

We are facing wholly unnecessary economic risks and the...

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I have to admit serious Brexit chaos has arrived sooner than I expected.

Empty super market shelves are happening.

Exporters quite literally cannot export.

Delivery companies have cut services into and out of the UK because legal compliance is too hard, and too expensive to deliver.

It seems that multiple load hauliers, carrying pallets from a number of sources are being especially hard hit.

Now there is suggestion that UK and French customs systems are incompatible and we have only found out now as we did not complete ours in time to trial it.

Northern Ireland is especially hard hit, and in potential real trouble.

And amidst all that, it is now clear musicians lost their right to tour on a single visa because the government chose not to ask for it.

What is apparent is that those who thought that the problems we would face would be at the ports are wrong. The simple fact is that systems are so bad that the ports are simply ceasing to function. Trade is not failing to get through, by and large. It's simply not happening.

Nor is this a problem that it can be suggested has been created by small companies. If John Lewis and M&S can't see a way to viably export now there is a systemic cause to this.

It's easy to say Brexit is that systemic cause. And at one level that is, of course, right.

But Brexit need not have been like this. We could have stayed in the single market. We could have concluded a deal very much earlier and actually trialled how it might work.

We could have agreed a deal on Northern Ireland and worked through the consequences.

We could have done Brexit and still had a functioning economy. But we chose to prevaricate and delay. And chaos is the result.

Will it get better? Of course it will. But not without large numbers of business failures, and lost jobs on the way. Business is already facing a Covid crisis. Now some companies face this as well. And cash flows will not survive the double whammy, which is something no one in government seems to understand.

I have accepted the inevitability of Brexit for now. But nothing requires the degree of incompetence that requires failure on the scale now being witnessed. We are facing wholly unnecessary economic risks and the only people to blame are the government.