

## It's time for MPs to reject the UK's failing political ...

Published: January 13, 2026, 12:59 pm

---

Jeremy Corbyn has made his Brexit position clear: he wants a hard Brexit and nothing less will do. If [reports of a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party last night correct](#), and there is no reason to think that they are not, then what he's made clear is that Labour will not support any option for Brexit that means that the UK is a 'rule taker'. Quite explicitly that rules out membership of the EEA, or what is commonly known as the 'Norwegian option'.

There are three consequences. First, this leaves Labour in exactly the same position as the Tories: they have no plan unless crashing out can be described as such.

Second, this means Labour has almost no basis for opposing the Tories. To oppose you must have an alternative: right now as far as I can see Labour has none.

Third, it reveals Labour as not only clueless but are profoundly naive. It is absurd to suggest that the UK will not be a 'rule taker' if we leave the EU. Of course we will be. We will still be a member of a myriad of organisations, from the United Nations to NATO, to the OECD and beyond, all of which impose obligations upon us as result of our choice to be in membership. In addition, if we are admitted to the WTO in our own right we will have to consent to vast numbers of rules, many of which are worse than those imposed as a result of EU membership. And, of course, not to forget a theme familiar to this blog, we are party to a very wide range of tax treaties which reflect obligations to which we have agreed. And let's not pretend that any of these are more or less onerous than those that the EU create, where we have a vote (which we have in none of these other situations) and where our government is very clearly represented as an equal.

To suggest then that we cannot be a 'rule taker' is absurd: rules, including those imposed from the EU, are always the result of mutual bargains that the parties wish to be honoured. The EU did not impose these rules on us: far too often, in fact, the UK decided to create regulation for itself that went far beyond those required by Brussels, as is very apparent from the quite different interpretation of the same rules seen in other European countries. We had a choice: we did not always make good ones.

And we are not now. Most especially, Labour is not now.

It's front bench now has no opposition to offer in any Brexit debate: no wonder it is languishing in the polls.

For a party now built on youth it is selling out those who put Corbin in this position of indecision.

And Labour is, by offering a lame excuse for this position, showing its intellectual weakness. At the very least it should be saying what could be done by rejecting this option, rather than saying we must simply walk away.

I am not, and have never been, a great fan of many MPs who favour the EEA option: with Howard Reed I have been happy to describe many of them as LINO - Labour In Name Only. I shudder at the thought of what a Labour Party with Chris Leslie as shadow chancellor would be offering as an economic policy at this moment. But, needs must, and across Parliament there are MPs from all parties who are willing to do three things that are, in my opinion, right at this moment.

First, they are willing to find a compromise solution with the EU, which is what the EEA option represents.

Second, they are willing to make sure that this country honours its obligations by maintaining appropriate borders; sustaining its agreement on Northern Ireland; supporting those who have been invited to live, work and invest here, and (most importantly) to support the jobs and well-being of people in this country.

And third, they are willing to stand alongside other countries to say that we have interests in common that are greater than the issues that stand us apart.

For those reasons I could live with an EEA deal.

In my opinion this is now the only tenable Brexit solution.

And if Corbyn won't have it, then I think his Party has to tell him that is unacceptable. And his MPs will have to ignore his whip. They would have a duty to their consciences, their country and the people that they represent to stand alongside other parties, as a coalition in the House of Lords did, to impose upon the UK's failing political leadership a solution that is in the best interests of this country as a whole.