



**BREXIT UNIT**

# **Making sense of Brexit**

**Portland**



## Introduction

Brexit is the biggest issue in British politics for decades. It is set to dominate the agenda for years to come.

The Brexit vote brings politicians, the media and every sector of the economy a swathe of new challenges and unanswered questions – the future of the UK’s prosperity, workforce, international alliances and standing in the world is at stake as it forges a new path outside the European Union.

As Brexit’s contours become clearer, Portland can work with you to create a communications strategy to mitigate the risks and maximise the opportunities associated with the UK’s departure from the EU. We will put our knowledge, analysis and expertise at your disposal to help you achieve your objectives both domestically and internationally.

**If you have any questions, or would like to find out more, please contact [brexit@portland-communications.com](mailto:brexit@portland-communications.com)**

## ABOUT PORTLAND

*Portland is a fully integrated communications consultancy trusted by some of the highest profile organisations, governments and individuals in the world. With offices in Washington DC, New York, Doha, Nairobi, Singapore and our HQ in London, our global teams support clients in more than 85 countries.*

## Portland's Brexit Unit

Portland has set up a dedicated Brexit Unit to help you navigate this unprecedented event.

We provide the very best counsel to our clients. Our Brexit Unit includes those with considerable experience in Brussels, Westminster and Whitehall. We bring unique insight, with leading figures from both the Remain and Leave campaigns coming together to ensure we offer the most comprehensive view of Brexit.



## How can we help you?

Our Brexit Unit provides high quality advice to a range of clients on how Brexit is likely to affect them, how they can seek to ensure a positive outcome, and what action they should be taking to prepare for the point of departure and beyond.

Our team can work with you to develop a tailor-made package of support to ensure your organisation is well-placed to shape and respond to the events of the coming years.

Our **Brexit Healthcheck** will form the basis of a full communications strategy that equips you to mitigate the risks and maximise the opportunities of the UK's departure from the EU. It will focus specifically on:



## Brexit Healthcheck

The centrepiece of our Brexit Healthcheck is a bespoke strategy and messaging workshop for your organisation. The workshop will bring together your leadership with Portland's senior counsel and Brexit specialists. It will equip your organisation to:

- *Identify issues, opportunities and risks presented by Brexit*
- *Establish how to influence the process and respond to the changing landscape*
- *Prepare effectively for the operating environment whilst negotiations are ongoing and once the UK has left*



**"BREXIT MEANS BREXIT,  
AND WE'RE GOING TO  
MAKE A SUCCESS OF IT."**

*- Theresa May, 11 July 2016*

## Our Healthcheck will cover:

### THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

- The current political landscape
- The key players in negotiations
- The dividing lines within the EU
- The red lines on all sides
- The economic implications
- Key moments to watch

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- Understanding the Brexit process
- Identifying the opportunities and risks for you and your sector
- Influencing the Brexit negotiations
- Tailoring messages for different audiences

### PLANNING AHEAD

- Timeline of external events
- Tactics to communicate your messages effectively
- Channels to use
- Stakeholder mapping
- Media mapping

### SUPPORTING ANALYSIS

- A tailored briefing pack
- A timeline of events
- Commentary from our Brexit experts
- Mapping of key influencers

## What Portland will deliver for you

**1 RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS:** Facts-based approach to provide insight into the level of understanding of your sector and your organisation amongst key influencers, target audiences and the general public.

**2 MESSAGES THAT WORK:** A detailed workshop will develop the most effective messaging for your organisation. Building on the research and insights gathered, it will ensure your messaging is both consistent and powerful, whilst retaining maximum flexibility to respond to a fast changing political landscape.

**3 ENGAGEMENT PLAN:** Development and delivery of a political engagement plan. Depending on your requirements, this can focus on the UK or extend to key decision-makers across the EU.

**4 MEDIA PLAN:** Development and delivery of a programme of key interventions to ensure your messages are heard. This will include engagement with journalists, creating and selling in stories, drafting op-eds and producing briefings ahead of broadcast interviews. Media training is also available.

**5 BESPOKE MONITORING:** Keeping you up-to-date with all the latest news, this will include tailored recommendations and advice on how to adapt to any developments in Westminster and Brussels.



# Brexit

*The story so far and where we go from here*

## The phases of Brexit

The Brexit process will be disrupted by internal and external developments. Elections across Europe, interventions by the Westminster Parliament and devolved administrations, and changing public opinion will all play their role in shaping the final UK-EU relationship. The outcome will have profound implications not just for the UK but also for the future of the whole European project.

## Assessing the impact of Brexit

The impact of Brexit will be different for every organisation and every sector. We look at the implications of Brexit for your organisation and create a Brexit communications strategy tailored to you.

*June 2016 - March 2017*

### Sound and Fury

#### Build up to Article 50 trigger:

A period of uncertainty, with the Government in full listening mode.

Opportunity for organisations to be heard and to lay their concerns on the table.

*March 2017- March 2019*

### The Face-off

#### The negotiations with the EU:

A period of 'poker faces' - big demands are made by both sides. Complex relationships need to be navigated.

The time to seek influence beyond the UK Government through media campaigns, Parliamentary outreach, and relationship building with other Member States.

*Most likely mid-2019*

### Exit and Transition

#### The UK leaves the EU:

Without an extension to the negotiation period agreed by all parties, the UK leaves the EU mid-2019.

Navigating an uncertain and potentially volatile transition.

*Immediately after exit*

### Repeal and Replace

#### The Great Repeal Bill takes effect:

The European Communities Act 1972 is repealed and all EU law is brought into UK law en masse.

Chance to influence Government and Parliament - as they decide which laws to keep, amend, repeal, or replace.

*The long term*

### Brave New World

#### Life post-exit:

A period of gradual adjustment as the public and private sectors become accustomed to the new arrangements.

Organisations will need to influence the EU and its legislative and regulatory process from the outside - with no UK voice at the table.

# MITIGATING RISKS

## TRADE

The UK has said it will leave the Single Market and seek a new Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU. Failing that, trade will default to World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. Either outcome would mean new tariff and non-tariff barriers to UK-EU trade in goods and services.

The UK is also likely to leave the Customs Union – resulting in new customs and rules-of-origin checks, hampering cross-border movement of goods.

Competing interests need to persuade government why their needs should be prioritised during negotiations.

## LABOUR AND SKILLS

The UK has said free movement of people from the EU will end post-Brexit. Domestic control of immigration is one of the UK's top negotiating objectives, with the aim of reducing overall net migration to the tens of thousands every year.

This will affect the supply of both low- and high-skilled labour. The Government says it will continue to welcome those with skills and expertise, but it is not yet clear how the Home Office will determine who can live, work and study in the UK.

Clarifying the rights of 3 million EU nationals already in the UK is likely to be an early priority in the negotiations.

## REGULATION

Many sectors are currently subject to EU regulations and overseen by EU regulators. Post-Brexit, regulations may diverge and EU regulators will cease to have legal force in the UK.

The government plans to transfer all existing EU law into UK law to prevent a regulatory “cliff edge”, but there is uncertainty over who will enforce those regulations. Organisations face the prospect of a legal void without alternative arrangements in place.

Over the longer term, regulatory divergence could make it harder to trade with the EU and lead to significant extra costs for industry.

## SECTORAL SUPPORT

A number of EU-administered grants and funding streams – for example in agriculture, regional development, scientific research and education – benefit organisations in the UK.

The government says it will honour existing EU commitments, so long as projects are good value for money and meet domestic priorities.

The long-term outlook is more uncertain. The UK could seek to opt into EU programmes, replace programmes with domestic equivalents, or cease funding altogether.

# MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES

## TRADE

Being able to strike bilateral trade deals with countries outside the EU is one of the UK's main negotiating objectives.

The UK's trade with non-EU countries has been growing for many years and recently overtook trade with the EU. The US, Australia and New Zealand have already said they want to reach trade deals with the UK, while China and India have also expressed interest.

Businesses should be considering which markets they would like the UK to target and what the content of new trade deals should be.

## LABOUR AND SKILLS

Ensuring the UK's labour force is fit for the future is a government priority.

As restrictions on immigration are introduced, there is likely to be flexibility at the margins as the UK seeks to attract highly-skilled migrants in priority sectors, from both inside and outside the EU.

The government also intends to upskill and reskill the domestic workforce, through reforms to education and training. Each sector will need to take a long-term view about their labour and skills requirements.

## REGULATION

Post-Brexit, laws, rules and regulations which were previously set at EU level will become the competence of the UK.

A "Great Repeal Bill" will transfer existing EU laws and regulations onto the UK statute book. Parliament will then be able to change these laws.

Government departments are already considering which laws they want to keep, and which they want to amend, repeal or replace. This has implications across sectors and industries, with the potential for sweeping regulatory change.

## SECTORAL SUPPORT

Brexit will give the UK some specific new policy levers – for example by lifting restrictions on setting VAT rates and stopping EU oversight of business taxation.

The Government regards Brexit as a springboard for a more "global Britain". In its Industrial Strategy, the Government considers steps to support growth, jobs, innovation and enterprise.

This could include tax and regulatory changes or even financial support for particular industries, given EU state aid rules will no longer apply.





Portland

STRATEGY CONTENT DELIVERY

Contact our

**Brexit Unit**

**VICTORIA DEAN,**  
PARTNER AND HEAD OF BREXIT UNIT

Previously Head of the Foreign Office's Europe Directorate, Victoria worked with the UK Government on Brexit preparations. She has also served as the Spokesperson and Head of Communications for the UK's representation in Brussels.

Victoria brings a keen understanding of the issues, processes and personalities involved in shaping and influencing the EU, be it from the inside or beyond. Her role at Portland is designed to help clients better navigate this tricky area, enabling them to manage risks, influence the right decision-makers at the right points in the process, but also to take advantage of the new opportunities opening up.

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**HENRY COOK,**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Henry is a former Special Adviser to Michael Gove at the Department for Education, Government Whips' Office and Ministry of Justice.

In 2016 he worked on the EU referendum campaign, providing strategic and communications advice to Michael Gove as Co-Convener of Vote Leave.

**AMY RICHARDS,**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Amy advises governments around the world on all elements of media and political strategy.

Amy managed the national press office for Britain Stronger in Europe, the cross-party campaign supporting the UK's continued membership of the EU. Before this she worked as a senior adviser to Yvette Cooper, the Shadow Home Secretary in the lead up to the 2015 General Election.

**JAMES STARKIE,**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

James is a campaigns specialist who has worked in the UK and abroad. He spent the past year running the regional press team on the successful Vote Leave campaign, having previously worked for leading polling companies YouGov and Populus.

As well as working on the EU referendum, James spent more than four years working across the Middle East working with both political and commercial clients.

*In addition, our Brexit Unit consists of a team of Executives, Managers and Directors drawn from across Portland's Corporate, Local and International teams.*

## Senior Leadership Team

**Tim Allan,**  
*Managing Director*

**Steve Morris,**  
*Managing Partner*

**George Pascoe-Watson,**  
*Senior Partner, Corporate*

**David MacKay,**  
*Senior Partner,  
US General Manager*

**Jane Brearley,**  
*Partner, Health*

**Caroline Edgar,**  
*Partner, Corporate*

**Sam Ingleby,**  
*Partner, Corporate*

**Ben Thornton,**  
*Partner, Corporate*

**Siobhan Newmarch,**  
*Director, Engagement*

## Our Advisory Council

**Alastair Campbell,**  
*Former Press Secretary and  
Senior Adviser to Tony Blair*

**Radek Sikorski,**  
*Fellow at the Harvard Center of  
European Studies and former Polish  
Minister of Defence, Foreign Minister  
and Speaker of Parliament.*

**Lisa Shields,**  
*Vice President - Global  
Communications and Media Relations  
at the Council on Foreign Relations*

**Michael Portillo,**  
*Former Secretary of State for Defence  
and Shadow Chancellor.*



# Portland

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