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**IT-Security-GRC**

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**The End of the Brexit Nightmare or More Problems at the end of the Four-Year Dream?**

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The end will be December 31<sup>st</sup>, for good or ill. You could say ‘thank God for the coronavirus as it has distracted both the government and the people, with due cause. It has also thrown the Brexit debate off the wires. Many would say, no bad thing. A fatigue factor of yah-boo exchanges has not been enlightening.

However, there will be a wake up call next month. June will bring more tense times, angry exchanges, speeches and letters. Matters are not helped by doing it over the internet. Here, personal contact does matter.

June should be the deadline for finalising all the details. Will they get there? Probably not.

Will they ever get there before December 31<sup>st</sup> when it is all over...?

These are good times for the betting man.

My gut instinct is they will scramble over the line at the last minute. By then, instead of the technocrats, Barnier versus Frost, it will be the Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his opposite numbers in Europe, lead by Merkel and Macron.

Pragmatism finally has the last word. It could be Merkel who brokers it.

What is the real block?

Is it really the detail about fishing rights, harmonisation of standards, competition, movement of peoples, financial services...?

All these matters can be resolved, when the political will emerges.

The block today is ideological. And with it a completely fundamentally different approach to the EU UK relationship. The EU struggles with losing a major trading partner. This has been a major blow, economically and politically.

The UK struggled to make itself heard as a sovereign country, ranking number as the world's sixth economy. Only Germany is ahead of us in Europe.

It therefore stands that the UK sees itself as sufficiently mature to make its own decisions and controls of laws without the diktat from Brussels.

Of course there have been many benefits to being a member of the EU, which will be sorely missed. My own personal view, is the departure was based more on emotion than on reality.

Be that as it may, the UK is flexing itself. It has made it clear, that once the bridge has been crossed by the EU in accepting our full sovereignty, things will move on.

I totally accept that a free trade agreement with the UK is bound to be very different from all the other ones. For a start, over 60% of UK trade has been with the EU. This is way ahead of all the other trading partners. We are on the doorstep of the EU. We are not a far away economy with only limited impact, such as Jordan, Lebanon or Moldova. All told around 60 countries or groups have free trade agreements. They vary in their terms.

The UK agreement cannot fit into any of those categories. Hence, it has to be tailor made for mutual benefit.

At the moment the UK is playing hard ball, saying it is content to exit without any deal and operate through the World Trade Organisation. Decidedly imperfect. But that is the whole process of negotiation and in the course of it, not a pretty sight. I do not see Boris Johnson seeking an extension. That is wishful thinking.

Looking ahead, I can see a rocky path for the UK for the next three years. Time we can ill afford to lose after the price of the coronavirus.. It can be a lonely business forging our own identity. Trade agreements with major markets are always tough. Apart from the EU, the UK is working to do the same with the US. They too play hardball, and will try to push us hard in accessing our markets. There is little sentiment either there about the much touted 'Special Relationship'.

The way to survive for the UK after Brexit is to be creative, and imaginative, to be the isle everyone wants to trade with. This could indeed happen with tax incentives,. Free ports, vastly reduced tariffs – and give a genuine welcome to other nations including our friends in Europe to come and profit from a commercial hub, from which we will all benefit.

