

# The inexorable flow towards Brexit chaos

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A few days off normal work provide new perspective. Or at least, the refresh old ones by providing the room for a new angle.

Over the last week I have had my focus on Oxfam and related issues. But that has not meant I have ignored other issues. Like Brexit. And on that I realise I am quite genuinely anxious. I mean by that the sort of anxiety that can actually induce real, physical symptoms that are a manifestation of worry.

Almost a year after Article 50 was triggered, and 20 months after the country voted to leave the EU (whatever that means) the reality is many fold.

First, it is clear that we have no idea what we voted for.

Second, we have no idea what to do about whatever we might have voted for.

Third, as a consequence we have made almost no net effective progress towards achieving anything at all.

Fourth, we have upset an almighty lot of people as a consequence, with some, like the Irish, having very good reason for that.

Fifth, it would seem we have won no new friends, at all.

Sixth, the UK's two leading political parties have both looked incompetent on this issue.

Seventh, whatever might happen next March is something we are hopelessly unprepared for.

Eighth, of course it is possible that this will not matter. Except in a world of regulation, which is what this is all about, that seems to be exceptionally unlikely to the point that relying on this being the case would be very unwise.

In other words, it is very apparent that decisions need to be taken and yet no one

seems to have the slightest idea what to make decisions upon because no one has the slightest clue what outcome is really desired, and when.

Of course I simplify just a little, but only a very little. When we cannot even be sure whether there will be a transition and whether there will be customs borders the scale of paralysis we face is quite staggering.

And in that case my anxiety is not based on the long term consequences of Brexit. In the long term most things can be managed. It's the short term that worries me.

In a highly complex, rule based, system the smallest of unforeseen and unplanned changes can have great significance. And we are looking at massive unplanned change. Of course that means things will go wrong. They are simply bound to.

And it remains my great fear that this will have short term impact. In particular if, as is likely unless some urgent action to prevent borders is taken, there is massive customs clearance chaos as a result of a lack of preparedness then supply lines for business will be extended and business insolvencies will simply flow one after the other as cash flows collapse in that situation.

Should I be worried? Yes, because I see this risk as real.

Should I be anxious about it? Probably not, because there is almost nothing I can do about it. But then, we all know those are the hardest problems to deal with. We're inexorably moving towards Brexit chaos and no one seems to be doing anything about it. I wish I knew why.