# Labour minister condemns UK Brexit trade policy as post-imperial delusion



A Labour minister has alarmingly characterised Britain's Brexit trade policies as rooted in what he described as "post-imperial delusion," a phrase that likely points to a misguided approach in dealing with our European neighbours. In this critical moment of political realignment, Douglas Alexander, a former trade minister under Sir Tony Blair, used his platform to lambast the previous Conservative administration's handling of Brexit, underscoring the ongoing challenges that leave UK firms scrambling under the weight of excessive red tape.

In a session dedicated to business and trade questions, Alexander claimed the government is now “consciously pursuing a trade agenda based on data.” However, it's clear that these assertions are part of a broader narrative designed to mask the Labour government's willingness to negotiate trade arrangements that may compromise the UK's independent future. The notion that Brexit has harmed UK firms, while tangible, should prompt a more profound reconsideration of Labour's own path going forward instead of merely shifting blame.

Under the leadership of Sir Keir Starmer, Labour appears poised to undertake a significant "reset" in its dealings with the EU, a move that raises critical questions about their priorities. After years of Conservative efforts to strengthen non-EU trade ties, Labour's inclination towards re-engagement with Brussels suggests a retrograde step that echoes the very bureaucratic entanglements from which Brexit sought to free the UK. Starmer's insistence that alignment with both the United States and the EU can coexist directly undermines the potential for strong independent policies that truly elevate UK interests.

There are also mounting concerns that Labour's potential agreement with the EU over veterinary standards could severely compromise future trade negotiations with pivotal partners like the US. Facing a summit with EU leaders on 19 May, the Labour government faces pressure to lock in a trade deal with the US beforehand to mitigate risks from rekindling ties with Brussels. This strikes an alarming chord with businesses that seek clarity and independence in their dealings.

In Parliament, Alexander was encouraged by Liberal Democrat MP James MacCleary to capitalize on the upcoming summit; yet this focus on rebuilding relationships across Europe seems to sidestep the strategic imperatives that need addressing. The previous regulatory burdens placed on firms post-Brexit have been exacerbated under Labour's watch, as their leader attempts to reshape the narrative away from the realities faced by businesses today.

While Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds insists that the government won't favour one market over another, this quest for a so-called balanced trade policy may lead to an ill-conceived approach that jeopardizes the independent stance the UK voters manifested through Brexit. A holistic tactic must cater exclusively to the UK's needs, rather than catering to the demands of a fragmented European Union.

In a complex economic environment, the Labour government’s cynical move to re-engage with Europe comes across as an attempt to cling to outdated notions rather than grapple with the modern dynamics of global trade. The party's shift towards seeking agreements that replicate past entanglements may well undermine the prospects of a genuinely independent trade policy that champions the UK’s sovereignty.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://labourlist.org/2024/09/government-news-douglas-alexander-brexit-britain/> - Douglas Alexander, a Labour minister, criticized the UK's post-Brexit trade policy as having a 'post-imperial delusion,' highlighting the challenges faced by UK firms due to excessive red tape.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/aug/28/labour-economic-ties-with-europe-eu-analysis> - The article discusses Labour's efforts to deepen economic ties with Europe outside the EU's structures, emphasizing the party's approach to rebuilding relationships with the EU.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/sep/16/labour-wants-new-eu-links-in-a-reset-of-british-foreign-policy> - Labour's commitment to resetting the UK's relationship with the European Union is detailed, including plans to negotiate a veterinary agreement and mutual recognition of professional qualifications.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jan/16/uk-trade-eu-post-brexit-rules-ippr-report> - The report highlights the decline in UK trade with the EU post-Brexit and suggests that the government should consider revising post-Brexit trade rules to address these challenges.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/aug/28/labour-economic-ties-with-europe-eu-analysis> - The article analyzes Labour's approach to improving economic ties with Europe, focusing on the party's efforts to negotiate agreements that reduce trade barriers and enhance cooperation.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jan/16/uk-trade-eu-post-brexit-rules-ippr-report> - The report discusses the economic impacts of Brexit on UK trade with the EU and recommends measures to mitigate these effects, aligning with concerns about the consequences of the UK's departure from the EU.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14668371/Labour-minister-swipes-Brexit-trade-policies-based-post-imperial-delusion-hint-Keir-Starmer-make-big-concessions-Brussels-reset-EU-relations.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data