

# The Brexiteers pre-crashing out excuses are becoming ev...

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I noticed Fraser Nelson [promoting a post on the Spectator](#) site this morning. Its headline drew my attention. It was:

### **Why the onus is on the EU to do a Brexit deal**

Written by someone called Charles Day, whose articles for The Spectator do little to inspire confidence in his judgement, this one makes the extraordinary argument that the EU **has** to agree an exit deal with the UK based on Article 50, which he notes as saying:

*A Member State which decides to withdraw shall notify the European Council of its intention. In the light of the guidelines provided by the European Council, the Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that State.*

He claims that the words 'shall' and 'conclude' apply only to the Union and oblige it, come what may, to reach a deal with the state that is leaving, whatever they might ask for.

It would seem that if Day is right then assuming that the UK had demanded that our former territories in France be returned to us then the EU would have been obliged to conclude a deal on that basis because they are obliged to reach a deal. We, apparently, can then be as unreasonable as we like and based on this logic the EU is obliged to agree.

The logic is, of course, absurd. It is entirely appropriate that Article 50 requires that the EU assist a member state who wishes to leave the EU. But no reasonable interpretation on earth says it must do so whatever is demanded. But that is what Day is saying.

Let's be clear; arguments as stupid as this are going to be rolled out relentlessly over the weeks and months to come. All of them will supposedly justify Boris Johnson's intransigence. And if this is the standard we are to expect, they'll all be completely crass.

But then, the whole Brexit project is just that.