

Who Dares Use the 'B' Word?

Voters Say it is Time to Talk about Joining the Single Market Again

- As Britain reels from one economic crisis to another and searches for yet another PM, the public increasingly see that the deeper reason for our crisis lies in the type of Brexit we have pursued. **British voters recognise that Brexit is worsening Britain's economic crisis and they want politicians to stop avoiding the subject**, according to new research published by the psychological think tank, NOUS (formerly Global Future).
- Whilst **the political divides of the referendum are still strong**, with 77% of Remainers and 72% of Leavers still identifying with those labels, **a shared sense of urgency about falling living standards and a declining economy has begun to close that divide**.
- According to a new YouGov poll, the overwhelming majority of **the British public (87%) recognise that the economy has suffered since we left the European Union**. Almost everyone agrees that Covid and the war in Ukraine have helped cause the cost-of-living crisis, but now a substantial proportion of Leave voters - 38% - are also ready to blame Brexit.
- **There is majority public support for a closer relationship with the EU**. This view is shared by one in three Conservative voters and Leavers, as well as Remainers. People are unhappy with the current arrangement with net support at -22%. There is also very little support for scrapping the Northern Ireland Protocol.
- While rejoining the EU does not get majority endorsement, **the only option going forward that achieves net positive support is rejoining the single market at +7%**. This option is supported across all regions including the North, with highest support in London, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Despite the widespread assumption that people are fatigued with Brexit, the YouGov survey shows **voters, by a two-to-one margin, want to hear politicians talking about it again**. Barely a quarter say they don't want to hear about Brexit at all.
- However, **there is dissatisfaction about how well voters are being represented by their politicians**, especially Labour ones. Only 43% of Labour supporters say they are well represented by their

party's Brexit position, compared to 60% of Conservatives, and 55% of Liberal Democrats. **As Conservative MPs and party members decide on their next leader, the might pause to consider the shifting sands that are occurring in the country on this issue and who is best equipped to respond** to them and address the underlying reasons for our economic problems.

- As the current political drama unfolds, with all leaders and parties needing to focus on reestablishing economic credibility with the markets and the cost-of-living crisis, **this report argues that there is a political opportunity for politicians to talk constructively and practically about a better relationship with the EU to help address the deep challenges facing this country** and its people in the months ahead. A commitment to pursuing this agenda could possibly be the single most important step in stabilising the pound and easing the debt and cost of living crisis
- This is not the time to avoid talking about an issue that is affecting so many people's lives. **This is a time to be honest with the public about Brexit because, for the first time in six years, there is an opportunity to build a consensus** that may help heal political scars as well as solve economic problems.

Gurnek Bains, leading psychologist and Director of NOUS said:

“When people are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, they want to see their politicians talking practically about how to build a better relationship with our trading partners. Despite far-flung stereotypes that people are fatigued of talking about the ‘B’ word, this report shows that politicians are out of touch with people’s desires to make Brexit work for their wallets and their families.”

David Guake, former Conservative MP said:

“A clear majority of the public – faced with the economic consequences – now support a closer relationship. I hope this report gives our politicians the confidence to confront the realities and engage in this vital matter.”

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1749 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 8th -9th September 2022. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

For all media enquiries please call Akal Bains on 07919936180 or email akal.bains100@gmail.com