scrap retained EU laws. The statement criticises Labour’s approach to EU relations, describing it as entangling the UK in excessive regulations that impede economic recovery. Reform UK positions itself as the champion of business and jobs, accusing Labour of stifling success among small and medium enterprises while highlighting their intent to reverse Labour's policies.