

Labour Party Annual Conference 2017
24-27 September, Brighton Centre

Addendum to the

CAC Report 2

Monday 25 September - Annual Conference 2017

Statement from the NEC on Brexit

Conference believes Brexit is a crucially important issue facing our country, and has grave concerns about the impact a reckless Tory Brexit, which opens the way for a race to the bottom in standards and corporate taxes, will have on our economy and society.

Labour campaigned to remain in a reformed European Union, but as democratic socialists we accept and respect the referendum result.

Conference is deeply concerned that 15 months on from the referendum, and six months on from the triggering of Article 50, the Conservative government has agreed nothing of substance and has made almost no progress in negotiations with the EU.

Therefore, Labour calls on the Government to spend less time fighting internal battles and negotiating with itself and more time engaging in the most important and complex set of international negotiations the country has ever faced.

Unlike the Conservatives, Labour will fight for a Brexit deal that prioritises jobs and the economy and protects rights. We will seek a strong, progressive new relationship with the EU – not as members but as EU partners.

Labour will work with sister parties and allies across Europe to improve workers' rights, boost trade union membership and put an end to the exploitation of workers – as well as changing UK law to improve the security, pay and skills of all workers in Britain.

Labour is clear that we need a tariff and impediment-free trading relationship with the European Union. Labour's priority is an outcome that puts jobs, living standards and the economy first. The precise institutional form of the new trading and customs relationship needs to be determined by negotiation. Labour will not support any future arrangement that sees the introduction of a hard border, or which restricts freedom of movement between Ireland and the UK.

In order to avoid a cliff-edge as we leave the EU and allow time to negotiate this new relationship, Labour would seek a time-limited transitional deal on the same basic terms we currently enjoy. During this transitional period Labour would seek to remain in a customs union with the EU and within the Single Market and would abide by the common rules of both.

Conference condemns the Conservatives for whipping up division over immigration and for the dishonesty of their bogus targets. Labour recognises that migrant workers make a huge contribution to our economy and society and that it is necessary for migration to continue to maintain our industry and public services.

Labour's future immigration policy will be shaped by enduring Labour values of solidarity and respect, and will never scapegoat migrants and their families. We will not allow migrant or other workers to be subject to exploitation as a consequence.

Labour also calls on the Government to provide greater certainty on citizens' rights and deplores the government's inaction in failing to guarantee these rights in the weeks and months after the referendum. Labour demands the Government immediately guarantee existing rights for all EU nationals living in Britain, as it seeks to obtain reciprocal rights for British citizens living in the EU. This is vital for our economy and the right and progressive thing to do.