

What does it mean?

This is a glossary of the main terms and abbreviations used in relation to Brexit. EU terms are listed only where particularly relevant. For other EU terms, see the European Commission website.

Acquis

Acquis communautaire: EU law as a whole

Alignment

Harmonising UK and EU rules in order to facilitate access to each other's markets etc

Article 50

Article 50 of TEU - provides for withdrawal of a Member State from the EU (see Art 218(3) of TFEU for procedure)

Article 50 notice

A Member State's notice of its intention to leave the EU, lodged under Article 50(2) of TEU

Backstop(s) or double-backstop

Arrangements aimed at ensuring that, when the Transition Period ends, there is no hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (the Irish part of the backstop) and limited trade barriers between Northern Ireland and Great Britain (the UK-wide part of the backstop) - see Arts 1 and 6 of the Protocol on Ireland and our overview of the Withdrawal Agreement in How Brexit Works

Blind Brexit

The UK leaving the EU without knowing the substance of their long term relationship

Brexit

The UK leaving the EU

CCT

See Common Customs Tariff

CETA

See Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

CJEU

See Court of Justice of the European Union

CTA

See Common Travel Area

Canada

A long term UK-EU agreement similar to the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the EU (CETA)

Canada plus (or plus plus)

A long term UK-EU agreement similar to the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the EU, but with greater access to the EU for the UK's financial institutions and food exports etc, closer regulatory alignment, and fewer border checks

Chequers

The UK's proposals for the long term UK-EU relationship agreed by the cabinet at Chequers, the Prime Minister's country house, in July 2018. Among other things, the proposals envisaged the end of free movement of people between the UK and EU27; the UK imposing tariffs on the EU's behalf, removing the need for a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; and the adoption of a Common Market 2.0

Alternative name for Norway Plus

Common rule book on e.g. food standards to minimise delays at ports

Cherry picking

Honouring some of the Four Freedoms, but not others - in particular, where the UK is concerned, enjoying access to the Single Market or European Union Customs Union without having Free Movement of People (especially of EU27 citizens into the UK)

Clean Brexit

See Hard Brexit

Cliff edge

The UK suddenly ceasing to be subject to EU rules either on Brexit or at the end of the Transition Period, leading to difficulties with e.g. goods that are in transit or legal proceedings that are underway at the moment of change

Common Customs Tariff (CCT)

Duty imposed on goods imported into the EU, the sums payable depending on what the goods are and where they come from

Common Market 2.0

Alternative name for Norway Plus

Common rule book

Part of the Chequers proposals fleshed out in the White Paper of July 2018, but not echoed in the Political Declaration agreed in principle with the EU in November 2018. Would have involved the UK aligning its rules on e.g. food standards closely with those of the EU to minimise delays at ports and airports

Common Travel Area (CTA)

UK and Republic of Ireland - see Art 5 of the Protocol on Ireland

Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (CATA)

A proposed UK-EU agreement covering market access and investment, aviation safety and security, air traffic management, and provisions to ensure open and fair competition - see para 60 of the Political Declaration

Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

A free trade agreement between Canada, the EU and its Member States eliminating many tariffs between Canada and the EU

Confidence vote

See No confidence vote

Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU or ECJ)

Highest court of the EU and ultimate arbiter of EU law

Customs Union

See European Union Customs Union

DExEU

See Department for Exiting the European Union

Declaration

See Political Declaration

Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU)

The UK government department with specific responsibility for Brexit

Divorce bill

Money to be paid by the UK to the EU under the Withdrawal Agreement

ECHR

See European Convention on Human Rights

ECtHR

See European Court of Human Rights

ECJ

See Court of Justice of the European Union

EEA

See European Economic Area

EFTA

See European Free Trade Association

EUCU

See European Union Customs Union

EUWA

See European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018

Enhanced equivalence

In the financial services context, a version of Equivalence that remedies some of its limitations, e.g. gaps in cover or the possibility of Equivalence being easily revoked

Equivalence

In the context of financial services, the EU formally acknowledging that the legal, regulatory/supervisory regime of a third country is as good as its own, and allowing market access on that basis - see also Enhanced equivalence

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

Treaty protecting human rights and political freedoms in Europe, inside and outside the EU

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

A supranational court, independent of the EU, enforcing the European Convention on Human Rights

European Economic Area (EEA)

Geographic scope of the Single Market, comprising EU Member States and three of the four EFTA states: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (but not Switzerland)

European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

Free trade organisation comprising Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland - all bar Switzerland are in the EEA, and all bar Liechtenstein are party to the Lugano Convention

European Union Customs Union (EUCU)

The customs union between all Member States of the EU, Monaco and some territories of the UK (such as Jersey) that are not part of the EU

European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (EUWA)

Statute repealing the European Communities Act 1972 and authorising negotiation of the Withdrawal Agreement and the preservation of EU law "operative" in the UK on Brexit (s 3(3)) - will be amended by WAB if the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration are ratified (see below)

European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill (WAB)

Proposed statute enshrining the Withdrawal Agreement in domestic law - will amend EUWA so that EU law will be preserved insofar as it is "operative" at the end of the Transition Period rather than at the moment of Brexit

Exit Day

The day the UK leaves EU: currently 29 March 2019 at 11pm UK time - see Art 50(3) of TEU and section 20(1) of EUWA

Facilitated Customs Arrangement

The UK collecting EU tariffs on the EU's behalf, enabling frictionless UK-EU trade - proposed in the White paper

Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011

Statute introducing fixed-term elections to the UK parliament

Four Freedoms

The freedom of goods, services, people/labour and capital that is guaranteed by the EU's Single Market

Free movement

See Four Freedoms

Hard border

A tangible border including physical infrastructure and/or related checks and controls - see Protocol on Ireland

Hard Brexit

A form of Brexit that is radically different from remaining in the EU

Henry VIII clause

Clause in a bill that enables ministers to amend/repeal provisions in a statute by using secondary legislation

Implementation Period

See Transition Period

Internal Market

See Single Market

Irish Backstop

See Backstop(s)

Joint Committee

Committee responsible for implementation and application of the Withdrawal Agreement (Art 164 of the Withdrawal Agreement); alternatively the committee responsible for managing and supervising the implementation and operation of the future UK-EU relationship (para 129 of the Political Declaration)

Level playing field

Conditions ensuring fair competition between the UK and EU - see the Protocol on Ireland, para 79 of the Political Declaration

Lugano Convention

The Lugano Convention 2007, which extends EU jurisdiction and enforcement rules to Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, i.e. all EFTA states other than Liechtenstein

Max-fac

See Maximum facilitation

Maximum facilitation

Relying on technology to minimise border checks, especially between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- proposed in the White paper

Meaningful vote

The vote by the UK parliament's House of Commons on the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration, as required by s 13 of EUWA

Mini-deals

Agreements reached between the UK and EU (or individual EU Member States) on specific subjects such as visas, to mitigate the effects of a No-deal Brexit

Movement

See Free movement

No confidence vote

A House of Commons motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister personally or the government. If the motion relates to the government and the the vote is lost, the Fixed Term Parliaments Act gives the government 14 days to win a corrective vote of confidence, failing which a general election must be held. Alternatively, a vote within the parliamentary Conservative party initiated by 15% of Conservative MPs writing to the chair of the party's 1922 Committee to express no confidence in their leader. The leader is deposed if 50% or more of Conservative MPs vote against her

No-deal

A form of Brexit in which no comprehensive withdrawal agreement between the UK and EU is negotiated or ratified and the UK leaving the EU suddenly and completely - see also Mini-deals

Non-regression clause

Provision ensuring that the UK does not undercut the EU by lowering e.g. environmental or labour/social standards
- see also Level playing field

Non-tariff barriers

Obstacles to the free movement of goods other than the payment of tariffs, e.g. rule of origin checks

Norway for now

The UK joining EFTA temporarily, with a view to moving to a more distant relationship with the EU in the longer term - see Canada

Norway forever

The UK joining EFTA on a permanent basis

Norway plus

The UK joining EFTA and also a customs union with the EU, removing the need for a hard border in Ireland

PDFF

See Political Declaration

Passporting

The legal right of financial services companies based and regulated in one country of the EU (or EEA states outside the EU) to do business in other Member States on the basis of their home state authorisation

People's vote

See Second referendum

Political Declaration

The (non-binding) "Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and United Kingdom" that accompanies the (binding) Withdrawal Agreement

Protocol on Ireland

Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: the part of the Withdrawal Agreement that sets out the Backstop(s)

Rules of origin

Criteria needed to determine the national source of a product, which in turn helps determine what duties and other restrictions apply when importing the product into the EU

Schengen

Schengen Agreement: a treaty allowing people and goods to pass freely between some EU Member States and all EFTA countries without passport or other controls

Second referendum

A referendum on whether the UK should leave the EU on the terms set out in the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration - may include the options of remaining in the EU and/or a No-deal Brexit

Settled status

Legal status under the EU's Settlement Scheme allowing individuals to continue living and working in the EU after the Transition Period ends, and to apply for British citizenship if certain additional requirements are met

Settlement scheme

The European Union Settlement Scheme: set up by the UK government to ensure that the rights of EU citizens in the UK, and certain family members, are protected after Brexit; it will allow them to live, work and access healthcare and other public services from that point on

Single customs territory

Bare-bones customs union set out in Arts 6 and 15 of the Protocol on Ireland and forming part of the Backstop(s)

Single Market

The EU as one territory without regulatory obstacles to the free movement of goods and services across internal borders - see European Economic Area

Soft Brexit

A form of Brexit that is close to remaining in the EU

Specialised Committee

Committee for the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and established by Art 165 of the Withdrawal Agreement - see also Article 16 of the Protocol on Ireland

TEU

See Treaty on European Union

TFEU

See Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

TTIP

See Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Third country/state

Country or state outside the EU or some other organisation/territory, depending on context

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

Proposed free trade agreement between the UK and USA

Transition Period

Period beyond Exit Day when the UK remains part of the EU for most practical purposes - will finish at end 2020 unless extended by agreement (Withdrawal Agreement Art 126) to a date no later than end 2022 (Art 132)

Treaty on European Union (TEU)

One of two treaties forming the basis of the European Union (the other being the TFEU) - otherwise known as the Maastricht Treaty

Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)

One of two treaties forming the basis of the European Union (the other being the TEU) - formerly known as the Treaty of Rome

WA

See Withdrawal Agreement

WAB

See European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill

WTO

See World Trade Organization

White paper

In the context of Brexit, the UK government White Paper (report) of July 2018 setting out the Chequers proposals

Withdrawal Agreement

The (binding) "Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community" that accompanies the (non-binding) Political Declaration. Neither document has been ratified yet.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

Global organisation dealing with the rules of trade between nations

